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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As we move onwards enjoying the days and weeks of high summer, and as the sun's energies permeate the waters and land of the earth, many of us turn our faces towards the sun admiring the beauty of life which surrounds us. Midsummer - the Summer Solstice - is recognised worldwide by many different cultures, and is marked by various holidays, carnivals, festivals, rituals and feasting. The Solstice occurs when the sun reaches its greatest height, which in the northern hemisphere is between 21st and 25th June.

Midsummer celebrations stem from ancient times and still hold a special place in the cycle of the year, so powerful is the image of the sun and what it represents. In Scandinavian countries the Solstice is celebrated by fire festivals. It is also associated with fertility and in Austria celebrations include a colourful procession of boats sailing down the Danube as it flows through wine growing country, accompanied on the hillsides by bonfires and fireworks. Midsummer's day is also known as St John's Day in many countries and that too is often accompanied by bonfires and feasts. Across the world the Summer Solstice is marked by many kinds of festivals, music and dancing.

In Greek mythology the sun was personified as Helios, crowned with a shining aureole of the sun, who drove a chariot across the sky each day and night. Sometimes depicted as being drawn by solar bulls or by horses 'fire-darting steeds'. Apollo was the God of light and the sun, representing truth and prophecy, music, poetry and healing. The sun represents light and divine unity, a bridge between 'heaven' and 'earth', its rays the source of life and energy. H.P. Blavatsky says:

"Man is suspended, by all his three spirits, in the macro-cosmos He is in it, as it is in him, for the world-pervading element fills all space, and is space itself, only shoreless and infinite. As to his third spirit, the divine, what is it but an infinitesimal ray, one of countless radiations proceeding directly from the Highest Cause – the Spiritual Light of the World, which are three in one? Everything in this visible universe is the outflow of this Triad, a microcosmic triad itself. And thus they move in majestic procession in the fields of eternity, around the spiritual sun as in the heliocentric system the celestial bodies move around the visible suns." ¹

As Jung related, the Sun is a symbol of the source of life and the ultimate wholeness of humanity when the primal matter of life is transmuted into gold – or Wisdom, signified by a golden-flower. Associated with both purification and tribulation, the Sun symbolises the zenith of the human journey as we reach towards the higher truths and the light of the spiritual sun.

The articles in this summer issue relate to this journey and give us much to think about. I hope you will also enjoy learning more about what theosophists get up to by way of practical humanitarian work.

We have a slightly new look to the event listings this time. TS HQ is unable to give details of the Sunday talks at headquarters, partially because of the difficulty in finding extra time getting copy to meet the Esoterica deadlines, but also because HQ is to start a new London web email list – so please do remember to sign up to this as soon as it is launched. Full details of HQ events will of course be available at www.theosoc.org.uk or HQ can be contacted on 020 7563 9817. Information about study, classes, courses and other HQ events will still be covered in Esoterica.

Susan Bayliss
Editor

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THE BALANCE

There has always been a balance
The one that suspends the world
In its transcendent embrace
Being conceived of the liminal
Between both time and space
Holding the fragments together

There has always been a balance
Between the opposites of this universe
The darkness and the light
Existence and non-existence
Walking along the threshold of its opposite
A breath will send it tumbling

There has always been a balance
Of the body and soul
A long fought debate surpassing centuries
Love versus mind, matter versus spirit
The spirituality to break Newton's boundaries
For all of Physics cause, we are the effect

There has always been a balance
Between the energies of people
Some stronger than others
The viscous vibes that plague the unconscious
Can mingle together, in friends or lovers
The bond of a father and his children

There has always been a balance
And you are mine.

*Zoe Seabourne
June 2014*

KINSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Diana Dunningham-Chapotin

When young, my impression of Theosophists was that they were a pretty studious bunch of people who didn't have the time to get very far away from their books and Lodge meetings. But as I gradually came to know hundreds of members throughout the world, I discovered that in fact many are deeply involved in hands-on service as a natural part of their spiritual practice. Some are involved in community service as members of the Theosophical Society Order of Service (TOS), some as members of the Theosophical Society (TS), and many more Theosophists are involved in community service simply as human beings and private citizens. Their willingness to give of themselves stems from their conviction about the fundamental unity of all forms of life.

Whatever our level and type of involvement in the uplifting of the planet as a theatre for evolution, all of us undoubtedly have stories to share of how service has brought us a measure of spiritual awareness and how it has helped us develop a sense of universal brotherhood. We could probably also all talk at length about the character weaknesses, the resistances, the doubts, the strong emotions and the compulsive needs that act as inner barriers to truly effective spiritual service.

The American spiritual teacher Ram Dass says that "those who choose to enter the arena of social action must learn to go deep to the place where we are One. And that vision must be profound and all-inclusive, an affirmation of heart and soul. It must be strong enough to stay alive, often under the worst conditions." (*"How can I help" Ram Dass and Paul Gorman, A.A. Knopf Publishers 1987, p 178*).

For myself, I wouldn't say I've served in the worst conditions by any means but I've been in some scary ones at times and they have tested, in their little way, my capacity to stay connected with the One. My husband Michel and I live in an outer suburb of Paris where poverty and unemployment are high and where sub-standard immigrant housing is common. Social unrest is the result. Do you remember the riots that took place in France in 2005 when tens of thousands of cars were burned? Well, we live in one of those areas. We've had to intervene in unpleasant incidents several times and let me tell you, you don't have time to stop and meditate first! Michel and I are also very involved in animal rights work. Most of our actions to promote vegetarianism in Paris have taken place very harmoniously and with a good response from the public, but sometimes we've actually been abused and on a couple of occasions people have become very aggressive. These are testing moments for remaining brotherly and in reflecting afterwards, one always returns to Theosophy as an ethical and spiritual reference point.

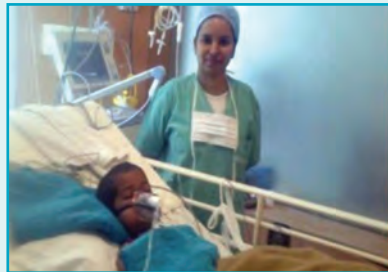
I could relate many small incidents in the area of personal experience alone. The point is that one learns little by little that to stay in control of oneself in all circumstances, one has to train oneself to look squarely at one's emotions, one's resistances, one's compulsions and more especially at what lies behind them.

In engaging in areas of social service or social activism, we need to own up to natural feelings of indignation, anxiety, guilt, discomfort, nervous fatigue, impatience, disappointment and so on. In looking behind these feelings, we often find certain fears are there: fear of loss of control, of powerlessness, of being overwhelmed, of having our heart broken and ultimately the fear of extinction. By increasing our awareness at this level it allows the release of the energy we need for genuinely spiritual service, I would suggest. Such awareness allows us to keep before us that profound and all-inclusive vision of the One of which Ram Dass and the Ageless Wisdom speak.

Now demonstrating in the streets of Paris may seem quite remote from the kind of service that TOS and TS members habitually engage in, but the same need to look at our inner barriers applies in many other circumstances. Maybe we keep putting off going to visit an elderly friend, bedridden and lonely



Above: Those who serve together grow together. TOS workers at the International TOS Conference 2013.



Above: A few members of the Healing Circle at Olcott, Wheaton, USA (all are welcome to place names for those in need, just go to: <http://www.theoservice.org/node/23>). Heart surgery for children from the economically weaker section of society co-sponsored by the TOS Deepti Group in Delhi. There are over 100 TOS groups in India.



Above: TOS members in Nairobi celebrated the opening of a bore and manual pump to provide for female villagers who hitherto had to walk miles every day to fetch water. It was officially handed over to the women's collective that administers the water supply. The village children enjoyed a party prepared by the TOS members.

in hospital, not just because of the difficulty of masking our sadness for them and of making conversation. Maybe underneath we are being confronted with the terrifying spectre of our own loss of control, our own helplessness and above all, our own abandonment.

The significance of this was brought home to me when I was in my early twenties and staying for the first time at the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Chennai, India. I learned that a medical dispensary for the needy was operating on TS property. Since I had a month at my disposal, I decided to volunteer there and was put to work cleaning and bandaging the infected sores of local villagers. I was full of energy and goodwill but the work was a little gruelling for a coddled young Westerner. The sight of suppurating ulcers was unpleasant and having to inflict pain on the villagers to disinfect them was hard. In no time at all I was using sheer will-power to keep at the work and quickly noticed that the line of people at the door awaiting treatment never got shorter. As soon as one patient left with her arm or leg all nicely bandaged up, another one would appear at the back of the line. At the end of each evening's session, there was no sense of achievement because the line was just as long as ever.

I was deeply disturbed by this experience and realised that I needed to learn how to tap resources within that would enable me to focus on bandaging limbs patiently and gently without even glancing at the line to see if it had shortened. I wanted to understand how it was that widespread poverty was tolerated in a rich world – and more particularly how I dared to return each evening to the comfort, cleanliness and quiet of the TS headquarters estate at Adyar while privation and overcrowding reigned just outside. It was hard to bring myself to believe that the countless people on this planet who are victims of circumstance could all be personally responsible for their situation because of past thoughts or actions. I wondered where a spiritual path fitted into things when the vast majority of humanity is busy just surviving physically.

I needed answers to such questions and started looking for a place where the light that Theosophy casts on social problems could be found, where the doctrine of karma could be debated, where one could talk openly about one's lack of inner resources for helping others, where the short and long term effectiveness of different kinds of social action could be examined. What was it that inspired a dedication to the relief of suffering?

This place was found right within the TS itself – the Theosophical Order of Service. I learned that the TOS's whole reason for existence is to help the TS make Theosophy a force for good in the world, to help Theosophists make their philosophy of life practical, to help others and themselves along their road to spiritual awareness. I discovered that the TOS seeks to show that Theosophy has light to shed on contemporary issues of concern and that in the TOS could be found a framework in which social action as spiritual practice is supported and nurtured.

If we feel that Theosophy can transform our lives through service, we can also consider what its teachings have to say about the place of animals in the evolutionary scheme and how our lifestyles might be modified in consequence. If we appreciate what Theosophy has to say about hidden forces in the universe and the possibility of calling upon them, we can perform the TOS healing ritual to help those with health problems. In short, Theosophical ideas can have a lot to say about solutions for planetary problems if we care passionately enough to seek them. The TOS offers a framework for their exploration and application.

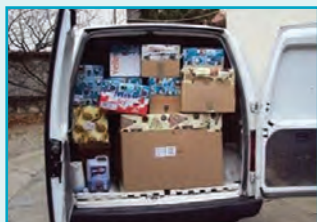
Through the TOS I have been privileged to be able to meet members engaged in serious service projects throughout the world, and to exchange thoughts with them on all the metaphysical and methodological questions that can plague those seeking radical, enlightened reform in this world. I have come to appreciate the uniqueness of Theosophy in approaching the needs of the world.

If Theosophy can give us a glimpse of what brotherhood without distinction is, then surely we can investigate how this knowledge can be put to work to help reduce suffering in many areas of life. It might be to help reduce religious, racial and political tensions such as Philippine TOS members have

The TOS in Kenya provides skills training to women enabling them to add to the family income and gain a measure of autonomy. At one of the sessions held at the premises of the TS in Nairobi, ladies were shown how to make cow dung cakes to use as fuel, instead of coal. The fuel cakes are easy and cheap to make, are environmentally friendly and can be sold with a very reasonable profit margin.



A member of Pretoria Lodge, with Roscoe, one of the Guide Dogs who lived with her and her family during his early training



Left and Centre: In 2010, the TOS in Hungary 'adopted' a flood-affected village with the blessing and support of the town's municipal officers. They have offered all kinds of services, becoming friends with the villagers in the process. The TOS's long term goal is to help the villagers build their own active self-help community. Right: At the Assam and Arunachal regional conference in India, various mobility aids were provided to the poor. Some of these aids were purchased with a donation from the TOS in Australia.



Left: The Brisbane Australia TOS Group held an art exhibition to raise funds for the Kenyan water bore project. A TOS member did a painting specifically for the theme: 'Water for Life'. Centre: The TOS and TS in Kenya educate children on the importance of looking after the natural environment by planting trees, etc. Right: Filipino Theosophists conduct in-depth seminars addressing two issues in particular: core commonality in religion, and dealing with one's own anger and fears regarding other people or other ethnic and religious communities. Here we see one of the trainers running a peace-building seminar for army officers assigned to Mindanao.

been doing for years on the island of Mindanao. It might be to look at ways to introduce theosophical values and principles into primary, secondary and even tertiary education, as is being done by the Golden Link College in Manila. Or to address the issue of economic independence for women through educational and vocational training programmes such as those going on through the TOS in many places in India and also in Kenya and violence-ridden Pakistan, where sadly one of our TOS workers was injured and one died.

Members are also very active in the developed world too. Much can be done by providing friendship and support to the lonely and dispossessed in our own neighbourhood, or by volunteering at a local food bank, community centre or animal shelter. One thing is sure: as Theosophists we each have a part to play in becoming more self-aware, thereby increasing the harmony and unity and reducing the suffering within our own community. The work of the TOS is effective because of its international network, well-coordinated teamwork and the strong bond which TOS members share. All TOS workers are volunteers, the TOS is entirely self-funding and all donations are spent on the causes for which they are made.

I hope that, like me, you can find inspiration for your service aspirations and that the TOS resources are of real practical use in working for the ideal of Universal Brotherhood. This is what the TOS hopes to provide. **The TOS is here to support us in discovering the joy that arises from service grounded in spiritual aspiration. It is here to help us along the road to awareness of Unity we are all treading together.**

Originally from New Zealand, Diana was born into a theosophical family and worked under Joy Mills for nine years at the Krotona School of Theosophy in California. Now based in France, Diana is the International Secretary of the Theosophical Order of Service. Her passion is ensuring that the TOS gives as much support as possible to making the teachings of Theosophy of transformative value in the world. *All photographs supplied by the TOS.*



FIND OUT MORE FROM OUR TOS TEAM AT THE SUMMER SCHOOL AND AT A THEOSOPHICAL BRANCH NEAR YOU



TOS workers at the International TOS Conference 2013, Olcott, Wheaton, USA

International website of the TOS: <http://international.theoservice.org/index.html>
Contact: International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin: tosinternational@wanadoo.fr
To subscribe to free e-newsletter: <http://international.theoservice.org/enews.html>

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UK Chair: Maureen Atkinson. Treasurer: Greta Walker, Secretary: Cynthia Trasi.
A donation form can be downloaded from: www.tos-uk.org.uk
Please send donations to: TOS, 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA.



What is the relationship of the TOS to the Theosophical Society and the Foundation for Theosophical Studies?

For over one hundred years, the TOS has made a significant contribution to the community outreach of the Theosophical Society. It considers its collaboration with the TS and all Theosophical groups to be an honour. It collaborates with the Foundation for Theosophical Studies and has received funding from the Foundation for some of its theosophically-oriented educational work with the young.

"The Theosophical Order of Service was founded by Annie Besant in 1908 so that the sum of pain in the world may be reduced to some extent at least, and at the same time help its workers to learn, through their service and the attention they pay to the quality of their work, to purify the mind. The Order of Service has therefore a double purpose. From this point of view, it is not merely the doing of work which is important but the manner in which it is done and the purity of purpose behind it.

The TOS encourages self-forgetful service, and is the natural counterpart of the Theosophical Society's work to guide people to wisdom. It brings together those for whom Theosophy represents a dynamic force of the uplifting of human society and the protection of the planet. It is to be hoped that more and more members will join in its work of building up in this world an atmosphere of compassionate service and caring relationships". Radha Burner, former International President of the Theosophical Order of Service

Annie Besant was prompted to form the TOS because members of the TS wanted to do practical work to actively promote the first object of the Society. She ordered it to be called "The Theosophical Society Order of Service" and the motto chosen was 'A Union of Those who Love in the Service of All that Suffers'.

TOS groups are organised by members of the TS and they operate from within and not separate from the Society, though not all members of the TOS are members of the TS. In around half a dozen countries, the TOS has become a legally registered body mostly because of the extensive nature of the community work they are engaged in. Whether formally registered or not, all groups operate rather like autonomous community outreach arms of the TS.

The TOS has a harmonious working relationship with the TS and it provides a place where social action as spiritual practice is valued and actively nurtured. Though not present in all the countries where the TS is active, the TOS continues to grow and provides a focal point where members and friends may work along self-selected lines of service. The TOS does not see its role as peripheral to the work of spreading Theosophical teachings nor does it see itself as simply duplicating the work of humanitarian groups. The TOS exists to show the world that Theosophy has much light to shed on contemporary issues of concern and can help people find meaning in suffering. It aims to demonstrate that service grounded in spirituality can engender far-reaching good in the world.

Throughout the world, all TOS activities are supported and supervised by the International Secretary of the TOS who reports regularly to the International President of the TOS (ex officio International President of the TS).

International website of the TOS: <http://international.theoservice.org/index.html>

Contact: International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin: tosinternational@wanadoo.fr

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THE COMPASSIONATE MIND

Bhupendra R. Vora



The purpose of evolution is to enable consciousness to experience terrestrial existence in the various kingdoms of life. Through this experience it is provided with the impetus to develop from the grosser levels of existence to higher and higher levels of unfolding and potentialities. Nature's preordained design is for the progressive movement of consciousness from the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms to the human kingdom.

In the human experience self-consciousness arises and the distinction between the self and others as separate entities is cognised at the outer level. In the evolutionary journey nature intends for the unit of consciousness to progress from being self-centred, and involved only in its own interests, to a being that is concerned with the welfare of others. Progressively it has to learn to work in harmony with the Universal Laws and thereby assure its own progress as a part of the Whole.

The occult doctrine describes the journey of consciousness from the un-manifest levels of Being to the manifested outer world, where through experiences in the various kingdoms of life, it reaches the state of manifested perfection. At the pinnacle of the evolutionary journey are the incarnations of love and compassion like The Buddha and The Christ.

At the heart of the Universe is love and compassion that is manifest in all the creation. The Divine Intelligence that is the architect of this creation caringly caters to the needs of all its creation with great intricacy and love. A Divine desire to lead each species of life to its perfection and ultimately to the pinnacle of evolution can be discerned in this vast creation. This is evident in the myriad species of life with special abilities granted to them by nature for their survival. There is variety in the fauna and flora of the Earth with their intricate designs and forms. It is amazing that each species of life has been provided with its own particular form of defence mechanism to protect itself from other forms of life.

For instance a chameleon changes its colours to blend in with the foliage on which it is perched so that it does not easily attract attention from birds and other carnivorous animals. Some varieties of insects and small creatures have been provided with glands to eject poisonous substances or odours to deter other animals from attacking them. Nature in its infinite compassion provides all of them with the means to protect their lives and the right food and environment for survival. Equally there are species of life that support each other and live in harmony with natural laws.

Lord Mahavira, the great teacher and reformer of the Jain faith preached non-violence and compassion as the basis for a true morality. He declared that all life had the right to exist and evolve on its own evolutionary journey. He further stated that it was not enough to declare non-violence as one's creed, but to also empathise with all living beings in their struggle for existence. His message to human beings was to live and help other forms of life to live as well. In doing so he would not only respect the rights of all life to live and progress but also ensure the delicate balance of life on this planet. This is in accordance with Nature's plan for consciousness to experience life through all forms of manifestation.

How can a new mind set emerge in the 'New Age' in the human consciousness that has the sensitivity and compassion to live in accordance with this principle of 'Live and Help Live'? Scientific research is proving that there is interconnectedness and interdependence of life at all levels of being and disturbance of this harmony causes disasters in one form or the other. An understanding of this truth, not merely intellectually but at the deeper level of experience and understanding, transforms the consciousness into a caring and compassionate one. However self-centredness and

limitation in understanding the plan of evolution binds human beings to their individual existences. They are therefore unable to perceive the larger design of nature for the evolution of life! The human mind is caught up in this island of self-interest and unable to perceive the larger design for its rise to a higher level of consciousness.

When we aspire for a 'New Mind' for a 'New Age', it is for a different mind-set from the one in which human beings are trapped. The mind imprisoned in the conditioned way of thinking is unable to make this change without understanding that conditioning. There can be no liberation from this conditioning until there is clarity of perspective of the purpose of life; and of the relationship and the dependence of the different species of life upon each other.

In the Eight-fold noble path of the Lord Buddha, the first step of 'Right View' has been considered to be of paramount importance, on the foundation of which the remaining steps are constructed. 'Right View' indicates a true understanding of the nature of things or the world as it is, and not how we perceive it through the colouring of the senses and the mind. This implies an understanding of the laws of nature under the operation of which evolution proceeds. It also means an understanding of the Oneness of all Life and the interconnectedness of everything with everything else. When the understanding is correct the subsequent processes of thought are correctly founded and lead to right actions.

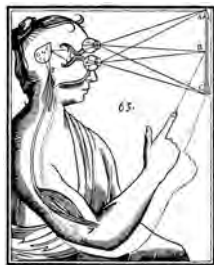
When the Buddha was asked whether this meant that belief in some form must be accepted blindly, he replied: *"No, but you must know for yourself three great things-that only upon the Path of Holiness and good living can man finally attain perfection; that in order to attain it he moves through many lives, gradually rising higher and higher; and that there is a Law of Eternal Justice under which all these things work."*¹

In the teaching of the 'Four Noble Truths' the Buddha explained that there was suffering and a cause for it. This is 'Trishna' or desire. As long as we are caught up in the web of desires of one kind or the other for wealth, fame or power this suffering continues and as 'The Light of Asia' describes:

If ye lay bound upon the wheel of change,
And no way were of breaking from the chain,
The Heart of boundless Being is a curse,
The soul of Things fell pain,
Ye are not bound! The soul of Things is sweet,
The Heart of Being is celestial rest;
Stronger than woe is will; that which was Good
Doth pass to Better-Best."²

These beautiful verses describe graphically, that there is suffering in the world and as a result of ignorance the cycle of death and birth inevitable. Through right understanding liberation is possible from this cycle of suffering. The Buddha taught that man's suffering is as a result of the choices that he makes. In the words of 'The Light of Asia' man "Whirls upon the wheel of life and hugs and kisses its spokes of agony", of his own free will; no one forces him to make the choices that he makes out of ignorance. This bondage to the cycles of birth and death takes place as a result of his desires that tie him to the wheel of causality. Ignorance of the real purpose of life is reflected in the vain search for wealth, power and position from which the hope is to acquire happiness and contentment. The mind that is self-seeking is caught up in this struggle of life that results in suffering. That there is much suffering in the world is evident everywhere and makes no distinction between the rich and the poor.

The human mind conditioned by many things like race, religion, caste etc. is trapped into an established way of thinking. It is constantly conditioned by impacts not only from outside but also by impulses from within by all those factors that create division. The thinking is therefore not holistic but divisive. Freedom from such a state can be realised when the conditioning of the mind is



explored through observation. A detached observation of the thinking process reveals the things that influence our thoughts and actions.

The Buddha once put a problem to his disciples: How would you untie a knot? The pupils gave very learned answers. Then the Buddha said: 'If you want to untie a knot, find out how the knot was tied'.³

To understand the human conditioning we must find out the causes of that conditioning. To arrive at the unconditioned state of mind, we must know how the mind gets conditioned. In this connection Krishnaji said: *"The totality of our conditioning can be broken - not bit by bit, which takes time, but immediately, by directly perceiving the truth of the matter. It is the truth*

that liberates, not time or your intention to be free".⁴

To understand the conditioning process, the impacts of the outer consciousness operating through the senses on the inner state of the mind and conversely of the mind on outer actions and thoughts must be observed. In all the thought and action processes this conditioning can be observed. This needs awareness. An awareness that can perceive the influence of some previous experience on the present experience is an alert awareness.

We create images of our past experiences that influence all our present actions. So differences of race, religion and many other forms of division are created by the mind. Images of past experiences and prejudices affect our present experiences that we see through preconditioned eyes. The action in the present is therefore never right action nor compassionate. Therefore preconceptions of people based on religion, race, nationality, sex and a thousand other things are created that hinder true understanding. There is pre-judgement of people, on the basis of these artificial divisions, without an attempt ever being made to understand them. To understand this working of the mind is the way of wisdom and compassion.

To have genuine understanding means putting ourselves into the shoes of others, and to see where they are coming from in terms of their outer behaviour and beliefs. However our own conditioning makes us intolerant of others and hinders a true perception. To understand this conditioning requires deep insights into our own nature. It then becomes evident that we have pre-established views that influence our present experiences and views. Our present is therefore never free from the images of the past. The recognition of this conditioning comes from awareness and deep contemplation.

Therefore to understand the present human condition we have to analyse those things that divide human beings and prevent them from becoming compassionate and mindful about others. Firstly it is self-centredness. This arises as a result of lack of comprehension about the purpose of life. It results in a very selfish attitude that considers only that which one likes or wants, to the exclusion of the interest of others. This self-centredness rises from the self at the individual level and from there to the family, the group to which one belongs, race, religion, nation and so on. In this way innumerable numbers of separate interest groups are created by human beings that are divisive and do not help in creating harmony.

As long as there is exclusivity and separative tendencies there will be conflict. When he was addressing the European Union Parliament, Dr. A. P. J. Kalam who was then the President of India, referred to the thoughts of the Tamil poet Kaniyan Pungudranar who was quoted having said far back in time: *"I am a world citizen and every citizen of the world is my kith and kin. Where there is righteousness in the heart there is beauty in the character. Where there is beauty in the character there is harmony in the home. Where there is harmony in the home there is order in the nation. Where there is order in the nation there is peace in the world."* In a similar way Krishnaji said that the individual must change before society can change. It is only when our inner conflicts cease and we are in harmony with others that the world will change. There are many serious social issues with

broken homes or unstable families because of individual self-interests and lack of true love; a love that is not self-seeking.

Where there is love and understanding in the family there is stability and security in the children born in that family. Where there is selfishness and a lack of understanding of the other person's point of view there is unhappiness and instability. A true relationship whether between a husband and wife or any other member of a family is based on selflessness and love. In such a home as the poet Kaniyan said there is harmony.

But this is far from what many homes have under the influence of the present electronic age of computers, mobile phones and other gadgets. A relationship between a husband and wife is usually based on expectations that are self-centred. There is therefore an unwillingness to accommodate the views or interests of each other in the relationship. Hence there are broken homes and children who become social problems. The need is for right values and right forms of education that result in responsible and compassionate individuals. It is fine to have institutions providing technological and other forms of learning. But this development is lopsided without the balancing of right values of life. There must be fundamental grounding in ethical and moral values which would create compassionate and caring human beings.

Is a society based purely on material progress the right one? Should there not be a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life and an understanding of the social responsibilities that go with this? The drive towards greater and greater material progress is creating extremely competitive societies where there are tremendous pressures on individuals to perform more and more. The resulting pressures on family life are tremendous and often result in broken homes and unhappiness. These add up to the miseries and suffering in the world.

There is the story of an Australian couple, the husband a lawyer and the wife a mathematics graduate who got tired of their materialistic life and came to India to find out whether a simpler mode of living could bring contentment and happiness in their lives. They have been living in a slum in Delhi for

more than a decade and raised two sons there. When interviewed they expressed great contentment with their simple life. They also experienced the kindness and generosity of the poor people who were their neighbours. This is perhaps an exceptional and extreme example that is not possible to be emulated by most people but it does indicate that happiness and contentment are not based on the things you have or the kinds of houses you live in.



There is much that is not right in a society that is based on material values only. Should there not be a sensitivity and compassion of the mind to share the limited resources of the world with those that are less fortunate! But what is visible in many places is the extreme greed of people who accumulate wealth through unfair practices without any

thought of the harm they are doing to others. Often illegally obtained wealth is siphoned off to safe havens and is never used even by the perpetrators of such immoral acts. So we hear of immense amounts of money deposited by crooked politicians and others in foreign lands that could be used for the development of their countries.

Lord Mahavira taught that a disproportionate accumulation of wealth was a form of violence because it prevented others from having their share of the Earth's resources. So any inequitable distribution of the resources of the earth is a form of violence against others. Right education should inculcate ethical and moral values and foster responsible use of the earth's resources.

The challenge for the new age is rightful thinking and living. A new way of thinking and living should evolve in the human consciousness that is based on a holistic perception of life. What stops this happening is the limited, self-centred mind that is concerned only with its own interests and not

with the welfare of others. To understand life requires sensitivity of nature and compassion. A compassionate mind is one that has the sensitivity to respond to the suffering of others and is not preoccupied with the self. Such a mind is very different from the worldly mind that is only concerned with its immediate circle of interest. The average human being lives a life in which the mind is occupied in matters of self-interest only. There is no concern for the well-being of others outside the circle of family, friends and other specific groups. When we observe the world around us we see this as the general human condition everywhere. This is so at the individual, societal or national levels.



There is either a lack of understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life or the understanding is only at the intellectual level without the sensitivity and empathy that is required to feel this. A compassionate mind on the other hand has the sensitivity to perceive the oneness of life and to respond constantly to pain and suffering in the world. Such a mind has deep compassion and empathy for the progress and happiness of all life. It was the compassionate mind of the Buddha that saw the suffering in the world, through old age, disease, death etc. and his subsequent effort to do something about this suffering.

However the influence of materialism on the human mind is so strong that it craves for more and more of the worldly goods at the expense of inner contentment and peace. A mind like that caters only for the self and not for others. At the national level the same factors of self-centredness are multiplied. Hence at world forums nations are unable to come to agreement on issues that are vital to the survival of the planet and its resources. Whether it is matters of the pollution of the oceans of the Earth or the depletion of its resources, the economic interests of nations and large corporations are the deciders of actions.

Human greed is the cause of much suffering in the world and no resources of the planet have been left untouched by this greed. In the continent of Africa, for instance, many countries are in a state of civil war or internal strife. There is great human suffering and the exploitation of women and children. At the core of these strifes are the vast natural resources of the continent. Therefore you have trade in what are termed the 'blood diamonds' and other valuable stones. These are sold in the world markets and the proceeds used for the purchase of armaments that fuel the wars on the continent and support the vast armament industries of the world. So these cycles of wars, human exploitation and the destruction of the planet's resources continue.

Another example of human greed is the demand for ivory and rhino horn in the Far East. The result of this greed is the slaughter of these wonderful animals and the near extinction of the species. Similar exploitation of the resources of the seas has resulted in the near extinction of many species of life like the whales and dolphins. In some countries animals are killed for sport. Such animals are recorded to have displayed great fear and anguish at the time of their death. Unless the demand for these animal products is curbed, the suffering of the animals will continue.

A petition was recently circulated by an activist organisation concerning extreme cruelty towards dogs, which are boiled alive so that their meat would become more tender and succulent for eating. Many voices of protests from all over the world were lodged in the petition to stop such inhumane practices. To stop such practices of animal cruelty a larger and larger number of people must raise their voices of conscience. It is not enough to be negatively good; there must be positive efforts in the direction of stopping such cruelty. In this connection Radha Burnier writes in her book 'The World Around Us':

"Compassionate living in the modern world seems to be hardly an ideal as it comes in the way of making large and quick profits out of business, and also conflicts with the desire to find new pleasures and satisfactions. People are seeking to introduce into their diets novel tastes, eating the flesh of wild animals and creatures which were not counted previously as sources of meat. Eating the brains of living monkeys for example, and regarding it as a culinary delicacy is a new pleasure open to tourists travelling around the world and getting acquainted with alien customs..... In the midst of

the gruesome inhumanity being practiced, there is a glimmer here and there of a different mentality and approach to life. This keeps alive the hope that humanity is not altogether ceasing to be humane.”⁵

The other factor of division amongst people and nations is religion. It is the cause of much suffering and division in the world. Instead of spreading the message of love and compassion that is at the core of all belief systems, we have bitter divisions and hatred. In a very vivid commentary on the state of religions ‘The Mahatma Letters’ describe the influence of the priests of institutionalised religions on their flocks. Indoctrination of the followers turns them into fanatics who are willing to kill in the name of their God. Immense suffering is caused by such fanatics of all faiths on the followers of other faiths in the name of their religion. Even within the followers of different sects within the same faith there is so much mistrust and violence that it has resulted in suffering for thousands of people. The priesthood of the various religions who are entrusted with matters of faith inculcate feelings of mistrust and hatred for the followers of other faiths.

The indoctrination of people into certain belief systems continues to be carried out in the name of their faith. Places of worship become hotbeds of violence and extremism. How can this extremism be replaced by understanding, love and compassion for others? Only through right education and the upliftment of communities that have been economically disadvantaged, can the problem of extremism be vitiated. It is the lack of education and the economic hardships under which many people live that create the conditions for social unrest and religious extremism.

An example of a courageous stand against extremism is that of the remarkable young girl Malala Yousufzai who has been fighting for the rights of girls to education. In her speech at the United Nations she spoke about education that would foster liberal thought and nonviolence. She quoted the examples of the Buddha, Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohamed for their compassionate lives and those of Mahatma Gandhi and Pashtun leader Badshah Khan for their principles of nonviolence. This example shows what the courage and right belief of one individual can do to awaken world opinion.

Right education creates stable and compassionate human beings with ethical and moral values. They in turn create a caring society. With right education that fosters freedom of thought, the causes of poverty, conflict and many other ills in the human condition can be reduced to create a more just and equitable society. However instead of tackling the core issues to alleviate suffering, vested interests use illiteracy and poverty for indoctrination into extremist ideological thinking that encourages violence. Politicians use these large vote banks to acquire power and wealth, without making any real attempt to help such people.

In order for any real change to take place the individual must change. This means that we have to examine our own conditioning. What divides us from others and why do we create islands of separation from other people on the basis of race, religion, caste etc. This may be out of fear, insecurity or the lack of understanding of other people on the basis of their belief systems or cultural traditions and many other things. Unless an attempt is made to understand other people and their traditions or belief systems peace cannot be realised.

The question that we have to ask of ourselves is whether we can make a difference. The majority of the people in the world are decent human beings who abhor violence and extremism. But they remain as a silent majority who shy away from giving voice to their views. The small minority holding extremist views seem to prevail everywhere because of the silent acquiescence of the large number of moderate human beings. Right thinking people must ask of themselves whether it is morally right to remain passive. Is it not morally incumbent upon them to raise their voices when issues concerning the well-being of humanity and life generally are affected?

The inaction may be as a result of underestimating one’s own strength or ability to do anything significant. In reference to this human tendency, Nelson Mandela the great humanitarian and statesman said:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves," Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and famous?" Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make magnificent the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in all of us. And when we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

A mind that has the sensitivity and compassionate concern for the wellbeing of life would be involved in proactive action. If a new age is to mean an age of an equitable and a just society then the right values must be cultivated. Glimmers of such sensitivity and compassion are visible in the altruistic actions of some people and organisations around the world that are increasingly taking up issues concerning the welfare of all life. *This creates hope that a more humane society is evolving.*

Bhupendra is an international lecturer who writes regular for Theosophist and other theosophical journals. He is a former General Secretary of the East and Central African Section of the Theosophical Society, a member of the General Council of the Society and a member of the General Council for the International Theosophical Centre at Naarden.

References: 1. *The Masters and The Path*. C.W. Leadbeater-1975 Edition p287. 2. *The Light Of Asia*. Book The Eighth. 3. *Krishnamurti and Sant Kabir* p78. 4. *Krishnamurti And Sant Kabir*- Page 78. 5. *The World Around us*- Radha Burnier, p619.

Images: p13: Drawing from René Descartes' (1596-1650) in "Treatise of Man", illustration of mind/body dualism. (Descartes believed inputs are passed on by the sensory organs to the epiphysis [pineal gland] in the brain and from there to the immaterial spirit.); p14: Dharavi Slum in Mumbai, India, Kounosu; Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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THE SCIENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

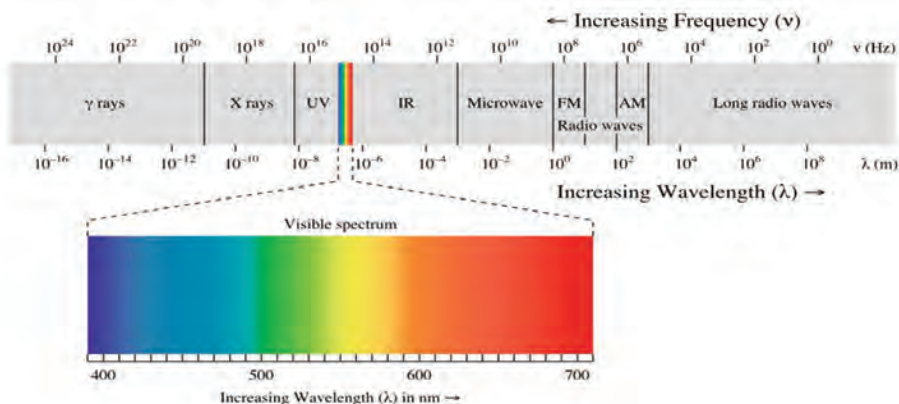
Noeline Hart



What is the definition of 'Enlightenment'? Could it be described as transformation by light? Science would describe light as the energy of the electro- magnetic spectrum, which our five senses only detect in part.

Science from "*sci*ere" is Latin for 'to know'. This is an objective knowing rather than 'gnosis' and as such, needs to be proved by observation, experiment and testing before it can be accepted as a proven fact by Science. The Scientific Method has traditionally used the five senses to test its theories and over the centuries has developed equipment which can extend the senses such as the telescope, microscope etc. Physics is increasingly dealing with energies that cannot be detected by the human senses and has moved into the theoretical field where higher mathematical equations are used as working hypotheses.

We know that the electromagnetic spectrum is composed of varying waves or frequencies of Electromagnetic Radiation, commonly known as EMR. These different frequencies have different names: radio waves, microwaves, infrared radiation, visible light, ultraviolet radiation, X-rays and gamma rays. The visible spectrum or light, which the eyes sense, is only a very small range of the frequencies of EMR. Higher and lower frequencies remain invisible to the eye but can be detected by instruments developed by scientists during the last century.



Can the inner worlds or planes be proved to have an objective existence? Is telepathy a fact? Is reincarnation true? And is it possible to predict the future? These are just some of the questions that Science would require us to prove, using the Scientific method, before it could accept their

validity. This knowledge has been hidden (occluded) from man due to his inability to understand the laws behind the outer forms and is therefore of an occult nature. How can a blind man see the wonders of the world we live in? How can a profoundly deaf person hear a radio or know the beauty of music?

We are told in the Esoteric Sciences that *"All is energy and there is naught else"*, vibrating at ever increasing frequencies beyond which the senses cannot detect. These levels of energy therefore remain invisible to humans in our present stage of evolution. Technology has developed instruments which are able to detect the existence of more and more of these 'invisible' worlds, such as x-rays, gamma rays, cosmic rays as well as atomic, and sub-atomic levels. The human form in its present state doesn't have that range, but as each new break-through takes place, Science then has to acknowledge their existence and thus expands the consciousness of Humanity as a whole.

Could it be that Enlightenment is the development of the form which enables the access to higher level frequencies of Light? We know that:

- All physical matter is composed of atoms containing various types of particles vibrating and moving in relationship to each other at determined frequencies.
- Atoms are minuscule objects invisible to the human eye. Atoms can only be observed individually using special instruments such as the scanning tunnelling microscope. Over 99.94% of an atom's mass is concentrated in the nucleus, with protons and neutrons having roughly equal mass.²
- Solids, liquids and gases are determined by the nature of the relationship of the particles within the atoms.
- Temperature can change the relationship of the particles and this also changes the manifest form. When water evaporates it does not cease to exist, it is invisible as a gas (water vapour)

There was a time when science would not have accepted their reality without proof. This is also true for sound, another form of energy on a slower frequency, which the ears are designed to detect, but again there are frequencies of sound which humans cannot hear.

The Ancient Wisdom states that we have seven bodies, or vehicles existing on seven planes. We can only see the physical, so does this mean that each vehicle is composed of atoms of more and more refined matter vibrating at increasingly faster frequencies? Worlds within worlds, consisting of etheric atoms, astral atoms, mental atoms, all invisible to the human eye. 'As above, so below' would indicate this to be correct.

The Scientific Method needs tangible evidence for all theories before they are accepted as realities, but hypothesis is allowed and is in fact used all the time in theoretical physics. These hypotheses stand until they can be disproved. Science uses mathematical equations to convey a higher form of knowledge than the concrete mind used by the general mass of humanity. This gives a concrete form to abstract thinking which arises from the world of ideas at the three highest sub-planes of the mental body. Science tells us that each element has at least one isotope with an unstable nucleus that can undergo radioactive decay. Electrons that are bound to atoms, normally have stable energy levels, but can undergo transitions between them by absorbing or emitting photons that match the energy differences between the levels. This can result in a transmutation that changes the number of protons or neutrons in a nucleus, this process leads to a transformation of the form.

It would appear that the practice of meditation, study and service to others starts to change the frequencies of our various bodies, it is said that the atoms start to become radioactive, and are able to transmit more light to the whole system which our consciousness is using. The greater the light, the greater the consciousness, would seem to be the possible outcome of these practices.



Service – Could the outcome of this selfless work lead to the transforming of the lower energies of the astral/emotional desires into the finer atoms of the Buddhic energies, manifesting in the heart as aspiration and love of humanity rather than the self?

Study - Could the regular pursuit of study and a higher order of thinking, lead to transforming the mental atoms, from the denser concrete mind, to the higher frequency matter of abstract mind up to the causal level of pure ideas?

Meditation - Could the daily tuning in to the frequency of the spiritual worlds enable a transformation to take place, as we build a bridge of light, infusing the energy centres with ever increasing levels of light energy?

If we consider the Great Work, spoken of by alchemists, (who were surely the scientists of their day.) Could it be that turning lead or base matter into gold, was a form of spiritualising matter by changing the atomic structure? The ancient wisdom states that 'Matter is concretised Spirit' and their difference is frequency and vibration. This means that it must be possible to change the lower denser vibrations by irradiating the lower vehicles, atom by atom. Could this be the path to enlightenment and ultimately God consciousness?



When Esoteric knowledge is understood then it ceases to be 'occult' and eventually becomes general knowledge. In the history of Science there have always been pioneers who have led the field and brought the knowledge through, often in the face of ridicule and opposition and even with the sacrifice of a life. This will continue as long as there are men and women capable of bringing enlightenment and new discoveries into the world to benefit and expand the consciousness of Humanity.

Noeline is President of the Southport Lodge and is a life time seeker of esoteric knowledge, of both Eastern and Western Traditions, including Theosophy, Astrology and the Kabbalah. She runs a holistic centre and with study groups and workshops for members, enquirers and advanced students.

¹ Rays and Initiations, Alice Bailey, p248. ² Wikipedia.

Image p19: 'Electromagnetic spectrum with light highlighted, original author Philip Ronan; The Leaves of Hermes Sacred Tree (public domain image); Alchemist, Joseph Wright of Derby, 1771 (public domain image); courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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THEOSOPHY IN THE COUNSELLING PROFESSION

Barbara Bradley Hebert

Over the years, the TOS has interviewed Theosophists about how they apply theosophical principles in their jobs. Here Barbara is interviewed about her work as Director of the University Counselling Center at the South eastern Louisiana University, where free psychological counselling, or therapy, is provided for students, faculty and staff.

***TOS:** Are the teachings of Theosophy of direct or indirect use to you in your work?*

The principles of Theosophy are invaluable to me, both directly and indirectly, at work on a daily basis. For example, my theosophical beliefs align perfectly with my counselling skills. As a counsellor and as a theosophist, I believe that all individuals have their own path. In my role as a counsellor, I simply serve as a facilitator to help my clients find their own answers, their own path. I respect each individual thoroughly and completely as a divine spark of the Universal. This unconditional positive regard, a basic skill requirement for an effective counsellor, is a part of my life as a theosophist. I strive to empower clients to look within and find their own answers which are compatible with who they are.

Furthermore, like many in the helping profession I see a great deal of humanity's sadness in my day's work. My theosophical beliefs provide me with a perspective through which I can view 'man's inhumanity to man' without feeling overwhelmed. My perspective allows me to use my theosophical 'glasses' and centre myself; thus, I am much more effective with my clients.

***TOS:** Haven't you ever had a client through your office who seemed a hopeless case, divine spark notwithstanding?! Theosophy puts a great deal of emphasis on the importance of self-mastery and spiritual unfoldment through personal effort but do you think that people really change all that quickly? Has your work with college students made you pessimistic or optimistic about the pace of change?*

I have certainly had more than one student through my office who has made me wonder if there is a spark! That thought is 'the slayer of the real' to me. Reality, with a capital R, reminds me that there is a divine spark, even if I can't find it. As a theosophist and a counsellor, I work to remember that the individuals in front of me are unique and special in their own way – even if I, with my limited sight, can't see that uniqueness, that divinity within.

My perspective is that people don't necessarily change quickly, and many people seemingly don't change at all. However, once again my theosophical beliefs help me continue to work with clients who are unwilling to change or who move very slowly. The understanding that this is just one lifetime out of many, that there are lessons to be learnt (of which I am unaware), that the lessons will somehow be learnt one day, that the individuals have the right to make their own decisions thereby creating their own karma, are all helpful to me in accepting them wherever they are on their own path.

I do certainly become pessimistic at times about the pace of change as well as about the incredible amount of sorrow and hurt in this world. When I feel the cynicism and pessimism beginning to overtake me, I try very hard to re-centre myself and see the situation from a more universal perspective.

There have been some nice surprises along the way. I once had a student at high school level who seemed to be beyond help. His family situation was dreadful – substance abuse, violence, poverty. He hated school, and he would not even make eye contact with me. He simply sat in his desk with his head down. I tried every technique I could think of with this student and nothing seemed to make

a difference. Then, one day another counsellor talked about a specific technique which appealed to the 'magical' side of clients. I adapted the technique for use with this student. I said to him, "I have a gift for you. Please stand up so that I can give it to you." He very slowly looked up at me and even more slowly stood up. I cupped my hands together and extended them toward him. I said, "I know it looks as if there is nothing in my hands, but there is. It is a very special gift for you. It is a magical golden ball of love. When I give you this golden ball of love, it will fill your whole being with love so that whenever you feel scared or alone, you will know that this golden ball of love is within you."

I reached forward and placed my hands on the boy's chest as if putting the ball of love into his heart. He looked a little shocked and then he smiled and said "Thank you." I wish I could say that the impact of this technique was immediate, but it wasn't. However, the student did begin at times to respond to me when I spoke with him. Several years later I found out that he had married, was working full-time at a job he enjoyed, was buying a house and was not using drugs. I don't know if the golden ball of love sustained him, but I like to think that it may have had an impact on him in some way, encouraging him to see his own spark of golden light within. As a theosophist, I do believe that every interaction with another has an impact of some sort whether we see the result or not.

TOS: *Are you ever tempted explicitly to mention theosophical ideas – spiritual evolution, reincarnation, karma – to your clients?*

Yes, I've been very tempted, but I do not explicitly talk to clients about these ideas unless the client brings up the topic. I am much more likely to bring up some of the theosophical concepts in a more implicit manner. For instance, when a client experiences the death of a loved one my theosophical ideas become relevant. As always, I try to be very sensitive to clients and their backgrounds. However, I am comfortable asking about their religious beliefs about what happens after death. If it is appropriate, I share my belief that we are never separated, even through death. I tell the client that I believe that love connects us to those we love, even after death. Frequently I use the symbol of a golden thread of love which connects us with a loved one both living and dead. As a theosophist, of course, I never want to proselytise. As a counsellor, my job is to meet clients where they are. I move very gently around the whole religion and ethics arena. I live in a very small, rural, conservative area, and I try to remember that when I am dealing with clients. Also, I believe that the way I live and the way I interact with others (all based on my theosophical convictions) speaks more strongly than words.

TOS: *Has your job helped you in your own spiritual journey?*

Absolutely. My job makes me look at myself as a person, makes me look at my motives, makes me look at my own issues. I try to be self-observant so that my issues don't have an impact on my clients. I also want to be self-observant because I am encouraging my clients to be self-observant.

Sometimes I wonder what effect I would have on clients if I were able to approach them consistently in a spirit of oneness, going into interviews with my heart fully open.

TOS: *There doubtless have been clients with whom you have established a solid, consistent, heart-to-heart connection...*

Yes, I believe so. It amazes me how frequently clients look to a counsellor or to a special teacher or friend for the only positive support they receive. Many children are born into situations where there are no supportive adults, and in fact, the adults in the lives of these children may provide a very seriously negative environment. I continue to be appalled by the number of children who live with adults who are being destroyed on a daily basis by alcohol or drugs. (I hesitate to call it a family because the adults do not even begin to provide a situation that one would recognise as a family.)

Thus, it is extremely important for every one of us to be aware of the possibility that not every child has had the opportunity to be born into a loving, caring family. As theosophists, we may wish to focus

on only the good and the positive as we are frequently encouraged in theosophical literature; however, it is also important to balance that focus with a recognition of the reality into which some children are born. As theosophists and citizens of this planet, it seems we have an urgent calling to assist the children. They are truly the way of the future.

TOS: To close our interview, can you share with us any meditative technique, or affirmation, or mantra, that helps you achieve the serenity you need when dealing with deeply troubled clients?

Yes. I don't know who the author is, but there is a meditation I learned from my grandmother, a theosophist of many years. I say it frequently to myself. Here it is:

*Father, I come to thee in the quiet of this early morning hour,
Seeking union with thee and therefore with all others.
Seeking to realise that thou art seated equally in the hearts of all men,
To see thee gaze at me from all eyes, to hear thee speak in all voices,
Seeking to manifest thy peace, thy wisdom, and thy power.
To view the world with love-filled eyes.
To be gentle, understanding, kind.
Seeking to see thy children as thou seest them
And to manifest thee that I may call thee forth in all thy beauty
In all whom I meet this day.*

Barbara of, is a member of the National Board of the Theosophical Society in America, and lives in Covington, Louisiana.



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THE FLAME DIVINE PART TWO: THE VEDIC TRADITION

Jeanine Miller

In the Vedas, the Fire manifesting at three different levels is the threefold AGNI, the Lord of beings with seven sons, the ruler of the fire elementals and devas. This flame power that is said to “quicken the waters’ seed” unites the macrocosm and the microcosm, nature and nature’s child, man, in their essential being. I am light threefold, measurer of the region. Thou, Agni, through the days brightly shining, thou sovereign Lord of men, art born pure; born of the waters, and of the stone, and of the forest trees and of the herbs. He who grows mightily in herbs, within each fruitful mother and each babe she bears, wise, life of all men, in the waters’ home. He ... is germ of waters, germ of woods, germ of all things that both move and move not.¹

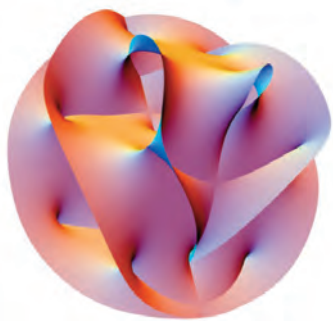
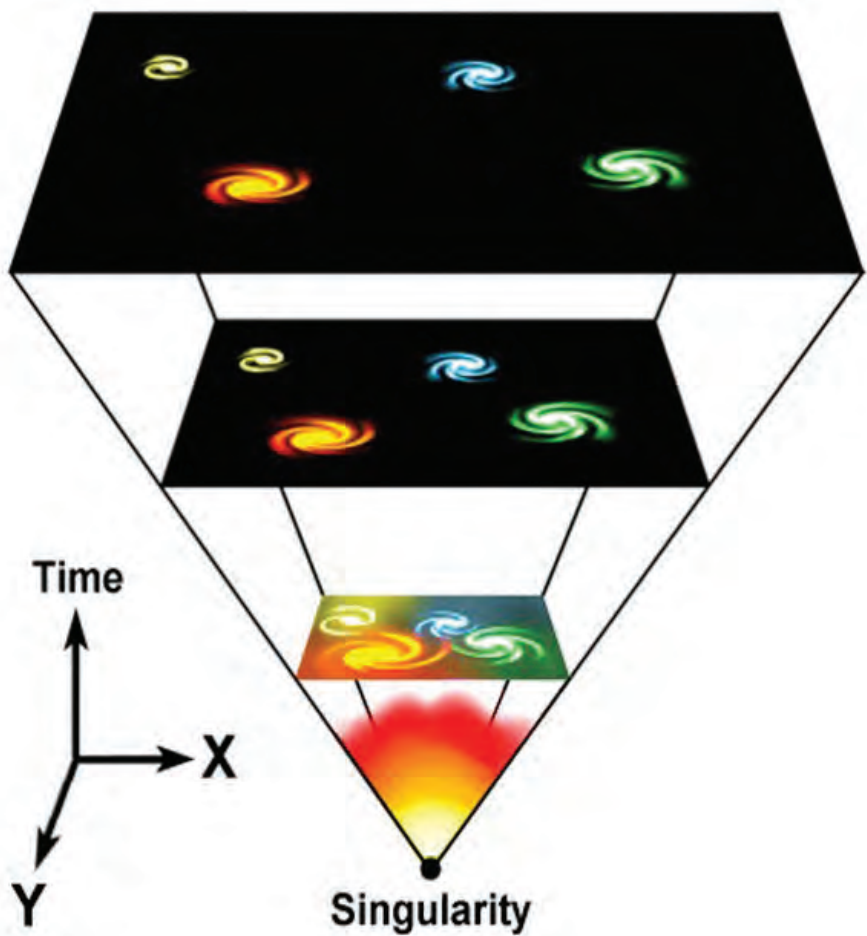
From the *Atharva Veda*, called the Veda of the people, we have a splendid hymn to the Earth, where Agni is sung as that fire that makes all things one. Thanks to his hidden activity, all things are brought out of the nurturing darkness of earth into the full light of day and maturity. For Agni is “the home to which the kine return, whom the fleet-foot coursers seek”, the hearth to which men are enjoined to “lead all their ways”, the “hidden cave” wherein he sits waiting to manifest to man. Sri Aurobindo remarks that “Agni’s mission is . . . to raise up the soul struggling in nature from obscurity to the light ... Agni is the seer-will in the universe, unerring in all its works”.²

One senses that a great plan is behind this constant quickening of creation, what in the *Rig Veda* comes out as joy, Agni’s roaring, all-devouring and all fostering and purifying life, something referred to in the Christian scriptures as the redemption of all creation, in other words, the bringing up of all forms moulded of matter, of atoms, to perfection — to be the perfected chalice wherein is poured the divine life. St Paul expressed this truth thus “For we know that the whole creation groaneth in the pangs of childbirth until this hour” — until “the creation itself would be set free from the thralldom of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God”.³

Agni in the *Vedas* is both eternal and recreated in each manifestation, age-old and ever youthful, beyond birth and repeatedly born again, is all consuming and all redemptive, is threefold in essence, manifests in the three levels of Vedic cosmogony and has seven offspring. His threefold essence¹² may be envisaged as light, flame, heat; electricity, radiance, motion; will, desire, action; it is referred to in various guises and is in one hymn called the “three brothers” who personify the whole gamut of Vedic triads. His seven sons are themselves the prototype of all Vedic heptads - the seven Rivers, or seven creative hosts ever descending and ascending, or the seven ancient rishis; all described as the seven horses or heads, or tongues of Agni. His seven tongues are mind, understanding and the five senses whose counterpart are the five elements of the Ancients.

H.P.B. states that “the primitive names of the gods are all connected with fire ... and the three chief Vedic gods are AGNI, VAYU, SURYA fire, air and the sun, three occult degrees of fire”, and points out that “in Occultism, to ‘kindle a fire’ is synonymous to evoking one of the three great Fire powers, or to ‘call on God’”.⁴

The Rishis expressed the cosmic aspect of Agni in certain poetic images, hinting at the age-old idea of the spirit’s descent into matter, of the incandescent dart falling into the waters of space, the abyss of the deep: Agni, “the son of the Waters, has occupied the lap of the reclining waves, himself upright, lightning clad”. This shows the fire descending in a vertical line into the waters, into the substance out of which all things are fashioned, the Great Deep of Genesis, the Mother aspect, the horizontal line; the vertical and the horizontal line forming the cross of manifestation: “Deep in the ocean lies the bolt,



Universe expansion and projection of a Calabi-Yau.
See page 34.

with waters compassed round about; and in continuous onward flow the floods their tribute bring to it." Compare these verses with the Stanzas of Dzyan: "Darkness radiates light and light drops one solitary ray into the waters, into the Mother deep". (S.D. I p.133. Stanza 3:3). So the Vedas show us how deep in the ocean of mundane existence is immersed the fire of the Spirit, fettered and hidden, confined and crippled, yet the king to whom all creation pays homage.⁵

Kundalini Fire

Although the word *kundalini* does not appear in the Rig Veda, nevertheless direct and indirect references to the discovery and actual arousal of such a dynamic power can be found in several addresses to Agni and point to the antiquity of such a knowledge. Kundalini in Indian philosophy, is the power or *Shakti* of Shiva, the transcendent Consciousness (*cit*). Whereas Shiva is changeless, the static aspect of Consciousness, *Kundalini-Shakti* is the kinetic, active aspect of the same transcendent reality.

Fohat, or cosmic electricity, *Prana* or solar energy, and *Kundalini*, or cosmic fire, are aspects of the Flame divine. Kundalini is that tremendous, resistless, cosmic force which manifests as liquid fire,

a fire quite distinct from electricity and from prana. Its centre is in the depths of the earth; in the human being it is at the base of the spine, at the etheric level. Its outer layers energize the whole body and as they mingle with the pranic currents form the personal magnetism of each human being. Its inner layers lie quiescent, coiled up at the base of the spine, like a serpent, hence its name – the "serpent fire".



As the kundalini and the pranic currents blend and as the former rises up the spinal column, bathing all the *Chakras* and vitalizing them, man awakens to a new dimension of his being and eventually to complete control of his nature. But only the pure in mind and heart are successful. If kundalini should be aroused prematurely, if the emphasis of the life is on the lower instincts, technically on the centres below the diaphragm, then the inner fire will flow downward, overstimulate the sex impulse, open up the lower astral and lead to disastrous consequences. Should

the kundalini fire rise upwards, the protecting etheric web that acts as a filter between the various planes of consciousness is burnt away, and as a result the human being is able to pass consciously from the physical plane of awareness to the astral, to the mental and finally to the spiritual. When the brow Chakra is vitalized, the "third eye" is awakened. Man's insight is able to range over all the planes of manifestation.

The ambivalence of the kundalini energy, its life and death giving power, is hinted at in the earlier works on Hatha Yoga, the *Goraksa-Shataka* where the word itself is used: "Above the 'bulb' the kundali power, eight times coiled, is said to lead the foolish to bondage and to grant emancipation for the yogins".

In the *Rig Veda*, Agni in his manifold manifestations is the mighty energy, the healer and the killer at the root of all things, including man: "Thou, Agni, art highest vital power" and "Agni, the knower, procures heroic might, procures vigour, enhancing it for immortality". He is the treasure found far away, in heaven, but might in his hand. The idea of churning up the fire, as evidenced in many Rigvedic hymns, could be taken as examples of the Vedic method of kindling fire, but it may also have an inner meaning; for fire is mentioned as being produced by means of "deep thought".⁶

Concentration, patience, steadiness, are part of that will-power which has to be exerted to arouse or “bring forth” Agni. Agni’s concealment, churning, and the goal expressed as “ambrosia” or as “striving for immortality” attest to an early knowledge of the inner fire which made the seers designate it as the “ruler of thought” power which can be “aroused by thought”, and “enhanced by songs”. “Cleaving through the rock”, “pounding the unbendable” and “churning”, are Vedic expressions that point to the significance of Agni’s action of bringing forth out of the rock-like nature of that which the fire must overcome, the treasure locked in matter, or entombed in the physical body.

Agni, as the supreme agent in matter and in man, raises the potential immortality of man to actual immortality, i.e., to unlimited consciousness and boundless freedom. The very emphasis on concealment, and on power not merely necessary to draw forth the fire, but actually conferred by Agni on his devotees, granting them that energy which strives after immortality should indicate that there is in question not something purely physical or imaginary, but a very potent force hidden deep in the human being — the kundalini, dynamic energy that grants vision, insight and immortality.⁷

Agni is said to have been “churned up” from the “lotus flower”, i.e., the heart *Chakra* by means of practices of austerity. His hiding place often described as a *cave* is the innermost centre whence emerges the visionary thought which enlightens and makes the seer what he is. From the depth of the cave Agni is begged to draw out or release the inspired vision lying latent therein.⁸

Meditating in their hearts the Rishis found the effectual words that strike the right keynote, that through their vibratory power evoke a response from the hidden centre where Agni is lying at rest. We have here a combination of *concentration* and *sounding* of the required note which in turn result in arousing the fire — or discovering “Agni crouched in the cavern”. “Those who understand”, i.e., the wise “knowers”, stimulate Agni “by means of thought”, i.e., concentration. “So let our songs”, continues the verse, i.e., let the power of the word or sound, “enhance thee O Agni”. The vibratory power inherent in sound arouses and stimulates the flame divine which in turn makes the gods manifest, i.e., reveals the divine regents of the universe. Thus is established the way of communication between mortals and the immortals. So H.P.B. tells us: “The Magic of the ancient priests consisted in addressing their Gods in their own language ... composed of Sounds, not words; of sounds, numbers and figures. He who knows how to blend the three, will call forth the response of the super-intending power”.⁹

The interdependence, the bi-unity of *Word* and *Fire* may strike us as odd, but one enigmatic Rigvedic verse touches upon this mystery: “Most excellent Agni . . . shining forth in the eternal syllable, in thy mother’s womb . . . deliver the child-bearing *Brahman* that radiates in heaven”. The syllable is the embryo that becomes the full “word of power”, *Brahman* in the Vedic sense of *Brahman*, the ritually potent formula which was soon to be equated with OM. The *Word is fire*.¹⁰

Let us recall H.P.B.’s statement that *Akasha* is the noumenon of ether which in its purest form is fire, that “*Akasha* has one quality ... sound” and compare it with the *Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana*; “First was this *Akasha*, this same is still here; this *Akasha* is the word, from *Akasha* proceeds the Word”. That word that speaks from *Akasha* is said to have been “squeezed” and from its “juice” the three-fold universe is created; whose juice is the gods, whose juice is the triple Veda; whose juice is the three utterances; whose juice is OM.¹¹

The Word is creative. The Word is destructive. The Word is the impelling force that gives form to matter and order to chaos; that gives rhythm to motion, the rhythmic dance of Shiva. But increase its intensity and its resonating force will over-stimulate the form and shatter it; the creative dance becomes the destructive dance. Cosmos dissolves back into chaos. All is one.

Solar Fire

This same fire that we have viewed as the flame in the hearth, in nature and in the human heart, also manifests in the sun as solar fire, the life and light-giving principle of cosmos. The sun in the *Vedas*,

embodiment of the Universal Soul, Mahat, is “the soul of all that moves and moves not” and was ever the symbol of illumination, of intellectual enlightenment that made man a rational, understanding, purposeful and creative being.¹²

“Living fire”, we are told in *The Secret Doctrine*, was needed “to construct a thinking man”, “that fire which gives the human mind its self-perception and self-consciousness or Manas”. Animal man, both in the Moon chain and in this Earth chain, “aspired” and Spirit responded: the fire of matter, permeated by the spark of mind working through the instinct like yeast, was stimulated by external agencies, viz. on this earth by the Lords of the Flame, and the contact between the lower and the higher Fires or the two poles of Fire, produced individualization, activated the Fire of Manas, awoke self-reflective consciousness. “Man” the thinker was truly born. “The Sons of Mahat are the quickeners of the human plant. They are ... the spark that vivifies the human animal”. Stimulation through the application of electrical polarity is typical of our earth evolution.¹³

The fire of Manas manifests as that spark of instant understanding that allows the child to grasp what is presented to it whether as objects or words, and later as that drive to achievement, hence purpose, impelling the form or vehicles in a certain direction along a destined path, slowly burning out all obstacles. It is thus a reflection, on its own plane, of Atmic fire, the Will Divine, and is eventually to be transmuted into Atmic fire when there will be nothing left but the Atman blazing to incandescent Realization. This faculty of acquiring knowledge and developing understanding parallels the opening up of physical sight. The fire of Mind illumined animal man in Lemurian days at the time that physical sight was being perfected. Hence the very close relationship that the Ancients, Egyptians, Indians, Greeks, etc., always established between the “eye” or sight, and the “mind”, and the “eye” and the “sun”. The English words “sight” and “insight” and “perceive” show the closest relationship between sight and understanding. Manas is the coordinator, the bridge and the separator.

The sun, Surya, in the *Vedas*, is the organ of perception which the gods have evolved, by means of which they view manifested existence. He is the very essence of the gods’ vision and omniscience. From the throne of Surya, Mitra and Varuna behold the infinite and the finite, the good and the evil deeds of men: “Through the Gods’ intelligence was that Eye first created” and “The brilliant presence of the Gods has risen, the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni; the soul of all that moves and moves not”.¹⁴



Surya is the manifestation of vision, of insight, the personification of divine knowledge, the deity whose all-illuminating gaze makes of the spiritual powers that generate it the all-seeing, all-knowing and all-wise gods that the *Vedas* portray. As the living embodiment of the light of illumination, the sun is the goal of human life, in one sense. Through the *Rig Veda* Surya appears the great treasure to be won and his hiding and his seeking form part of a recurring theme.

“Three generations indeed have gone into the beyond. Others have entered into the presence of the Sun”.¹⁵

“From my Father have I received the perception of Truth; I was born even like a Sun”.¹⁶

“During the fourth degree of prayer, Atri found the Sun (till then) immersed in darkness”.¹⁷

To the sun aspect of the Fire the Rishis turned again and again and to this we owe them one of the most beautiful invocations framed by man, the celebrated *Gayatri* mantra which has become the 6th Ray mantra for our race: “Let us meditate upon that celestial splendour, the Solar Lord; so may he pierce through us and inspire our prayers”.

Agni, the hidden flame present in the night of the soul, hidden in the cave of the heart, Agni that same flame now transfigured into the splendour of the rising sun on the soul's awakening, both are one and that one is that "firm", that "loftier light", "set up for men to look upon" - "I honour as the face of lofty Agni in heaven the bright and holy light of Surya" that inner light whose flash illuminates our minds and like the sun sets it ablaze; then in the silence "Mine ears unclosed to hear, mine eyes to see him; the light that harbours in my spirit broadens".¹⁸

So on Agni, the "very wise", men are enjoined to "meditate", for he is the 'knower' "of gracious intelligence and unerring insight, charioteer of lofty Order". No wonder that to him goes that most ancient of human cries: "Shine forth auspiciously upon us that we may reach wise understanding" and "From thee O Agni, inspired-wisdom, from thee intuitions, from thee accomplished utterances are generated".¹⁹

To Agni's ministry is ascribed the very subtle role of inner illumination. His action is to "bring to birth within the heart a thought as light" causing the inspired thought to come to consciousness which is then shaped into a song. Born in the heart, seen as light, expressed as song, with Agni as both its arouser and its purifier, it is then offered to the gods. The result of kindling the flame of aspiration-inspiration-ecstasy, seems to have been that vision of transcendence which translated itself into a hymn of intuitive perception which is offered up in the sacrifice to be renewed and received again. "Agni, to thee we bring with our song this offering shaped in our heart". For Agni "The one ocean, the foundation of riches, of many births, shines forth from our heart".²⁰

Sacrificial Fire

More than all that, Agni's sacrificial action marks him out as the great uniter, he who links the manifest and the unmanifest, heaven and earth, gods and men. He embodies the vast law in his very function of receiving, assimilating or burning, of giving and returning the essence of the gift (in the sacrificial ritual), describing thereby the full circle of life. To understand his essential action in the ritual of linking, purifying, offering and returning, is to catch a glimpse of the Vedic meaning of the sacrifice, that which links heaven and earth in one sacred act performed by man and that which epitomizes the whole cosmic process. In such an act all forces work together towards a harmonious end.

The deathless "oblation-bearer" who, by means of "vision", "brings together", i.e., joins vision and offering, man and gods, heaven and earth, ritual and cosmic order, "offers" man's visionary thought as he ascends and descends, he, "vehicle of the Transcendent"! Visible expression of the invisible! As vehicle he steps down the power of the Transcendent to within the reach of the worshipper; as vehicle he transmutes man's offering that it may be purified and acceptable to the gods. In encompassing all worlds he is the dynamic charioteer of that which lies beyond these worlds. As the intermediary between heaven and earth, he, the "inspired high-priest", enters into the houses of men as the "guest", bringing about the means of communication between the visible and the invisible.

It is constantly stressed that Agni accomplishes his task among humans according to the dictates of the universal law. True to his inherent being, he performs that immemorial task of burning, transmuting and offering; of destroying and creating, linking the poles of manifestation through his very being and sacred activity. His very function of offering to the gods man's sacrificial food embodies in itself the law of give and take. In thus consuming man's fuel so that only the essence can reach the gods he proves himself the "true sacrificer", the one archetypal priest on whom all priesthood is modelled: "Whatever worship we thus perpetually offer to every god, in thee Agni, is that oblation presented".²¹

This creative work of Agni who burns the dross of every offering is described in terms of "human offering" "making him an axe for the sake of radiance". This axe-like sharpening of what is offered may be interpreted as the burning up of the unwanted part of the offering which is mixed up with the essence, leaving the latter intact, that which is worthy to be received by the gods but also of man's own inner burning. This is symbolic of the change and transmutation that should take place within

man before he can hope to “enter the divine harmony” to integrate himself. By means of Agni, man harnesses the ritual for purposes of reflecting the cosmic order and coming to terms with both the vision of it and the living in accordance with it. This is Agni’s task as the cosmic priest, and by reflection, it is that of the human priest. The insistence upon the understanding, insight and wisdom which Agni incarnates and imparts to man is an indication of the Rishis’ own inherent wisdom.

The work of the flame divine gives man that radiance of countenance, that spiritual exaltation called in Sanskrit *tejas* so that *tapas* and *tejas* are in a sense related, one emphasizing the process, the other the manifestation. Those who are “sun-eyed”, i.e. illumined, are radiant and with Agni as their tongue, are called “flame-tongued” (*agnijihvah*), they can pronounce the words of power. So when the seers declared that “in choosing Agni men choose one who has the wisdom of a seer”, who “holds all knowledge in his grasp”, who is sought out as a “refuge”, “father”, as “providence”, they give us a glimpse of the profound significance Agni had in their eyes. Seership, wisdom, will, characteristics to which man is heir, the gifts of the spirit, are identified with Agni’s gifts. Fire of insight, fire of wisdom and illumination, this is Agni, Agni in us, the probing light of intelligence, of deepening understanding, of sacrificial love. “He who desires the light of knowledge desires the gift of a priest of fire”¹ says the Zend Avesta. That priest is Agni in us. The Promethean gift of fire, is the opening of man’s spiritual perception.²²

The Flame Divine was delivered at the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in England at the College of Ripon and York, St. John, Ripon, Yorkshire on August 4th 1984. Part One appeared in the last issue, the final part will be included next time.

¹ Rigveda (Rgv): VIII 44.16, III 26.1, I 67.5, I 67.5, I 70.2

² Rgv: V 6.1, I 66.5. *On the Veda*, 1966, p.400-1.

³ New Testament Epistle to the Romans: VIII 16.24.

⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine* (SD), III p123.

⁵ Rgv: II 35.9, VIII 89.9. SD: I p133. Stanza 3:3.

⁶ Rgv: II 1.12, III 25.2, III 9.5, I 143.2, I 67.2.

⁷ Rgv: IV 6.1 Rgv. VIII 44.19, III 25.2)

⁸ Rgv. VI 16.13, IV 11.2.

⁹ Rgv. VIII 44.19. SD: II p185.

¹⁰ Rgv{ VI 16.35.

¹¹ SD: I p.298, II p.151. (Jaim. Up.Br. I. 23 ff).

¹² Rgv: I 115.1.

¹³ SD: III p111, III pl 11.

¹⁴ Rgv: VII 76.1, I 115.1.

¹⁵ Rgv. VIII.101.14.

¹⁶ Rgv. VIII.6.10.

¹⁷ Rgv. V.40.6.

¹⁸ Rgv: I.73.8, VI.9.6.

¹⁹ Rgv: VII.3.10, VI. I 1.3a.

²⁰ Rgv.III. 26.8, VI.16.47, VI.16.47, X. 5.1.

²¹ Rgv. I.26.6.

²² Rgv. I. 1.4. SD. IV p92.

Images: p27 Roger Penrose’s 5-fold tile configuration, oil painting and photo by Urs Schmid; p29 Universe expansion (Fredrik), projection of a Calabi-Yau, p30 diagram of chakras and Kundalini in a human being; p32 Suryabeeldje; courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. These were not part of the original work.

Note re images on pages 27 and 29. Cosmogony concerns theories about the origin of and coming into existence of either the cosmos (or universe), or the so-called reality of sentient beings, and has implications for both philosophy and science. Students of the Secret Doctrine and others may be interested in taking a glimpse at a scientific viewpoint. There is ‘vast consensus’ among physicists that our universe started with a Big Bang from a state of gravitational singularity. Scientists disagree about whether time existed “before” the emergence of our universe or not, and have only tentative theories for the early stages of the currently observed universe (or its beginning, for those who conjecture that it had one). Some of these questions have been described by physicists and cosmologists as being extra-scientific (i.e. metaphysical). The ekpyrotic universe, is an alternative cosmological model of the origin and shape of the universe, mentioned here because in Ancient Greek Ekpyrosis means conflagration or (Stoic) “conversion into fire”. The projection of a Calabi–Yau manifold or Calabi-Yau space, relates to superstring theory and the curvature of space-time. There are different theories regarding what combination of “stuff”, space, or time, emerged along with the singularity (and therefore this universe). Information Wikipedia. **Links:** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmogony>
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The Essence of the Universe by Edwin Lucas, London 1912 (339 pages).

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THEOSOPHICAL TALKS AND WORKSHOPS AROUND THE UK

Please Note: the opinion of speakers or group leaders, and any views expressed at these meetings do not necessarily represent the views of the Foundation for Theosophical Studies or The Theosophical Society.

AUGUST SHIPLEY

AN OVERVIEW OF THE AGELESS WISDOM

Tim Wyatt

Saturday 16th August 2.30 pm

There is a body of sacred knowledge that underpins all religions and philosophies. This Ageless Wisdom speaks of an unending, interconnected and constantly changing universe as well as vast, non-physical realms of existence. Even hard-nosed science is beginning to admit that we don't live in a clockwork cosmos. In this interactive discussion Tim Wyatt will present a broad overview of the fascinating synthesis of ideas embodied in Theosophy.

Bradford Theosophical Society. Room 2, Shipley Library, 2 Wellcroft, Shipley BD18 3QH.

Enquiries: 01274 598455 info@ts-bradford.org.uk www.ts-bradford.org.uk

BANGOR

AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER - THE LIFE OF KRISHNAMURTI

Ted Capstick

Tuesday 26th August 7.30 pm

Bangor Theosophical Society. Hiracl Meeting Room, Ambrose St, Bangor, North Wales, LL57 1DF.

Enquiries: 01248 600267 toddyalc@gmail.com theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk www.theosophywales.com

SEPTEMBER BOURNEMOUTH

MANTRAS IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Cynthia Trasi

Saturday 6th September 1.30 pm

"The speech of men cannot reach the Gods. They must be addressed in their own language. It is composed of sounds, not words. This language or the incantation of mantras being the most effective agent and the first of the keys which opens the door of communication between Mortals and Immortals." – H P Blavatsky.

Bournemouth Society of Art, Philosophy and Theosophy. Bournemouth University, Cobham Theatre, Talbot Campus, Poole, BH12 5BB. Enquiries: 0800 612 7282 bournemouthsociety@yahoo.com

www.bournemouthsociety.org.uk

DURHAM

WHY A CONSCIOUS CREATION?

Stuart Trotter

Saturday 6th September 2 - 4 pm

An explanation of why a conscious creation is the only creation that can exist and the implications for human psychology.

Durham Centre for Theosophical Studies. Shakespeare Hall, North Rd, Durham DH1 4SQ.

Enquiries: 0191 386 0492 durhamcentr4ts@btinternet.com www.theosophicalsocietydurhamcentre.com

LEICESTER

THE ARCHETYPAL PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Gary Kidgell

Saturday 6th September 10 am – 1 pm, 2 – 4.45 pm Day course

Inscribed in the forecourt of the temple was the famous aphorism of Know Thyself. The true meaning of this refers not merely to obtaining knowledge relating to the transient human personality with its physical body, feelings, emotions and thoughts, but rather towards gaining knowledge of the immortal and enduring aspect of our nature. This workshop considers the spiritual path and the archetypal process of spiritual transformation, drawing upon the Ancient Wisdom and mythology.

Theosophical Society. Quaker Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Clarendon Park, Leicester LE2 1WP.

Enquiries: 0116 270 7293 jrhollen9@hotmail.com

www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

LIVERPOOL

TIMELESS MOMENTS: GLIMPSES OF THE DIVINE

Cynthia Trasi

Saturday 13th September 2.00 pm

A Timeless Moment is a moment of epiphany when, for a slice in time, we gasp in wonder at the immensity and power of the Divine. This talk will look at the common characteristics and different interpretations; also who might experience a glimpse into the Divine, and how we should prepare to attract what, after all, may be a life-changing happening.

Merseyside Theosophical Society. Friends Meeting House, 2 School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT.

Enquiries: 0151 327 3872 hugh.agnew1@btinternet.com nwffederation.org.uk

BOLTON

EVOLUTION OF SOUND AND LIGHT

Sorna Thurai

Sunday 14th September 2.30 pm

Bolton Theosophical Society. Bank St Chapel School Room, Crown Street, Bolton, BL1 2NU.

Enquiries: 01257 401152 Ichrislowe@yahoo.co.uk gawayne7@yahoo.co.uk nwffederation.org.uk

LEEDS

THE SPIRAL AND THE ROCK FACE

Cynthia Trasi

Sunday 14th September 2.30 pm

This talk discusses the two paths, sometimes called the mystic and the occult that may be taken in the search for truth.

Leeds Theosophical Society, 12 Queen Square, Leeds LS2 8AJ. Enquiries: info@ts-leeds.org.uk

www.ts-leeds.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM

H. P. BLAVATSKY'S DIAGRAM OF MEDITATION

Robert Woolley

Sunday 21st September 4.00 pm

This talk sets out Blavatsky's instructions on meditation and how they are designed to lead us to experience "the fundamental unity of all existence". This is a practical talk with lots of illustrations.

Birmingham Theosophical Society 52 Tamar Drive, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham B36 0ST.

Enquiries: 0121 240 5912 or carmelgreiner@yahoo.co.uk

NOTTINGHAM

SACRED WAVES AND THE FOUR WINDS

Susan Bayliss

Saturday 20th September 2 pm.

Within the waves of the ocean lie the Secrets of the Universe – a Dragon of Wisdom sailing on the Breath of Life. In our own sphere we are the boatman on a journey of discovery in this Great Mystery. Drawing on the "Secret Doctrine" by H.P.B., this talk reveals how we live and breathe in the One Life whose Great Breath reaches the four corners of the Kosmos.

Nottingham Theosophical Society, Theosophical Hall, 73 Maid Marion Way, Nottingham, NG1 6AJ.

Enquiries: 0116 2785856 (evenings) info@theancientwisdom.co.uk www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

BANGOR

THE MYSTERY OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Colin Price

Tuesday 23rd September 7.30 pm

Man's self-consciousness is of a higher order than anything observed in nature or anywhere in the cosmos. There is no obvious limit to its ultimate potential. In dreams, trances & the activity of our creative imagination we can get glimpses into the deeper spiritual reality that underpins our lives from which our consciousness is derived.

Bangor Theosophical Society. Hiraal Meeting Room, Ambrose St, Bangor, North Wales, LL57 1DF.

Enquiries: 01248 600267 toddycalc@gmail.com theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk www.theosophywales.com

BOLTON

THE AKASHIC RECORDS

Steve Nuttall

Sunday 28th September 2.30 pm

Bolton Theosophical Society. Bank St Chapel School Room, Crown Street, Bolton, BL1 2NU.

Enquiries: 01257 401152 Ichrislowe@yahoo.co.uk gawayne7@yahoo.co.uk nwffederation.org.uk

OCTOBER

BIRMINGHAM

IDENTIFICATION, INITIATION & IMMORTALITY

Ted Capstick

Sunday 5th October 2014 4.00 pm This will be an interactive session, Ted Capstick will chair a talk and discussion.
Birmingham Theosophical Society 52 Tamar Drive, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham B36 0ST.
Enquiries: 0121 240 5912 or carmelgreiner@yahoo.co.uk

HOLYHEAD

PATHWAYS TO SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

Susan Bayliss

8th October 2014 2pm

Spiritual seekers are faced with an abundance of would-be teachers from ancient traditions to modern gurus. This interactive talk explores some approaches to spiritual awareness. The Living Wisdom of Theosophy can be a transformative experience, enabling us to live at the centre of our being. We can begin to understand our future goals, and learn to discriminate between the real and the unreal; embracing our ultimate transformation into Enlightenment and Truth.

Holyhead Theosophical Society. Harvest Moon Shop, Newry Street, Holyhead, LL65 1HP.

Enquiries: 01407 760062 tsolyhead@gmail.com theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk www.theosophywales.com

COLWYN BAY

ANCIENT TRUTHS – MODERN SECRETS

Susan Bayliss

Thursday 9th October 2 pm

There are many myths about the ancient mysteries and of secret societies. In exploring some of these 'myths' and 'secrets' we learn how the Esoteric Teachings can help us to unlock the meaning of life and enrich our own spiritual journey. Through the Ageless Wisdom of Theosophy we can turn the key and open the door to these hidden truths.

Colwyn Bay Theosophical Society. Parkway Community Centre, Rhos Road, Rhos-on-Sea, LL28 4SE.

Enquiries: 01492 585348 or 01492 545587 eldersofthetribelive.co.uk theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk.

BOURNEMOUTH

THE WEB OF KARMA

Colin Price

Saturday 11th October 1.30 pm

The law of karma is described by H. P. Blavatsky as the ultimate law of the Universe. In the *Mahatma Letters*. It is described as "This terrible law". What is it about Karma which calls forth such powerful language? The complexity of Karma and its operation in human life are discussed.

Bournemouth Society of Art, Philosophy and Theosophy. Bournemouth University, Cobham Theatre, Talbot Campus, Poole, BH12 5BB. Enquiries: 0800 612 7282 bournemouthsociety@yahoo.com

DURHAM

THE SOUL'S IMPERATIVE

Harold Tarn

Saturday 11th October 2 - 4 pm

The Ancient Wisdom states that Nature is Deity manifest and "Ever- Becoming" - which is the process of spiritual growth and achievement through which all living forms - comprising all the kingdoms of Nature, pass in an aeons-long evolutionary journey. This ever-becoming is a total universal process, involving everything from sub-atomic particles to planetary globes - and even suns and galaxies. Man is a critical stage in this process. This talk is a brief introduction to this astonishing process.

Durham Centre for Theosophical Studies. Shakespeare Hall, North Rd, Durham DH1 4SQ.

Enquiries: 0191 386 0492 durhamcentr4ts@btinternet.com www.theosophicalsocietydurhamcentre.com

LEICESTER

MANTRAS AND SACRED SOUND

Finian Heavey

Saturday 11th October 2 pm to 4.45 pm

Theosophical Society. Quaker Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Clarendon Park, Leicester LE2 1WP.

Enquiries: 0116 270 7293 jrholden9@hotmail.com www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

SHIPLEY

IDENTIFICATION, INITIATION, IMMORTALITY

Ted Capstick

Saturday 11 October 2.30 pm This will be an interactive session, **Ted** will chair a talk and discussion.

Bradford Theosophical Society. Room 2, Shipley Library, 2 Wellcroft, Shipley BD18 3QH.

Enquiries: 01274 598455 info@ts-bradford.org.uk www.ts-bradford.org.uk

NOTTINGHAM

THE UNCONSCIOUS SIDE OF THINGS - Alison Lambert

18th October 2 pm.

Nottingham Theosophical Society, Theosophical Hall, 73 Maid Marion Way, Nottingham, NG1 6AJ.

Enquiries: 0116 2785856 (evenings) info@theancientwisdom.co.uk www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

LIVERPOOL

DAY CONFERENCE

Saturday 25th October 2 pm

THE PATH - EARLY STAGES

David Harvey

Describes what happens when a Soul may decide to accelerate its own evolution back to the divine after hundreds of normal lives on Earth. Discusses Re-incarnation, salient features of The Path, Initiations, the Soul's Purpose, etc. Quotes from Blavatsky, Mabel Collins, Dion Fortune, Krishnamurti, Sri Ram, Geoffrey Hodson, Douglas Baker.

THE SOUL'S PURPOSE – David Harvey

If we cannot work out our own Soul's purpose for us in this life, then we may live in vain, at least to some extent. This talk covers the more philosophical aspects of the purpose of human evolution in general as well as more specific issues. Touches on reincarnation, karma and dharma, and the possible avenues for ascertaining the 'purpose'.

North West Federation of the Theosophical Society. Friends Meeting House, 2 School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT.

Enquiries: 01282 422278 0151 638 5390 mla.gold@yahoo.co.uk hcarroll1@ntworld.com

BOLTON

DION FORTUNE AND THE WESTERN MYSTERY TRADITION

David Harvey

Sunday 26th October 2.30 pm

Partly biographical, also covers much esoteric ground in the Western Mystery Tradition. Dion (1890-1946) was an Initiate and had a profound effect on the English esoteric scene. Reveals her contacts with the Masters, links with the Theosophical Society, dispels some misinformation, and much more besides. Comprehensive bibliography.

Bolton Theosophical Society. Bank St Chapel School Room, Crown Street, Bolton, BL1 2NU.

Enquiries: 01257 401152 Ichrislowe@yahoo.co.uk gawayne7@yahoo.co.uk nwffederation.org.uk

SOUTHPORT

KARMA

David Harvey

Monday 27th October 7.30 – 9.30 pm

Southport Theosophical Society. Liverpool Road Methodist a Church, Liverpool Road, Birkdale,

Southport PR8 4PD. Enquiries: 01704 574505 noeline@live.co.uk nwffederation.org.uk

BANGOR

EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Ted Capstick

Tuesday 28th October 7.30 pm A question and answers with discussion. Ted invites the Audience to bring questions.

Bangor Theosophical Society. Hiraal Meeting Room, Ambrose St, Bangor, North Wales, LL57 1DF.

Enquiries: 01248 600267 toddyalc@gmail.com theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk www.theosophywales.com

NOVEMBER

MANCHESTER

FULL MOON MEDITATION AND THE TWELVE SPIRITUAL FESTIVALS

Ted Capstick

Saturday 1st November 2 – 4 pm

Manchester Theosophical Society. The Quaker Meeting House. Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

Enquiries: 01942 608368 or 07899 896887. www.nwffederation.org.uk

DURHAM

THE PATH OF TRANSFORMATION – VOYAGE TO THE SILENT SELF

Susan Bayliss

Saturday 1st November 1.30 - 4 pm

On this sacred journey the Seeker must climb the Dragon Tree of Wisdom to find the Seal of Truth concealed within. Its gateway is the Secret Path to spiritual unfoldment, the golden light of which illuminates the heart of the awakened soul and provides the key to its final freedom. Our voyage will also reveal how the great roar of Nature is relevant to our progress.

Durham Centre for Theosophical Studies. Shakespeare Hall, North Rd, Durham DH1 4SQ.

Enquiries: 0191 386 0492 durhamcentr4ts@btinternet.com www.theosophicalsocietydurhamcentre.com

WINCHESTER

THE COMPLEX NATURE OF MIND

Colin Price

Tuesday 4 November, 7.45 pm

This lecture advances the theory that man's mind provides him with a dual experience of consciousness. One part is provided by his physical brain and the other part is derived from his spiritual nature.

Winchester Theosophical Society. St Lawrence Parish Hall, Colebrook Street, Winchester SO23 9HL (next door to Quaker Meeting House). Enquiries: 01962 772 361 or angi_ovenden@hotmail.com

LEICESTER

THE THREE I'S - IDENTIFICATION, INITIATION AND IMMORTALITY

Ted Capstick

Saturday 8th November 2 pm to 4.45 pm

Theosophical Society. Quaker Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Clarendon Park, Leicester LE2 1WP.

Enquiries: 0116 270 7293 jrholden9@hotmail.com www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

NOTTINGHAM

SOME STRANDS FROM A THEOSOPHICAL CLOTH

Finian Heavey

15th November 2 pm.

Nottingham Theosophical Society, Theosophical Hall, 73 Maid Marion Way, Nottingham, NG1 6AJ.

Enquiries: 0116 2785856 (evenings) info@theancientwisdom.co.uk www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

PADIHAM

IDENTIFICATION, INITIATION AND IMMORTALITY

Ted Capstick

Sunday 30th November 2 – 4.30 pm

Blackburn Theosophical Society. Unity Rooms, Unitarian Chapel, Padiham BB12 8JH.

Enquiries: 01282 422278 mla.gold@yahoo.co.uk

DECEMBER

BOURNEMOUTH

THE WISDOM OF THE HEART AND THE VOICE OF SILENCE

Christian Bodhi

Saturday 6 December 1.30 pm

This talk and workshop will explore the ways how to connect with the heart centre and how to learn to act from it. The spiritual notion of peace within will be explored in a more literal sense and essential practical exercises will be taught.

Bournemouth Society of Art, Philosophy and Theosophy. Bournemouth University,

Cobham Theatre, Talbot Campus, Poole, BH12 5BB. Enquiries: 0800 612 7282 bournemouthsociety@yahoo.com

SHIPLEY

DEATH AND BEYOND - AN ESOTERIC PERSPECTIVE

Tim Wyatt

Saturday 13 December 2.30 pm

Death – and the fear of it – is one of the enduring taboos of Western society. Some people will go to extraordinary lengths to cling on to their physical bodies, believing that this is the ultimate end. And yet the Ageless Wisdom has always insisted that life continues beyond the grave – and that our own existence is eternal. Tim will look at crucial questions such as: What happens when we die? Where do we go? And, more crucially, when and how do we come into flesh and bone again.

Bradford Theosophical Society. Room 2, Shipley Library, 2 Wellcroft, Shipley BD18 3QH.

Enquiries: 01274 598455 info@ts-bradford.org.uk www.ts-bradford.org.uk

LEEDS

THE ENLIGHTENMENT PRINCIPLE: PLANETARY AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

Christian Bodhi

Sunday 14 December 2.30 pm

We are living in moments of transition - we are witnessing the end of an age. Is humanity on the verge of global enlightenment? Can the present crisis be seen as labour pains which will give birth to a new civilisation? Our own enlightenment, and understanding of the forces involved both inner and outer, can help this process and provide us with a vision of what is to come. This workshop considers the real and unreal and offers advanced forms of meditation.

Leeds Theosophical Society, 12 Queen Square, Leeds LS2 8AJ.

Enquiries: info@ts-leeds.org.uk www.ts-leeds.org.uk

THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND DISCUSSION GROUPS AROUND THE UK

Please Note: the opinion of study leaders and any views expressed by the group do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation for Theosophical Studies or the Theosophical Society.

DURHAM

LIFE AFTER LIFE - Study and Discussion 2 - 4 pm

Led by **Jim Blakey**

Saturday 27th September - Session 1. Life as we know it.

Saturday 25th October - Session 2. Life after death.

Saturday 22nd November - Session 3. Life after death.

Saturday 6th December - Session 4. After death states.

Durham Centre for Theosophical Studies. Shakespeare Hall, North Rd, Durham DH1 4SQ.

Enquiries: on 0191 386 0492 durhamcentr4ts@btinternet.com www.theosophicalsocietydurhamcentre.com

NORTHAMPTON

GROUP DISCUSSIONS 7.30 – 9 pm

Wednesday 20th August - **SPIRITUAL TEACHERS AND GUIDES WHO IS THERE TO HELP POINT THE WAY ALONG THE SPIRITUAL PATH?**

Wednesday 3rd September - **EARTH ENERGIES**

Wednesday 17th September - **AUTUMN EQUINOX MEDITATION EVENING.** A chance to reflect on our spiritual life as the year progresses.

Northampton Theosophical Society. Quaker Meeting House, Wellington Street, Northampton NN1 3AS

Enquiries: 07791 082161 northeos@hotmail.com www.meetup.com/Northampton-Theosophy-Group

MANCHESTER

O LANOO – THE SECRET DOCTRINE UNVEILED - Study and Discussion

Led by Mark Crowshaw with group discussion. Regular meetings - please ring for dates.

Manchester Theosophical Society. The Quaker Meeting House. Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

Enquiries: 01942 608368 or 07899 896887. www.nwfederation.org.uk

NOTTINGHAM

HP Blavatsky's THE SECRET DOCTRINE – Study and Discussion

Monthly Every Third Saturday at 11 am

Nottingham Theosophical Society, Theosophical Hall, 73 Maid Marion Way, Nottingham, NG1 6AJ.

Enquiries: 0116 2785856 (evenings) info@theancientwisdom.co.uk www.theancientwisdom.co.uk

SIDMOUTH

THEOSOPHICAL Study and Discussion at 2.30 pm

Saturday 16 th August	- Voice of the Silence - Fragment 2	- led by Julie Faber
Saturday 20 th September	- Forgiveness	- led by Suzanne Claremont
Saturday 25 th October	- Buddhism and Theosophy	- led by Edgar Mihas
Saturday 15 th November	- Consciousness	- led by Julie Faber
Saturday 13 th December	- Nature Spirits/Angelic Kingdom	- leader TBC

Sidmouth Theosophical Society. Enquiries: 07967 167984 01395 488627

SOUTHPORT

NEW ENQUIRERS GROUP – Study and Discussion.

If you want to know more about the fundamentals of Theosophy, this will provide an opportunity for asking questions on all aspects of Theosophy.

Led by Noeline Hart and Paula Young

Wednesdays fortnightly at 7.30 pm.

Southport Theosophical Society. Enquiries: 01704 574505 noeline@live.co.uk nwfederation.org.uk

SWANSEA

SECRET DOCTRINE – Study and Discussion

Tuesday afternoons 1 – 3 pm

Swansea Theosophical Society. 122 Clydach Road, Morriston, Swansea SA6 6QB, South Wales.

Enquiries: 01792 774225 pam@peacemala.org.uk www.theosophywales.com



Lecture Room

Theosophical Headquarters London

ROOM HIRE

For details on room hire contact
Colyn Boyce: office@theosoc.org.uk

THEOSOPHICAL EVENTS IN LONDON

COURSES, TALKS AND WORKSHOPS.

Theosophical Society 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA

Telephone 020 7563 9817 www.theosoc.org.uk

21st SEPTEMBER – 7th DECEMBER 2014

Please Note: opinions expressed at these groups does not necessarily represent the views of The Theosophical Society or the Foundation for Theosophical Studies

SUNDAY TALKS AND WORKSHOPS SUNDAYS 6 - 7.30 pm

We have a full programme of talks each Sunday, as well as occasionally on special weekdays, and with some workshops 2-4.30 pm on selected Sundays. For full details and booking please go to www.theosoc.org.uk or ring our London HQ on 020 7563 9817.

THEOSOPHY: HIGHWAY TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

MONDAYS 7.00 – 9.00 pm

21 September – 7 December

An informal session in which the basic teachings of the Divine Wisdom are explored and discussed. Everybody on this planet is in the Great School of Life - of spiritual development. Over the weeks we shall look at the great hidden truths, which make sense of our lives and which, gives them purpose. This is a basic grounding in the Eternal Mysteries, and it has absolutely no strings attached! The book *The Key To Theosophy* is recommended for newcomers. Leader: Edward Archer, who has been a member of the Theosophical Society in England for 35 years. Free admission

ISIS UNVEILED Study & Discussion Group

MONDAYS 7.00 – 9.00 pm

1 September – 22 December

This term the group will be systematically reading and discussing *The Perfect Way* by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland. This is a key work of Theosophy and is widely acknowledged as Pure Gnosis. Anna Kingsford was interested in Buddhism and Gnosticism, and became active in the Theosophical movement in England, becoming President of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society in 1883. This is an on-going group and newcomers are welcome at any time. Copies of the text to be studied will be available.

Leader: George Wood is a former teacher of Religious Education who has regularly led courses on Gnostic Christianity. Free admission but donations welcomed.

THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY

WEDNESDAYS 7.00 – 8.30 pm

1, 15, 29 October; 12, 26 November

Is there a God? What happens when we die? Have we lived before? What is soul? Can we speak to the dead – or they to us? Is immortality attainable? Does life punish us for forgotten crimes? Is Theosophy a new religion? Does it endorse or contradict the teachings of Jesus? How can we know the Truth for ourselves? In *The Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, answers these and many related questions in the light of the timeless Divine wisdom – Theosophy. Leader: Colin Price is the National President of the Theosophical Society in England. Free admission but donations welcomed.

THE JOY OF MEDITATION: Beginners

DHYANA CENTRE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Courses for beginners teach the theory and practice of meditation as a spiritual discipline: these consist either of seven consecutive Tuesday evenings 7-9pm or two workshops on Sundays 11am-4pm. Newcomers must join a course in its initial week; it is not possible to join without attending the foundation session. Course places must be pre-booked; this can be done online at www.dhyanacentre.org (see the Calendar page).

Course 6/14: Tuesdays 5 August - 16 September

Course 7/14: Sundays 24 August & 14 September

Course 8/14: Tuesdays 23 September - 4 November

Course 9/14: Sundays 12 October & 9 November

Course 10/14: Tuesdays 11 November - 23 December

Leader: Alan Perry. Free admission but donations welcomed.

The Dhyan Centre also holds OM Healing chant sessions weekly on either Thursday or Friday (open to all without booking) plus meditation retreats and other activities. Full details at www.dhyanacentre.org, or emailinfo@dhyanacentre.org

THEOSOPHICAL GALLERY TOURS

TUESDAYS 2 pm monthly

George McNamara is leading another series of visits to galleries for members of the TS, enquirers or friends (or indeed anyone interested in cultural studies) to investigate the following topics:

23 September British Museum – Gods and Goddesses of many cultures

14 October Natural History Museum – Theosophy, Fossil Record and Early Man

11 November Victoria + Albert Museum – World Religions

9 December National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place – Heroes and Villains.

Visits will start from relevant main entrances. Details from George on 078 8181 3242 or george@whatever-will.be

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

Saturday and Sunday, 20-21 September 2014

Academics and researchers from around the world will gather together to present papers on a wide variety of topics. These include:

A Necessary Evil: Theosophy's Ambivalence towards the Human Body John L. Crow

Osvald Siren, Theosophy and Chinese Art Chuang Chienhui

Sincere Jews: The Jewish Theosophical community in Basra, Iraq Boaz Huss

Blavatsky and Neo-Gnosis in Modern Eastern Orthodox Contexts Yuri Stoyanov

Theosophical Ideas of Collective Karma and their Relationship to Apocalypticism in America Erin Prophet

Detailed programme at www.theosoc.org.uk. £30 per day (£25 concessions, £20 TS members) or £50 for both days (£40 concessions, £30 TS members)

GENERAL INFORMATION THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP: £40 per year (£20 fulltime students, unemployed or pensioners). Details from Colyn Boyce (office@theosoc.org.uk)

LIBRARY: We have a large collection of books on Theosophy, Astrology, Mythology, Comparative Religion and Western Occultism. Open Monday-Thursday 2-6.30 pm, Sundays 4-8.30 pm (when there is an evening lecture). Free to Members or Subscriptions from £12. books@theosoc.org.uk 020 7563 9816

BOOKSHOP: Contains a good selection of theosophical works by authors such as H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, Annie Besant and G de Purucker. Open Monday-Thursday 2-6.30 pm and on Sundays 4-8.30 pm (when there is an evening lecture). books@theosoc.org.uk 020 7563 9816

RECORDINGS: We record most of our Sunday lectures on audio MP3, CD and cassette and occasionally on video. For details of recordings available for purchase contact the Bookshop (books@theosoc.org.uk) or see our website.

GENERAL OFFICE: Open Tuesday to Friday 2-6.30 pm. Our offices close over Christmas and New Year at 7 pm on Tuesday 23 December and re-open on Monday 5 January 2015. office@theosoc.org.uk 020 7563 9817.

NATIONAL OFFICERS: National President: Colin Price. National Secretary: Janet Lee. National Treasurer: Piero Soteriou.

UK WEBSITES:

www.theosoc.org.uk • theosophywales.com • theosophical-society-scotland.org

The Foundation for Theosophical Studies
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Editor: Susan Bayliss

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esoterica@theosophy.org.uk

or by post to:

Editor Esoterica, 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA

Next Issue: CLOSING DATE 30th September 2014

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esoterica@theosophy.org.uk

Adverts should be in sympathy with the aims and aspirations of the Foundation for Theosophical Studies.

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