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Editorial

Here in the UK, spring has unfolded into blue skies, green trees, fragrant daffodils, hyacinths and tulips, cherry and apple blossoms; which is in soothing contrast to the virulent spread of the virus, the suspension of normal human life, and the lockdown being experienced across the world right now.

We can hope good things may come from this challenge and that by working together and helping one another, we will turn the page to a new, kinder and conciliatory chapter in human history. I hope you will find this selection of thoughtful articles both enlightening and uplifting.

With good wishes for your safety and wellbeing.

Susan Bayliss
Editor

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Cover Image: 'Light of the World', SMB, 2019.

Image facing page: 'Edgartown Light at Dawn', Rfgagel 2006. Public domain courtesy of the photographer.

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From the National President



January saw not only the start of a new year but the start of a new decade. Twenty, twenty slips off the tongue so easily and to me is a sign of good times ahead; at least that is what I hoped for. Instead the start of 2020 has brought some severe weather and misery to many people and devastation to nature. But it is a new and virulent virus that is causing so much concern as it continues to spread around the globe effecting not only people's health but the economy of countries. Businesses may have to shut while governments try desperately to stop the inevitable spread of the disease.

Natural occurrences such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods and hurricanes all cause devastation, but in time nature begins to heal itself and new life and regrowth appear showing that life can never be destroyed. The same applies to mankind for following disease or accidents the body naturally begins the healing process. However, these days we have some help from both medical practitioners and complimentary therapists who themselves are often natural healers. One thing recommended to aid both physical and mental health is to get in touch with Nature by walking through forests, along the coastline, beside waterways and across moors while being mindful of everything around you. Exercise, fresh air and beautiful scenery have tremendous power to calm the mind and to restore a person's health.

All life is cyclical and so death is not an ending but the gateway to a different form of consciousness and the next stage of the soul's journey. Those who have had near death experiences tell of the wonderful joy felt when free from their bodies and to the profound disappointment they have when they have returned to this world.

The 39th European Congress, which will now take place from the 2nd to 7th August 2021 at the University of York, has the theme "Healing Oneself, Healing the World" which in the circumstances is very appropriate. Note that healing oneself comes before the world. Healing implies giving and whether it is to other people or to the environment it will not be effective unless the healer has a compassionate heart and a serene mind. So, if we want to bring about changes, we have to start with ourselves.

Jenny Baker
National President
April 2020





Thought Forms

Shaun Johnson

What They Are, What They Do, and How They Affect Our Lives.

Throughout the Theosophical teachings, there are references to thought forms, but grasping what is meant and what the implications are can be confusing, not least because particular writers at different stages have viewed thought forms conceptually through diverse lenses and from contrasting and disparate viewpoints.

Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater were inspired in their research by the likes of Hippolyte Baraduc, who attempted to capture photographic images of thoughts, emotions, and even the soul. As a result of a series of experiments using clairvoyant techniques, Besant and Leadbeater produced various illustrations depicting thought forms created by different emotional states and specific situations, such as the witnessing of a street accident, the atmosphere of a funeral, and the appreciating of a picture. Alice Bailey, on the other hand, focused her attention on exploring thought forms, their creation and use within magic,¹ whilst William Q. Judge described thought forms as elementals, “centres of force or energy” with “an intelligence of their own and a character”.² Master K.H., however, characterised thought forms as not so much elementals as active entities that associate themselves, or coalesce, with elementals.³ Judge himself had earlier written in similar terms, stating that: “every thought combines instantly with one of the elemental forces of nature, becoming to that extent an entity which will endure in accordance

with the strength of the thought...”⁴ Annie Besant found a middle way, referring to thought forms as “artificial elementals”, associating them in type with elemental beings whilst making it clear they were actually something else.⁵

To avoid further confusion, it would be well to clarify what a thought form is. Master K.H. wrote that, “thoughts are things...they are real entities”,⁶ and that, “every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and... survives as an active intelligence”.⁷ If we are to accept this idea, it is impossible to live without continually creating these entities. Furthermore, to quote Master K.H. again, “a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one as a maleficent demon”.⁸ The implication of this is that we not only create entities with our thoughts but that these impinge upon the lives of both ourselves and others. As Mme Blavatsky has stated: “The effect that every thought and act through life carries with it for good or evil a corresponding influence on other members of the human family renders a strict sense of justice, morality, and unselfishness so necessary to future happiness or progress”.⁹ So, in Theosophy, thought and its effects are intrinsically interlinked with karma, and this is made even clearer when Mme Blavatsky adds that: “our present lives and circumstances are the direct results of our own deeds and thoughts in lives that are past”.¹⁰

¹ Initially in ‘A Treatise on Cosmic Fire’ (1925) and later in ‘A Treatise on White Magic’ (1934)

² ‘Conversations on Occultism’ (1894) in W.Q. Judge, Vernal Blooms, The Theosophy Company, Bombay, 1946, p.135

³ Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett in chronological sequence, Theosophical Publishing House, Quezon City, 1998, p.472

⁴ W. Q. Judge, The Ocean of Theosophy (1893), The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1987, p.102

⁵ Annie Besant, The Ancient Wisdom (1897), The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1939, p.125

⁶ Hao Chin, Jr., op.cit, p.66

⁷ Ibid, p.472

⁸ Ibid

⁹ H.P.Blavatsky, The Key to Theosophy, The Theosophical Publishing Company Limited, London, 1889, p.213

¹⁰ Ibid, p.215.

Image facing page: “Thought Forms” *SMB*. Adapted from photos of some original watercolours created for the book on Thought Forms by Besant and Leadbeater. Exhibited at the TS International Convention, Varanasi, India, January 2020. Adapted from photos of original watercolours exhibited at the TS International Convention, Varanasi, India, January 2020.

Master K.H, Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater point out that it isn't just thoughts, but also feelings and desires, that create thought forms. Master K.H. wrote, in this regard, that: "*man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions...*"¹¹ Elsewhere, Besant and Leadbeater state: "*the vast majority of [thought forms] are expressions of feeling as well as of thought...*"¹² It is perhaps because of this that trying to fit what is being conceptualised here into a catch-all term, such as 'thought form', becomes not only difficult but inaccurate, leading to other attempts at terminology which aren't ideal and cause further confusion. Terms such as 'tulpa' and 'manomayakaya', used interchangeably with 'thought form', overlap with what is being described here, but are in their own ways problematic.

Tulpas, described by Alexandra David Néel as "*magic formations generated by a powerful concentration of thought*",¹³ are similar to the type of thought form consciously created through occult means. Once created, tulpas "*[play] the part of a real being [that] tends to free itself from its maker's control*",¹⁴ and sometimes carry on beyond the purpose intended by its creator as "*a half-conscious, dangerously mischievous puppet*".¹⁵ Although a tulpa's level of consciousness may differentiate it from a thought form, this is a moot point, with Judge, as mentioned earlier, describing thought forms as having "*an intelligence of their own and a character.*" According to Besant and Leadbeater, thought forms are created from elemental essence, described as: "*that strange half-intelligent life which surrounds us in all directions [that] responds very readily to the influence of human thought*".¹⁶ Can anything have intelligence, or half-intelligence, without consciousness? Well, Theosophically speaking, everything has some

level of consciousness. As Mme Blavatsky has written: "*The breath of heaven, or rather the breath of life, called in the Bible Nephesh, is in every animal, in every animate speck as in every mineral atom*".¹⁷ What does differentiate a tulpa from a thought form, though, is that a tulpa needs to be dissolved by its maker, creating problems if its creator dies before doing so.¹⁸ A thought form, on the other hand, dissolves over time regardless, the length taken dependent on the strength of the thought, feeling or desire that created it.¹⁹

Manomayakaya, usually translated as 'mind-made body', is a term used in a number of core Buddhist teachings such as the 'Samaññaphala Sutta', which lists manomayakaya as one of the fruits of the contemplative or spiritual life, in the context of the ability to create from one's body, "*another body, having a form, mind-made, complete in all its limbs and faculties*".²⁰ Clarifying what is meant here, the Buddha states that this body is like a reed that can be drawn out of a sheath or a sword that can be drawn from a scabbard. In this sense, the manomayakaya is more akin to the astral body in astral projection, a type of thought form for sure, but it would be a mistake to confuse one specific thought form with thought forms in general.

Alice Bailey makes a passing observation, in 'A Treatise on Cosmic Fire', that all of our material sheaths, which would include the physical body, are thought forms,²¹ which doesn't seem to be mentioned elsewhere in the Theosophical teachings but fits in with the universal laws of karma, cause and effect, and evolution. As H.S. Olcott wrote, concerning karma: "*the new being of the re-birth, being the same individuality as before (but not the same personality), with but a changed form, or new aggregation of Skandhas, justly reaps the consequences of his actions and thoughts in the previous existence*".²² That 'changed form' would include the physical body,

¹¹ Hao Chin, Jr., op.cit, p.472

¹² Besant & Leadbeater, Thought Forms, The Theosophical Publishing Society, London & Benares, 1905, p.38

¹³ Alexandra David-Néel, Magic and Mystery in Tibet, 1931, Ch. VIII

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Besant & Leadbeater, op.cit., p.25

¹⁷ H.P.Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, Vol I, The Theosophical Publishing Company Limited, London, 1888, p.212

¹⁸ David-Néel, op.cit., Ch. VIII

¹⁹ Besant, The Ancient Wisdom, p.67

²⁰ 'Samaññaphala Sutta' in Maurice Walshe (trans.), The Long Discourse of the Buddha (1987), Wisdom Publications, Massachusetts, 1995, p.104

²¹ Alice Bailey, A Treatise on Cosmic Fire (1925), Lucis Publishing Company, New York, 1989, p.554

²² H.S.Olcott, The Buddhist Catechism (1881), The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1970, p.79

though it could be argued that where Bailey indicates our physical bodies are thought forms, physical bodies are in fact created from a complex variety of sources and influences that include not only thoughts, feelings and desires, but are also a consequence of our actions. Working with what we have, and trying not to confuse matters further, it is worth mentioning here the three general principles that Besant and Leadbeater, in their book on the subject, have said underlie the production of all thought-forms:

1. Quality of thought determines colour
2. Nature of thought determines form
3. Definiteness of thought determines clearness of outline.²³

They further listed three classes of thought form:

1. That taking the image of the thinker.
2. That taking the image of some material object.
3. That which takes a form entirely its own.²⁴

Every thought, according to Besant and Leadbeater, “*gives rise to a set of correlated vibrations... accompanied with a marvellous play of colour, like that in the spray of a waterfall as the sunlight strikes it...*”²⁵ Whilst other sources don’t mention colour as connected necessarily with thought forms, the colours and patterns created during the course of their experiments have influenced and been explored further by a number of artists, most notably Wassily Kandinsky, particularly from 1904 to 1912.²⁶ It comes as no surprise that darker and lighter colours represent darker and lighter thoughts, feelings and desires respectively, with mixtures of the two a reminder that even those thoughts, feelings and desires that we assume to be positive, such as affection, compassion, devotion and love, can be corrupted into something selfish, malicious and grasping.

Annie Besant has stated that the purer the thought, the more rapid are the vibrations.²⁷ Purer thoughts affect “the rare and subtle

grades of mind-stuff”.²⁸ Base and evil thoughts, however, “draw into the mental body the coarser materials...and these materials repel and drive out the finer kinds.”²⁹ These fine and coarse materials are elemental essence from the surrounding atmosphere. Vague loose thoughts create thought forms consisting of loose clouds of elemental essence, disintegrating after a while.³⁰ Clear, precise thoughts, however, create sharp and clear thought forms that last longer, are more active, have a far stronger influence, and “*can be directed by the thinker towards any person he desires to reach, their potency depending on the strength of his will and the intensity of his mental power*”.³¹ It is this kind of thought form, referred to by Besant as “protective elementals,” that can be used to send healing and comfort to others, in the same way as malignant thought forms can do the opposite. However, should they find no receptive vibrations at the other end, they rebound back to their creator with the same force with which they were sent out, rejuvenating or damaging the sender accordingly.³²

Thought forms created by thoughts are generated in the mental (or causal) body on the mental plane; those created by feelings or desires by the activity of Kama-Manas and thrown out through the desire (or astral) body on the astral plane. As their animating soul, they have the thought, desire or passion that sent them out. Among the general population, thought forms created by feelings, according to Besant, “*are more vigorous and more definite than those created by thought*”.³³ It follows that a thought form created by a superficial or passing positive thought or feeling will have less power or impact than a powerful or overwhelming one. It also follows that a thought form created by a deep and pernicious hatred or jealousy will create an equally powerful, correspondingly destructive, thought form. This seems all very neat, except for the fact that most of our thoughts, feelings and

²³ Besant & Leadbeater, op.cit., p.31

²⁴ Ibid., p.36-38

²⁵ Ibid., p.18

²⁶ See Maurice Tuchman, *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, Abbeville Press, New York, 1995

²⁷ Annie Besant, *Thought Power*, The Theosophical Publishing House, London, 1910, p.27

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom*, p.66

³¹ Ibid., p.67

³² Ibid., p.69

³³ Ibid., p.67-68

desires aren't solely thoughts, feelings or desires, or even one thought, one feeling or one desire, but a complex mixture. This means that most thought forms don't just reside in one plane or body, nor are they created solely by one body in one plane. They act in different bodies in different planes at the same time, according to the most favourable conditions in each.

Thought forms affect not only the person creating them, but others too, particularly those most receptive on a vibrational level. A nasty person, for example, will more likely be affected by coarser thought forms, a compassionate person by finer ones. Not the exact thought or its subject, however, but the character of the thought.³⁴

Since all of our thoughts, feelings and desires create thought forms, the implications are significant, for ourselves, for others, and for the rest of the world. The more we contemplate the ramifications, the more difficult this can be to comprehend or assimilate. It is distressing to know that we are continuously, automatically and unconsciously, creating damaging and dangerous entities that affect ourselves and those around us. In the words of Besant and Leadbeater: *"Each man travels through space enclosed within a cage of his own building, surrounded by a mass of the forms created by his habitual thoughts"*.³⁵

We may well ask ourselves, in such circumstances, what we can do to protect ourselves and others. *"The only question"*, writes Annie Besant, *"is whether we will [affect those around us] beneficially or mischievously.... We cannot help the thought of others touching our minds; we can only choose which we will receive, which reject"*.³⁶ So we do actually have a choice. But there is a problem, of course. It is a question that Annie Besant asked in one of her books: *"How can 'the will' take the place of the attraction?"*³⁷ If our natural inclination is to indulge in our physical desires and pleasures, for example, regardless of the consequences, how do we consciously counter those tendencies through pure reason?

We could use the techniques outlined in the 'Visuddhimagga' to meditate on the foulness of the human body, surrounding ourselves with corpses in various states of decomposition, though this would be awkward to arrange, and more than likely to get us into trouble. *"In the absence of an attraction from without,"* writes Annie Besant, what is needed *"is illumination from within"*, as well as a motive to change, that motive being *"that which Reason selects as the thing most conducive to the good of the Self..."*.³⁸ This does sound overly theoretical, especially when all we're looking for here is a way to prevent the creation of deleterious thought forms whilst encouraging the production of positive and helpful ones.

Annie Besant writes about the habitual vibrations that we produce in our various bodies, and how the repetition of negative vibrations form channels through repetition, automatically directing them, and our thoughts, along those channels, causing us distress and pain, and producing malevolent thought forms by default.³⁹ The solution to this, of course, is to form other channels of the exact opposite character, *"made by definite, persistent, regular thought"*.⁴⁰ In this way, these more positive channels become the default channels through which thoughts flow instead, giving comfort instead of pain and creating beneficent thought forms instead of malevolent ones.

Fighting our negative, evil or impure thoughts, which might seem like the obvious and natural response, is advised against by Annie Besant. She states that a more effective way is, *"to utilize the fact that the mind can only think of one thing at a time,"* replacing evil or destructive thoughts with their opposite.⁴¹ So, every time we think badly of someone, immediately focus instead on their positive qualities, or think affectionately of them. As Besant puts it: *"We must think of that which we desire to receive, and refuse to think of that which we desire not to receive."* She refers to this as *"the secret of right receptivity....by habitual good thinking...building into [the mind's] very fabric materials that are receptive of good, unreceptive of evil"*.⁴²

³⁴ Besant & Leadbeater, op.cit., p.24

³⁵ Ibid., p.26

³⁶ Besant, Thought Power, p.136

³⁷ Ibid., p.56

³⁸ Ibid., p.56

³⁹ Ibid., p.114

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.115

⁴¹ Ibid., p.98

⁴² Ibid., p.99

There are other techniques that deal with thought forms, of course, some dating back many centuries, such as those from the Chöd tradition of Machig Labdrön. Chöd practices include the personification and visualisation of negative thoughts, feelings and desires as demons, proceeding to offer up the physical body to these demonic entities as food. The aim is not only to dissolve those thought forms, but to practice compassion and generosity, and ultimately to cut through attachment to the physical body and to realise the true nature of reality itself.⁴³

Such alternatives are not diametrically opposed to those in the Theosophical teachings, the overall approach perhaps best summarised by Dilgo Khyetse, in his commentary on the work of Padampa Sangye: *“There are only two ways to erase the trace left by a harmful act: either by going through the experience of suffering that is its natural consequence, or by purifying it with the appropriate antidotes before the appearance of its dire effects”*.⁴⁴ The Theosophical approaches are more a process of purification, but that doesn’t mean we’ll never experience the consequences of

creating negative thought forms and sending them out into the world. The law of karma implies that we will, one way or another, especially if those thought forms have affected others, prompting them into behaving in a way they wouldn’t have done otherwise.

Combatting our inherent tendency to create potentially damaging thought forms is very much about thought control, discipline, single-pointed concentration, meditation and self-awareness. In working with these practices, which also develop our spiritual qualities, we enhance our powers of thought and perception, our capacity to assist and be of service to others and deepen our understanding of the Theosophical teachings. Meaning that the creation of thought forms, and our ability to generate positive rather than negative ones, is fundamentally linked to our spiritual development, and ultimately to our spiritual progress.

Shaun Johnson is a long-standing TS member and student of the esoteric traditions. He is a Trustee and Director for the Theosophical Society in England.

⁴³ See, for example, Jérôme Edou, Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd, Snow Lion Publications, New York, 1996

⁴⁴ Padampa Sangye & Dilgo Khyentse, The Hundred Verses of Advice, Shambhala, Massachusetts, 2005, p.30



The aura of a devotional person, with the lower area betraying selfishness.



A wave of strong and pure affection sweeping over a person.



A person consumed in intense anger.



A person in love. Affection and devotion in the upper area, lust and jealousy in the lower.

A Human Being

Albert Einstein

A human being is part of the whole, called by us "Universe", a part limited in time and space.

He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and The whole of nature in its beauty.

1950

Reflected Back at Me

Reflected back at me,
My soul's nature in the stars.
Reflected back at me,
The bloom of flowers in the vase.
Reflected back at me,
The whole cosmos in my heart.
For when the journey ends,
The adventure's sure to start.

Reflected back at me,
The illusions of this life.
Reflected back at me,
The worries and the strife.
Reflected back at me,
The coming and the going.
Then see the waters still,
Witness peace in the knowing.

For this infinite soul knows more
than it's revealing,
Keeping veiled secrets, hidden
in their meaning,
Treading well worn paths,
familiar to one being,
Blissful in its task, which forever
it's concealing.

Reflected back at me,
The oceans and the skies.
Reflected back at me,
My neighbour's shadow
of demise.
Reflected back at me,
My own eternal being,
For when the light must fade,
The darkness points to seeing.

Sarah Leybourne

The Federation of Theosophical Societies in Europe

Healing Oneself Healing the World

The 39th
European Congress
will now take place from
2nd to 7th August 2021
Chief Guest Speaker
Tim Boyd
International President

A great opportunity to meet members and make friends from all over the world. The programme and booking information will be posted on our website and circulated to members as soon as they are available: www.theosoc.org.uk

University of York England



*We send our good wishes for the
safety and good health of all our
fellow members, friends, and
readers across the world.*





The True Meaning of Brotherhood

(Part Two)

Jenny Baker

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

We are told "Universal Brotherhood is a spiritual thing and spiritual perception alone can know it."

In the late 19th Century the concept of a universal brotherhood must have, for some people been hard to conceive. This was a time in America when slavery was only officially ended on December 6, 1865. In India, the caste system meant that those in the lowest caste had no chance of bettering themselves and in Victorian Britain a married woman was the property of her husband and any money she might have brought to the marriage was now her husband's. Following a divorce, the woman had no right to any of that money and any children were taken away from her. The woman was, it seemed the guilty party and thus had no rights.

The fledgling Theosophical Society therefore had a lot of prejudice to overcome. HPB in her book, *The Key to Theosophy*, had much to say on the subject. The Enquirer asked: *"How, then, should Theosophical principles be applied so that social co-operation may be promoted and true efforts for social amelioration be carried on?"* The Theosophist replied: *"Let me briefly remind you what these principles are Universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma and Reincarnation. These are the four links of the golden chain which should bind humanity into one family, one universal brotherhood."*

HPB goes on to describe the differences between the rich and the poor and the social injustices prevalent at the time. She tells the enquirer: *"If the action of one reacts on the lives of all, then it is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters, and by all practising in their daily lives true brotherhood and sisterhood, that the real human solidarity, which lies at the root of the elevation of the race, can ever be attained. It is this action and interaction, this true brotherhood and sisterhood, in which each shall live for all and all for each, which is one of the fundamental Theosophical principles that every Theosophist should be bound, not only to teach but to carry out in his or her individual life."*

She goes on to say: *"Progress can be attained, and only attained, by the development of the nobler qualities. In every conceivable case he [the Theosophist] must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces."*

During the Chicago World's fair in September 1893, the Theosophical Society participated in the First World's Parliament of Religions. In the absence of the President-Founder Col Olcott, who was in India, the Vice-President W.Q. Judge served as permanent chairman of the Theosophical Congress, whose presentation of its ideals and principles drew increasingly larger audiences. W Q Judge began his talk, "Universal Brotherhood - a Fact of Nature" by saying that he had been asked to speak about universal brotherhood as a fact in nature; not as a theory or utopian dream but as an actual thing. This is what he said:

"The Theosophist who knows anything about life insists that universal brotherhood is not a mere theory. It is a fact, a living ever-present fact from which no nation can hope to escape... It is a beautiful doctrine. It is the only doctrine of the Theosophical Society, the only thing that anyone is asked by us to subscribe to. The reason that it has not prevailed in practice is that it has been denied in the heart. Why, just think of it! If all in Chicago, in the United States would act as Jesus has said, as Buddha has said, as Confucius has said, as all the great ethical teachers of the world have said 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you' would there be any necessity for legal measures and policemen in this park as you had them the other day? No."

Image facing page: "Peace" SMB, 2019.

He ends, with these words: *"I conclude by calling upon you by all that humanity holds dear to remember what I say, and whether Christians, Atheists, Jews, Pagans or Theosophists, try to practise universal brotherhood, which is the universal duty of all men."*

In her letters to the American Convention in April 1888 HPB made some significant statements: "This should never be forgotten, nor should the following fact be overlooked. On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and important mission - namely, to unite firmly a body of humanity of all nations in brotherly love and bent on a pure altruistic work, not on a labour with selfish motives - on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man." (SD I p644). HPB also said this:

"If every fellow in the Society were content to be an impersonal force for good, careless of praise or blame so long as he sub-served the purpose of the Brotherhood, the progress made would astonish the world and place the Ark of the TS out of danger." (CW XIII pp172-3).

"The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind, and it is the aspiration for the true Adept." (ML 5 p20).

THE QUALITIES OF BROTHERHOOD

Earlier I mentioned that to accept the first object of the TS; which is *"To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour"*, is an ideal which is easy to say but not quite so easy to live up to and put into practice. So, how can we? What tools should we use and what attributes should we acquire? Where do we start on our quest for brotherliness and brotherhood?

We have to start with ourselves. We must acknowledge what kind of person we are and where we need to make changes. Perhaps it is our lifestyle that needs rethinking; or perhaps our attitudes towards others are selfish. Do we live for ourselves and care not at all what we do and who we hurt in the process, if in the end we get what we want? Should we perhaps adopt a humbler and less egotistical manner?

Before we can be at one with others we must be at one with ourselves. We can give no peace, compassion or loving kindness to others unless we have it within our hearts to give. One way to get peace within is by the practices of yoga and meditation. Yoga, like Theosophy, is a philosophy that guides the sincere seeker of truth. There are several different forms of yoga but the ones I would recommend are Hatha, Bhakti, Karma and Jnana. Hatha Yoga consists of the practices of asanas, (postures), pranayama, (breathing techniques) and relaxation all of which bring health and balance to the body and the mind. It aspires to self-realization through the transmutation of the body.

Bhakti Yoga is the self-transcending power of love. It is the way of love and devotion. The way of the heart when the yogi or yogini allows the Divine within to guide them in their lives. Karma Yoga is the yoga of self-surrendered action. It is the way of service in which all actions are done in the name of the Divine without thought of recompense, reward or recognition. Jnana Yoga is the way of knowledge associated with discerning the real from the unreal. It is the path of self-realization that applies discriminative wisdom or higher intuitive knowledge to all situations and conditions of life. It is one of the most difficult paths to enlightenment and requires the practitioner to be able to discern the real from the unreal, the Self from the non-self. Detachment, restraint and self-discipline are also required.

The studying of the great yogic and theosophical texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, At the Feet of the Master and the Voice of The Silence is one of the tools we can use to help us understand the oneness of life. Meditation is one of the most important tools we have for its practice focuses the mind on our higher Self. It is only when we can let go of the



trappings of the personality and the needs of the lower mind that we can aspire to the knowledge of our real selves and the divinity within us.

What are the qualities or aspects of brotherhood that we must develop within ourselves? Here are some: kindness, compassion, tolerance, friendship, unselfishness, patience, benevolence, altruism, serenity and humility. What is it to be unbrotherly? It is to be selfish, egotistical, proud, unthinking, rude, angry, to spread gossip, and to lie deliberately. "Friend beware of Pride and Egoism, two of the worst snares for the feet of him who aspires to climb the high paths of knowledge." (ML 131).

In the Key to Theosophy (p253) HPB gives this advice; *"One [a Theosophist] should be ever prepared to recognise and confess one's faults. Never to back-bite or slander another person. Always to say openly and direct to his face anything you have against him. Never to make yourself the echo of anything you may hear against another, nor harbour revenge against those who happen to injure you"* And later (p255) she states firmly: *"But true or false, no accusation against*

another person should ever be spread abroad. If true, and the fault hurts no one but the sinner, then leave him to his Karma. If false, then you will have avoided adding to the injustice in the world."

BROTHERHOOD AND SERVICE

As with Karma Yoga, Theosophy is about service to others. Having diligently studied theosophical literature and meditated upon his understanding of the same, a true theosophist will put into practice what he has learnt. When a Theosophist starts to practice the aspects of brotherhood, service to others will come naturally. Altruism can be considered another way to describe Theosophy.

John Algeo said: *"To serve effectively, we must act out of an understanding that arises from meditating on our study of the great principles. But serving - living to benefit mankind by loving deeds - is the first step. It is the cause, not the result of self-knowledge."* The way we choose to benefit mankind depends on the sort of person we are, our health and fitness, our disposition and time we have available. We are encouraged not to strive to be everything to all people but to concentrate on the field we know best, so our energies can be preserved and our work therefore more effective.

Serving others is not just about helping people less well off than themselves; it is also about spreading the word of Theosophy for as we are told in the Key to Theosophy: *"No fellow has a right to remain idle, on the excuse he knows too little to teach. For he may always be sure that he will find others who know still less than himself."* The benefit is that as soon as a person tries to teach the gaps in their knowledge become very apparent. *"The true work of a Theosophist is to promote spiritual progress. This is a higher task than even the promoting of Brotherhood — which is, after all, the elementary teaching both of Theosophy and Christianity"* (From the Maha Chohan's letter).

There are many people all over the world who put others before themselves. They are not necessarily members of the TS but nevertheless are living the life of a true theosophist. To work efficiently for other people means putting their needs before one's own. The Christian prayer sums it up well:



*“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love,
Where there’s despair in life let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there is sadness, ever joy.
Grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul”.*

BROTHERHOOD AND KARMA

We are aware of Karma, the Law of Cause and Effect. That every thought, word and deed have their reactions and consequences in some form or another. So, when we act in a brotherly manner towards others we can expect the same from them. If we act in an unbrotherly way we will reap similar actions.

In the Key to Theosophy we are told that the Law of Karma applies equally to all, although all are not equally developed. In helping the development of others, the Theosophist believes that he is not only helping them to fulfil their karma, but that he is also fulfilling his own. How to do this? We test ourselves by asking if the proposed action will promote true Brotherhood. We must be a centre of spiritual action and in our daily lives radiate those higher spiritual forces. For we are told that any failure to respond to the highest within ourselves retards not only ourselves but all in their progressive march.

But to me true brotherly behaviour is not a check list of good deeds to be ticked off, but a spontaneous act of kindness. It is the intention behind the act that is as important, if not more important than the act itself. We know that whatever we do has a consequence not only for others but also for ourselves. A selfish or an unkind act will have a negative impact on the person performing it.

I am sure that we can all recall acts of brotherliness from the past and the present. I will mention one recounted in the Bible and two from our own times. The parable of the Good Samaritan is well-known. It tells of a traveller attacked by robbers and left naked and half dead by the roadside. A priest came along and passed by on the other side of the road. So too did a Levite: but then a Samaritan, a foreigner, came along and immediately tended to the traveller’s wounds, placed him on his donkey and took him to an inn where he gave the Innkeeper money to care for him before he, the Samaritan, went on his way. He also told the Innkeeper that on his return journey he would reimburse any further expenses incurred.

The next example happened in Paris and required courage. A four-year old child was observed dangling from the fourth-floor balcony of a block of apartments. Without thinking of possible danger

Image above: ‘Tiger’ Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1842. Public domain.

Image facing page: Photograph, dawn above Malibu, California. Doug Dolde 2001. Public Domain courtesy of the photographer

to himself, a 22-year old man climbed up the facade of the building and pulled the child to safety. The consequences of the man's action were that the child was saved and the man, who was an illegal immigrant from Mali, was given a medal and a promise of French Nationality by the French President. The man acted spontaneously, and it is a wonderful example of brotherhood. The other example is one I witnessed myself last winter. A man in ragged and inadequate clothing entered a London underground carriage asking for money. Most people ignored him but the man at the far end of the carriage, without hesitation, took off his coat and gave it to the man. This was a spontaneous action of true brotherhood.

SELF-TRANSFORMATION

True brotherhood can only be realised when we connect with the Higher Self. The changes we must make to acquire the qualities of brotherhood can be described as Self Transformation. Transformation is not brought about by a decision of our ordinary mind, nor by any efforts arising from the level of consciousness which needs to be transformed. When the mind has let go of the demands of the personality; when the person has realised that they are not the body, neither are they the mind, nor their emotions, but they are the spirit within, and that spirit lives not only within themselves but is the same spirit dwelling in all others; then transformation will take place. The true spirit of mankind is hidden by layers of selfish desires, ignorance and egoism. When all the layers have been slowly and maybe painfully peeled away the true light of Spirit will shine through. We all have the ability to make this transformation and I urge you to try. Let your light shine but not in a proud or boastful way. Your demeanour should be humble and serene and the light a gentle continuous glow from the heart.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5 14-16).

I will end with the words of the universal prayer that beautifully sum up Theosophy and what it stands for.

"O Hidden Life vibrant in every atom,
O Hidden Light shining in every creature,
O Hidden Love embracing all in Oneness,
May all who feel themselves as One with thee,
Know they are therefore one with every other."

Jenny Baker is a long-time TS member and since April 2015 she has been National President of the Theosophical Society in England. 'The True Meaning of Brotherhood' was the Blavatsky Lecture given at the Summer School in 2018. Jenny attends General Councils of the TS world body twice a year and is in her third year on its Executive Committee. Additionally, she is on the Council of the Federation of European Theosophical Societies and is a board member of the International Theosophical Centre at Naarden, in the Netherlands. Jenny is a Trustee and Chair of the Board for The Theosophical Society in England.



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The Butterfly's Wing

Frank Watson

As a scientific fact, the principle of the 'butterfly's wing' was discovered some years ago, when a meteorological calculation was re-evaluated to a different level of accuracy - to five decimal places instead of six! The astonishing result was a completely different weather outlook! Thereby arose the idea of the infinitely small amount of wind generated by one butterfly's wing over Africa making some enormous difference to subsequent weather conditions elsewhere, perhaps the difference between the formation of a new cyclone near the West Indies – or none at all! Now it is agreed that the weather cannot be accurately forecast, at least beyond a certain period, because of the similar tiny factors, which absent from predictive calculation, could make a disproportionate difference.

It reminds one of the story of the battle lost through the lack of a nail in a horseshoe. It would now seem that this long-accepted wisdom has been demonstrated in relation to the weather. In this way we can perhaps rejoice that the completely dynamic nature of the universe and therefore of our personal efforts within it is similarly demonstrated, as is the impossibility of reducing them to mathematical equations. Surely such an idea is relevant to our theosophical work? One relatively small effort can in a similar way make a disproportionate difference to the ultimate outcome – the extra care in preparing a lecture, the willingness to accept a Lodge Office when

the personality baulks at the responsibility, the extra word of explanation about a particular concept – are not these the 'butterfly wings' which may make an outstanding contribution to our progress?

There is of course a collective aspect: it is the total sum of our efforts which produces the result. Yet at the same time, it is an inspiring thought that within that totality of effort any one of us may well provide the 'butterfly's wing' which tips the balance of our combined endeavour. Now is an especially suitable time to reflect on this profound truth. The crucial nature of the present cycle is becoming more apparent every day. In the dissemination of theosophical teachings, one 'butterfly's wing' may be (who knows), all that is required to help bring about a quantum leap forward in human understanding and therefore in evolution, with the concomitant reduction in human suffering.

Frank Watson was a long-time TS member and a very active worker for the Society. He was a theosophical lecturer and member of the TSE's Executive Committee, with special responsibilities for building up and supporting lodges and centres. For example, in Kendal, Lancaster, Chester, and in a great many outlying areas around the country such as Penzance. Frank's article was written for 'Insight' in 1991.



How Did I Come to Theosophy?

Alan Hughes

As a boy in St Peter's Ealing choir I listened to a lot of sermons. These raised questions in my mind. I asked our curate: If I say my prayers, don't do bad things, and believe in Jesus, when I die will I go to Heaven? "Yes". Will I see Jesus there? "Yes". Will I be in Heaven for ever and ever? "Yes". And God? Will I see him too? "Yes". Buddhists don't believe Jesus was the only son of God. Does this mean when they die they go to Hell? *"I don't think these are the sort of questions that should be bothering you".*

I went away thinking that maybe God would forgive all those who weren't Christians. It wasn't their fault they'd been born into the wrong religion. But deep down I knew that wasn't the right thing to believe. My days of wandering began – both metaphorically and literally. Literally because years later I married and we both thought we'd like to do some travelling before having a family, so we packed our bags and got on a boat to Canada. In Montreal I called on a firm of architects and was told *"You have come just at the right time. One of our architects is going back to New Zealand and we need to replace him"*. John and I overlapped by a couple of weeks. He was half Maori and a very helpful and kind chap. *"Well, as I understand you and your wife are on your travels, if you ever find yourself in New Zealand, look me up"*.

Two and a half years later, we were standing by the front door of a house in Auckland, New Zealand. But this time our timing wasn't so good: *"Oh dear. We're off on holiday tomorrow. But do come in. You can have the house while we're away"*. Then he remembered: *"I told my mother-in-law she could use the house while we're away"*. Don't worry, I said, I'm sure we'll get on ok. A few days later we came back from a day on the beach and we sensed that something was different. Mother-in-law turned out to be one of the most amazing ladies we'd ever met.

When our chats on this and that were exhausted, we began talking of the deeper things of life. And inevitably I found myself raising those questions which had always bothered me. *"We're all part of Nature"* she said *"And her ways are our best teachers. Think of her alternations: summer/winter, activity/rest, day and night, life and death"*. Do you really believe in reincarnation? *"How else are we to experience all that the human condition has to offer? Are we really to believe that whether we live for 9 or 99 years, that's all we're going to get? How can the priesthood expect us to accept such an unsatisfactory theology? The Master Jesus taught reincarnation and it was a fundamental of early Christianity until Justinian had all bible references to it deleted. That act was the greatest of disservices to humanity. The period of death is a period of sleep. If only churches, mosques and synagogues still taught reincarnation and the law of karma, peoples' lives would be so much happier"*. How do you know these things? *"Well, I'm getting on in years, so I've been able to do a lot of studying – and pondering. And - I'm a member of The New Zealand Theosophical Society"*. Now that's a society I must look into when we get back to England, I thought.

Strangely though, it was some years before I actually did this. No doubt raising a family was responsible for occupying so much of our thoughts. Nonetheless, there came a time when I found myself in front of another front door, a forbidding black one, with the words 'The Theosophical Society in England' over the fanlight. It wasn't shut. Should I just barge in and risk disturbing a circle of theosophists sitting in the lotus position chanting 'Om'? I pushed the door open. The hall inside was empty. After a while a lady appeared. I tried to say why I was there. *"Well,"* she said, *"we have a class for new enquirers beginning this evening"* When does it start? *"In about twenty minutes time. Come, I'll introduce you to Adam"*. The years that followed were truly amazing. The studies of the teachings of the Mahatmas who have gone before us were a revelation. Those who were studying with me felt very fortunate because Adam was one of those rare persons - the combination of a brilliant intellect and a highly developed intuition.

We learned how a universe is born and how it evolves – a process of condensation of The One Element - the very opposite in fact of the astronomers' 'Big Bang'. We learned that Plato's third element, which he called 'water', is the "dark matter" that is baffling today's physicists. *"Take the analogy of an iceberg", Adam explained; "it's that which we can't see that forms the bulk of what we call the objective world. Dark Matter, so-called, is not only the support of the physical world, but more importantly is both the birthplace of all its forms and the repository of all our thoughts".*

We learned that Mind precedes the formation of our brains. And we learned not only the difference between our temporary personal soul and our eternal Spirit, but precisely what happens to us when we die. We found how inadequate had been our understanding of history – that the world's previous civilisation, the "Atlantean", had had its peak millions rather than thousands of years ago. We also learned what Adam called 'our real history' – the evolution of the human being, which is a spiritual development, and not a progression from apes - who developed later than humanity. And, most important of all, came an answer to those childhood questions about the nature of God.

It became clear to us that because all of Nature, visible and invisible, is a TRUE UNITY - a ONENESS, and not a number of seemingly separate things linked together, then the concept of 'God' cannot be a Being somehow beyond - or outside - Nature. What a relief it was to be able to dispense with that "jealous God" of the Old Testament who demands worship and threatens us with dire punishments if we don't obey his commandments. Does this mean that theosophists are atheists? No, indeed not. But it does mean that they subscribe to the teaching of the Adept Masters that God is 'within' us – is the spiritual core of our being in other words. So – I suppose it should not surprise (or frighten us) when we first come across the life-changing proclamation that: WE ARE ALL GOD.

If, then, I'm asked how I came to Theosophy, I would have to say from two points on this Earth that could hardly be further apart – via

an extraordinary lady in Auckland and a truly insightful man in London.

Alan Hughes was a prominent Theosophical speaker and workshop leader in the UK and this article is printed in appreciation of Alan who died in 2019. Please see the 'In Remembrance' section on p30.



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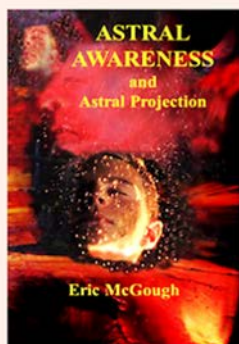
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So thank you for putting the course together and promoting it. I and I am sure, very many students of theosophy are indebted to you. RB



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The Wisdom and The Way

Eric McGough

Why We Need the Wisdom Teachings



In the West, we have reached a time when we are almost overwhelmed with spiritual teachings of every kind. Never in the history of mankind have people been faced with so much information, so much choice. There is a definite atmosphere of 'pick and mix' spirituality, where seekers no longer feel settled to one approach but take a bit from here and some from there. The freedom to choose, and even to shift promiscuously from one teaching to another, can be seen as a result of the lessening grip of orthodox religion during the twentieth century. Its parallel can be identified in the promiscuity of sexual relationships and the breaking down of the traditional family unit, which has grown at the same pace over the same period.

This development is part of a natural progression, a breaking down of the old order and a building up of the new. What we are seeing now is a period of transition; this brings with it a measure of chaos or lessening of discipline - in this case, of spiritual discipline. This 'transfer of power' is the power to mediate between man and his idea of God. For the last four thousand years,

that power has been firmly in the hands of the Priest, the Rabbi, the Guru, and anyone else with the ability to attract a following. The age of Aries saw the establishment of what we now regard as orthodox religion, with its Father figure and male-dominated control. This followed on from the previous age of Taurus when the Mother figure, a symbol of fertility and female sexuality dominated supernatural thought. Today, we are leaving the age of Pisces, whose influence is to seek truth for ourselves. It was an age of the individual and the lessening of the authoritarian grip referred to is the culmination of that vibration. It was the age of the Son, the third aspect of the trinity. And the son was to go out and find his way in the world, thus realising his potential and freedom of thought hitherto unknown.

One of the most important lessons to be learned from this new-found freedom is that FREEDOM IS NOT A LICENCE TO DO AS WE PLEASE. The fishes of Pisces may be swimming in opposite directions, but they are tied together by the cord of karma showing us that what we do as individuals affects all of us.

So, the transfer of power is from the traditional God-mediator to the individual, who Jesus said had the Kingdom of Heaven within and here is the key. If the kingdom of heaven is inside us and we no longer *need* to rely on the priest to mediate, how shall we awaken that knowledge, that connection between our minds and our higher self? How shall we commune with the God within? The answer lies in the symbolism of the new age, Aquarius. The age that we are struggling to adjust to even now during this transition from one age to the next and from one way of knowing to the next. As Pisces was the age of emotion - symbolised by the element water, so Aquarius is the age of the mind symbolised by the element air - freedom, communication, higher view, release, awakening. All the signs have two main aspects and in the case of Aquarius, we have the lower and the higher mind, science- the lower, art and philosophy - the higher. The lower includes all the knowledge of self-improvement, academic

Image: Esoteric form of Avalokitasvara, Hanging scroll. Cundi, Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Public domain image.

learning, and the development of concentration. The higher mind includes self-awareness, wisdom, and the development of meditation and intuition.

The wisdom teaching is not at all like past forms of knowledge. On the surface, it does seem to be simply another version of spiritual knowledge, but this is not the case. The wisdom teaching is the source of all knowledge, whether philosophical, scientific, or spiritual and as such has the power to link directly to the higher mind and the Buddhic consciousness beyond. The ancient wisdom is so-called because its origins are so far back in history that only the adepts (whose task it has been to safeguard it for this age) know its true source. Up until now, the only way that a seeker could gain access to its teachings was to commit to a secret brotherhood and live a life of discipleship to a master of wisdom. Today, we are more fortunate in that we have open access to at least some of its teachings, following the dissemination by the Mahatmas through H P Blavatsky and one or two others during the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries.

Aquarius is the first of the spiritual ages of the greater zodiac. It represents the next step in the evolution of our life wave. But for us to fulfil its requirements we must take that step as a matter of conscious choice. Not all of us are ready to make that choice at this time. It requires more than simply taking in a head full of knowledge. The knowledge that we get from books and lectures is second-hand, it is other people's words, like these you are reading now. Only the wisdom teachings can awaken that intuition, that 'tuition from within' that connects you to the higher truth, which is an essential part of your spiritual self. When Jesus said that heaven was within us he might just as well have said that the truth was within us, for they are the same. This Truth is a Universal Truth, Spiritual Wisdom, which transcends all.

Theosophy is a modern word for the Ancient Wisdom Teaching. It was used by Ammonius Saccas and his disciples in the third century A.D. In philosophical terms, this was 'Eclectic Philosophy' designed to reconcile all religions and philosophies

under a common system of ethics, based on eternal truths. The Greek, Diogenes places it at the heart of Egyptian philosophy attributing it to the cult of Amun, the God of wisdom. In India, its equivalent is Brahma-Vidya or Divine Knowledge.

We do not have to be ready to take the 'next step' to study Theosophy. Any study of theosophy will enhance our understanding of life and the inner workings of nature and therefore cannot fail to help us to live more meaningful lives. Spiritual processes are subtle and opening up to this knowledge from within is as gradual as the opening of a flower. We need only study the Ancient Wisdom as best we can and leave this process to its own ways.

In the meantime, we can use the knowledge aspect of the Theosophical Teachings to bring our personalities up to date. We all have outstanding issues left over from the ages of Taurus, Aries, and Pisces. These hangovers are like brick walls standing in the way of our self-development. They hold us back because they are strong influences determining the way that we see things. They are conditioning, prejudices, negative attitudes, and outworn ethics, which must be seen in the context of the light of the New Age.

Eric McGough is a long-standing TS member and a former National President for the Theosophical Society in England. He is a lecturer, teacher and author, and has developed various courses for theosophical students including spiritual self-development. Eric is a Trustee for the Theosophical Society in England and Director for the Diploma in Theosophy and the Higher Diploma in Theosophy.



THEOSOPHY

"Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection. Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent. Theosophy, finally, is the fixed eternal sun, and it's Society the evanescent comet trying to settle in an orbit to become a planet, ever revolving within the attraction of the sun of truth. It was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend toward it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities."

The Key to Theosophy, H. P. Blavatsky 1889.

THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS

The first proposition is that there is one underlying, unconditioned, indivisible Truth, variously called "the Absolute", "the Unknown Root", "the One Reality", etc. It is causeless and timeless, and therefore unknowable and non-describable: "It is 'Be-ness' rather than Being". However, transient states of matter and consciousness are manifested in IT, in an unfolding gradation from the subtlest to the densest, the final of which is physical plane. According to this view, manifest existence is a "change of condition" and therefore neither the result of creation nor a random event. Everything in the universe is informed by the potentialities present in the "Unknown Root," and manifest with different degrees of Life (or energy), Consciousness, and Matter.

The second proposition is "the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow". Accordingly, manifest existence is an eternally re-occurring event on a "boundless plane": "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing," each one "standing in the relation of an effect as regards its predecessor, and being a cause as regards its successor", doing so over vast but finite periods of time.

The third proposition related to the above is "The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul... and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—a spark of the former—through the Cycle of Incarnation (or 'Necessity') in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term." The individual souls are seen as units of consciousness (Monads) that are intrinsic parts of a universal oversoul, just as different sparks are parts of a fire. These Monads undergo a process of evolution where consciousness unfolds and matter develops. This evolution is not random, but informed by intelligence and with a purpose. Evolution follows distinct paths in accord with certain immutable laws, aspects of which are perceivable on the physical level. One such law is the law of periodicity and cyclicity; another is the law of karma or cause and effect.

SUMMARY

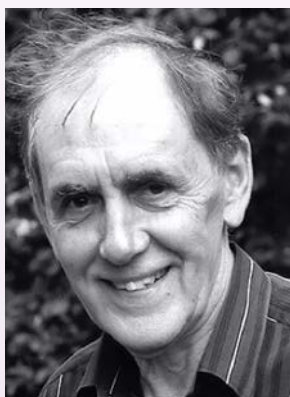
1. There is One absolute, eternal principle.
2. Creation is cyclic at all levels.
3. One Life, and all expressions of it must pass through all cycles according to Law.

The Secret Doctrine - The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy. H. P. Blavatsky 1888.



In Remembrance

ALAN PHILIP HUGHES



Alan passed away in July 2019 and his funeral took place on 1st August at Worthing, well-attended by family and friends and members of the Theosophical Society. It was with great sadness that I heard of the passing of my very dear friend, who I had known for over thirty years. He was a devoted Theosophist and passionate about the teachings, especially 'The Mahatma Letters'. He applied these principles to his daily life. Alan was a popular lecturer who combined insight with humour. Later in life he preferred to be more of a group facilitator, drawing out from others' truths they maybe didn't know they knew. With the help of a few other members, he was instrumental in the revival of Worthing Lodge.

He and his lovely wife Maureen were married for over fifty years and had three children and were blessed in later years by four grandchildren. Family life was very important to Alan and he was immensely proud of them. By profession, Alan was an architect and he designed their very welcoming family home, where he would happily discuss philosophical and Theosophical ideas on life. Alan was an open friendly man with a great sense of humour, although he had strong opinions on certain things. He loved to perform plays and sketches, a lot of which he wrote himself, and he was a regular at Summer School on the final evening's 'show night'.

Alan first came across Theosophy in New Zealand, where he and Maureen travelled when they were first married. From then on it became his lifetime's interest and work. Along with his lectures in the UK, Alan was a visiting lecturer at the Krotona School of Theosophy in Krotona and he also made a tour of the Australian Lodges. In 2002, he was invited to give the prestigious Blavatsky Lecture at the Summer School, titled "The Harvest of Life". In his lecture, he wrote that "*The desire to understand life's mysteries is with us*". He was fond of quoting from Ianthe Hoskin's single sheet which was produced for enquirers, with questions such as 'Do you ever ask yourself: *Who am I?, Why am I here?, Where am I going?* and giving the reply: "*You are here to discover who you really are, and to bring into activity all the powers that lie sleeping within you. Since you are in your true nature, a part of the divine life, you have within yourself all the attributes of divinity, infinite love, infinite wisdom, infinite power*".

Alan was a person who spent his life discovering the truth behind those words and helping others to do the same. He says in the Harvest of Life: "*A Truth is not that which one simply acknowledges, but that by which one lives, that by which one is transformed. A 'Truth' cannot be a truth for us unless it becomes- and remains – an aspect of our Being*". He will be sorely missed.

By Christine Lowe.

JOSEPHINE AVATI

Josephine (Jo) passed to higher service on 31 January 2019, aged 90 years. She joined Sidmouth Lodge in 1990 and not only hosted our lodge meetings in her beautiful Devon cottage for 25 years, but also served as custodian of our lodge library books. A former nurse and mother of four, Jo suffered a great deal of pain for much of her life especially during her later years. But despite her failing health and partial blindness, Jo's kindness, sense of humour and dedicated service to Theosophy were an inspiration to all who knew her.

Two of her daughters would also offer their services by making cakes for our lodge meetings and auditing our accounts. Jo became particularly good friends with Bertha Meyer who was our lodge president during the 1990's. Both ladies were of similar age, had much in common and shared a great friendship for many years. Jo loved children and as well as enjoying her own grandchildren, she was delighted when my children were born and became very much part of my growing family. When my daughters were small Jo would come to their birthday tea parties and every ballet show they performed in. Jo's brother used to play piano for the dancing school and my father used to play at our tea parties and Jo would not have missed any of it for the world.

Jo was a very private, modest person, always ready to support her family and help her friends. A great student of Theosophy, her dauntless courage and determination in the face of her difficult illness and her desire to serve despite her daily challenges makes Jo one of the most remarkable yet humble Theosophists I have personally known. It was an honour to have your friendship Jo and we shall remember you always with great fondness.

Suzanne Claremont on behalf of Sidmouth Lodge.

YVONNE GILBRIDE (previously Yvonne Al-Ibrahim)



It is with great sadness that Yvonne left us on 27 November last year, 2019, after very long illnesses. The irony of her last few years was that Yvonne was a lively and vibrant member of the Theosophical Society with unbounded energy and enthusiasm. She was a long-standing member having joined the TS in 1985, initially at Coventry Lodge and subsequently joining Birmingham Lodge; and a former National Councillor. Yvonne was a keen student of Theosophy, a member of the Esoteric Section, a Deacon of the Liberal Catholic Church, a member of the Round Table, and she was also in Co-freemasonry. To name but a few examples of her breadth of interests.

The first time that I met Yvonne was way back in 1992 at the Friends Meeting House in Coventry. The occasion was a talk given by the late Ianthe Hoskins based on a booklet called 'Out of the Silence' by James Rhodes. This was my first contact with the Theosophical Society, so I was a little apprehensive about what to expect. "Come and sit down by Yvonne", said the Lodge President (Patricia Winstanley). So, I sat down next to Yvonne and straight away I knew that she was someone special. Yvonne, as well as being a fully qualified physiotherapist, was also a wife, mother of two and had a keen interest in travel. She felt that she had a particular connection to Egypt - an affinity with all things Egyptian.

The Yvonne we knew encompassed all the qualities of always being positive in life, to be of good cheer, think good thoughts, to be the best you can be and to do your best. During her trip to the

Krotona Institute in America, a residential community of Theosophical Society members dedicated to service and which helps students deepen their understanding of theosophy and encourages a spiritually oriented life; she chose to give a lecture on “The Third Eye”. Yvonne always dressed very smartly, particularly with her hat, looking like a Hollywood star. Yet, if the truth be known, we all lost the Yvonne that we knew and loved a while ago, but her time in the physical world was not yet up. As Rumi states so eloquently:

*Be quiet now and wait
It may be that the Ocean One
The One we desire so to move into and become,
Desires us out here on land a little longer
Going our sundry roads to the shore’.*

She enjoyed a very happy marriage to her devoted second husband, Nigel, with whom she shared an all too brief time where they shared their mutual love of travel, before her tragic series of strokes cut this short. I must pay tribute to the devotion of her husband, who had dedicated himself totally to nursing and caring for Yvonne. Our thoughts go out to him now as he adjusts to a new life without his beloved Yvonne. Nigel’s strength and strength of character was tested to the utmost. No-one could have been more faithful, more dedicated, more caring, done more for Yvonne or suffered more than Nigel did. It has not gone unnoticed or will ever be forgotten. Yvonne will forever be in our hearts.

To finish, another quote from Rumi:

*“Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes.
Because for those who love with heart and soul, there is no such thing as separation”.*

On behalf of Yvonne’s friends and TS members in Coventry and Birmingham.

MARY HEWLETT

Our Mother departed this life on 26th March 2020 at the age of 104. Her passing was a peaceful end to a life devoted to pacifist principles (she protested at Greenham Common and was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation). She had a deep concern for others, both for those she knew and those beyond her immediate circle. Our Mother approached life’s challenges with forbearance and patience. She was a serious individual who, whilst a lifelong member of the Church of England, was blessed with an enquiring mind which led her along many paths, one of which directed her to Theosophy.

Our Mother embraced Theosophical principles, reading widely on the subject. She valued friendships and insights gained through her membership of the Society, as much as possible attending meetings at Winchester. A vegetarian since her early years, our Mother discovered Mazdaznan cookery and this and a firm belief in the ability of the body to heal itself, influenced her attitude and practices toward maintaining her own health. Crossword puzzles and a refusal to be beaten, were an abiding passion which she doggedly pursued.

Being of a quiet and thoughtful nature, our Mother was often to be found either reading – she had a love of classical literature; or writing well-considered and beautifully constructed letters to her family and many friends. To receive a letter was one of Mum’s pleasures – she kept every one for repeated re-reading and enjoyment.

Since 2008, I have known Mary Hewlett and have been in regular written communication with her since then. During the intervening time I benefited from her wisdom and love of Theosophy. My last hand-written letter from her was in 2017 and she was still able to write her name. Earlier, her Daughter had been enlisted to act as her scribe and Frances took dictation when her Mother wished to speak to me, and Mary always signed it.

Throughout our correspondence Mary's personality shone through her writing. We wrote to each other, mainly about our studies of Theosophy, and which areas we were presently looking at closely. Mary had much wisdom to share. I had written to her and was reading one of A.E. Gardiner's wonderful books. Mary told me she had met him in the garden at Tekels Park and although he was very old by then the conversation had been very interesting and lively.

Mary was a well-rounded personality and studied the lives of the famous musicians and other historical personalities she could learn from. She told me that Theosophy was her foundation which helped her when she looked at the worldwide religions. Mary called me her Theosophical Friend and what joy she brought to me. In 2018, Frances sent me a photograph of Mary celebrating her 103rd Birthday. Her eyes were still sparkling out at the world. In March Mary left to continue on her "journey of Necessity". I was blessed to have Known her during this lifetime.

By Mary's daughter Frances and a friend.

MARY ANDERSON



Mary died on the afternoon of 14 April 2020 after living in a Care Centre in Bournemouth, England, ever since her return to the UK from Adyar in 2008. Throughout her life, Mary served in many posts for the TS including for the International Theosophical Society, as International Secretary and Vice President, and for many years she was Secretary of the European Federation of the TS. Mary also lectured widely for the Society. She will be fondly remembered for her kind, gentle, soft spoken and humble nature; for her knowledge of Theosophy and the many talks she gave using different languages in diverse countries, and for the articles she wrote for the international journal 'The Theosophist' and elsewhere; and for her contributions at many conventions.

In conversation, Mary was quietly spoken and truly unassuming in her outward nature which without any kind of artifice, concealed a great depth of knowledge and wisdom. The shining light of her being was only too willing to serve the world and the TS, to which she gave a lifetime of service. She was frail by the time she came to live permanently in the UK, but this did not stop her from giving an occasional lecture, until she was unable to travel, or keeping in touch with her friends in Europe and around the world. As someone close expressed on her passing: *"a person who served well and passed through when it was time"*.

Mary was remembered in the TS global meditation - today at the time of writing, and many will continue to remember her beautiful soul, gentle kindness and cheerful loving personality which touched those she met.

By Mary's family and friends.



Madame Blavatsky At A Distance

J. Campbell Ver Planck

It was in the spring of 1885 that I first heard the name of H. P. Blavatsky and the word 'Theosophy'. We were at luncheon, and my hostess began opening her mail. She tossed one pamphlet impatiently aside, with the remark: "Why do they send me that? I am not a Theosophist.". What is a Theosophist queried I. A follower of Madame Blavatsky's Eastern Teachings. And pray who is this Madame Blavatsky?

With an exclamation at my ignorance, an ignorance caused by circumstances which had removed me from all touch with the world of thought, my friend handed the discarded pamphlet to me, saying: "Read that and you will know her". *Prophetic remark!* That was the Report of the Society of Psychic Research, and through it I did come to know her. Read with care, it left two distinct impressions upon my mind.

First. My people on both sides had been lawyers for generations. I was accustomed to hearing testimony discussed. The circumstantial nature of the evidence; its fragmentary character so the insufficiency of the testimony so the inadequacy of proof: the fact that a single witness, sent out for the purpose of discovering suspected fraud, and a witness whose account of his proceedings showed credulity and want of equipoise, all combined to fill me with surprise that any body of men should consent to issue matter so feeble as their deliberate judgement. The Report bore no evidence to my mind save that of an immense prejudice, a predetermination to arraign and condemn.

The second impression left upon me related to Madame Blavatsky herself. I saw trace of her immense activity, her intellectuality, her work and her influence. Evidently here was a power, whether for good, or for evil. Either she was an adventuress far surpassing all the world had ever

known, an original adventuress who slaved for intellectual progress and rule as others slave for nothing, not even for gold, or she was a martyr. I could see no means between. The force of her character took hold upon my imagination, and caused desire to know what were the teachings for which this woman braved alone: condemnation, poverty, and persecution; but also the laughter of two continents, that laughter which is the deadliest weapon of the nineteenth century.

So great impatience was engendered in me, so intense was my interest in the problem before me, that I went that same afternoon to hear a talk given by Mr Arthur Gebhard in a private salon, and all I heard convince me, as by illumination, that the Theosophical teachings filled a life-long want of my nature; that they alone could reconcile me to Life and to Death.

As these teachings shed their beneficent light upon my path, I abandoned, so far as conscious thought was concerned, the fascinating Blavatsky puzzle. The attempt to solve her character ended. I had started an intellectual amusement; I had found a great Truth, found a hint of the Holy Grail, and all else was forgotten in this. "It matters not what Blavatsky is", I exclaimed; "Theosophy is the Truth, and Truth is what avails; its adherents are nothing. It was only later on, as the philosophy opened out before me, that I discovered within myself, quite by chance, as it were, a profound, a passionate gratitude to that messenger who had dared all things, given all things, endured all things to bring this priceless and eternal gift to the Western world. She was my spiritual mother, my benefactor and my guide.

In the light of this thought all lesser ones were swallowed up. The need of understanding her character disappeared then, to emerge later on. For the moment she was only, to me, that soul to whom I owed the most. This indebtedness no less knowledge of her untiring and enormous labours, seemed to spur me on to such imitation as I could compass. For ever the idea that the only possible return I could make to my benefactress was to give to others that bread of life which

she had given me, urged me to steadfast action. I seemed to feel, across the intervening distance, the vast surge of her activity, and as a thing to be sensed in all ways. It was as if what she had given was so vital that it germinated within me; a life-impulse was imparted by her soul to mine. I never had the same experience with any other person or teaching. Only those who have passed through it can know the reality of the 'multiplication of energy' as possessed by certain great souls. That which Keely has demonstrated to modern science – that the friction of inter-etheric action, and the play of molecule, atom against atom, *liberates* force instead of decreasing it, was here proven to me, upon the psychic plane and from a distance, by the energetic action of her soul upon mine. It was tangible, verifiable; it had a pulse, ran through a scale alternated but never waned.

It was only at a later stage that the desire to understand Madame Blavatsky returned. The immediate cause of this emergence was the attack made upon her. I felt a need to justify her, not alone to the world, but to myself. That is, I believed in her. But I wanted to be able to put the grounds for that belief very clearly, to give reason (as well as intuition) for it. I found myself amply able to do this, and for a very simple reason. It became at once evident to me that the explanation of the personality of Madame Blavatsky was to be found in the philosophy taught by her.

Message and messenger are one and the same thing in the laws of the supra-natural, where, as Drummond puts it, cohesion is the law of laws. *A person may teach a truth and yet may not be that truth, by virtue of living it.* But s/he cannot impart a truth in its vitality, so that it fructifies – an energetic impulse of power – in other lives, unless he possesses that life-impulse by reason of having become it. S/he cannot give what they do not have. For example: after deducting, as unproven, a number of reports concerning HPB – reports which time has abundantly disproven; I found that those hints of magnetic-etheric laws given by the Eastern School, would explain many of her words or ways, as endeavours to set up, alter, contract or expand given vibrations in the nerve-aura, or in the ether, both of which are dynamic agents of vast power when acted upon by certain sound-combinations known to the Adept.

It was not, for instance the philological meaning of the word she spoke which she intended to take effect upon the hearer, but its tone, or its sound, or its vibratory ratio, which set up effects upon the inner planes and met conditions therein existing which she alone could see and use to helpful ends. She always acted from the plane of the Real, and we had only physical senses wherewith to gauge her spiritual action, hence our failure. The fact that soul is independent of body, leaving only a residuum of force and reflected consciousness to run the body, accounted for other peculiarities and so on through the list.

Nowhere could I find incongruity when I studied her from the standpoint of the inner and less unreal planes, and when I could not follow her mighty nature, I could still discern that, being what it was, it could only exist by virtue of going with the Law and not against it. When in addition, I allowed for my own ignorance of Law and those sub-rays called nature's laws or forces, the problem was answered. The fact of her existence thus became the most powerful factor of mine. Where I did well, she inspired me; she, and what she gave forth. Where I did ill was where I departed from the philosophy and from her example.

I never met her, never looked into her eyes. Words cannot picture regret. But after a time, she wrote to me of her own precedent and motion, as one who responds from afar to the longing of a friend. Prompt reply if I asked help for another, silent only to the personal call full of pity and anguish for the mistaken, the deserter, the suffering; solicitous only for the Cause, the Work, so I found her always. Although she had a lion heart, it bled; but it never broke. The subtle aroma of her courage spread overseas, invigorated and rejoiced every synchronous heart, set us to doing and to daring. Knowing thus her effect upon our lives, in its daily incentive to altruistic endeavour, truth and virtue, we can smile, at all alien testimony. Only from kindred virtues do these virtues spring. She could never have strengthened us in these things if she had not been possessed of them in abundant measure.

To quote the words of one who lived in the house with her: *"They may say what they please about her personality. I never knew a better one. It had the sturdiness and dignity of the druidic motto:*

"The Trust against the World". Although in flesh she remained unknown to me, she alone of the world's leaders gave me Truth, taught me how to find it, and to hold it 'against the world'. The soul that can work such a miracle at a distance is no minor ray; it is one of the great Solar Centres that die not, even though for a time we miscall it Helena Blavatsky.

Mrs J. Campbell Ver Planck was an author and poet, and a regular contributor to the early theosophical magazine *'The Path'* most notably during the years to 1887 and 1889.



Image above: 'Quiet Dawn' Yasutomo Kato 2016, Tahara, Aichi, Japan. Public domain courtesy of the photographer.

Songs of the Unseen

J. Campbell Ver Planck 1887

I. EFFLUX AND INFLUX.

When Brahma opes his golden door,
What ambient shapes of Life and Light,
What radiant tides of Being pour
With song into the dazzled night!
The winds that fashion worlds take flight,
Glad heralds of the Sons of Might;
And dancing stars trip on before
When Brahma opes his golden door.
When Brahm would close his gates supreme,
With Life's vast ebb his halls are strown.
Thunders, and powers, and forms that teem,
Fear to be shut in space alone.
Along the meteoric foam
World after world comes shuddering home.
The last pale hours slip swift between
And Brahm hath closed his gates supreme.

II. RECOLLECTION

When from mysterious spheres outflows
A Voice that calls my hidden name,
The world's strong ties like bubbles break
Against its ancient claim.
"Have I forgot thee? Never!
No Age our bond can sever.
I love thee now, as I have ever,
And ever shall, forever."
*In vain my heart seeks earthly homes,
In vain my thought declares me free.
Those mighty tones sweep o'er my soul,
And they are one with me.
"Can'st thou forget me? Never!
What power the bond can sever?
Then love? me now, as thou hast ever,
And ever shalt, forever."*

III. ENVOI

*When Brahma opes his golden door
Within the soul, rich visions soar:
But desolation reigns, I ween,
When Brahm hath closed that gate Supreme.*

Gods of Becoming

Richard Dell

Faiths, such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam,
released us from our fear of the ancient gods of
power and indifference. Yet still we make those
newer faiths vehicles of fear.

In the beginning, there was fear.
In the beginning, there was Us.
In the beginning, there was Them.

In the beginning we were weak.
In the beginning, They were mighty.
In the beginning, we were humans;
In the beginning, They were Gods.

We bowed to the Gods in the beginning,
Because in the beginning we feared the Gods.
We craved favours of the Gods in the beginning,
And the Gods granted us their favours:
As of whim.

We were the playthings of the Gods, in the
beginning,
And in the beginning the Gods played:
With us.

But then the beginning became the becoming,
And in the becoming we found new Gods.
We found caring Gods, and loving Gods.
Gods of rightness and compassion,
Gods no longer given to whim.

These were Gods we could love.
These were Gods we could trust.
But in the becoming there was Us.
So in the becoming there was fear.
The fear was not in the Gods.
For the mightiness of the Gods of becoming,
Was in Their rightness and compassion.

The fear was in Us

So we made them into vengeful Gods,
And jealous Gods.
We made them not out of the Gods;
We made them out of ourselves.
In the becoming there was fear,
And that fear that was Us,
Was our tragedy

And in every becoming to come,
That will be our fear.
That we make of our Gods what we will:
As of whim.

Yet, the Gods of rightness and compassion,
Are now known to us.
And the nature of us is made known to us too,
And the nature of us, through our tragedy,
Need not be our tragedy.

The becomings that are to come
Can be our tragedy
Or our salvation.

Poem No. 36 from 'Stars in our Souls', by Richard Dell.



Image: Illustration from 'Heroes of the Dawn',
The Macmillan Co. 1914 (1910). Public domain.

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Contributors should make sure their articles have been proof-read by a competent person prior to submission, to ensure correct grammar and spelling, for clarity of style and reasoned argument etc. Consideration should be given to the use of definitive statements to avoid stating as fact that which is actually speculation. Note: we receive occasional requests for articles to be reprinted in other theosophical magazines around the world, so if you do not consent to your article being reprinted please notify the Editor with your submission.

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2. To encourage the study of comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

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