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Editorial

As we go to print, time rolls forward towards the end of the annual cycle for the year. Many in the world still labour under the weight of the coronavirus pandemic which despite its twists and turns has not yet reached a diminishing cycle. My heart goes out to everyone who has been seriously affected by its treacherous journey.

So much else in the world is also in need of healing and we can all play our part. As the esoteric science teaches, our internal reactions by their very nature produce emotions, thoughts and actions, and those vibrations have the ability to create or destroy. To create mischief and add to the lower vibrations in the world, or create the higher vibrations of kindness, goodwill, love and spirituality, which add to the light and destroy the dark. Either way, thought energy is a powerful means of transformation. An aspect of life of which most are unaware, and many do not take seriously.

HPB tells us: "*The 'Divine Thought' does not imply the idea of a Divine thinker. The Universe, not only past, present, and future – which is a human and finite idea expressed by finite thought – but in its totality, ... the absolute being, with the Past and Future crystallized in an Eternal Present, is that Thought itself reflected in a secondary or manifest cause.*"¹ And elsewhere, she refers to an allegory in Chinese philosophy: "*seven choirs of celestial spirits were exiled upon earth, which 'brought a change in all nature, heaven itself bending down and uniting with earth'.*"²

There is a lot of loving kindness in the world and a great deal of the opposite. This reflects the 'dual nature' in each and every person, symbolised by the two faces of Janus. To create lasting change, it is first necessary to 'bend upwards', and set our sights on the spiritual so that 'heaven' and 'earth' can become united in our own nature.

Susan Bayliss
Editor

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Contents

Editorial	2
<i>Susan Bayliss</i>	
Seasons Greetings	3
Our Waking Consciousness	5
<i>George Arundale</i>	
Tranquillity and Transformation	13
Vegetarianism and Theosophy	14
<i>Thomas Ramsay</i>	
Kindness and the Theosophist	19
<i>James Rainbird</i>	
A Note on the Great Invocation	22
<i>Robert Woolley</i>	
Diploma in Theosophy	25
The Sevenfold Planes of Nature	27
<i>Susan Bayliss</i>	
The Cycle of Life	31
<i>Colin Price</i>	
Silence	41
Applied Theosophy	43
<i>H. S. Olcott</i>	

Contributions and articles in Esoterica do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or those of the Theosophical Society.

¹. Secret Doctrine, Vol I., p 61, Unabridged Verbatim Edition, Theosophical University Press.

². Secret Doctrine, Vol II., p 486, Op Cit.

Photo facing page: British Robin, *SMB* 2021.



*Wishing You a Very
Healthy and Peaceful
2022*

Chirping,
In such a musical way,
With your brown and black body
And your bright orange belly.
Listening to you,
My day turns
Into a graceful song.
I feel like you
The robin.

By Mannix7



Our Waking Consciousness

A Lecture on Consciousness

George Arundale

If I were to endeavour to trace in detail all the stages through which the evolving life of the LOGOS¹ moves onwards to its destiny, I should not only need many more lectures than the one allotted to me, but also a keener vision than that which at present I possess. Within the limits of one short hour the survey must necessarily be broad, and much knowledge must already be assumed. I shall, however, try to put my subject as simply as possible - confining myself to broad statements which I believe to be of general application, though often requiring modification as regards details and special conditions.

To consider briefly, the processes by which we acquire what is known as our waking consciousness, let us think for a moment of the LOGOS as an immense Flame of light, one great all-embracing Consciousness, existing, perhaps, as a spark in some still more vivid light, but in itself complete, cognising its own perfection on its own plane. Living in itself as an undivided whole, this Flame wills to live consciously in all its innumerable parts; for there is no ultimate perfection of a whole until each smallest part attains the stature of the whole of which it has been a part. And so, this Flame - existing in its own Divinity, or dwelling (as Theosophists might say) on the divine plane of nature - begins to throw out its consciousness, to evolve from itself the planes of its nature, on each of which its constituent parts shall evolve as the Flame itself has evolved in the dim, and distant past.

The Flame reproduces the conditions of its own evolution, conditions which it has built up into its own nature, and spreads them outwards - through an act of will spoken of in Theosophical literature as the Third Life-Wave - as the various planes of nature, in some of which we are living consciously. Out rushes the life of the Flame, joyous in the task it is destined to accomplish; and the busy activity, sending out the parts on this journey towards self-conscious Divinity, is

seen in the myriad sparks scintillating and shining in their unconscious splendour. These sparks, Monads, consciousnesses individualised from the one divine Consciousness, are the future Flames destined to bring forth future universes; and you and I, sparks of our own Divinity, are travelling on the path which, leading to our own perfection, shall bring forth many perfections in all the life which has gathered round us on our upward climb.

The Flame itself, living on the plane of Flame, in that region of nature where Divinity alone may dwell, sends down its life on to the plane of sparks - the monadic, separates itself into its constituent parts, each of which is a reflection at a lower level of itself on the higher. Just as the Flame itself has within it the threefold aspect of its own development, the period of its creation, the period of its growth, the period of its accomplishment - Sat, Chit, Ânanda², so the Monads, parts growing into the semblance of the whole from which they come, not only receive from the LOGOS the conditions of their growth, but reflect from the threefold aspect as Manas, Buddhi and Âtmã³, reflections which manifest as life on the mñasic, buddhic and ãtmic⁴, planes of nature. So, consciousness, residing as to the part unconsciously on the plane of Divinity, feels its way outwards, first to the plane of nature in which the Divine is seen in its individualised aspect - the monadic - then ever onwards through the ãtmic, buddhic and higher mñasic⁵ planes of pure Spirit (Will), Wisdom, or Intuition, in its highest form, and Mind in its aspect of Creative Activity.

We must remember that all the while the divine Flame is behind the monadic spark, just as the Monad is behind the vestures of these three planes which it has assumed on its road towards the outermost circumference of manifestation drawn by its Divinity. The combined vesture of the ãtmic, buddhic and higher mñasic planes is generally spoken of as the jīvãtmã⁶, or Ego, for the life enshrouded in the matter of these three planes is the only reflection of the ultimate

Image facing page. 'Agni Yoga'. Diptych, Nicholas Roerich. Right part, 1928 (adapted). Public domain image. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.



Divinity which consciousness in the densest planes shall know for ages upon ages of slow though steady growth.

But the outpouring of life does not stop when the higher mānasic plane has been reached, for the divine Flame has made other manifestations of itself in which its consciousness is to function, that it may know of the entirety of its nature. And so, the jīvātmā, working through the Second Life-Wave of the LOGOS, sends its consciousness outwards through the second division of the mānasic plane - the lower - through the astral, finally reaching the physical, which is the densest plane of nature, the outermost circle of the life of the LOGOS.

So the Flame, which is Divinity unmanifested, becomes Divinity in manifestation, stretching its consciousness to the extreme limits which its force can reach. But the consciousness living in the planes built by one Life-Wave, and growing through the instrumentality of another, is not self-conscious save on the plane of its own Divinity, and then only as the undivided whole. So, we might say that this Flame, or LOGOS, is Self-conscious in its own Divine Nature, and that evolution consists in IT becoming, in the aspect of separated units of consciousness (Monads), Self-conscious in each portion of Being, so that the part may become as the whole already is, and may, in the fulness of its own time, send out its Life-Waves to multiply itself into many.

It would take too long, and would indeed be beyond my power, to trace the life as it proceeds downwards, or rather outwards, in its descent into matter. Let us take it at its turning-point in the mineral kingdom, from which it

proceeds upwards through the vegetable, into the animal, and thence into the human, gaining self-consciousness on each plane as it ascends, or as it turns inwards, reaping the harvest which the Third Life-Wave has provided for its garnering, finally meeting the last outpouring from the LOGOS, "Heaven kissing Earth", which welcomes back the wanderer to its newly-gained self-conscious Divinity. I have called the mineral kingdom the turning-point, because, while consciousness still sleeps in the bosom of its own infinity while living in its coarsest sheath, there is the faintest sign of the dawning of that self-consciousness for which it has made its long and weary pilgrimage. It sleeps, but it stirs uneasily, as we may stir uneasily in some vivid, strange and fearful dream; and Professor Bose of Calcutta has shown in the mineral these stirrings, faint preludes as they are to the mighty stirrings of God awakened in humanity.

The earthquake, the storm, the rumblings of the volcano - these are the life-signs of the mineral, by which the Monads, in "the silence and the darkness" of their existence on their own plane, first hear of the approach of the messengers they have sent out to bring them knowledge of their surroundings. Busy indeed is the life as it feels itself in the kingdom of which it is the king, and as the forms heave and roll and clash, are rent asunder or crash together, consciousness stirs, little thrills begin to send their wavelets inwards, and the varieties of experiences begin to mark out consciousness, so that the Monads, silently watching the life as it grows, gradually feel their self-conscious way into separated forms. In this way does the consciousness within respond to the impacts upon its vehicles, and as the response begins to grow more articulate, more coherent, the mineral form breaks up, so that the wanderer from its divine home may gain more experience than the fetters of the mineral kingdom permit - having experienced the fetters, having lived self-consciously within their narrow limits.

A very poor self-consciousness, you will say. Yes, but it was the beginning without which the physical consciousness could not have come; without which the circulation of our blood, the beatings of the heart, the automatic birth and decay of cells - now all sub-conscious, but, under other conditions, within what may

be called the then “waking” consciousness — would claim an attention which now we may concentrate on an inner plane of consciousness. In the mineral kingdom physical consciousness reigns supreme, and there are only the very slightest evidences that the consciousness is being pushed inwards to the astral plane and coming thence as a reflection into the physical. But even these slightest tremors imperatively demand a finer vehicle, and the call of the life, which is the master of its mineral form, is for some more separated existence than the mineral kingdom affords.

Then it is that the life flows into the vegetable world on its upward path, and the consciousness, hitherto sleeping, begins to dream the dreams that precede waking, and the stirring of the consciousness on the astral plane, while unconscious in its own plane, sends out small pleasure-pain judgments to which the finer matter of the vegetable forms more readily responds. But the seat of consciousness, the dwelling-place of its waking state, is still the physical plane and the physical plane alone, and indeed its waking condition is rather that of an awareness, a growing awareness, than that of the perception of the animal and of the human being.

Passing through the experiences appropriate to the vegetable kingdom, the life presses itself still more self-consciously to the inner plane - the astral - receiving, as a result of its increased pressure, more decided impacts on its physical form, more definite repulsions and attractions. Then comes a further step upwards into the animal kingdom, in which the channels, open between the astral and the physical worlds, give the animals not merely astral counterparts to their physical bodies, but astral bodies, in some of which, as regards the highest animals, self-consciousness has at last found its dwelling-place. Here in the animal world memory is the stirring of the mental permanent atom, around which a body is gradually being built as the life presses ever inwards.

Memory below the animal kingdom need not be considered from the standpoint of our present subject, but in the animal it begins to provide the mental consciousness which mankind will need to use. In the case of the animal world



the waking consciousness, while in the physical brain, is made up not only of the ordinary physical-plane impacts, but also of the workings of the life on the astral plane in its physical manifestation. We shall not speak of the animal being self-conscious on the astral plane, for that would mean that it is as conscious of the astral world as it is of the physical world. But it may safely be said that in its waking physical state, it lives to a large extent under the sway of the impacts of its astral body translated into physical terms, such impacts being either from the surrounding astral world or reactions from physical-plane conditions.

The same remarks apply to any mental impressions to which it may be able to respond. Still less has it any self-consciousness on the mental plane of the mental world around it, but it has faint stirrings in the mental permanent atom, due either to impacts from its own sphere or to those from the plane next below.

In the case of the animal, the earthquakes and the shocks which were referred to in connection with the mineral kingdom, are represented in the passions and emotions which come from the awakening of its astral consciousness. And some day, when a portion of the consciousness which has been sent down into manifestation has gained sufficient experience, has become strong and comparatively self-conscious, it reaches upwards through some great and unexampled stirring to the Third Great Force, or Life-Wave, on which the Monad comes to assume more definite and complete control of its lower vehicles through itself as the *jīvātmā*, in its manifestation on the three higher planes of nature - the higher *mānasic*, the *buddhic*,



and the ātmic. On the plane of Manas does this great meeting take place, the individualisation of consciousness, so that the Monad, through its ego, abides in its own separated form, the first clear image which has up to this time existed of its future vehicle. The Monad assumes charge of its own separated portion of consciousness, and evolves through it into a Flame which is the likeness of the whole from which it sprang.

Thus does the animal become human, and thus do we see that their waking consciousness is composed of their astral and mental consciousness working in the physical consciousness which only emerges above the line of unconsciousness when its harmony is disturbed - with the result that it ceases to function automatically - or when through certain practices of Yoga it is deliberately brought within the region of the waking consciousness.

I have already suggested that it is necessary to discriminate between consciousness functioning self-consciously on any plane, and the reflection of the stirrings of consciousness from the higher to the lower, or from the lower to the higher. Each plane of nature, as we have already been told in previous lectures, consists of seven sub-planes, each sub-plane increasing in density and coarseness as there is approach to the plane below. The result is that the upward-pressing life has first to make its way through the denser regions of a plane before it may reach the finer levels. So, the primeval human, the savage, receives the impacts which give the astral portion of their own individual waking consciousness from the lower divisions of the astral plane; for the life, though it has just

penetrated into the mental world above, has not yet made the channels which shall convey the conscious message from the higher regions of the astral. When living in the physical body, when the seat of consciousness is normally in the physical brain, the ordinary savage is hardly awake at all in their astral vehicle, even during the sleep condition; and it is not until death comes that they may be said to live, and then only for a short time, self-consciously on the astral plane. The individual who is more highly evolved, however, has represented in their normal waking consciousness not only the higher regions of the astral plane, but also the lower regions of the mental plane. And as they gain mastery over these lower regions, through asserting the dominance of the higher, their waking consciousness gradually begins to include a knowledge of the world of these two planes, as they already have a knowledge of the world of the physical plane.

In the ordinary waking consciousness of the average human being, they are their feelings, they are their thoughts, for the Self in these regions has not yet been distinguished from the Not-Self; but as the consciousness retires inwards it is seen apart from its vehicles, and so they become the master of their mind, the master of their desires; for they see that these are but their bodies which, in the infinite future, when themselves ideal and perfect, will use as planes of nature, in which will function with unity in their separated aspects - divinity in its resultant sparks.

The activity, the stirring, of the astral and mental consciousness depends ultimately, of course, upon the great upward sweep towards the goal of unity. But the struggle of the stirring is of interest, in that we clearly see how the qualities of the downward stretching into matter differ in quality from those appropriate to the tending upwards towards Spirit. The astral constituents, for example, emotions of all kinds - moral, aesthetic, personal - work through the nervous system, into the brain-cells of the physical vehicle; and their effect is either to press the life backwards (at least to keep the life from flowing upwards), or to push it upwards until it reaches Buddhi. So, the mind, which works through the astral on to the physical brain, is, if the emotions are good, pressed forward so that

it touches the buddhic level of consciousness through the causal plane (the higher mānasic), while, if the emotions are of what we call the passionate variety, the mind is drawn downwards and becomes entangled with the body, thus producing a condition which is often dangerous.

It must also be noticed that the activities of the mental body especially, caused by changes in the mental plane consciousness, depend for their reproduction in the physical brain upon the actual physical development of the brain itself. Before the age of seven years, for example, there is comparatively little inter-communication between the large nucleated cells of the brain and though the activities of the mental body may be quite considerable, they will not enter what is called the waking consciousness, which has its seat in the physical brain, because the brain has not yet grown so as to provide a vehicle of sufficient delicacy. Hence there is little in the way of reasoning before the age of seven, so far as the waking consciousness is concerned, though the power of observation will be well-marked and the senses of considerable acuteness.

We see, therefore, that the waking consciousness depends to a very considerable extent, I might almost say entirely, upon the development and condition of the physical brain. The astral constituents are those first brought clearly through, because these have been longer under control, or at least within the waking consciousness; and it is for this reason that the education of a child begins with observation and perception, and with training the sense of pleasure-pain, along the line of education, before the faculty of reasoning is sought to be established. As the child grows older, more and more constituents enter into the waking consciousness, as the brain learns to respond more clearly and gains in complexity in order to meet the ever-increasing demands of the stirrings of consciousness in the inner planes.

The physical brain, in fact, is like a musical instrument on which the jīvātmā plays, and the music s/he is able to make depends to a considerable degree upon the power of the instrument to respond accurately to their



intentions. So, within the waking consciousness, a disordered brain may distort the impressions from the inner planes, just as a piano which is out of tune will distort the music which it is desired to produce. The disorder of the brain may work in either of two ways. It may produce unrecognisable travesties of the realities beneath, or it may for the time - especially if over-strained - bring through visions of the inner glories which shall be a revelation to the outer world. But the disorder remains, and the risk of madness in either case is great, i.e. the risk of the brain being to so great an extent disordered that the waking consciousness consists only of distorted impressions from within and from without.

Let us now turn to the consideration of the abnormal conditions of the waking consciousness which are classified, in the programme of the present lecture, under the heading "Genius". We may roughly distinguish three very distinct types of genius, each having its own special source of manifestation, but all depending upon some special upward stirring, calling down from some finer plane of matter a response in terms of infinitely wider consciousness. The genius proper, for example, those who from time to time possesses sudden and far-reaching ideas, or who receive inspiration in the shape of creative forces showing themselves in invention, obtains this illumination from the higher mānasic plane, and is reproducing the activity of the ego on the plane of its activity - the causal. A flash of the causal-body consciousness comes down and

Image. Noor musical instrument. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

vivifies the whole mental process in a most extraordinary way, and we call this vivification or illumination genius.

It must be noticed, however, that a very highly organised brain is an indispensable preliminary to genius, for there must be the strong upward striving ere the downward response will be possible. And the fact that at our present stage of evolution the various brain-processes are by no means so completely developed as to provide a normal means of communication with the finer planes, can have the effect of causing genius to be unstable, because the brain itself is in a state of unstable equilibrium - now making its connection with the inner worlds, now losing it. The preliminary sparks and flashes, before the two poles of an electric magnet are carefully adjusted, will give us an idea of the way in which genius acts.

If the brain be very delicately organised, the pressure from within, while producing flashes of genius, may at times cause the vagaries of genius which are so familiar to us, and may give rise to certain aberrations or fixed ideas, which often seem so incongruous in a genius. The brain has not as yet become the perfect mechanism which will afford a perfect means of communication between the higher and the lower, and the aberrations, vagaries and flashes of genius are the signs of the struggle of the soul towards a self-consciousness wider than those it has hitherto known. Perhaps we may even think that they are the counterparts on the higher levels of the violent physical upheavals of which I spoke in connection with the mineral kingdom.

The second aspect of genius to which I would draw attention is that of the saint, one who lives from time to time in those raptures and ecstasies described in Professor James' Varieties of Religious Experience. In this case, it is not the causal consciousness which is brought down, but the consciousness working on the buddhic plane. The higher emotions working in the higher levels of the astral plane send out their call to the consciousness stirring on the buddhic plane, and the result is an outpouring of buddhic consciousness, which still further stimulates the highest sub-planes of the astral and causes a rapture, the reflection of that aspect of the

unity which is the dominating influence of buddhic plane life. Here, as in the former case, the delicately balanced brain will not permit of the communication being complete and continuous, and so in this case also there are the same aberrations and vagaries referred to in the former condition of genius.

The third aspect is that of the hero, one who appeals to the ātmic consciousness, with the result that a flash of ātmic consciousness enters the physical brain itself and causes the heroic action. Here also the brain must have considerable development, the result of action of a noble character in past lives. In this way the brain becomes specially sensitive to vibrations from the ātmic plane, and, in times of stress and of emergency, the appeal, ringing out with the force of many lives of action behind it, imperatively commands the flash of Âtmā to direct into what the world calls heroism the action which has to be performed. It is obvious in this case also that the aberrations referred to above must similarly be present, and the hero of the moment is by no means necessarily a hero in everyday life. At his existing stage of evolution, the appeal cannot be made continuously, and so the heroic stage can be reached but fitfully. With the seat of physical action, the brain proper, so inadequately developed, we must not imagine that the astral or mental consciousnesses themselves are deficient. These too must have reached a certain level, or the action could not be heroic, for astral and mental constituents enter into heroism, just as astral and mental constituents enter into the being of the saint. But the dominant factor in each case determines the mode of the expression of the genius, of that higher condition of the waking consciousness which with us can be but fitful and spasmodic.

It now becomes increasingly apparent why, from one standpoint, the jīvātmā, the ego, the representation of the Monad, contains within itself the triple aspect of Âtmā, Buddhi, Manas. Each of these vehicles will respond, when the time comes, to the special direction given by the spark of the divine Flame to its growing self-consciousness, and each vehicle is itself a reflection of that triple aspect of the great Flame itself - Sat, Chit, Ânanda, or whatever other designations may be appropriate, under varying conditions of manifestation. We see, therefore,

that the triplicity of manifested consciousness enters into the life-stream flowing upwards to bring self-consciousness to its own Divinity, and that the triplicity, with one special branch dominant, is within the waking consciousness of the growing spark in an ever-increasing degree. From this we may conclude that, even at its earliest outpouring or manifestation, each Monad was born under some special aspect of the Divinity, as an individual is born under a special star; and we may expect that the full glory of the Flame in all its Self-conscious Divinity contains within itself a dominant sound, the sound of its own birth aspects.

It is not within my province to deal with the waking consciousness of a human being beyond the mortal bodies. Others will speak of the beauties of that waking consciousness which is the glorious possession of the soul which is nearing its perfection, of the waking consciousness which embraces the causal, or the buddhic, or the ātmic planes. These are of the immortal Individual, and we in the present lecture of the series are confined within the limits of the mortal person.

Let me, therefore, in conclusion, endeavour to begin the bridge which shall span the gulf between the mortal person and the immortal Individual, by making a few suggestions as to the control and preliminary development of that part of the waking consciousness which includes the astral and the mental consciousness.

We are concerned with three great departments in our ordinary waking consciousness: the mind, the emotions, the physical body. Most people, as I have already said, are their minds, are their emotions, are their bodies. But, as has been said in 'At the Feet of the Master', the body is our horse; and we may imagine ourselves as driving a team of three - the horse of the body, the horse of the emotions, and the horse of the mind. The "we" is each individual *jīvātmā* or ego, which is the reflection of the divine Flame, the "will" to manifest and to multiply. But we must drive, or we shall be dragged; and the science of growing life consists in the making of deliberate effort to hold and to control the forces of Nature, for such holding and controlling is the acquiring of self-consciousness. This effort is the science of Yoga⁷, Hatha Yoga⁸, when

begun from below, Rāja Yoga⁹ when begun from above, and in ordinary English we may speak of it as meditation.

Meditation may be said to consist in growing accustomed to the instrument in connection with which the meditation takes place, in gradually learning how to draw out from the instrument its various capacities and possibilities. And meditation therefore means deliberately and intelligently exercised attention from the higher to the lower. Creative attention is that which renders the various vehicles more sensitive to the finer vibrations from the less dense planes of nature; and it is this kind of attention through which our will must work, rather than through that form of attention which seeks to retard the process of self-consciousness by maintaining the coarser, denser forms of manifestation. It is our business, therefore, to direct the waking consciousness towards the higher, and not towards the lower, by being alert, in all our daily occupations whatever they may be, and in spending a certain amount of time each day in arousing the mind and the emotions at the command of the will. We do this by directing the thought and the feeling towards certain definite objects, through certain definite channels, and in this way the waking consciousness grows more alert, more self-conscious, and in its growth expands.

Meditation affects the mind by gradually endowing it with (i) one-pointedness, (ii) flexibility, (iii) obedience. Meditation affects the emotions by endowing them with serenity, by cultivating the higher emotions and by eradicating the lower. And the result of such a meditation, sedulously performed, is to give an alertness to the physical brain, and consequently a promptitude of action which is ever the mark of growing self-consciousness.

Such does consciousness work its way through sheath after sheath, first of matter of ever-increasing density, then of matter of ever-decreasing density, from the unconscious to the increasingly self-conscious. And as the Self becomes conscious on the various planes of manifestation, we withdraw inwards, leaving below the level of waking consciousness all that we have learned to master and to control. Inwards we retire, realising ourselves in plane



after plane of finer and finer matter, until the spark has become a Flame, which finally shines in all its glory on its own plane, as did the Flame from which it came. Then comes its turn to send out its waves of growth and power, that all the life within its nature, all the life below the level of its waking consciousness (which is the plane of its Divinity) may grow as the Flame itself has grown. So does the unconscious part, without whose presence the whole would not have become a whole, receive the reward of its service, blossoming out into a self-sufficient unity as the bud expands into the full-blown flower.

Dr George Sydney Arundale was born in December 1878 in Surrey, England. His mother died in childbirth, and he was adopted by his aunt, Francesca Arundale, who joined the Theosophical Society in 1881. George became a member in 1895 and from 1910 onwards he frequently addressed Theosophical Conventions and gave many lecture tours around the world. It is impossible in a few words to convey the tremendous work he did for the Theosophical Society and in wider service for humanity. He served as General Secretary for the TS in England (1915), later in Australia (1926), and also in India (1928), and in 1933 he was elected International President. From 1934 he began to work out a Seven Year Plan which included the development of Adyar, ensuring the solidarity of the Society, and the next year he launched a 'Straight Theosophy' Campaign, that encouraged the study of basic Theosophical principles, culminating in the Diamond Jubilee Convention at Adyar in 1935. Lodges

were urged never to forget their primary purpose of instructing members in Theosophy, using a language that could be understood. The competent and devoted workers in every Section carried the Society forward under his direction. But due to travel restrictions and other constraints during the years of the second world war, he devoted himself to the inner side of the work in an endeavour to assuage the suffering of mankind. He was a prolific writer and editor, writing many books and articles, and in 1935 he was presented with the Subba Row Medal for his contributions to Theosophical literature. (*Abridged from Theosophy Wiki*).

Notes

- ¹ Logos is a Greek word that means "word," "speech," "reason" or "account". H. P. Blavatsky talks about three Logoi: "the unmanifested 'Father,' the semi-manifested 'Mother' and the Universe, which is the third Logos of our philosophy or Brahmâ". These three Logoi can be seen as "the personified symbols of the three spiritual stages of Evolution". Yet all the three Logoi are one.
- ² Ânanda (bliss). Spirit or consciousness has three aspects: the reality of being, awareness of others, and joyful activity. In Hinduism those are called sat (being), chit (awareness), and ananda (bliss), and these three terms often run together as sat-chit-ananda to symbolize the unity of these three aspects.
- ³ Âtma, Spirit (the universal All) and Buddhi: the vehicle of Spirit, which together are the Monad; and Manas: Mind (the vehicle for the Egoic Consciousness). Higher Mind is linked to the Ego or individual and Lower Mind to the personality and emotions.
- ⁴ Âtmic is Cosmic consciousness. In the Atmic plane the Radiant One establishes the centres against which nothing can prevail. From these eternal focuses the Solar Universe unfolds.
- ⁵ Mānasic is from Manas the Sanskrit word for "mind", from the root man, "to think". The mental plane of consciousness or faculty of intelligence, as distinct from the lower nature of desires and emotion.
- ⁶ Jīvātmā refers to the individual spirit as opposed to the universal spirit or paramātmā, the difference between the two being just an illusion.
- ⁷ Yoga is a Sanskrit term derived from the root yuj "to join, to unite, to attach", which can be interpreted as "union of ātman (the individual Self) with paramātmā (the Universal Self)".
- ⁸ Hatha Yoga focuses on perfecting asanas (postures or exercises) and pranayama or breathing control, to increase the vital energy flow throughout the body.
- ⁹ Rāja Yoga is the practice of meditations as a means of leading to spiritual liberation.

Image: "Archetype Universe" illustration by James S. Perkins. From slide collection of Theosophical Society in America Archives.

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Full board - single occupancy: £300 (three nights)

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Day delegate: Friday and Saturday £32, Sunday £24.

All meals are vegetarian/vegan.

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Vegetarianism and Theosophy

Thomas Ramsay



From a Theosophical view it could be argued that the credo of the Society supports a vegetarian lifestyle. To wit: “...the realization that life, and all its diverse forms, human and non-human, is indivisibly one”. This is not a dogma; rather it is an acknowledgment of the oneness of all life, all sentient beings. And moreover, the spiritual sense of ONE.

Vegetarianism is a choice. Vegetarians follow a variety of paths; some choose to shun meat but may sometimes eat fish. Others are lacto-ovo vegetarians who eschew the consumption of red meat and poultry and fish, but consume dairy products, including milk, cheese and eggs. An extreme branch of vegetarianism is veganism. This lifestyle is one in which all meat, red and poultry, all fish, dairy products and even honey—are excluded from the diet, and the purchase of leather goods is not condoned either. The benefits of a vegetarian diet are well documented. Leadbeater wrote “...for I have lived without the pollution of flesh food—without meat, fish or fowl for the last thirty-eight years and I not only still survive, but have been during all that time in remarkably good health”, and goes on to say that young people who embrace vegetarians “are distinctly freer from disease”.¹ He also admits that he wishes to convert others to vegetarianism and hopes that “in the case of those who are studying Theosophy ... we may assume that the moral considerations, which I shall later adduce will sway them far more forcibly”.²

As Theosophists we espouse freedom of choice, as in matters of Religion, Philosophy, and Science, so my purpose is not to attempt to convert anyone to adopt a vegetarian diet, but merely to point out some obvious benefits, including the relief of suffering in the animal kingdom. For example, in the production of milk, calves are removed soon after birth and are possibly exported. The cow suffers dreadfully from the loss of her calf, calling out for days. Some nutritionists have said that dairy milk is not suitable for humans and can cause dilatory and inflammatory conditions. And any nutritionist worthy of the title will agree that nuts, peas, beans, legumes in general are by volume richer in protein than meat. Some will suggest that meat is not a natural food, and many diseases, e.g., gout, kidney problems, digestive issues owe their origins to a flesh-eating diet, and many have offered medical sources to support these claims.

There are economic considerations too. Approximately 15,000 gallons of water are required to produce one pound of beef; only 180 gallons for a pound of potatoes. This is reflected in the soaring cost of meat products at the grocery store. However, it must be noted that a vegan lifestyle does incur other costs but overall that lifestyle is more economically sound when the cost of medications is included. Some groups claim that meditation is more beneficial for those who eat cereals and plant foods. It certainly makes sense that when entering a peaceful meditative state, a bellyful of products obtained from a slaughterhouse is not conducive to realization of calm.

In addition, there are occult reasons to consider vegetarianism. That we need to show compassion to animal as well as our fellow humans is not debateable: “*The verist tyro in the holy science of occultism knows that all life is sacred and that without universal compassion there is no true progress*”.³ Thus, Spiritual benefits ensue from a vegetarian lifestyle. When we eat food it not merely nourishes our body but blends with our levels of existence. Food ingestion gives us energies and as we absorb these into our

bodies, they create life vibrations and patterns of Karma. *"It has been scientifically proven that plants react to thoughts - they are telepathic. If we take the energies of plants into our higher levels, we will then naturally develop intuition and other subtle perceptions"*.⁴

The ancient teachings of India are worth noting here. Embracing the mental aspect of vegetarianism in the Upanishads we read: *"Mind consists of food. That which is the subtle part of milk is churned and becomes butter. In the same manner, the subtle part of the food that is eaten moves upward and becomes mind. Thus, the mind consists of food"*.⁵

Annie Besant travelled the world carrying the banner of Theosophy and wrote about vegetarian and the implications of following a flesh-eating diet, commenting on her trip to Chicago:

"Notice the terror that strikes on them as they come within scent of the blood! See the misery, and the fright, and the horror with which they struggle to get away even from the turning down which they are being driven! Follow them, if you have the courage to do it, right into the slaughter-house, and see them as they are being slain, and then let your imagination go a step further, or, if you have the subtle power of sensing astral vibrations, look, and remember what you see: images of terror, of fear, of horror, as the life is suddenly wrenched out of the body, and the animal soul with its terror, with its horror, goes out into the astral world to remain there for a considerable period before it breaks up and perishes".⁶

Many notable Theosophists have provided commentary about vegetarianism, I would direct the reader to the work of Annie Besant on 'Vegetarianism in the Light of Theosophy'. Ms Besant describes many more aspects of Vegetarianism than I can cover here; and better by far! There are many other many famous people who are or were vegetarians too. Dr. Jane Goodall would not be a surprise. Voltaire, Gandhi, and modern celebrities such as Sir Paul McCartney, the list is long and varied. Let me close with some words by Albert Einstein:

"Although I have been prevented by outward circumstances from observing a strictly vegetarian diet, I have long been an adherent to the cause in principle. Besides agreeing with the aims of vegetarianism for aesthetic and moral reasons, it is my view that a vegetarian manner of living by its purely physical effect on the human temperament would most beneficially improve the lot of mankind".⁷

Theosophy allows and indeed welcomes freedom of choice in whatever religious or spiritual path one wishes to embrace. There is no elected official telling us what we must believe. This freedom of choice dispels any notion of dogma. Theosophy seeks to guide and counsel, to listen and share life experience. My personal experience is that Theosophy makes one a more thoughtful person. Likewise, with vegetarianism, the freedom to choose to what degree one wishes to adopt is a purely personal decision. Vegetarianism has been called 'compassionate eating' and as with Theosophy it can help us to embrace the one acknowledgment of life that joins us all, the invisible thread in the weave of life's pattern. The cosmic glue that binds us in one humanity.

Notes

¹ C.W. Leadbeater, Adyar pamphlet No.33. Vegetarianism and Occultism. Nov. 1913. TPH, Adyar, Chennai, India.

² Ibid.

³ Leadbeater, C.W. page 51-2, The Astral Plane 2008.

⁴ <https://ocoy.org/originalyoga/how-to-be-a-yogi/spiritualbenefits-of-a-vegetarian-diet/>

⁵ Chandogya Upanishad 6.5.4, 6.6.2,5.

⁶ Annie Besant "Vegetarianism in the Light of Theosophy". TPH, Adyar, India, 3rd edition 1932.

⁷ <https://ocoy.org/originalyoga/how-to-be-a-yogi/spiritualbenefits-of-a-vegetarian-diet/>



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The Theosophical Society is a worldwide organisation whose primary object is the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction, based on the realisation that all life is One. Founded in 1875, the Society draws together those of goodwill whatever their religious affiliation (if any), social status, gender, or ethnicity. The Society promotes such understanding through the study and practical application of the Ageless Wisdom of Theosophy.

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Kindness and the Theosophist

James Rainbird

The University of Sussex, in conjunction with BBC Radio 4, launched in August an online survey about kindness. The results are expected in February 2022. This follows a series of highly successful such collaborations: The Touch Test, The Loneliness Experiment, and The Rest Test, each of which became the world's largest ever psychological study conducted on those topics. In the Kindness Survey, the issues covered included:

- What are the most common acts of kindness?
- What are the barriers to behaving more kindly?
- Is kindness viewed as a weakness?
- How is kindness connected with compassion and empathy?
- How does kindness relate to our value systems?

Radio 4 presenter and Professor at the University of Sussex Claudia Hammond said: *"This feels like the perfect moment to emphasise the topic of kindness in depth. I think a lot of us have found the pandemic has led us to think more about what really matters to us. In my view, kindness is not something soft but something that can make a real difference"*.¹

Here in the UK, and no doubt elsewhere, we have seen the distressing sight during the pandemic of shopworkers being abused; the very people who have been trying to put food on our tables have become targets for unkindness. At the same time many of us have begun to appreciate the work of delivery drivers, their low wages and poor working conditions, and we have begun to empathise with people who, before, we barely knew existed. The pandemic has brought the importance of kindness sharply into focus.

So, what is kindness? I think that it is the spontaneous reaction to a situation which represents a challenge to our moral worth. The challenge may seem trivial, such as holding a door open for someone, but this is a challenge

nevertheless; if we cannot be bothered to do the little things then how will we fare when faced with a bigger challenge? Such minor challenges can present themselves to our moral-self dozens of times a day. And how do we react? By putting ourselves out to do a small thing for someone else, or by being selfish and letting the opportunity slip by of helping another soul along their path?

Being kind to our loved ones is easy; being kind to total strangers is harder, and as Anne Kelly points out, the real test is being kind to unkind people, especially people who are unkind to us.² It needs to become part of our psyche to always think of the other person first if we are to progress on the path of evolution. Being kind is merely the first step on that path.

Einar Adalsteinsson, writing in *The Theosophist*, said that loving kindness is a state of mind present within everyone everywhere, it is what holds the universe together and it is what we should manifest in practice. But, he points out, there seems to be something in our psyche which heavily overlies this natural state of loving kindness. Most of the time we choke it with our thoughts and emotions so that it cannot shine through; perhaps we are not yet ready to show it in practical work whenever perchance it comes to the surface in our consciousness. We are faced with the dual task of making loving kindness dwell not only in our mind but to help it light up our neighbourhood as well.³

Einar goes on to say that loving kindness is neither an idea nor an emotion, which brings us back to the principle of spontaneity. Anyone who deliberately sets out to be kind to others is likely to miss the mark. It is very easy to end up interfering in someone's life in a negative way, by offering help where it is not needed or wanted, with the danger of altering their path through life. As HPB says:

The Theosophist ... sees that it takes a very wise man to do good works without danger of doing

*incalculable harm...though he may long to do good works...dreads to do them wrongly until he has himself acquired a greater power and knowledge...The ignorant doing of good works may be vitally injurious.*⁴

The act will also lack sincerity, leading to hypocrisy. What is needed is a subtle and permanent change in our attitude towards other people.

We can form a purely intellectual resolve to always be kind, but this may not be sufficient, it may fail at the first severe test. Only when we are instinctively kind in all situations will we have proved that we genuinely always think of the other person first. But we have to begin somewhere. It begins with becoming more aware of other peoples' needs and difficulties and being less focussed on our own, by learning to turn our attention outwards towards other people. The effects are cumulative. Think of how a tree root can, over time, lift paving stones and crack concrete. The constant rising of a tiny amount of sap every second of the day builds up into a force that not even concrete can withstand. So, it is with our acts of kindness, they build up into a force that strengthens the bond between our lower and higher selves, so allowing a greater down-pouring of inspiration and intuition. It is truly a win-win situation.

As well as being spontaneous, an act of kindness also needs to involve some degree of self-sacrifice. If we are not putting ourselves out a little by spending some of our time or our energy in helping someone when it is of no benefit to us, then what is the action worth? Nothing, I suggest. Similarly, if a person sets out to do a kind act with the intention of getting praise or attention or good publicity, they may well succeed in achieving their objective, but at what cost to their moral worth?

This brings us to the question of what is happening occultly when we perform an act of kindness. Giving and receiving kindness are like an exchange of energy between the giver and the receiver, a natural process which helps the spiritual evolution of both. Kahlil Gibran expresses this beautifully:

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving".

The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.

They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.

Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights is worthy of all else from you.

And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.

See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving.

For in truth it is life that gives unto life while you, who deem yourself to be a giver, are but a witness.

And you receivers – and you are all receivers – assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives.

Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;

For to be over-mindful of your debt is to doubt his generosity who has the free-hearted earth for mother and God for father.

Go to your fields and your gardens, and you shall learn that it is the pleasure of the bee to gather honey of the flower,

But it is also the pleasure of the flower to yield its honey to the bee.

For to the bee a flower is a fountain of life,

*And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love...*⁵

But it is not just acts of kindness that are important; our thoughts also are a potent force, and kind thoughts can be a force for good in the world. As Annie Besant says in *The Ancient Wisdom*, we all affect other people by our thoughts, they leave their creator and come into contact with and affect others, in this way setting up karmic links which can draw people together for good or bad in later lives, which later on surround us with relatives, friends and enemies. Bishop Leadbeater explains in *The Hidden Side of Things* that the thought vibration set up in our mental body is conveyed by the surrounding mental matter and reproduced in another person's mental body, in other words, thought is infectious. We thus see a great principle at work: while our thoughts produce our mental and moral character in their action upon ourselves, they also help to determine our future, and other peoples' futures, by their effect on others. We are all so inextricably linked

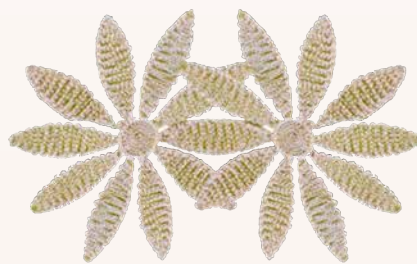
together, humanity is so truly a unity amidst all its marvellous diversity, that no-one can advance or recede without helping or hindering the progress of others.⁶

This is, of course, our old friend the Law of Karma. If someone does a good deed then good karma will eventually come back to that person. This good karma unfortunately binds that person to the earth just as effectively as does evil karma. The way to avoid this dilemma is to learn to do all actions absolutely without thought of self, because if there is no thought of self then karmic results of the ordinary kind cannot touch you. If you can forget yourself entirely and do the kind thing out of the fullness of your heart, because it is the right thing to do and you can do no other, then the whole karmic force of the result goes to the building of your own character, your own spiritual worth, and nothing of it remains to bind you to the lower planes.

But there has to be some karmic effect of a good deed, even a purely unselfish one. This is the karma of service, and the karma of service is always the opportunity for more service. As Bishop Leadbeater goes on to explain, when a person leads a particularly good life, it by no means follows that they will be rich or powerful or even comfortable in the next, but it does absolutely follow that they will have wider opportunities for work, that is, of course, work to help the general spiritual evolution of the human race. Clearly the Logos wants His work done, and if we wish for opportunities for progress then we must show that we are willing to work, and daily acts of kindness are a good place to start.

Notes

- ¹ www.thekindnesstest.org www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2021/the-kindness-test
Listen at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000xdq4
- ² Living Theosophy: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ3ksLd17oM
- ³ www.theosophyforward.com/articles/theosophy/1601-loving-kindness-in-practice
- ⁴ Blavatsky, HP *Let Every Man Prove His Own Work* quoted in www.blavatskytheosophy.com
- ⁵ Gibran, Kahlil *The Prophet* New Dawn Press 2004 (1923), 27–28; 75.
- ⁶ Besant, Annie *The Ancient Wisdom* London: TPS 1899, 240; Leadbeater, CW *The Hidden Side of Things* Monadic Deva Press 2017 (1913), 215.
- ⁷ lower planes – request to exclude. Leadbeater *ibid.* 333.
- ⁸ spiritual evolution of the human race – request to exclude *ibid.* 337.



Vegan Butter

A member has offered this delicious recipe for vegan butter which readers might be interested in trying.

It is particularly helpful for anyone who has to avoid dairy products for health reasons or wants to be vegan but are allergic to the additives in dairy-free margarine. This recipe can be used as you would dairy butter for pastry and cakes, and it tastes like good dairy butter on toast. It's definitely worth a try and quite easy and quick once you get used to making it. 'This really is just like butter!'

Ingredients

100 grams ground almonds.
200 grams non-dairy milk (Try 'Blue Diamond Almond Breeze' available in most supermarkets)
4 teaspoons nutritional yeast
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons cider vinegar
440 grams refined coconut oil (must be refined to remove the coconut taste)
120 grams olive oil

Method

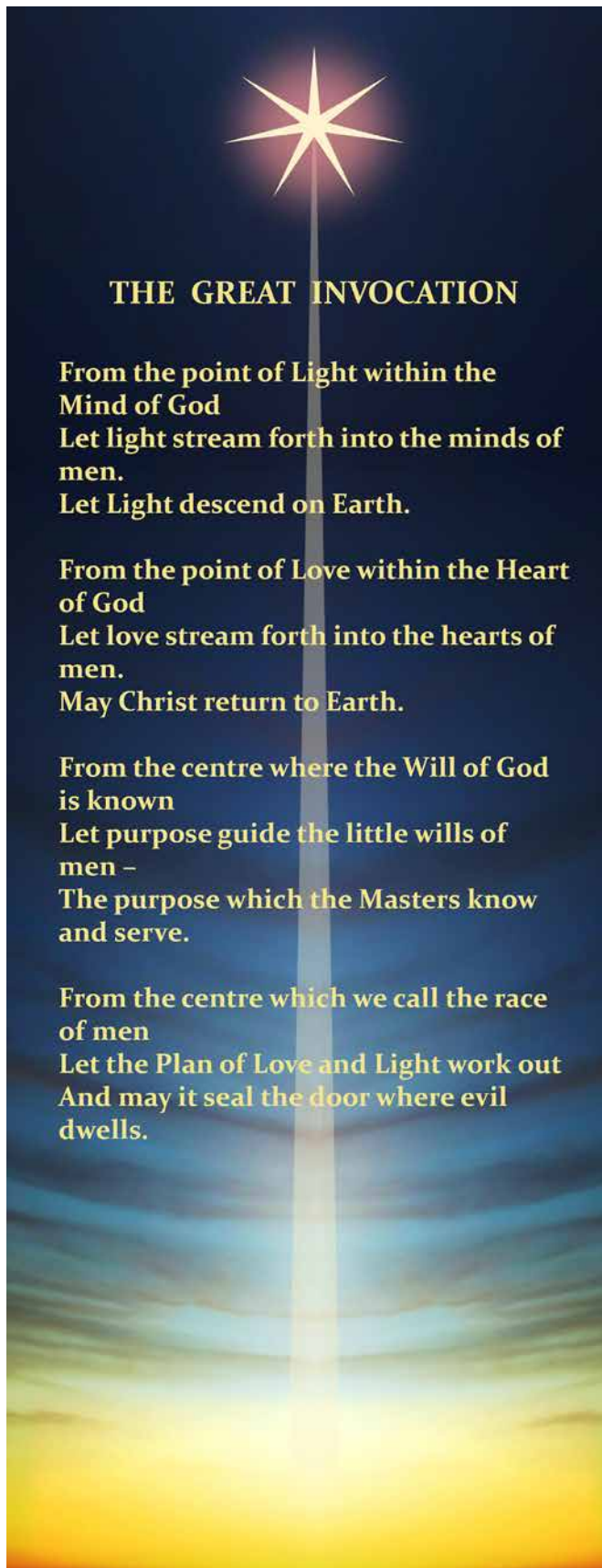
Blitz the following ingredients together in a blender: ground almonds, non-dairy milk, nutritional yeast, salt, and cider vinegar. When blended leave to curdle for 3 minutes. Melt the coconut oil in a microwave *but be careful as it gets very hot*. Then add the olive oil and coconut oil to the blender and blitz all of the ingredients together for three minutes in short bursts.

Storage

Pour into small containers or tubs and refrigerate, then keep in the fridge or it can be frozen. It will keep for 7 days in the fridge but soon melts if left out of the fridge. N.B. Refined coconut oil can be very expensive so look out for the best prices.

A Note on the Great Invocation

Robert Woolley



THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the
Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of
men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart
of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of
men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God
is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of
men –
The purpose which the Masters know
and serve.

From the centre which we call the race
of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil
dwells.

In the course of a talk on evil, I considered the question of whether there is such a thing as absolute evil, a force or power of evil. Having shown that evil is relative and a product of human selfishness, and in absolute terms non-existent, it was obvious that there can be no such absolute evil or power of evil. As Mahatma Koot Hoomi puts it in the Mahatma Letters (No 88, Chronological Edition), *"no more than good is it an independent cause in nature"*. But it has been drawn to my attention that the Great Invocation's 4th stanza can be read as implying the opposite. And the Great Invocation is used routinely in many esoteric groups around the world. The stanza reads:

*"From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells".*

(My emphasis) I understand that Douglas Baker used to say he had actually seen, or in some out-of-body state, been shown this door where evil dwells, and that he was very emphatic about the need to seal it. In the history of the Invocation, there is a statement in an article which says:¹ *"The final line of the fourth stanza is perhaps in need of explanation. This is a symbolic way of expressing the idea of rendering evil purposes both inactive and ineffectual. There is no particular location where evil dwells"*. (My emphasis.) The article then references the Book of Revelation and talks of *"the destruction of the devil and the rendering of Satan impotent"*. The next paragraph seems to start on safer ground, saying *"The 'door where evil dwells' is kept open by humanity through its selfish desires, its hatreds and its separateness... As goodwill and light stream forth into minds and hearts, these evil qualities and these directed energies which keep the door of evil open will give place to a longing for right human relations, to a determination to create a better and more peaceful world and to a world-wide expression of the will-to-good. As these qualities supersede the old and undesirable ones, the door where evil dwells will symbolically close through the sheer weight of public opinion and through*

right human desire. Nothing can possibly stop it". Note the "evil qualities" and the "directed energies". So the question is, does the author envisage some evil principle or power or not?

I noticed the Invocation is available in umpteen languages and had a look at the German. I discovered it is significantly different and perhaps makes much more sense! I give below the standard English version with the German version alongside and my translation of the differences which follows:

Die Grosse Invokation

Source of Light Aus dem Quell des Lichts im
Denken Gottes
ströme Licht herab ins
Menschendenken.
Es werde Licht auf Erden.

Source of Love Aus dem Quell der Liebe im
Herzen Gottes
ströme Liebe aus in alle
Menschenherzen.
Möge Christus* wiederkommen
auf Erden.

Aus dem Zentrum, das den
Willen Gottes kennt,
lenke plan-beseelte Kraft die
kleinen Menschenwillen
zu dem Endziel, dem die
Meister wissend dienen.

Durch das Zentrum, das wir
Menschheit nennen,
entfalte sich der Plan der Liebe
und des Lichts
und siegle zu die Tür zum Übel.

Mögen Licht und Liebe und
Kraft den
Plan auf Erden wieder
herstellen.

From the Centre *which knows* the will of God
May the *plan-inspired power* lead the little wills
of men
To the end-goal with the Masters, *knowing*, serve.

Through the Centre, which we call Humanity,
May the plan of love and Light *unfold* itself
And seal shut the door (*leading*) to evil.

The first and second stanzas refer to the "Source" of Love and Light and not the "Point". It is a

small change but seems to make much more sense. The third and fourth stanzas however, are significantly different in the German. In the third stanza, it is the 'Centre that knows the Will of God, and it is plan-inspired Power that leads men to the Goal'. The end of this third stanza is quite odd; "dem die Meister wissen und dienen" would be a perfectly adequate direct translation of the English. In the fourth stanza, the Plan does not unfold FROM humanity, but THROUGH humanity; presumably FROM the Centre which knows the will of God. There is no mention of evil dwelling anywhere, and it doesn't seal the door as if to keep something in, that wants to get out; rather it seals shut the door TO evil, through which one might otherwise stray towards evil. All of this fits much better with evil as a tendency in humans which might be overpowered by the goodness of Goodwill. It still seems odd that an apparently later German translation seems more coherent and more true to the meaning than other versions. Perhaps the English is actually a poor translation from something else. And what about these 'evil qualities' and 'directed energies'? I think I have a hint.

In the book 'The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep', Tenzin Wangyal gives an account of the nature of dream and how it arises. He has a good deal to say about karma (action, generating consequences) and about prana (energy or life force). As long as we identify with our mental self and respond to the negative emotion arising in the gap between what we want and what is, then we generate actions that leave 'karmic traces' in our mental consciousness. He says "Karmic traces left in the mind are like seeds. And like seeds they require certain conditions in order to manifest.... The elements of a situation that supports the manifestation of the karma are known as secondary causes and conditions". He points out that "Prana is the foundational energy of all experience, of all life", and says Karmic Prana is the energetic basis of the karmic traces produced as a result of actions. "When the karmic traces are activated by the appropriate secondary causes, karmic prana energises them and allows them to have an effect in the mind, body and in dreams". According to Wangyal, this is how the events and experiences in our lives are generated, how we are drawn to particular people or places at particular times (or how

they are drawn to us). And it is our responses to these events and experiences that sow the seeds of further karma.

All this relates to the individual and his or her personal experience. However, humanity is not merely so many isolated individuals. It has groupings small and large, of family, tribe, nation, faith and is an entity in itself. Each of these entities has its own history of actions, karmas, seeds and results. These may operate over almost any timescale, even centuries. And the karmic prana that energises these seeds, precipitating actions and events, might be felt as an energy or power of evil, especially if it is particularly strong and precipitates particularly obnoxious events and actions within the group concerned. As KH puts it *"Food, sexual relations, drink, are all natural necessities of life; yet excess in them brings on disease, misery, suffering, mental and physical, and the latter are transmitted as the greatest evils to future generations, the progeny of the culprits."* (my emphasis). This is no manifestation of any absolute power or force of evil, simply the working out of karma, quite possibly karma that we ourselves set going in some previous existence. No, there is no Dark Lord to be sealed away behind a door. Only a natural process of consequences following causes, which we can individually and collectively mitigate by our own progress on the spiritual path.

¹ https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/The_Great_Invocation

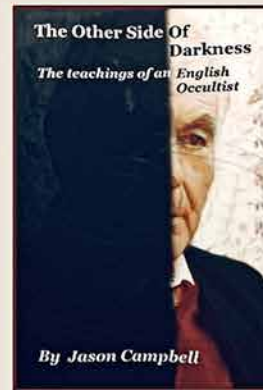
https://www.lucistrust.org/the_great_invocation/history_1

A Vision of the Infinite by William Wickham in the summer issue 2021. **Corrections:**

Verses 2: It was the searching raptures of the skies..."

Verse 8: "O'er youthful Venus in limpid and pale gold..." and "Covering like a mantle all its sons..."

Verses 9: "Ethereal forms that swirled around in Space..."



BOOK REVIEW

THE OTHER SIDE OF DARKNESS – The teachings of an English occultist.

by Jason Campbell.

*A must-read for
spiritual aspirants*

"A friend recommended this book to me because he knew that I had been an avid reader of Carlos Castaneda's books in the 1970's. I read the book and loved every word. The author, Jason Campbell, writes about how he met his teacher and underwent an apprenticeship with him starting in 1972. This is a fascinating account, told in the first person with an endearing honesty and humility. We don't often have access to the training of apprentices in the occult tradition and this is one of the best that I have ever read. It is full of occult/theosophical teachings as well as experiences involving elementals, ghosts, poltergeist, and etheric and astral travel. This book is very readable and really useful for all seekers especially theosophists. I highly recommend this wonderful book to all TS members. It will inspire, fascinate, instruct and delight in equal measure. Because of the pandemic, it has not reached the bookshops yet. I got it from Amazon searching for "Jason Campbell the other side".

Eric McGough

"An honest, illuminating and very well written account of an occult apprenticeship, which completely changed the author's view of himself and the world around him. You could read this book as a novel, yet it is full of information and occult teachings. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this and would highly recommend it to everyone. Thank you for sharing your experiences, Jason, I hope you will consider writing more."

Bethan Vaughan

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TESTIMONIAL

I wanted to say how useful I have found the Diploma.

Whilst I have been studying and reading theosophical literature for about 50 years now, and it has always been a guiding light for me, I found the Diploma a very valuable discipline in drawing the threads together, and emphasising the key concepts of Unity of all things; involution/evolution, periodicity and karma as a universal law. This has, I believe, led to a deeper understanding of theosophy. I have even managed to get a handle on chains and rounds!

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



The Sevenfold Planes of Nature

Susan Bayliss

Part Four

Part four will introduce various aspects of the seven planes of nature from a cosmic point of view and consider some associated symbols and concepts.



A good place to start is with the Emblem of the Theosophical Society and the esoteric symbols it contains. From ancient times these have been used to express profound spiritual and philosophical concepts and are found in

a variety of forms in widely separated cultures. Each one yields a wealth of understanding, and taken together they embrace the whole of nature, physical and spiritual, and relate to some of the deepest mysteries of existence. The true meaning of these symbols is veiled to those unaware of the Esoteric Teachings, and as part of our journey of exploration we will briefly look at some of the Wisdom they represent.



The Aum or OM above the emblem is of profound significance and is considered to be a sacred sound or mantra. It signifies the creative Word or Logos, the ineffable Reality, the source of all

existence, the sound of the breath of All That Is. As Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (H.P.B) tells us: *"It is 'an invocation, a benediction, an affirmation usually placed at the beginning of sacred Scriptures and is prefixed to prayers. It is a compound of three letters a, u, m, which, in the popular belief, are typical of the three Vedas, also of three gods - A (Agni) V (Varuna) and M (Maruts) or Fire, Water and Air. In esoteric philosophy these are the three sacred fires, or the 'triple fire' in the Universe and Man, besides many other things"*¹ The Divine OM, signifies the ALL that comes from and exists in

the One Unknowable Absolute, the Non-Duality or Universal Oneness.



The Serpent or Ouroboros swallowing its own tail, has in the timeless mysteries been associated with the highest arcane knowledge - spiritual Wisdom: *"Before our globe became egg-*

*shaped (and the Universe also), a long trail of Cosmic dust (or fire mist) moved and writhed like a 'serpent in Space'. The 'Spirit of God moving on Chaos' was symbolized by every nation in the shape of a fiery serpent breathing fire and light upon the primordial waters, until it had incubated cosmic matter and made it assume the annular shape of a serpent with its tail in its mouth - which symbolises not only Eternity and Infinitude, but also the globular shape of all the bodies formed within the Universe from that fiery mist. The Universe, as well as the Earth and Man, cast off periodically, serpent-like, their old skins, to assume new ones after a time of rest. The serpent is, surely, a not less graceful or a more unpoetical image than the caterpillar and chrysalis from which springs the butterfly, the Greek emblem of Psyche, the human soul"*²



The Fiery Cross, with its arms of whirling flame represents the tremendous energies of nature, incessantly creating and dissolving the forms

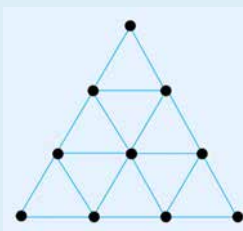
through which the evolutionary process takes place: *"In Esoteric Philosophy, the most mystic and ancient diagram. It is the originator of the fire by friction, and of the 'Forty-nine Fires'..... Its symbol was stamped on Buddha's heart, and therefore called the 'Heart Seal'. It is laid on the breasts of departed Initiates after their death;*

and it is mentioned with the greatest respect in the Râmâyana it is 'the symbol of esoteric Buddhism'. and in Occultism, it is as sacred to us as the Pythagorean Tetraktys"*.³ (see footnote below). "Applied to the Microcosm, Man, it shows him to be a link between heaven and Earth: the right hand being raised at the end of a horizontal arm, the left pointing to the Earth. It is at one and the same time an Alchemical, Cosmogonical, Anthropological, and Magical sign, with seven keys to its inner meaning. It is not too much to say that the compound symbolism of this universal and most suggestive of signs contains the key to the seven great mysteries of Kosmos. It is the Alpha and the Omega of universal creative Force, evolving from pure Spirit and ending in gross Matter. It is also the key to the cycle of Science, divine and human; and he who comprehends its full meaning is for ever liberated from the toils of Mahamaya, the great Illusion and Deceiver. So ancient is the symbol and so sacred, that there is hardly an excavation made on the sites of old cities without its being found".⁴



The Ankh or Crux Ansata in the centre of the emblem, is the Egyptian symbol of life or immortality, often held in the hand of Egyptian statues and in wall and

tomb paintings. Sometimes referred to as 'the key of life', it is made up of the Tau or T-shaped cross surmounted by a small circle. The top arm of the Tao represents the cross upon which human passions have been conquered. The circle alludes to the triumph of spirit over matter, life over death or resurrection, and also signifies the upper triad in a state of completeness or Unity - unification with 'heaven' - the Self-realisation of the One. This symbol can also be depicted as the Ankh-tie, a looped rope signifying a door



* Tetraktys is a Greek word meaning 'tetrad'. It refers to a triangular figure consisting of ten points arranged in four levels with one, two, three, and four points in each row – see diagram. This is an important mystical symbol in Occult and Pythagorean geometry. The Tetrad is said to combine within

itself all the materials from which Kosmos is produced. For a fuller explanation go to: <https://theosophy.wiki/en/Tetraktys>

or mouth - 'the Soul passing through the eye of the needle'. It symbolises "the endless and beginningless eternity, that which descends upon and grows out of the plane of material nature, the horizontal feminine line, surmounting the vertical male line - the fructifying male principle in nature or spirit".⁵



The Six-Pointed Star of interlaced triangles of dark and light, represents spirit and matter. The dark facing downwards - spirit falling into matter (involution)

and the light facing upwards - matter seeking spiritual light (evolution). It symbolises the six planes and principles, synthesised within the unseen seventh at its centre (the Divine Self, God or the Absolute). The six-pointed star is sometimes called 'Solomon's Seal', and another name is the Blazing Star signifying the Light, Life and Love of the World. It is the Divine Flame, the Star of Glory, divine harmony, and balance. The six can also be symbolised by a cube, which has six sides, spirit manifest in the material world. To explain a little more:

"The symbolical double triangle, adopted by the T.S. and by many Theosophists is also called in India the 'Sign of Vishnu' The triangle was sacred and used as a religious sign in the far East ages before Pythagoras proclaimed it to be the first of the geometrical figures, as well as the most mysterious. It is found on pyramid and obelisk, and is pregnant with occult meaning, as are, in fact, all triangles. the pentagram is the triple triangle - the six-pointed being the 'hexalpa ha'. The way a triangle points determines its meaning. If upwards, it means the male element and divine fire; downwards, the female and the waters of matter; upright, but with a bar across the top, air and astral light; downwards, with a bar - the earth or gross matter, etc., etc. When a Greek Christian priest in blessing holds his two fingers and thumb together, he simply makes the magic sign - by the power of the triangle or 'trinity'".⁶

In the Mahatma Letters, Mahatma Koot Hoomi addresses the inner meaning of the Theosophical Emblem stating that "the double triangles contain the synthesis of the whole of the Occult Doctrine. The squaring of the

circle, the 'philosophers stone'. "Seven being the germ of the six, it also relates to the seven planes in nature and principles in man". "The six-pointed star is the perfect seven - the central point standing for the seven". "The upper pointing white triangle is 'Wisdom Concealed', representing 'knowledge' or 'the knower'. The downward pointing triangle is 'Wisdom Revealed'. "The serpent or circle indicates the circumscribing quality of the Universal Principle which embraces All".⁷

Creation begins with the three primary outpourings of: Divine Will, Divine Wisdom, and Divine Activity. Corresponding to Brahmah, the creator known as the Self-born, the vivifying expansive force in nature in its eternal evolution. Vishnu, the preserver, protector from chaos, evil and destructive forces. Shiva, the destroyer and transformer. On the manifest planes, Activity is the first movement in the unmanifest, harnessing Wisdom and Will in creating the seven Kingdoms of Life:

"When in a state of 'pure Being' no outward activity occurs, until after an ageless period of rest the Absolute or Unseen Principle awakens and once again manifestation comes into being as part of the Divine Plan. The Absolute is genderless, neither male nor female yet paradoxically both". "The ONE divides into Spirit and Matter which give rise to the Trinity".⁸ "Everything in this visible universe is the outflow of this Triad, a microcosmic triad itself. And so 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".⁹

This outpouring of Life is aided by the Hierarchies who maintain Wisdom and Balance. These are the 'creating fashioning powers' which come forth from the Absolute, the 'Vehicles for Manifestation', transmitting spiritual energies to the lower worlds: *"The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled, and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings each having a mission to perform They vary infinitely in their respective degrees of consciousness and intelligence"*¹⁰

Spirit and matter are entwined in the Cosmic Dance, whose movement creates all forms in the seven planes of existence, held together and directed by the Planetary Angels* under the Guidance of Divine Consciousness. The Seven rays and the seven planes of life emerge as Evolution starts to unfold, creating all other forms of life on the planet from the rocks and soil to the animals and birds, and to the highest evolved human beings, to the Mahatmas and beyond. Cosmic Mind holding ALL in perfect balance. *"This cosmic dust is something more. It is an atom and an Angel for every atom in the Universe has the potentiality of self-consciousness in it and is A Universe in itself, and for itself".¹¹*

The Absolute creates everything that is: the 'One Life' in which we live and breathe. *"Man is the mirror of the universe, and his triple nature stands in relation to all things" [Van Helmont]. The will of the Creator, through which all things were made and received their first impulse, is the property of every living being. Man, endowed with an additional spirituality, has the largest share of it on this planet he exercises it through the course of his whole life, whether consciously or otherwise".¹²*

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¹ H. P. Blavatsky, Theosophical Glossary - Aum.

² H. P. Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine Vol. I. p 74. Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993.

³ H. P. Blavatsky, Theosophical Glossary - Swastika. This is the ancient name for this symbol but because it has inappropriate associations in Europe, the phrase 'Fiery Cross' is used.

⁴ H. P. Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine.

⁵ HPB's, Theosophical Glossary - Crux Ansata.

⁶ Op Cit. - Solomon's Seal

⁷ Mahatma Letter to A. P. Sinnet. Letter No. 111, Chronological Version.

⁸ The Secret Doctrine.

⁹ Isis Unveiled.

¹⁰ The Secret Doctrine.

¹¹ Op Cit.

¹² Ibid.

* Planets are the visible bodies of the Planetary Angels.

The Cycle of Life

Colin Price

Part One

Introduction

In his book *Cyclic Evolution*, Adam Warcup writes *"It is easy to get carried away by the 'cyclic' aspect and overlook the 'evolution'."* At all times it is vital to bear in mind the words of a Mahatma: *"Realise but once the process of the Maha (great) cycle and you have realised them all!"* ^(p.10)

In other words, there is but one cyclic process with its component stages, and every great or small cycle reflects exactly the same stages within its own context. Our personal development is a component part of the development of all humanity, and we accomplish it with our own series of cycles. Each cycle commences with our birth into a physical body so that we become subjected to the many cycles of earth life, days and nights, seasons, years and so on. The component parts of our earth life become increasingly spiritually significant as we grow in understanding and awareness of the meaning of life. If we fail to advance through the cycle of knowledge and wisdom we will have little to contribute to the bigger cycle of which our life is a part.

In the Mahatma Letters we read: *"they forget, or never knew that he who holds the keys to the secrets of death is possessed of the keys of life"*.¹

So, a knowledge of the whole cycle is essential to an understanding of its components. Cyclicity is fundamental to existence itself and is at the heart of the second of the Three Fundamental Propositions which H. P. Blavatsky describes in the Proem to the Secret Doctrine:

"The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane, periodically the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing.... The appearance and disappearance of the Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux".

And in the Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy, Ianthe Hoskins further quotes as follows:

"This second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all parts of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe".²

As Autumn sees the fading of Nature's Summer bloom and she prepares through Winter for another Spring; so, humanities physical strength weakens while its spirit grows in wisdom and lays the foundation for another earth life. However, the concept that we live an earth life for spiritual development and the acquisition of qualities of unselfishness, altruism and loving concern for others, does not seem to be widely held. More often it would seem that humanity is motivated primarily by selfish desires with little concern that their fulfilment has on the lives of others.

This is why the consideration of the whole cycle of life is so essential. Where the earth life is a life of causes, the Bardo³ state between lives is that part of the cycle where the effects are experienced. Each individual reaps the harvest they have sown. Without fear or favour the inexorable and immutable law of karma pays the wages of good and ill. The process is not enacted under anaesthetic like a hospital operation. The persistence of some consciousness after physical death ensures that justice is not only done but seen by the individual to be done.

Relevant Concepts

It is therefore necessary to understand how the cycle of life proceeds in the bardo state between

Image facing page: An illustration by Dionysius Andreas Freher The Works of Jacob Behmen „The Teutonic Philosopher“, vol 3 1764
Public domain image Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

earth lives and theosophical literature has produced a number of important concepts or intellectual tools to establish the reality and credibility of this unseen world of effects:

1. The doctrine of reincarnation.
2. The concept of occult or dimensionless space.
3. The seven principles of man arranged in a hierarchical order.
4. A view of time measured by the frequency of events which determines its duration.
5. The teaching of the various states of consciousness within this hierarchy.
6. The notion of 'ever-becoming' as nature in all her cycles progresses towards a limitless horizon of perfection and evolution.

The development of spiritual qualities during life is a major theme for many of the world's religions, but the significance of events after death is not widely addressed. There is also a lack of authoritative, credible detail about such events and until recent times little information that would be classified as reliable evidence. By contrast, H. P. Blavatsky and even more so the Mahatmas in the Mahatma Letters, give us a great deal of information derived mainly from that huge accumulation of occult knowledge called the Ancient Wisdom.

The Doctrine of Reincarnation

The acceptance of the concept of life as a cyclic process where physical earth life alternates with the bardo state virtually demands the idea of reincarnation as an integral part of the overall process. Naturally the enquiring mind will need answers to many fundamental questions before accepting that life is a cyclic process on the scale suggested, and if consciousness really does persist between lives. For example: WHERE do we go between lives? How long do we have to wait to reincarnate and are there other factors involved? Can I choose when I come back to earth and who my parents are? Am I always the same sex? If I am, do I have an identical body, if not why not, and so on.

It is to produce a conviction that reincarnation is not only credible to those who choose to believe, but also to those who want to believe and would

like to be persuaded that many other pieces of theosophical doctrine can be used and can be shown to be relevant. It should be noted that the Christian Church fathers rejected the idea of reincarnation because of its incompatibility with the theology which was agreed at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. under the direction of the Emperor Constantine. In particular, the theology of the physical resurrection of the body. The references in the New Testament to the Judaic belief that John-the-Baptist was Elijah returned after many hundreds of years shows the prevailing mood before then, and particularly at the time of Christ. The threat of hellfire and judgement is greatly enhanced by the idea that you only have one chance to get things right! This clearly gave the Church great authority and power in controlling people's lives which it has used whenever it can to this day.

The Concept of Occult or Dimensionless Space

The branch of modern science known as theoretical physics has for many years postulated the existence of space with many more dimensions than the three with which we are familiar. It is not therefore unreasonable to suggest that such a thing as dimensionless space might exist. In the Foreword to George Adam's book *'Physical and Ethereal Spaces'* is quoted a translation of a poem by Rudolf Steiner:

"Think on it: how the point becomes a sphere and yet remains itself. Hast thou understood how the infinite sphere may be only a point, then come again, for then the Infinite will shine forth for thee in the Finite".

George Adam wrote: *"The whole field is one of those places where the exoteric science of our time comes hard upon the threshold of the eternal occult truths and asks to be complemented, to be directed and confirmed by the science of spiritual initiation. The formal mathematics used in the idea of ethereal or negative space, sometimes called polar-Euclidean space, has long been known to pure mathematicians, but apart from their interest in its beautiful form, they have attached no further importance to it. Its significance lies however, not in its mere form, but in the fact that its discipline, created by the*

mathematicians of the nineteenth century, gives insight into a quite new conception of space which exactly corresponds to what has always been described by occultists as the secret spatial aspect of the etheric - of life.⁴

In his book 'Deity, Cosmos and Man', Geoffrey Farthing draws our attention to the obvious fact that thoughts and imaginings do not occupy three-dimensional space, and this property of the mind may help us to grasp, at least, vaguely at this very difficult concept. The importance of this for that part of the cycle of life where we have no physical body is obvious. Kama-Loka⁵, Devachan⁵, Avitchi⁵ and for that matter Purgatory, Heaven and Hell, do not have to be 'anywhere' in order to have a reality for the disembodied consciousness which is effectively what we are between lives. More precisely we are dealing with a part of our consciousness which has survived death and this refinement is considered later. Geoffrey Farthing suggests that one should imagine an orange, observe its colour and texture, smell and taste it by using your memory. Then ask what space this imaginary orange occupied. Thoughts do not occupy space, but never-the-less have an unquestionable reality. So are all abstract and

subjective properties of the Spirit independent of three-dimensional space.

The Seven Principles of Man in an Hierarchical Order

Theosophy expands the general view of man as body, soul and spirit or body, mind and spirit to seven parts: Atma, Buddhi, Manas, Kama (Desire), Prana (Life Force), Linga Sharira (Astral) and Sthula Sharira (Physical body). The combination of Atma and Buddhi is called the Monad, Manas or Mind is divided into two parts, upper and lower. The upper or higher manas is combined with the Monad to form the Individuality which then becomes a vehicle for the Egoic Consciousness. The lower manas is often combined with Kama and called the kama-manasic principle because they function so closely together. (Sometimes called the middle duad). This combines with the three lower principles or lower triad to form the personality and is the vehicle for our normal waking consciousness. It is this consciousness which fades as these lower principles finally disintegrate during the after-death-processes, so that only the Egoic consciousness remains to enter Devachan.

Table I - THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN			
	English Names	The Principles as Elements of Man's Being	Sanskrit Names
7	THE ONE SELF (Spirit)	↑	Atma
6	Vehicle of Spirit	↑	Buddhi
5	Higher Mind	↑	Higher Manas
	Lower Mind	↓	Lower Manas
4	Emotion (Desire, etc)	↓	Kama
3	Life Force (Vitality)	↓	Prana
2	Astral Body	↓	Linga Sharira
1	Physical Body	↓	Sthula-Sharira

It ultimately emerges from Devachan to receive the Skandhas which contain the karmic record prior to re-birth. It is suggested that ultimately this egoic individuality can escape the cycle of birth, death and rebirth when it has lost all desire and has become sufficiently spiritually evolved. There are many details about the seven-fold nature of man which are not directly relevant to this study. They are explained in *The Key to Theosophy* by Madame Blavatsky.

There is an obvious need to establish a reasonable explanation for how consciousness can exist 'outside' three-dimensional space. A majority of people find the idea of travelling to some other part of the physical universe to find the location for existence after death unacceptable. Conversely, the idea that we remain around the earth to await our next incarnation occasionally manifesting as poltergeists or ghosts does not appeal as an adequate explanation. Particularly as we do not feel we are being watched by thousands of people we used to know and who have died.

Humanity's sevenfold nature correlates directly with the seven planes of the cosmos. The physical correlation is obvious. The astral correlation is not so obvious, but it is highly relevant to an understanding of the relationship between three-dimensional space and abstract or occult space. See table for 'Constitution of Man'.

There is abundant evidence that our consciousness can transfer from our physical to our astral bodies - not only from those who can 'travel' when asleep at night, but from the many cases of Near-Death Experiences (NDEs). There is a constant flow of evidence from our hospitals where people who undergo dangerous surgery sometimes experience a transference of their consciousness to their astral bodies. It seems that the astral plane is a transitional plane which enables a variety of effects to occur according to circumstances. This may account for some confusion which occurs with reference to an etheric body. The transition can be slow, gradual, or virtually instantaneous according to the individual, and in the case of NDEs reversible due to resuscitation. Once in the astral body, it would seem that the awareness

of three-dimensional space can slowly fade as the individual moves more deeply into occult space. As this proceeds, it becomes more and more difficult to return, in spite of the most intense efforts of the paramedics. Those who embrace death willingly at the end of a long life, or after much illness and pain would not be expected to dawdle! While others conversely unwilling to die in the prime of life may cling to earth life and help the resuscitators as much as they can.

We are given considerable information about the part of the cycle of life that immediately follows the death of the physical body. We arrive in Kama-Loka. The location of kama, (desire) fourth principle. Initially the individual is very conscious of the past life and is able to review it in intimate detail from the indelible records in the Astral Light. Only after this first review is the cycle of life continued. Geoffrey Farthing writes:

"Death has occurred at a distinct moment, when the silver cord, as it is sometimes called, between the physical body and the astral double is severed. This link between the earthly man and his soul principles is of ethereal matter. At this time, these principles include not only the fourth and lower fifth (the middle duad), but the upper fifth, sixth and seventh (the upper triad), the Egoic individuality. After the severance of the cord there is no possibility of a return".⁶

The deceased loses the consciousness of their personality or lower self and the astral double as well as the physical body begins to disintegrate. However, the complex nature of individual's dual consciousness means that the egoic consciousness persists and is able to take a full part in the processes in Kama-Loka, which includes the death struggle and gestation and ends with a second review of the past life before entry into Devachan.

The Clear Light of the Void

"At the moment of death, the empiric consciousness, or consciousness of objects is lost. There is what is popularly called a 'swoon' which is however, the corollary of super-consciousness itself, or the clear light of the Void; for the swoon is in, and of the Consciousness as a

knower of objects. This empirical consciousness disappears, unveiling Pure Consciousness which is ever ready to be 'discovered' by those who have the will to seek and power to find it".⁷

is here that the full significance of man's dual consciousness becomes apparent. Only the egoic consciousness associated with the Higher Self survives. The deceased's former gender and particular personality characteristics are no longer relevant to the rest of the life cycle. However, the degree to which the deceased has during this life developed an egoic consciousness, and corresponding spiritual maturity and sensitivity, will determine the depth of their experience in Devachan. The speed at which all this occurs seems to be varied according to a number of factors. These include: the inability of the deceased to let go of earth life, as in the case of someone murdered in the prime of life, when they may haunt the murder spot until the time they would have died a natural death. Or the deceased may have a strong emotional attachment to their physical body and be reluctant to move on. It has been said that a generally unrecognised advantage of cremation is that the physical body then can no longer be a point of attachment. We are told in the Mahatma Letters that the process is halted in the case of suicides who must remain attached to the cause of their action and wait in Kama-Loka until the time they would have died.

A View of Time Measured by the Frequency of Events

The entry into Devachan does not only complete the withdrawal from three-dimensional space, but it also marks the end of earth time for the deceased. Time is much more complex than it appears to be. The variability of time in relation to earth time across the vast distances of the universe which can only be measured with reference to the speed of light has been shown by Einstein's Theory of Relativity ($E = mc^2$). It is hardly surprising that withdrawal from three-dimensional space into abstract or occult space would have a significant effect upon time as we know it. In fact, even now we experience the same subjective variability in time. When we are enjoying ourselves time seems to go quickly. When we are unhappy and particularly when we are in pain, time seems to go more slowly. If we



look more deeply into this subjective experience of time, we see that we really measure time by the frequency of events. The more things that happen to us and around us in an hour, the faster that hour seems to go for us. When we are busy time flies! The converse is also true.

The Teaching of Various States of Consciousness

There are different states of consciousness associated with humanity's seven principles. The highest spiritual consciousness is said to be achieved by the egoic individuality, i.e. with the Monad combined with upper manas. This can only be achieved by the practice of meditation and contemplation of spiritual things. The higher consciousness is able to watch and direct the lower mind's thinking consciousness. Something we do every day when we decide what we wish to think about. The Kamic consciousness is that of the emotions and we are all aware when we are emotionally aroused, and our focus is in our emotions. Likewise, our focus of consciousness can be entirely in our physical bodies and this

Image: Clock (fractal art), Mobilos, 2013, (cropped). Courtesy Wikimedia Commons."



is particularly true when we are very hungry or thirsty or in great pain.

The Notion of Ever-Becoming

It is the cultivation of our higher consciousness which is necessary to prepare us for our journey through the bardo state between lives and ultimately to enter the Nirvana⁸ (state) to begin a different, higher more advanced cycle beyond earth life to continue our spiritual evolution:

“The Cycles of Matter will be succeeded by Cycles of Spirituality and a fully developed mind. On the law of parallel history and races, the majority of the future mankind will be composed of glorious Adepts. Humanity is the child of cyclic Destiny, and not one of its Units can escape its unconscious mission or get rid of the burden of its co-operative work with nature. Thus will humanity, race after race, perform its appointed cycle-pilgrimage”.*⁹

⁸Race means the development of the whole of humanity in its evolutionary journey and not any social construct or invented stereotype based on a geographical place of birth or community group. [Ed].

The study of the past and of the principles underlying evolutionary advance, points to the inescapable fact that we all, individually and collectively, are the humanity whose evolution is the central theme of Esoteric Science.

The Cycle

So, a study of the cycle of life begins with a consideration of birth. The newly born child might well ask the questions: Why am I here and where was I before? Indeed, various studies have been published of children of around 3-6 years old who have very convincingly identified the location of their previous life which had usually been shortened by an accidental death.

Such evidence for the survival of self-consciousness is of course hugely exciting and makes the teachings about the after-death processes of major interest to all who care about what happens to them when they die. Not that such interest is anything new. In a Foreword to the Tibetan Book of the Dead, (entitled The Science of Death), Sir John Woodroffe writes:

*“The thought of death suggests two questions. The first is: How may one avoid death, except when death is desired as in “Death-at-will” (Ichchhamrity). The avoidance of death is the aim when Hatha yoga is used to prolong present life in the flesh. The second question is: How to accept Death and die? Here the technique of dying makes death the entrance to good future lives, at first out of, and then again in, the flesh unless and until liberation (Nirvana) from the wandering (Sangsara) is attained”.*¹⁰

The fact that the ego has been reborn suggests that it is still in bondage to rebirth. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we read:

“As a man’s desire is, so is his destiny. For as his desire is, so is his will; and as his will is, so is his deed; and as his deed is, so is his reward, whether good or bad. A man acteth according to the desire to which he clingeth. After death he goeth to the next world bearing in his mind the subtle impressions of his deeds; and after reaping there the harvest of his deeds, he returneth again to the world of action. Thus

he who hath desire continueth to be subject to rebirth".¹¹

Conversely in the Katha Upanishad we read of Freedom from Rebirth as follows:

"He who lacketh discrimination, whose mind is unsteady and whose heart is impure, never reacheth the goal, but is born again and again. But he who hath discrimination, whose mind is steady and whose heart is pure, reacheth the goal, and having reached it is born no more".¹²

Perhaps the Cycle of Life should be considered as a Spiral of Life as each successive life moves the ego forward towards the goal of Nirvana.¹³ Furthermore, the consideration of the events in the bardo state, between lives takes on added significance and importance when it is seen as part of an on-going process.

From 'Tour of all Toures and Teacheth a Man for to Die': *"Against his will he dieth that hath not learned to die. Learn to die and thou shalt learn to live, for there shall none learn to live that hath not learned to die".*

From the Katha Upanishad we get echoes of the Hermetic Axiom (As above, so below):¹⁴

"Whatever is here, that is there; what is there, the same is here.

He who seeth here as "different", meeteth death after death".

[Beware all who contemplate suicide].

"By mind alone this is to be realised, and, there is no difference here.

From death to death he goeth, who seeth as if there is difference here".

As a final answer to the question, Where was I before I was born?, remember the words of Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita:¹⁵

"Many lives, Arjuna, you and I have lived. I remember them all, but thou dost not".

The reincarnated ego has many influences to determine the potentialities for its future life. Not only has it inherited some of the characteristics of its parents both physically

and in personality, but it has entered with the skandhas which it carried forward when it exited from Devachan, built up of accumulated karma from tens of thousands of events - just as DNA is constructed using tens of thousands of atoms. These constitute a sort of spiritual DNA giving the characteristics of the ego and also its karmic balance carried over from previous lives.

What task will this reincarnated ego face as it grows into an adult responsible human being? To live its life in such a way as to prepare for death, or rather the life in the bardo state following death. Man has two components to his consciousness. One associated with his Individuality, Higher Self, and the other with his Personality or Lower Self.

The technical theosophical definition of Individuality is that it consists of the highest 3 of man's 7 principles but only that part of mind associated with Higher Consciousness. The definition of Personality is that it is the lower 4 principles, plus the lower mind which depends upon the physical brain consciousness; this is so fragile, so easily set aside for sleep, for anaesthetics and so on and lost finally in the death of the physical body. Clara Codd in her delightful book *The Technique of the Spiritual Life* rites of the Individuality and Personality:

The Individuality: The Ego or Soul (our divine side).

The Spiritual Will: The purpose of Life

The Eternal Love: Shining like the Sun on all

The Eternal Intelligence: Leading to Wisdom and Spiritual Knowledge.

The Personality: Our human side.

Body: For experience and service.

Heart: For response to Beauty and Love, and for radiating Beauty and Love.

The Mind: To observe and understand. This threefold personality is the crystal vase which must be cleansed and purified, for within it burns the Divine Flame, the Source of loveliness and good.

The Antahkarana: The Mind and Heart purified of egotism and aspiring steadily towards its divine counterpart.

The challenge facing the new grown adult, having survived the uncertain environmental influences of childhood and adolescence, is all to do with the balance of power and control between the Higher Self and the Lower Self. The Voice of the Silence, H. P. Blavatsky's final book, spells out the magnitude of the challenge and the difficulty of rising adequately to it. No one who reads it could be surprised that it takes many cycles of lives to succeed.

Clara Codd sees the power of the will, associated with the Higher Self as a factor of supreme importance: *".....The magical power of Kriyashakti¹⁶ is the power of concentrated thought and will"*. Willpower, she writes, not only means the ability to choose, but also to keep to the chosen path, to persevere:

"This power is often one of the weakest spots in the constitution of modern man. The whole trend of our soft, comfortable life is liable to sap the will and the power of endurance. The intelligence to see the best path, and the sustained will to continue treading it, are an absolute necessity for success in any venture, material or spiritual".

Now the possession of will-power is not an arbitrary gift from on high. If one is in possession of it, it has been developed in past lives by ourselves. The vast majority of men are more or less deficient in it. But it may be developed. There is only one way to do this, by acquiring

the faculty of being able to say 'no' to ourselves; of being able to face disappointment, loss and failure, without wavering in our ultimate intention. Begin early, if some of you who read the words are young. Will is a high form of desire. It is a high impersonal desire, seen to be right, necessary, altruistic; opposed to personal self-satisfaction, momentary pleasure and lower self-indulgence. The self-indulgent man can never become the holy, the illuminated, God-radiant man.

Will power is developed by 'going without', denying the little self on every possible occasion, till it ceases to beg, ask, or tussle, and obeys the intelligent ruling of the Higher Self without question. In an article entitled Unless You Deny Yourself, Dr. Cronin speaks of the famous physicist and electrical engineer Nikola Tesla, who began as a boy to learn and to practise this.

"If I had something I particularly liked, a sweet, a cake or chocolate, I gave it away although I suffered in doing so. Was there some task or exercise I disliked, I did it, no matter how inclination pulled. As the years passed, the conflict ceased. My wish and my will became one".

Here is the true asceticism so much despised these days, which gives a man sovereign

Image: 'Lost Illusions', Charles Gleyre 1865 1867
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'æpower. The Saints knew this well, and so we find St. Therese of Lisieux closing the book she was reading, even at the most interesting part, the moment the Convent bell rang; and restraining her natural curiosity until the next day. The early Christian Saints despised the body to such an extent that they often rendered it useless. The middle way of the Lord Buddha was neither to ill-treat, nor to indulge the body and the passions and desires which move it.

*The little self of our ordinary mind, emotions and body must learn obedience to the will of the divine Self within, and they will suffer bitterly until they become habituated and at peace. This battle is the first step ... and as the French proverb says: It is the first step that counts".*¹⁷

We have already seen there is a consciousness of the Personality and there is a consciousness of the Individuality. In fact, there is a duality in everyone's consciousness. With our higher consciousness we can not only observe our thoughts but modify them as we wish using our will. It is the exercise of our will to control our actions which is a key factor in the Cycle of Life.

Part Two will appear in the spring issue of Esoterica.

Colin Price served as National President of the Theosophical Society in England, for ten years. He joined the Society in 1989 and became a deep student of Theosophy under the mentorship of Geoffrey Farthing. For many years Colin was an energetic speaker and study leader and though he has retired from active life in the Society, his unstoppable enthusiasm for Theosophy and for teaching it, is well-remembered. 'The Cycle of Life' is from the Blavatsky Lecture presented at the Theosophical Summer School, Nottingham University, 2009.

may last from a few years to a kalpa. It is divided into three sub-periods (1) when the Ego delivered of its mortal coil enters into Kama-Loka (the abode of Elementaries); when it enters into its 'Gestation State'; when it is reborn in the Rupa-Loka of Devachan. Mahatma Letters, Chronological Edition, Letter No. 44, p194.

⁴ George Adams, 'Physical and Ethereal Spaces', p.9.

⁵ **Kama-Loka** is a compound Sanskrit word from kâma (काम), "desire" and loka (लोक), "place". H. P. Blavatsky defined it as follows: *"The semi-material plane, to us subjective and invisible, where the disembodied 'personalities', the astral forms, called Kama Rupa remain, until they fade out from it by the complete exhaustion of the effects of the mental impulses that created these eidolons of human and animal passions and desires. It is the Hades of the ancient Greeks and the Amenti of the Egyptians, the land of Silent Shadows; a division of the first group of the Trailôkya"*. ((HPB, Theosophical Glossary, Krotana, CA, TPH, 1973, p 171-172). Kâmaloka is the stage that precedes the one of devachan (or avitchi in the case of a wicked personality): From Kama-Loka, then, in the great Chiliocosm, once awakened from their post-mortem torpor the newly translated "Souls" go all (but the shells) according to their attractions, either to Devachan or Avitchi. (Mahatma Letters, Chronological Edition, Letter No. 104, p 361, TPH, 1993,). *Theosophy Wiki*.

Devachan is a phonetic spelling of the Tibetan term bde ba can or bde ba chen, frequently written as "dewachen" (Schlagintwei, 'Buddhism in Tibet', 1863.), and can be translated as "blissful realm" or "pure land", and corresponds to the Mahayanic sukhâvatî or the Hindu devaloka or svarga. In the Theosophical view, Devachan is a stage in the post-mortem processes that comes after having gone through the Kâmaloka. H. P. Blavatsky defines it as follows: *"The 'dwelling of the gods'. A state intermediate between two earth-lives, into which the EGO (Atmâ-Buddhi-Manas or the Trinity made One) enters, after its separation from Kâma Rupa, and the disintegration of the lower principles on earth"*. (HPB, Theosophical Glossary, Krotana, CA, TPH, 1973, p 98). In Devachan, the person enjoys the result of the good actions done in the life just finished, as well as receives a compensation for the unmerited suffering experienced: *"Devachan is the idealized continuation of the terrestrial life just left behind, a period of retributive adjustment, and a reward for unmerited wrongs and sufferings undergone in that special Life"*. (HPB, The Key to Theosophy, TPH London, 1987, p 132). *Theosophy Wiki*.

Avitchi (अवीचि, avīci) also transliterated Avitchi, is a Sanskrit and Pali word used in Buddhism meaning "without waves". It refers to the lowest level of "hell" (naraka), into which the dead who have committed grave misdeeds may be reborn. Although in Buddhism Hells are temporary, Avitchi is often regarded as a place of no return, where beings languish eternally. In the Theosophical view Avitchi is not a locality but a state of misery experienced by those who have devoted their life to do conscious harm, and as a consequence their personal egos have broken the connection with the spiritual Individuality. This state is not only experienced after death but can continue on the physical plane in a new incarnation as a soulless person, leading a life full of sorrow, turning more and more animalistic as time passes. The personality is eventually annihilated, after one or several incarnations. *Theosophy Wiki*.

⁶ G. Farthing, 'When We Die', p.33

¹ The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, Chronological Edition, Letter No. 136, p.451.

² Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB), Secret Doctrine, Vol. 1, p. 17.

³ **Bardo**: In one of the Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett the word "bardo" is used in connection to devachan. Master K.H. wrote: 'Bardo' is the period between death and rebirth - and

- ⁷ The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Foreword, p.lxxi
- ⁸ H. P. Blavatsky rejected the idea that Nirvana merely means the extinction of all consciousness: *"It is an extinction, it is just like a flame that is blown out from the candle; there remains nothing. Nirvāṇa – 'the flame out'. It is that every particle of matter, of that which may have form in our conception or be conditioned or limited, everything disappears to make room for one homogeneity, and for the one absolute spirit. But this spirit is not at all; it is non-consciousness for us, but it is absolute consciousness there."* Michael Gomes (transcriber), The Secret Doctrine Commentaries (The Hague: I.S.I.S. foundation, 2010), 339.
- ⁹ Secret Doctrine, Vol. 2, p.446, p.456; SD 3, p.444.
- ¹⁰ The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Foreword, p. i.
- ¹¹ The Tibetan Book of the Dead, preface to 3rd Ed, p.xii.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Mahatma Letters, Chronological Edition, Letter No.44 p. 122.
- ¹⁴ The Tibetan Book of the Dead, title page.
- ¹⁵ Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter 4, verse 5.
- ¹⁶ Kriya-Shakti (devanāgarī: क्रियशक्ति kriyāśakti) is a Sanskrit term that could be translated as «power to do

or to create» (from kriya, «action», and shakti, «power»). It is the name of one of the six shaktis in Hinduism. In Theosophical literature this Shakti is known as Thought Power. *Theosophy Wiki*.

- ¹⁷ Clara Codd 'The Technique of the Spiritual Life', pp. 19-21

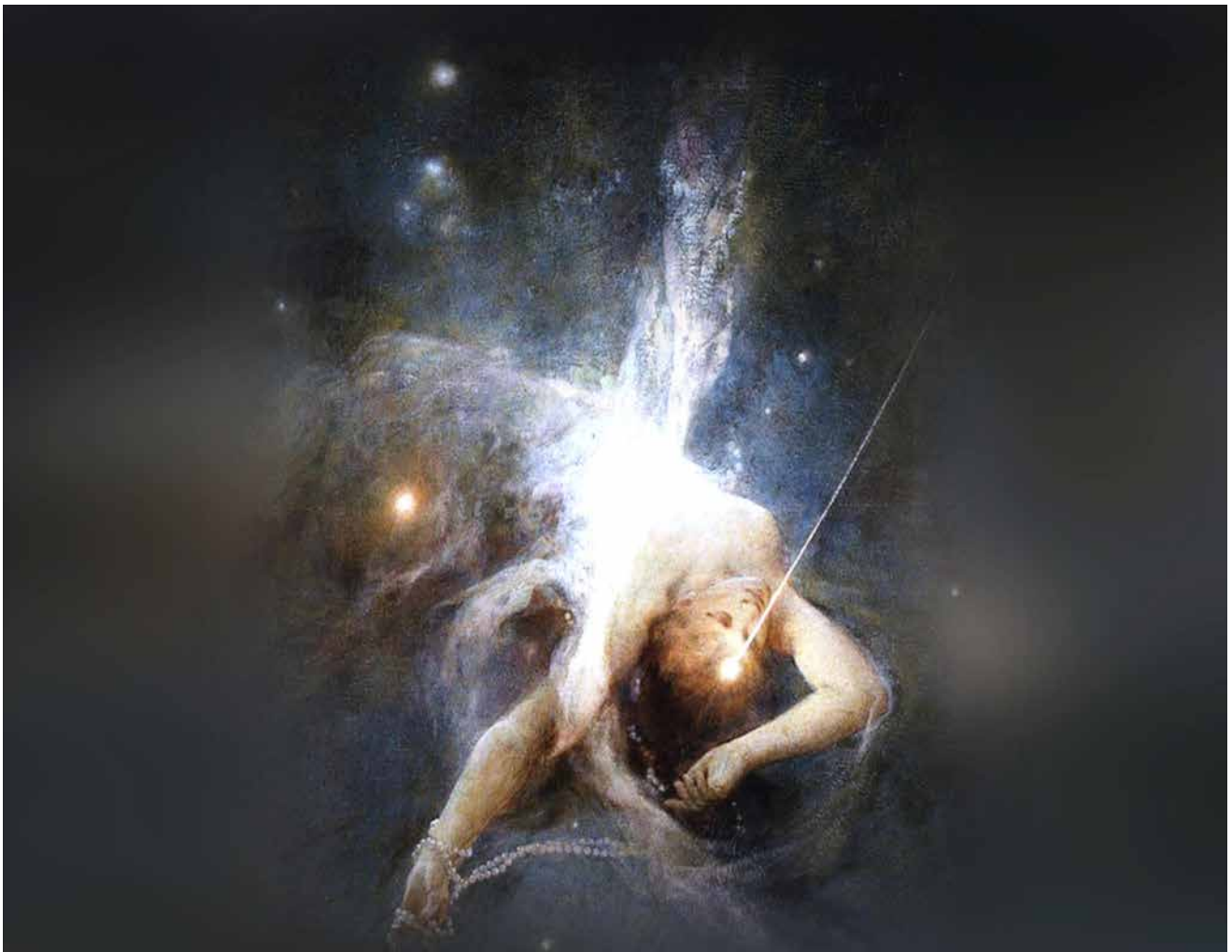
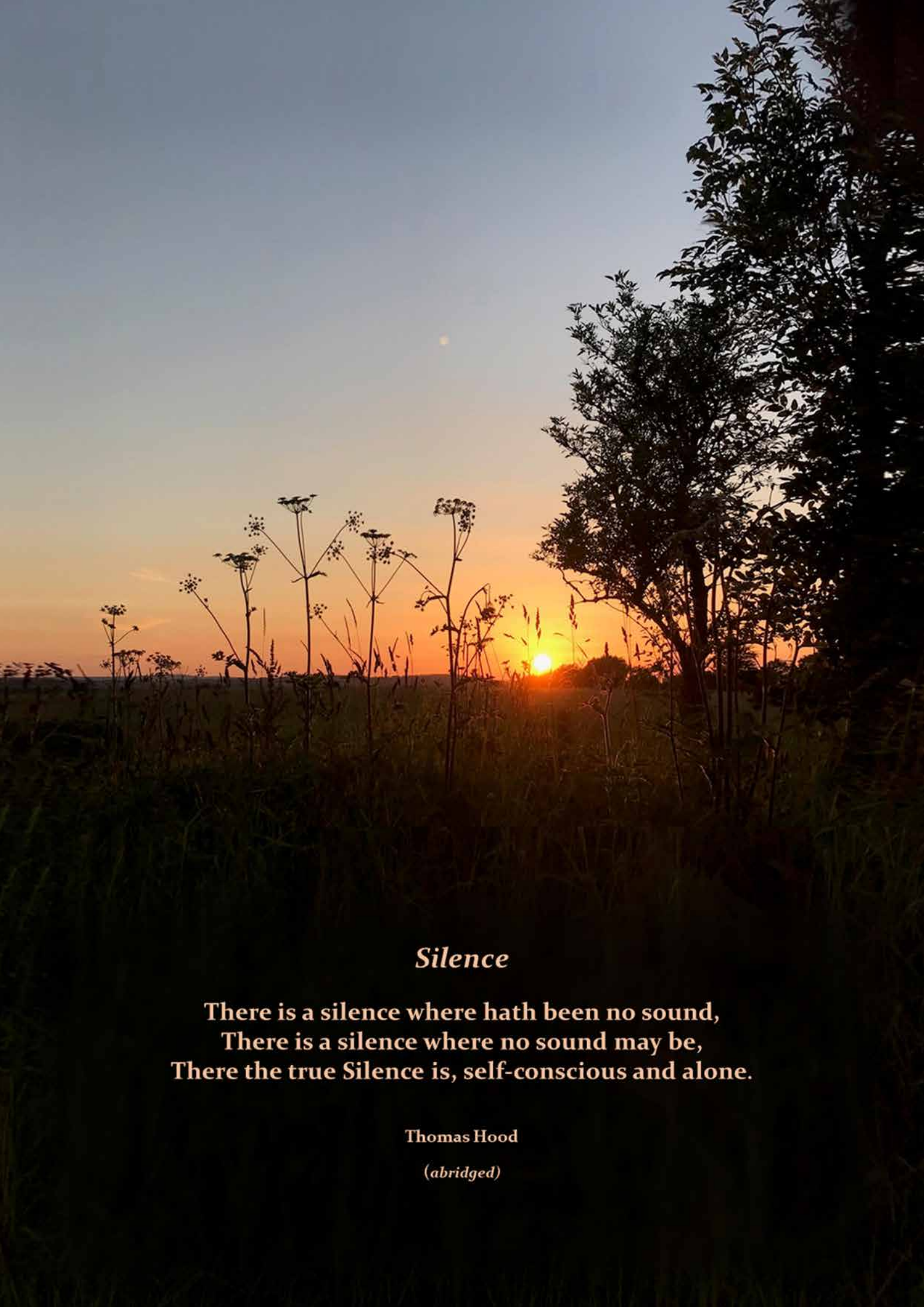


Image: Falling Star Witold Pruszkowski. (Adapted). Public Domain Image. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Image facing page: 'Black Hill, Yorkshire', *SMB* 2021.



Silence

There is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood

(abridged)



Applied Theosophy

H. S. Olcott

People speak of pure mathematics and applied mathematics; the former belong properly to the region of the ideal, not of the ideal in the sense of the fanciful, for there is nothing less fanciful than mathematics, but the ideal in the sense of the metaphysical, which is the really real; the latter is the very imperfect expression of the former in terms of matter, and roughly utilized for the purposes of this mundane existence. Now it is a question which demands the very serious attention of the Fellows of this Society, whether there does not exist something which bears the same relation to "pure Theosophy" that applied mathematics bear to pure. If "applied Theosophy" expresses any real idea, what is implied in the term? Can the Fellows of the Theosophical Society apply their knowledge to the affairs of our mundane existence? Is it possible to materialize, however imperfectly, the great mass of high aspirations and altruistic sentiments that have accumulated in the literature of Theosophy and in the souls of Theosophists, and which at present, for want of an outlet, seem to threaten us with a congestion of spirituality?

The first question that naturally arises is, whether the action of the Theosophical Society in every respect should be limited to its declared Objects. On the general principle that everyone should mind their own business, the presumption is in favour of this view. No one on joining our Society relinquishes their right to take a personal part in any other movement for the benefit of their fellow human beings, nor escapes their duty of doing so. But every "Cause" has its special organization and organs, and pre-empted field of work, and if the Objects of the Theosophical Society are taken seriously by its Fellows, are they not enough to occupy very fully all the time and energy these are likely to be able to spare from the routine business of life? Of the three Objects, two are distinctly separated from everything else. The study of Eastern philosophies, religions and sciences, and the investigation of the obscure forces in Nature and powers in man, are specialties, which have little or no direct connection with the altruism

which it is the peculiar function of Theosophy as an ethical system to publish to the world; more than this, they may be said to be both of them unsocial in their nature, since their tendency is to isolate those who seriously occupy themselves with them from sympathetic intercourse with their neighbours. The first Object is altogether different. To "form the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood", so far from conducing to retirement and concentration, is a purpose so high, so deep, so broad, so universally sympathetic, so distant of realization, that it becomes vague and confused when the attention is directed to it, and to most Fellows this Object is about equivalent in practice to the formation of a nucleus for the recurrence of the Golden Age, or for the re-establishment of the Garden of Eden.

Now, experience proves, what reason might have foreseen, that a comparatively small proportion of the Fellows of the Society take up seriously either of the two contracting Objects, and that only an exceptionally enthusiastic Brother is moved to action by the expanding one; from which it follows that as far as concerns any activity or good influence in the practical affairs of life, the Fellows as a corporate body might as well be shut up in a little community, from whom the world hears once in every ten years or so.

If this, however, were all there were in the Theosophical Society, it would never have become the well-known, by many much esteemed, and, in certain quarters, roundly abused, institution that it is. The fact is that those who join the Society bring into it their knowledge and their activity, and the reputation of the Society has been built up by the individual efforts of its Fellows. Take away *Isis Unveiled*; *The Secret Doctrine*; *Light on the Path*; *Esoteric Buddhism*; *Theosophy*, *Religion*, and the *Occult Science*, and half a dozen other works, together with Theosophical magazines - all of them distinctly due to personal effort - and what would be left of the renown or notoriety of the Society? Since, however, the Theosophical Society is composed of its Fellows,

and is what its Fellows make it, to say all that is in no way to disparage the Society, any more than it would detract from the beauty or utility of a Coral Island in the South Seas, to say that it owed its existence to the individual labours of the little lives that raised it from the bottom of the ocean. It is a mass of coral cells certainly, but it is something more it is a coral Island, with an added individuality of its own.

What the Society has hitherto done - its great merit in the eyes of some, and its terrible fault in the estimation of others - is to make people think. No one can for long belong to the Theosophical Society without beginning to question themselves. They begin to ask themselves: "How do I know that?". "Why do I believe this?". "What reason have I to be so certain that I am right, and so sure that my neighbours are wrong?". "What is my warrant for declaring this action, or that practice, to be good, and their opposite bad?". The very air of Theosophy is charged with the spirit of enquiry. It is not the "sceptical" spirit, nor is it the "agnostic". It is a real desire to know and to learn the truth, as far as it is possible for any creature to know it who is so limited by their capacities and so biased by their personal prejudices. It is that which has raised the Theosophical Society above the level of all other aggregations or organizations, and which, so long as its Fellows abstain from dogmatizing, must keep it on an altogether higher plane. To the Theologian, to the Philosopher, to the Sceptic, to the Spiritualist, to the Materialist, it says the same thing - study man and Nature, and compare what you find there with your own pre-existing ideas and theories.

In proportion as anyone follows this advice they spontaneously incline towards Theosophy, which is the least common multiple and greatest common measure of all the "ists," the "tys" and the "isms". There is nothing in the Objects of the Society which would enable any person unacquainted with its history to divine from them alone what would be the ideas of a Fellow of the Society upon almost any subject. The fact is that the Theosophical Society attracts persons who have got a natural disposition to examine, analyse, reflect; and when this tendency does not exist - when people join the Society from special sympathy with one or more of its Objects

- they very soon begin to ponder over the problems of existence, for they find themselves involuntarily and instinctively subjecting their own pet theories and cherished weaknesses to the process of examination which is the slogan of the Society. The result of an examination thus candidly made is almost invariably a view of life and of the universe in more or less resemblance to that of the Eastern religions and philosophies when these are purified of their superstition and priest-made masks. It is a mistake to imagine that what is known as Theosophy at present has been learned from the writings of the ancients; it is an independent growth in the modern mind which to many appears spontaneous, because they cannot discern whence the seeds come. Theosophy, like humanity itself, has many different sources.

All Science, all Philosophy, all Religion, are its progenitors; it appears when the seed of an enquiring spirit is dropped into a personal soil sufficiently unprejudiced and altruistic to give it nourishment. The modern world is thinking out the problems of life in the rough, and then comparing its conclusions with the ideas of the ancients by way of corroborating or verifying them. Here and there a Fellow of the Society outside of India may be found who is willing to accept the Eastern Initiates, whether ancient or modern, as teachers; but the majority prefer to think and theorize for themselves, which is, after all, the best way for anyone to learn who can think and theorize logically.

We have, then, a Society without opinions, but with certain "Objects", certain principles, and certain methods, and we have as a result a tendency to certain modes of thought, and certain theories of the Universe, to which theories the name of Theosophy has been given, and when these theories are examined, they are found not only to resemble those contained in the Eastern systems of philosophy, but a closer scrutiny shows that the very same ideas, only sadly mutilated, underlie all religions, and are contained in a more or less diluted form in all philosophies. Not only this: a careful comparison of the root of the Theosophical system with the latest discoveries and most advanced conjectures of modern science, and of recent experimental research in the borderland between physics and

metaphysics shows an extraordinary agreement between them. We are advancing step by step; a student can take in at a time from a teacher only a very small addition to the knowledge which they already possesses, and the fact that 'The Secret Doctrine' has been so generally understood and so highly appreciated by Theosophists, shows that their own thoughts were not so very much behind the ideas given out in that marvellous work.

All this, however, is only what may be called the intellectual or philosophical side of Theosophy; and it is the fruit of the Theosophical Society's influence only in one direction. Those who come under the influence of the Theosophic spirit are affected ethically as well as philosophically. The same causes which produce a certain tendency in thought, produce also a disposition to act in a certain manner. The habit of viewing the Universe and the lives as a divinely wonderful system, in which progress towards ultimate perfection by means of conscious effort is the furthest analysis which we can make of the purpose of existence, results in a desire to exert the necessary effort in order to ensure for ourselves, and for those whom we can help, as much of that progress as is realizable at present. It is impossible for anyone seriously to believe that this world is governed by a law of absolute justice - that as we sow, so shall we reap - without finding their ideas of the value of life, and of the things of life, radically affected thereby. If it be in our power to become larger and stronger beings, richer in ourselves and happier in our lives, no one but a fool would refuse to avail themselves of the means of attaining to that happier and higher state. If it be possible to help others to reach it, no one but a selfish and unsympathetic wretch would refuse to their neighbour the helping hand for which they feel they would themselves be grateful. The consequence is that along with enlargement of the mind there takes place an enlargement of the sympathies as the result of Theosophic studies, and both of these conduce to the moral growth of the individual.

This moral growth exhibits itself in two ways, internally and externally. The individual in whom it takes place begins to regulate and purify their own life; they cast away all that they feel will keep them weak and silly, and cultivate those habits and those qualities that they know will

make them strong. They also tried to induce their neighbours to enter the upward path, and endeavours to help those who show a disposition to turn away from the harmful and the idiotic, which form so large a proportion of the affairs of human life at present. The help they can be to single individuals is comparatively small; for the work they, like themselves, have to do at first is the rectifying of their own faults and the purifying of their own motives, and this every person must necessarily do for themselves; and a neighbour, however anxious to assist, can do but little more than exhort and encourage. But over and above these personal faults and evils, there are others which affect a great number of persons together, against which any single individual is powerless. Even were the dislike and fear of those wider evils general, and everyone agreed that they ought to be put down, still unless a united attack be made upon them they cannot be abated, for individuals can make no impression on them, and they are strong enough to resist the attack of a mob. To combat them requires unanimity and organization. Every Fellow of the Society feels in their heart a strong wish to aid to the best of their ability in diminishing and if possible, destroying these evils. They see that their existence is completely incompatible with any success in establishing a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. They know that they have their root deep down in human selfishness, and that they are supported by many existing institutions, political, social and religious - to which they are firmly attached by established customs and vested interests.

Now it is at that point that the hitch occurs. The Theosophical Society is not supposed to promulgate opinions concerning social matters, any more than it is supposed to do so concerning religious matters; and as for politics, they are strictly prohibited to the Fellows, as Fellows, by the Constitution and Rules of the Society, although personally they may and often do take an active interest therein. Again, if anyone proposes that the Theosophical Society shall take any part in the war against the practical evils of life, it is answered that, as has been previously said, each evil has already got a special organization to oppose it. There are special Societies for the suppression of drunkenness, of cruelty, of immorality in various forms; also for the furtherance of every kind of benevolent work; were the Theosophical Society

therefore to interest itself in these things, not only would it be going out of its legitimate province, but it would be an interloper in the fields which others have got a prescriptive right to occupy. Now this would be a serious argument, but for one very obvious consideration; namely, that since the Theosophical Society has professedly, as a body, no opinion on any subject, it is equally a transgression of its basic principles for it to sustain or promulgate any special system of philosophy, as in practice it decidedly does, under the name of "Theosophy". The Theosophical Society may be, and nominally is, a Society for the stimulation of enquiry and research, overshadowed by the somewhat vague idea of the ultimate realization of human brotherhood; but we have seen already that those who enter the Society either possess already or very soon acquire, certain definite habits of mind and ways of viewing the Universe, which are denoted and connoted by the terms Theosophy and Theosophist.

Now it is distinctly as a result of these ideas and habits that there arises a desire, not indeed peculiar to Theosophists, but inseparable from Theosophy, to rid the world of evil practices and evil forces; and it follows logically that the desire to act rightly is as much a consequence of a connection with Theosophy as the desire to think rightly; and that therefore both are natural, spontaneous, and inevitable consequences of Fellowship in the Theosophical Society and equally within the legitimate sphere of the Society, whether manifested individually, or by the united effort of a part, or of the whole of the Fellows. A Theosophist is necessarily imbued with what was called in the Middle Ages, and is called to this day by those who are still in the mediaeval condition of mind, a hatred of Satan and all its works. To combat evil actively is, in fact, the ungratified desire at present of thousands of Fellows of the Society, and it is chiefly because there is now no outlet for their activity in that direction, which takes their attention off of themselves and away from each other, that quarrels and scandals occur among its Fellows. Only a small percentage of the Fellows care very much to work at Occultism, and now there is a separate division of the Society set apart for that purpose, under a Teacher eminently qualified to teach real Occultism if she only had pupils capable of learning it.

This, then, is the problem, and it is of all the problems presented to us at the present moment that which is of most importance to the Theosophical Society: Having prepared themselves by study and self-development to take an active part in the warfare against evil, can any means be devised whereby the Fellows of the Society can apply their knowledge and their energies to the practical affairs of life? Practical Theosophy is an affair of the future. Applied Theosophy is a more modest ambition, and is, or ought to be, a possibility.

Now it is evident that no greater mistake could be made than to open little departments in the Society itself for different special purposes. A Temperance division, Social purity division, a Woman's rights division, an Anti-cruelty division, would be so many mistakes, unless the intention were similar to that which was manifested in the establishment of the Esoteric Division - to isolate a certain group of Fellows from the main work of the Society, for the mutual benefit of all concerned. It would be a blunder, not only because these special divisions would intrude upon the work now being done by special organizations, but also because the real work of the Theosophical Society is, and always must be, accomplished upon the plane of ideas, not on that of material things. Moreover, any specialization of functions tends not only to develop a particular part, but also to draw into that part all that appertains to the exercise of that function, previously contained in the other parts. Already the effect of clearly divided Objects has been the formation in the Society of unrecognized but not unreal divisions, in the shape of groups which are exclusively addicted to psychic experiments, to the philosophy of the Hindus, to ethics of Buddhism, or to the speculations of modern Western thinkers. Were the Fellows encouraged to follow their natural affinities in the application of their Theosophy to the affairs of life, as they do their predilections for the study of Theosophy in one or other of its various aspects, they would become still more one-sided and partially developed Theosophists than they are at present, and this further isolation of its Fellows from one another would tend to weaken the Society still more as a united body.

If the Fellows of the Theosophical Society are to apply their Theosophy to the affairs of life, it must be through the Society, and as individual units of the whole - not as isolated individuals. It is well known that in metaphysics two and two do not make four but five, and that the fifth is frequently by far the most important part of the sum. The same idea is expressed in the fable of the bundle of sticks; tied together they are unbreakable, singly they can be snapped with ease. Union or unity adds certain qualities and powers that were not there before, and the vehicle in which these powers reside is the unit which is added to the number of the sticks by tying them together. It is this mystic individuality, "the sum total"; that gives strength to all societies and congregations, and becomes the real dominating power, to which all contribute some of their force and which stands behind every unit and lends its whole strength to it. Without it a Fellow of the Theosophical Society would be as powerless as any other isolated man or woman in the community. With it behind them an Fellow is a power in proportion to the unity and singleness of purpose of the Society to which they belong. Who speaks when a priest of the Roman Catholic Church utters a command? The united power of the Church of Rome. Who speaks when a disrobed priest says something? A nonentity. Who speaks when the Judge, the General, the Statesman open their mouths? The State - the tremendous and often tyrannical personality that comes into life and action when the units that composed it are bound together, through organization, by a common will and a common purpose.

It is this added increment, and this only, that gives to the Theosophical Society its extraordinary, and to many unaccountable, power. Weak in numbers, contemptible in organization, distracted by personal jealousies, subject to constant endeavours on the part of ambitious individuals to break it up into pieces which they can distribute among themselves, the Theosophical Society is a power in the world notwithstanding all the assaults that are made upon it by outsiders, and the disintegrating influences within. Why? Because upon a plane higher than the physical the Fellows are united and strong. They are united in their ideas of the purpose of life, and of the government of the Universe - in other words, they are strong in that they are individual

cells composing the body called the Theosophical Society, as it exists in both the physical and the spiritual worlds.

Quarrel as they may among themselves, be as small and provincial as they choose, the Fellows of the Society cannot help contributing their little quota of Theosophical ideas to that united whole idea which is the spirit of the Theosophical Society, and therefore its very life and real self. And those who attack the Society are frequently its supporters; for they attack it on the external plane, while, unknown to themselves in spite of themselves, they support it upon the plane where its real life is passed, for those who are its enemies are generally ignorant of its true nature, and are frequently themselves imbued with eminently Theosophic ideas and aspirations, which nourish the Society on the ideal plane, and constantly tend to draw those in whom they exist, more and more in the direction of the Theosophical Society in its materialized form on earth.

If then the real power of Theosophy in the world is exercised in the realm of thought; and if the direction in which that power is exerted is a natural consequence of the growth of certain ideas in the minds of those who carry out the objects of the Society, it stands to reason that the gigantic evils of our modern world must be attacked with immaterial weapons and in the intellectual and moral planes. How can this be accomplished? Simply by perceiving the fact, understanding it and acknowledging it. Then the actual work will be accomplished quietly, almost silently, and apparently spontaneously, just as the great reforming work of the Society is now being accomplished - by individuals - who, while contributing to the strength of the Society, draw from it in return a force that gives to their utterances an importance and a power which had they spoken as isolated individuals, and not as Fellows of the Society, their words would not have had.

There does not, and cannot, exist the slightest doubt as to the direction in which the power of the Theosophical Society would be applied in practical things. If the tendency of Fellowship in the Society is to develop certain habits of philosophic thought, its tendency is even stronger to give rise to definite ethical views and moral

principles. However much and bitterly the Fellows may disagree as to the duration of Devachan or the number and viability of the Principles in man, or any other point of occult doctrine, it would be hard to get up a dispute among the brethren as to the evil of intemperance, or the abomination of cruelty, or about any other of the crying sins of our times. Not only is that the case but they would all give the same reasons, for their detestation of these evils, reasons founded on their Theosophical ideas and principles. Still, of what avail or utility to the world are their ideas and wishes in these matters at present? Who cares to have the good-word or influence of the Theosophical Society for any benevolent movement, any reform, or any attempt to do justice? No One. There is not a "cause" today that would not rather see the minister of some microscopic Christian sect on the platform at its Annual Meeting than the most prominent member of the Theosophical Society - for the good and sufficient reason that the Rev Gentleman would carry with him the unseen but not unfelt influence and authority of the body to which he belongs, while the Fellow of the Theosophical Society would represent nothing but themselves. This condition of things should not exist, and all that is needed to remedy it is for all of us to see and understand that the ethical is just as much a part of the Theosophical idea, and just as much the business of the Fellows of the Society as the philosophical.

But it is only as a united whole that the Theosophical Society can ever be a power in the world for good, or a vehicle for the exercise of the altruistic efforts of its Fellows. The action of the Theosophical Society is on the plane of ideas, which is the plane of realities, in that material things are but pre-existing ideals brought down into this earthly sphere. The Theosophical Society does not mean a number of little coteries, nor a few larger coteries composed of a collection of the smaller ones. It does not mean a few hundred Presidents of little Branches, or half a score of "General Secretaries", it does not mean even the Fellows that compose the Society at any particular time, for these come and go and the Society remains intact, as the cells of the body change, while the body remains the same person, animated by the same spirit. The real Theosophical Society is an indivisible unit, animated by an individual life! Its soul is the love

of truth, its vital principle is kindness, and it dwells in a world above the material, where no enemy can touch it. It depends for its manifestation on earth upon an appropriate vehicle, and the first condition necessary in that vehicle is that it shall be a united whole. The Theosophical Society is an ideal power for good diffused over the whole world, but it requires material conditions, and the most important of these is a material centre, from which and to which the efferent and afferent forces shall circulate. This is a condition of the life of all organizations, and of all organisms, and the Theosophical Society is both; it is an organization on the material plane, an organism on the spiritual. A common centre, therefore, is as necessary for spiritual as for physical reasons. "Adyar" is not a place only, it is a principle. It is a name which ought to carry with it a power far greater than that conveyed by the name "Rome". ADYAR is the centre of the Theosophical movement — not "7 Duke Street, Adelphi," or "Post Office Box 2659, New York.

ADYAR is a principle and a symbol, as well as a locality. ADYAR is the name which means on the material plane the Headquarters of an international, or, more properly speaking, world-wide Society of persons who have common aims and objects, and are imbued with a common spirit. It means on the supra-physical plane a centre of life and energy, the point to and from which the currents run between the ideal and the material. Every loyal Fellow has in their heart a little ADYAR, for they have in them a spark of the spiritual fire which the name typifies. ADYAR is the symbol of our unity as a Society, and so long as it exists in the heart of its Fellows the powers of the enemy can never prevail against the Theosophical Society.

What then, to recapitulate, must be our answer to the questions with which we started: Is such a thing as "Applied Theosophy" possible? If so, of what does it consist?

We have seen that there is no reason why the ideas and influence of the Theosophical Society should not be as great in combating wickedness in the practical department of life as in combating error in the philosophical. The Objects of the Society neither order nor forbid interference with either; but they predispose the

Fellows to exert an active influence in both, by evolving in their minds a perception of truer and better things, and a desire for their realization. We have seen that it is not by making the Society itself an instrument on the physical plane that its power can be utilized for good; but that its influence must be a moral one, consisting of the combined and united thoughts and wishes of the whole Society, focused upon any individual point, and acting through the personality of its individual Fellows. We have seen that all that is necessary to make such a united power manifest is that its existence should be acknowledged and felt by the Fellows themselves; and that to acknowledge and feel it, and thus bring it from the latent to the active condition, the Fellows must perceive that the Theosophical Society is a living entity, "ideal" if one chooses to call it so, but an entity one and indivisible alike upon the material plane and on the supra-physical plane. We have also seen that the visible centre of the Society, "ADYAR", is symbolical of the principle of unity, as well as of the material life of the Society, and that in every sense loyalty to "ADYAR" means loyalty to the Objects of the Society and to the principles of Theosophy.

The answer to our questions then must be that Applied Theosophy is surely a possibility; and that it consists of the moral influence brought to bear upon the practical evils of life by the exertions of individual Fellows who have behind them, severally and collectively, the spiritual power created by unity of purpose, of ideas and loyalty to the truth; a power for good of which the terrestrial ADYAR is the physical centre and Headquarters; while the spiritual ADYAR is the channel by means of which powerful influences from a higher sphere, unseen but not unfelt, enter the Society through the hearts of each and all of its Fellows, thence to be outpoured upon the whole world.

Henry Steel Olcott was an agriculturist, American military officer, journalist, lawyer, and co-founder of the Theosophical Society. He held the title of President-Founder of the Society from 1875 till his death in 1907. He was the first well-known American of European ancestry to make a formal conversion to Buddhism. During his presidency he helped to restore Buddhism in South Asia, and established schools for children of Buddhist and

Hindu families, among many other notable achievements. Col. Olcott related the timeless wisdom of Theosophy to the cultures of both East and West, applied it to everyday life, and built the Society into an international organization. It was at Chittenden, Vermont, while he was on this assignment, that he met H. P. Blavatsky who had come there on instructions from her Master. Joining forces with her, from this point onward he worked to carry out the purposes of the Brotherhood of Adepts, especially those purposes related to the specific mission assigned to Mme. Blavatsky by her Master. "Bound together by the unbreakable ties of a common work - the Masters' work - having mutual confidence and loyalty and one aim in view, we stand or fall together..."¹ Of their personal relationship, Colonel Olcott says, "Neither then, at the commencement, nor ever afterwards had either of us the sense of the other being of the opposite sex. We were simply chums; so regarded each other, so called each other." And again, "She looked at me in recognition at the first hour, and never since has that look changed... It was teacher and pupil, elder brother and younger, both bent on the one single end, but she with the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages".² When the Theosophical Society was founded a year later in 1875, Colonel Olcott was elected president for life. From that time until the end of his life, the Society was his first care. He guarded it jealously from every threat to its existence; he gave his physical strength and the benefit of his wide experience to its organization, and his administrative ability to nourish it and foster its growth. "He held the world in his heart" - Josephine Ransom.³ this account barely scratches the surface of his Work and further information can be found at *Theosophy Wiki*. This article was first published by the Theosophical Publishing House (Adyar) in 1930.⁴ (Adyar Pamphlet, Issue No.140).

Notes

¹ The Theosophist, August 1932, p. 471.

² Claude Bragdon, Episodes From an Unwritten History, p. 23.

³ Josephine Ransom, "Tributes" World Theosophy 2.8 (August, 1932), p 642.

⁴ Adyar Pamphlet, Issue No.140.

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.

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The Theosophical Society is a worldwide community whose primary object is Universal Brotherhood without distinction based on the realization that life, and all its diverse forms, human and non-human, is indivisibly One. Seen as revolutionary when it was founded in 1875, the Society draws together those of goodwill whatever their social status or ethnicity.

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2. To encourage the study of comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
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