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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Contributors: Oren R. Lyons Jr. | Geoffrey A. Farthing | Janet Macrae | John Algeo
Hazel S. Minot

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From the Editor's desk

Winter has run its course and spring is with us once more. We can now look forward to warmer days and a profusion of blossom to brighten our daily lives, along with some serious study in this edition of *Esoterica*.

In recent months, various disturbing comments regarding the war in Gaza have been posted on Facebook. Some of them have been aimed at Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. Accusations of antisemitism and pro-Nazi remarks have been attributed to theosophical teachings and even to Blavatsky. This is not new. Accusations such as these have been voiced many times over the decades since the Second World War. The article *Responding to Lies About H. P. Blavatsky* gives an informed, factual view.

John Algeo's article *The Dark Side of Light* gives us a fascinating view of the necessary balance between the opposing yet complementary dark and light forces in the cosmos and the world around us. As theosophists, we are aware of the dualistic nature of the universe but mostly this only touches the surface appearance. John's article takes us to the working heart of duality, even to the light and dark angels or devas.

We have two articles by Geoffrey Farthing in this issue. Geoffrey was one of the most learned and inspiring theosophists in recent times. His article *Ever-becoming: The Cosmic Process* is pure theosophy and well worth reading and re-reading to gain a deep understanding of life's journey in this



manvantara. Geoffrey was one of the few theosophists to be awarded the Subba Row Medal, which is awarded to writers of works of outstanding merit on Eastern and Western philosophy.

This edition's content begins with words of wisdom from an ancient culture and ends with words from an artificial intelligence tool from the very latest cultural innovation.

We have no book reviews to offer for this edition. If you have recently read a book that has inspired you or has expanded your understanding in some way, why not write a short review for inclusion in *Esoterica*? All contributions will be welcomed as will letters and comments. As members of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales, this is your magazine and we would love to hear from you. ✱

Julie Cunningham Editor

An American Indian Speaks

Quotes by **Oren R. Lyons Jr.**

“We have to make a change in our direction of how we live, a change in the direction of how we think... That’s why it is important for the small voice of indigenous people at this point to come forward. Western civilisation lost the mystery, you lost the elegance, you lost the spirituality of the reality of the earth and of life itself. And when you lost that, you lost direction.”

“If you do not have a moral question in your governing process, then you do not have a process that is going to survive.”

“In our perception all life is equal, and that includes the birds, animals, things that grow, things that swim. All life is equal in our perception.”

“The environment isn’t over here. The environment isn’t over there. You are the environment.”

“We have to do that. We have to be thankful. That’s what we said. Two things were told to us: To be thankful, so those are our ceremonies, ceremonies of



Oren Lyons, dancing at evening camp fire, Camp Onondaga, Long Lake, NY, 1947.



thanksgiving. We built nations around it, and you can do that, too. And the other thing they said was to enjoy life. That's a rule, a law – enjoy life – you're supposed to."

"We've got to think now, in real terms, for that seventh generation . . . We've got to get back to spiritual law if we are to survive."

"I do not see a delegation for the four-footed. I see no seat for the Eagles. We forget and we consider ourselves superior, but we are after all a mere part of the Creation. And we must continue to understand where we are. And we stand between the mountain and the ant, somewhere and there only, as part of the Creation."

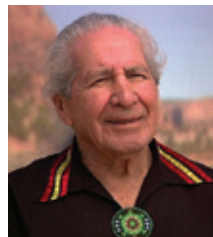
"Even though you and I are in different boats, you in your boat and we our canoe, we share the same river of life. What befalls me befalls you. And downstream, downstream in this river of life, our children will pay for our selfishness, for our greed, and for our lack of vision."

"The law says if you poison the water, you'll die. The law says that if you poison the air, you'll suffer. The law says if you degrade where you live, you'll suffer. ... If you don't learn that, you can only suffer. There's no discussion with this law."



"When we walk upon Mother Earth, we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them. In the absence of the sacred, nothing is sacred. Everything is for sale." ✱

Andy Holme



Oren R. Lyons Jr. is a Native American Faith keeper of the Onondaga nation, which is one of the Six Nations of the historic Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which means "People of the Longhouse" (they are also referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy). He is a passionate advocate and activist for the rights of Indigenous people. He has been a member of the Indigenous Peoples of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations for 14 years.

Ever-becoming: The Cosmic Process

By **Geoffrey A. Farthing**

In *The Secret Doctrine* there are a number of passages wherein the process of becoming is described and applied to a number of aspects. Taken together these tell us plainly that becoming is the cosmic process. We are told that;

Becoming is the mode of activity of the uncreate deity. Having been endowed with the germs of becoming, matter (objective) is brought into birth, for the creative force fashions it *according to the ideal forms*. Matter not yet engendered had no form; it becomes when it is put into operation.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p281

This passage tells us something of the meaning of 'becoming' at the very start of cosmic activity. Students of Theosophy will have appreciated that the whole process is a manifestation of life and that life can be thought of under a number of aspects, consciousness, energy and substance. The more common one is the duality of Spirit and Matter. However, as all theosophical students are aware, there is **no** beginning of anything *ab initio* or creation from nothing. There are always seeds carried forward from

the fruits of previous periods of activity (Manvantaras). These seeds lie dormant so to speak and remain so during the whole period of Pralaya whilst everything, being and creature that constituted a previous period of activity is re-assimilated into the One Life whence it came. As a man wakes in the morning without necessarily thinking about all that he has learnt in his life up to that time, he is nevertheless possessed of all his experience and this he calls on when he has to do whatever the day ahead has in store for him. As a universe, so he does not start his day from nothing. We have another informative passage:

Everything that is, was, and will be, eternally is, even the countless forms which are finite and perishable only in their objective, not in their *ideal* Form. They existed as Ideas in the Eternity, and, when they pass away, will exist as reflections. Neither the form of man, nor that of any animal, plant or stone has ever been created, and it is only on this plane of ours that it commenced "becoming", i.e. objectivizing into its present materiality, or expanding *from within outwards*, from the most sublimated and supersensuous essence into its grossest appearance.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p282

This passage continues to point out the relevance of its content to man but we will see his position in the process later. Looking again at the subject of deity in the context of ever becoming, we have the following:

According to the Esoteric philosophy, this Deity is during its "nights" and its "days", (i.e. cycles of rest or activity) "the eternal perpetual

motion", the "EVER-BECOMING, as well as the ever-universally-present, and the ever-Existing". The latter is the root-abstraction, the former - the only possible conception in the human mind, if it disconnects this deity from any shape or form. It is a perpetual, never-ceasing evolution, circling back in its incessant progress through aeons of duration into its original status - ABSOLUTE UNITY.

The Secret Doctrine Vol II p545

In this article we are discussing the process of Universal Becoming. This means that we are thinking in terms of THE ONE in manifestation and not the Absolute which, as H.P.B. says, is unknowable and unthinkable.

We have now been introduced to the idea of 'never-ceasing evolution' and this evolution we usually think of as the progressive development of forms, but in occultism there is a parallel evolution of the subjective faculties. We are told that:

...there exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme ... or rather three separate schemes of evolution These are the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual and the physical evolutions. These three are the finite aspects or the reflections on the field of Cosmic Illusion of ATMA, the seventh, the ONE REALITY.

1. The Monadic is, as the name implies, concerned with the growth and development into still higher phases of activity of the Monad in conjunction with:
2. The Intellectual, represented by the Manasa-Dhyani (the Solar Devas, or the Agnishvatta Pitris), the "givers of intelligence and

consciousness" to man and:

3. The Physical, represented by the Chhayas of the lunar Pitris, round which Nature has concreted the present physical body. This body serves as the vehicle for the "growth" (to use a misleading word) and the transformations through Manas and - owing to the accumulation of experiences - of the finite into the INFINITE, of the transient into the Eternal and Absolute.

This passage is followed by the words:

"Each is represented in the constitution of man, the Microcosm of the great Macrocosm; and it is the union of these three streams in him which makes him the complex being he now is". Again we see how inseparable man is from the total process.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p181

The intellectual and the physical aspects of evolution do not present much difficulty but we can ask what it is that can evolve as far as the Monad is concerned? The words are that it is developing "into still higher phases of activity". This implies that the Monad too is ever-becoming. The Monad is defined in the S.D. as being a combination of Atma and Buddhi, both universal Principles, in combination, representing the divine Life. They are usually considered as the highest states of any kind of Being. How therefore can they progress? The answer seems to be that, like everything else in Nature, they themselves are sevenfold, their sub-principles reflecting the main principles or planes of Cosmos. One could conjecture that development of Monad could take place by

the progressive unfoldment, at their level, of the qualities of each of the monadic sub-planes. Reasoning by analogy, this development would be by stages, i.e. corresponding to the development of Elements according to the Rounds.

Analogy also gives us a useful clue as to 'spiritual' development in the process of ever-becoming as applied to the Cosmos. The spiritual development of man is Egoic, i.e. the Monad plus Manas. In the cosmic context this would be the Monad plus Mahat, the universal mind, as indicated by scheme (1) taking place in conjunction with scheme (2).

The development of universal mind would be by way of the accumulated experience of the whole collectivity of life forms gathered during their periods of existence. Even though only man is endowed with Manas, his distinguishing characteristic, all things, by way of the mahatic aspect of whatever principles are operating in them, will have a 'mind' content, even though they have no manasic consciousness as man has. This accounts for the intelligence manifesting in many orders in Nature, as instinct for example, in the animal kingdom. All of this will, of course, be closely associated with the Elementals; they too are on an evolutionary journey.

The process of becoming reflects that of the triple evolutionary mode. As far as objective existence is concerned, we are interested in matter, first in its own right and then as a constituent of all living forms. Here we are entering into the process or state of manifestation of unity in diversity. On p 250 of Vol I there are the words "*From the ONE*

Life, formless and uncreate, proceeds the Universe of lives" and each atom is a life in this sense. Prior to physical atoms, according to the S.D. there are three kingdoms of development, the three elemental kingdoms or Elementals in three stages of development. These represent an invisible hinterland to objective existence in the Astral Light.

Associated with the Elementals are the Elements of which the Elementals are the 'souls'. The Elements can be regarded in two ways: one as the Earth, Water, Air, Fire, (Ether) of the mediaeval philosophers, the other as the elements of science. *The Secret Doctrine* tells us that the elements of science are derived from the traditional elements. The latter are those that have to do with the several states of matter which reflect into the physical world as solid, liquid, gaseous, etc. They also have to do with the qualities of matter as they manifest in the qualities of both physical material and living forms. Basically they reflect something of the qualities ascribed astrologically to the planets.

The Elements obviously play a major part in the process of ever-becoming. They too develop by stages. A passage in *The Secret Doctrine* says this:

The elements, whether simple or compound, could not have remained the same since the commencement of the evolution of our chain. Everything in the Universe progresses steadily in the Great Cycle, while incessantly going up and down in the smaller cycles. Nature is never stationary during manvantara, as it is ever becoming, not simply being; and mineral, vegetable, and human life are always adapting their organisms to the

then reigning Elements, and therefore those Elements were then fitted for them, as they are now for the life of present humanity.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p257

The above follows another relevant passage which begins by describing the formation of the Elements (the philosophers):

This means that every new Round develops one of the Compound Elements, as now known to Science - which rejects the primitive nomenclature, preferring to subdivide them into constituents. If Nature is the "Ever-becoming" on the manifested plane, then those Elements are to be regarded in the same light: they have to evolve, progress, and increase to the Manvantaric end. Thus the First Round, we are taught, developed but one Element, and a nature and humanity in what may be called one aspect of Nature - called by some, very unscientifically, though it may be so *de facto*, "One-dimensional Space". The Second Round brought forth and developed two Elements - Fire and Air and its humanity, adapted to this condition of Nature ... in a strictly figurative sense ... "a two-dimensional species".

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p250

Later on in the same passage we are introduced to the idea of matter possibly having "*a fourth dimension in space*". H.P.B. says that this is an unhappy phrase because in objective space there are obviously only three dimensions. She says it refers to a characteristic of matter which she calls 'permeability' and that will correspond to the next sense of man for which she proposes

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the name "*normal clairvoyance*". She suggests that this new characteristic should be referred to as the sixth corresponding to the next, i.e. the sixth, sense of man, and it would be a condition ascribable to a tattvic condition above Fire which she calls Ether, not fully due till the 5th Round.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the process of 'ever-becoming' has a number of aspects. The total process, however, has obviously to be coordinated and the coordination is done by LAW:

It is idle to speak of "laws arising when Deity prepares to create" for: (a) laws or rather LAW is eternal and uncreated; and (b) that Deity is Law, and vice versa. Moreover, the one eternal Law unfolds everything in the (to be) manifested Nature on a sevenfold principle ...

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p152

This Law is that of which all the laws of Nature are partial expression and Karma as normally thought of in association with man's destiny is also encompassed in it. The Law however is universal.

To what is this process of ever-becoming tending and what is man's part in the process? This latter is that which really concerns each of us and we are told a number of what may be to many, surprising facts. Most theosophical students will be familiar with the idea that up to the middle of the third Root Race man was hermaphrodite (androgynous). He then became bi-sexual and procreated as the then animals did and as they do now. It was at this time that man was endowed with mind and his self-conscious

evolution started. There is a passage relevant to all this:

Once that Androgyne "humanity" separated into sexes, transformed by Nature into child-bearing engines, it ceased to procreate its like through drops of vital energy oozing out of the body. But while man was still ignorant of his procreative powers on the human plane (before his Fall ...) all this vital energy, scattered far and wide from him, was used by Nature for the production of the first mammal-animal forms. Evolution is an eternal cycle of becoming, we are taught; and nature never leaves an atom unused. Moreover, from the beginning of the Round, all in Nature tends to become Man. All the impulses of the dual, centripetal and centrifugal Force are directed towards one point - MAN. The progress in the succession of being, says Agassiz, "consists in an increasing similarity of the living fauna and among the Vertebrates, especially, in the increasing resemblance to Man. Man is the end towards which all the animal creation has tended, from the first appearance of the first palaeozoic fishes".

Just so; but "the palaeozoic fishes" being at the lower curve of the arc of the evolution of forms, this Round began with astral man, the reflection of the Dyani-Chohans, called the "Builders". Man is the alpha and the omega of objective creation.

The Secret Doctrine Vol II p170

This central position of man in the schemes particularly with regard to our earth comes as a surprise and new idea. It does, however, give meaning to the expression 'Heavenly

Man' as the archetypal model for the whole cosmic process. Everything tends to become man, or in the earlier stages to become a constituent part of him:

Every form on earth, and every speck (atom) in Space strives in its efforts towards self-formation to follow the model placed for it in the 'HEAVENLY MAN' ... Its (the atom's) involution and evolution, its external and internal growth and development, have all one and the same object – man; man, as the highest physical and ultimate form on this earth; the MONAD, in its absolute totality and awakened condition – as the culmination of the divine incarnations on Earth.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p183

One of the aspects of the process of ever-becoming is that the fluid structure of Cosmos comprises a series of hierarchies through which the Monad must pass in its aeonic evolutionary journey. The beings that compose the hierarchies range from the Elementals, through the kingdoms of Nature, mineral, vegetable, animal, to man and then beyond into the Dhyan-Chohanik kingdoms, of which we are told there are three. Man again has a central position in these hierarchies, as told us:

The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled, and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings, each having a mission to perform, and who – whether we give to them one name or another, and call them Dhyan-Chohans or Angels – are "messengers" in the sense only that they are the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws. They vary infinitely in their respective degrees of

consciousness and intelligence; and to call them all pure Spirits without any of the earthly alloy "which time is wont to prey upon" is only to indulge in poetical fancy. For each of these Being either was, or prepares to become, a man, if not in the present, then in a past or a coming cycle (Manvantara). They are perfected, when not incipient men; and differ morally from the terrestrial human beings, on their higher (less material) spheres, only in that they are devoid of the feeling of personality and of the human emotional nature – two purely earthly characteristics.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p274

The significance of the above passage should not be overlooked. In effect it says that all beings in the Cosmos must pass through the human stage before they can become self-conscious post-human beings.

Man in the constitution of his being has an intimate relationship with these post-human Beings:

To the highest [of the "celestial Beings"], we are taught, belong the seven orders of pure divine spirits; to the six lower ones belong hierarchies that can occasionally be seen and heard by men, and who do communicate with their progeny of the Earth; which progeny is indissolubly linked with them, each principle in man having its direct source in the nature of those great Beings, who furnish us with the respective invisible elements in us.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p133

In the process of ever-becoming the Cosmos at its various levels is developing beings of ever greater stature as regards their qualities

and extent of consciousness. It is by reason of the progressed development of these beings that those below them on the path of evolution are invested with similar qualities. They have first of all to be acquired before they can be handed on and the beings ahead of us on the evolutionary arc have in the course of their struggles in the world of form and beyond developed faculties far beyond those that man can demonstrate at present, but he is heir to them: he possesses them potentially and can develop them and call them into activity.

These qualities are, according to the occult constitution of man, divided into two groups. The first pertains to the four lower principles of the personal man, the second to the higher three principles, those of the spiritual man. The personal man is temporary, having a karmically allotted span of life in our objective world. The other is the Egoic man whose principles are virtually everlasting; they are immortal. It is these latter which are directly 'illuminated' by the universal light of the One Life. There is a beautiful description in Stanza VII (iv), Vol I:

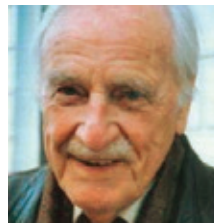
Just as millions of bright sparks dance on the waters of an ocean above which one and the same moon is shining, so our evanescent personalities – the illusive envelopes of the immortal MONAD-EGO – twinkle and dance on the waves of Maya. They last and appear, as the thousands of sparks produced by the moonbeams, only so long as the Queen of the Night radiates her lustre on the running waters of life, the period of a Manvantara; and then they disappear, the beams – symbols of our eternal Spiritual

Egos – alone surviving, re-merged in, and being, as they were before, one with the Mother-Source.

The Secret Doctrine Vol I p237

So man and the Cosmos in all its stages and states of ever-becoming are one and the same. An understanding of this gives us an insight into the meaning of unity. These vast concepts put our living into a context which far transcends our normal limited personal lives, and they help us to see that we are literally all children of one parent, Nature; all of us fulfilling an essential part in the great process of ever-becoming. In the light of this realization we see for an absolute fact that all other human beings are of the same family and fulfilling the same cosmic role. We are indeed truly all brothers, fellow pilgrims on the road to super-humanity with an endless vista of 'ever-becoming' ahead of us. ✨

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Online version: The Blavatsky Trust 2012.



Geoffrey A. Farthing was an English lecturer and writer who was very active in the Theosophical Society, Adyar. He served the Theosophical Society in England in many capacities, including a term as General Secretary. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the European Federation for a number of years, and a member of the Society's General Council.

Self Observation is the Key

If we desire to travel the spiritual path we must practice self observation and make changes in our thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions.

Gradually we become more calm and balanced and it becomes easier to hear that still small voice within. This is a process and it takes time and practice.

*Always remember ,
you are braver than you believe,
stronger than you seem,
smarter than you think
and twice as beautiful as you'd ever imagined.*

*Yesterday I was clever,
so I wanted to change the world.
Today I am wise,
so I am changing myself.*

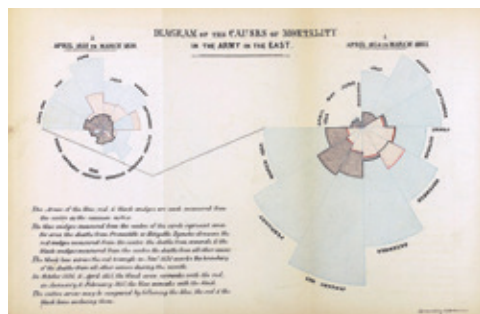
Poem by Rumi

Florence Nightingale's Scientific Spirituality

By **Janet Macrae**

Florence Nightingale is best known as the Lady with the Lamp, who nursed British soldiers during the Crimean War (in which Britain and France fought against Russia, 1854–56). This image is not only factual but highly symbolic, for she brought an enlightened vision to the healthcare at the British military hospital. A pioneer in the use of statistics,

she used her famous pie charts to show the reduction in the death rates from infectious diseases after a series of sanitary reforms had been implemented. (Reproductions and analyses of these charts can be found in Cohen.)



Above: An example of one of Florence Nightingale's 'pie charts'.

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Nightingale saw no conflict between science and spirituality. In her textbook *Notes on Nursing*, she wrote: "God lays down certain



physical laws. Upon His carrying out such laws depends our responsibility" (Nightingale, Notes, p 25). Nightingale's work in nursing and public health was based on a profound spiritual philosophy she had developed in her adolescence and early adulthood. It included three core concepts:

1. That the universe is regulated by scientific laws created by a higher intelligence;
2. That within all human beings there is a divine nature, an inner tendency towards goodness; and
3. That according to the law of evolution, all human beings will eventually actualize their divine potential.

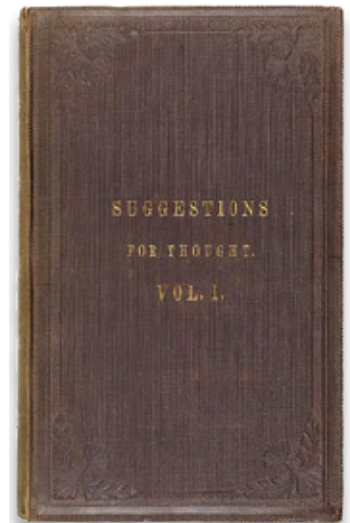
Nightingale was one of the most broadly educated women of the nineteenth century. Her father, a graduate of Cambridge and a liberal-minded Unitarian, gave her a classical education, which she furthered with lifelong studies in comparative religion, particularly

mysticism, and statistical science. One of her closest friends was Benjamin Jowett, a classical scholar at Oxford whose translations of Plato's dialogues are still used today. At his request, Nightingale helped him with his introductions and summaries, sending him many 'hints' for revision. Jowett thanked her, with a touch of humour, in a letter dated April 30, 1874:

"I cannot be too grateful to you for criticizing Plato . . . I have adopted nearly all your hints as far as I have gone (however many hints I might give you, my belief is that you would never adopt any of them)." (Quinn and Prest, p 257).

Nightingale discussed her spiritual views at length with Jowett, but expressed them most fully in an 829-page manuscript entitled *Suggestions for Thought*. She never published this work but, with encouragement from friends, agreed to have six copies privately printed. An edited edition with an introduction and commentaries was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1994. All the quotations below, unless otherwise stated, are from this edition of *Suggestions for Thought*.

Nightingale looked upon spirituality, that is, the consciousness of a Higher Presence, as an evolutionary phenomenon. She wrote that all human beings are capable of profound spiritual experiences, because the highest level of human nature, its essence, is divine. The finest human



Above: An early edition of Florence Nightingale's *Suggestions for Thought*.



Above: Benjamin Jowett (1817–1893), theologian and Anglican cleric, was a classics scholar and administrative reformer in the University of Oxford. Master of Balliol College, Oxford, he was a translator of Plato and Thucydides.

achievements, such as religious and mystical experiences, creative insights and expressions, and acts of courage and compassion, all arise from this inner divine nature. In her view, spiritual development is a process of harmonizing the personal self with the inner God consciousness, thus *“extending the limits of the divine in man.”* (p 117).

Nightingale considered herself a Christian, a follower of Christ, because she felt he was perfectly harmonized with the divine nature. But, she believed, in the course of evolution all human beings

will arrive at this same perfection: *“Human consciousness is tending to become what God’s consciousness is – to become one with the consciousness of God.”* (p 58).

If Nightingale were alive today, she would feel supported in her views by the work of the Religious Experience Research Centre at the University of Wales, which found similarities between the spiritual experiences of modern individuals and those of mystics throughout history (Cohen and Phipps).

In a way analogous to that of the mystics, who experienced an underlying divine order and unity, Nightingale saw patterns in her statistical tables that were invisible to her

normal consciousness. To her, these patterns and connections revealed the mind of a Higher Intelligence who regulates the universe through law as opposed to caprice. She referred to the laws or organizing principles of the universe as the *“thoughts of God.”* Although Sir Edward Cook, Nightingale’s early biographer, referred to her as a *“passionate statistician,”* she could also be called a spiritual statistician.

In keeping with her scientific perspective, Nightingale did not accept any religious doctrine she felt was inconsistent with the concept of universal law. She was in full agreement with her friend Jowett, who wrote in *Essays and Reviews* that: *“any true doctrine of inspiration must conform to all well-ascertained facts of history or of science. The same fact cannot be true in religion when seen by the light of faith, and untrue in science when looked at through the medium of evidence or experiment.”* (Jowett, 348)

She was decidedly against the common practice of praying for miraculous intervention, on the grounds that, first, it is contrary to universal law, as all actions have consequences that cannot be arbitrarily dismissed, and second, it keeps human beings from exercising and developing their own faculties and powers.

“It did strike me as odd sometimes that we should pray to be delivered “from plague, pestilence, and famine,” when all the common sewers ran into the Thames, and fevers haunted undrained land, and the districts which cholera would visit could be pointed out. I thought that cholera came that we might remove these causes, not pray that God would remove the

cholera.” (p 126).

From Nightingale’s perspective, every level of manifestation, including the spiritual, is regulated by divine law. As causes produce effects, spiritual progress cannot occur without the establishment of appropriate conditions. *“To think that we can be good under any circumstances is like thinking that we may be healthy when we are living over a sewer.”* (p 123). One of her most pressing questions, asked throughout *Suggestions for Thought*, is this: how can life, in all its aspects, be knowledgeably organized so that it enhances spirituality, that is, human greatness? The God-given tendency toward spiritual integration is within everyone, but without support it will lie dormant.

For centuries, religious orders have attempted to organize life around a spiritual purpose. Nightingale studied and personally investigated various orders, but was disappointed to find that they gave little support for the individual members’ unique talents, interests, and ambitions, and that the organizations had become insular, concerned mainly with upholding established dogma. From her point of view, spiritual revelation is an ongoing process. There are spiritual laws, as well as physical laws, that have yet to be discovered. Intellectual freedom and critical thinking are therefore essential for true spiritual growth. She wrote in a formal letter to the nursing students at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London:

“And may I say a thing from my own experience? No training is of any use, unless one can learn (1) to feel, and (2) to think things out for oneself.” (Nightingale, *Letter*, p 214).

Although it is doubtful that Nightingale was influenced by Buddha’s teachings, her statement is consistent with his advice, as expressed by her contemporary Max Müller: *“Do not believe in what you have heard: do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations; do not believe in anything because it is rumoured and spoken of by many; do not believe merely because the written statements of some old sage are produced; do not believe in conjectures; do not believe in that as truth to which you have become attached by habit; do not believe merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. After observation and analysis when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”* (Müller, p 114).

Nightingale respected the Bible as well as other sacred texts, but she felt they were all a mixture of truth and untruth. Religious beliefs, in her view, should be treated as working hypotheses and, when possible, tested by accurate observation and data analysis. For example, she



Above: Florence Nightingale in her latter years; and a plaque which marks the place on South Street, near Hyde Park in London, where the house she lived in and died at used to be.

found that the facts did not support the religious idea that poverty enhances spirituality. Her extensive nursing observations revealed to her that the poor were no more spiritual than the rich. Moreover, she observed in her statistical tables that poverty was associated with crime, disease, and high mortality rates.

"Surely it is a mistake to recommend poverty," (p 135), she concluded.

From Nightingale's point of view, spiritual development is an applied science. The intellectual effort, however valuable, is not enough, for she wrote that *"unless you make a life which shall be the manifestation of your religion, it does not much signify what you believe"* (p 116). Growing spiritually involves courageously accepting the consequences of one's mistakes, learning from them, and making the appropriate changes. This is a challenging process, and Nightingale had no illusions about her society's

willingness to change.

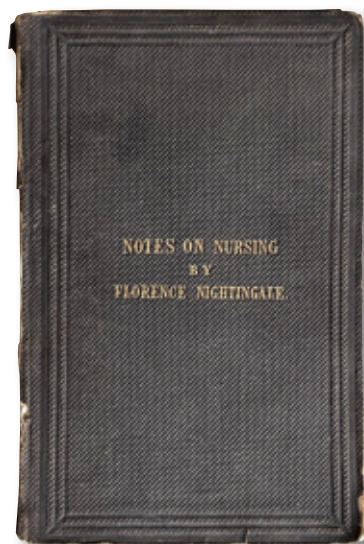
"Most people have not learnt any lesson from life at all – suffer as they may, they learn nothing . . . When they begin the new life in another world, they would do exactly the same thing . . . And not only individuals, but nations learn nothing. A man once said to me, 'Oh! if I were to begin again, how different I would be.' But we very rarely hear this; on the contrary,

we often hear people say, 'I would have every moment of my life over again,' and they think it pretty and grateful to God to say so." (p 65).

In *Notes on Nursing*, Nightingale wrote about the importance of *"ready and correct observation."* This is essential for the improvement of both physical and spiritual health, because we need to see what has to be changed. Our vision is hampered, Nightingale stated, by certain tendencies: habitual thinking, blindly accepting established ideas, not bothering to ask questions about seeming anomalies, taking the status quo for granted, and giving free rein to the imagination.

If she were designing educational programs today, Nightingale would probably include meditation methods such as mindfulness, which help one to observe reality, internal and external, from a less conditioned perspective. She wrote that we need to change our consciousness so that the hidden gradually becomes visible. Indeed, the ultimate goal is *"to see as God sees, which is truth"* (p 143).

In the letter to the nursing students mentioned above, Nightingale wrote that a period of quietude in their own rooms, *"a few minutes of calm thought to offer up the day to God,"* was indispensable in the ever-increasing hurry of life (Nightingale, *Letter*, p 213). For her, this was the highest form of prayer: opening oneself to the inner divine nature. She wrote to Jowett that the closing prayer of Plato's *Phaedrus* is unequalled by any collect in the service book: *"Give me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outward and inward man be at one"* (in Cook 2. 32).



Above: Many successive editions of Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing* have been published since its first publication in 1860.

Nightingale expanded on this idea in *Suggestions for Thought*, writing that work itself can become a form of prayer. Finding work for which one is suited, that holds one's interest and love, and doing it "unto God" will deepen our alignment with the inner spirit. From her perspective, any type of work can serve a sacred purpose, for it is one's intent or motivation that will transform it. "Work your true work, and you will find His presence in yourself—i.e., the presence of those attributes, those qualities, that spirit, which is all we know of God." (p 143).

Although Nightingale was certainly realistic, she was also optimistic about humanity's future. She had tremendous confidence in the universal laws, in the guidance of the inner divine spirit, and felt that despite all the difficulties on the way, humanity would become "the working out of God's thought," which is its destination. ✱

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On Kahlil Gibran ...

The Prophet

*Do not live half a life
and do not die a half death
If you choose silence, then be silent
When you speak, do so until you are finished
If you accept, then express it bluntly
Do not mask it
If you refuse then be clear about it
for an ambiguous refusal is
but a weak acceptance
Do not accept half a solution
Do not believe half truths
Do not dream half a dream
Do not fantasize about half hopes
Half the way will get you no where
You are a whole that exists to live a life
not half a life.*

Kahlil Gibran
From *The Prophet*

Hle was called "filthy" because his skin was dark, unintelligible because he could barely speak English and when he arrived in this country, he was placed in a special class for immigrants. But, a few of his teachers saw something in the way he expressed himself, through his drawings, through his view of the world. He would soon master his new language.

His mother had made a difficult decision to take him, his two younger sisters and a half-brother to America, seeking a better life for their family. They settled in Boston's South End, at the time the second-largest Syrian-Lebanese-American community. The family would struggle and the young boy would lose one sister and his half-brother to tuberculosis. His mother would die of cancer.

He would write, "*Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.*"

He was born in poverty on January 6, 1883 in what is now modern day Lebanon. He believed in love, he believed in peace, and he believed in understanding.

His name was Kahlil Gibran, and he is primarily known for his book, *The Prophet*. The book, published in 1923, would sell tens of millions of copies, making him the third best-selling poet of all time, behind Shakespeare and Laozi. Published in 108 languages around the world, passages from *The Prophet* are quoted at weddings, in political speeches and at funerals, inspiring influential figures such as John F. Kennedy, Indira Gandhi, Elvis Presley, John Lennon, and

David Bowie.

He was very outspoken, attacking hypocrisy and corruption. His books were burned in Beirut, and in America, he would receive death threats.

Gibran was the only member of his family to pursue scholastic education. His sisters were not allowed to enter school, primarily because of Middle Eastern traditions as well as financial difficulties. Gibran, however, was inspired by the strength of the women in his family, especially his mother. After one sister, his mother, and his half-brother died, his other sister, Mariana would support Gibran and herself by working at a dressmaker's shop.

Of his mother, he would write:

"The most beautiful word on the lips of mankind is the word 'Mother,' and the most beautiful call is the call of 'My mother.' It is a word full of hope and love, a sweet and kind word coming from the depths of the heart. The mother is everything – she is our consolation in sorrow, our hope in misery, and our strength in weakness. She is the source of love, mercy, sympathy, and forgiveness."

Gibran would later champion the cause of women's emancipation and education. He believed that *"Safeguarding the rights of others is the most noble and beautiful end of a human being."*

In a poem to new immigrants, he would write, *"I believe you can say to the founders of this great nation. 'Here I am. A youth. A young tree. Whose roots were plucked from the hills of Lebanon. Yet I am deeply rooted here. And I would be fruitful.'"*

He would write in *The Prophet*:

"Let there be spaces in your togetherness, And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together, yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart, And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow." ✱

The Dark Side of Light

By John Algeo



R.D. Smith

A n old kabbalistic motto holds that *Demon est Deus inversus*, "The devil is God upside down," or "The devil is God's complement." The Irish poet William Butler Yeats took, as his mystical name in the kabbalistic Order of the Golden Dawn, the initials of that Latin motto, D.E.D.I. Those letters, however, also spell the Latin verb *dedi*, which means "I have given" and thus punningly suggests that the diabolic is a divine gift.

Yeats probably learned the motto from Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who had been his teacher and had used it as the subject of one section in her great book, *The Secret Doctrine*. So what is the secret doctrine about this motto and the dark angel of whom it speaks? Blavatsky says of it: "This symbolical sentence, in its many-sided forms, is certainly most dangerous and iconoclastic in the face of all the dualistic later religions or rather theologies—and especially so in the light of Christianity." (SD 1:411)

She adds that Christianity certainly did not invent the figure of Satan, for such a concept has always existed. The name Satan in Hebrew means 'adversary'; he is consequently a personification of the inevitable balancing forces that must exist in nature: the shadow by which we recognize light, the night that separates the days, the

cold without which we have no sense of heat.

To say that the Devil is the inverse, the complement, of God is dangerous, however, because it invites misunderstanding, especially by those whose thinking is moulded by dualism, who see spirit and matter, soul and body, the righteous and the reprobate, the saved and the damned as eternal opposites. Those who think in simple dichotomies have great difficulty seeing the underlying unity beneath all diversities. They find it hard to conceive that Demon and Deus, the dark and bright angels, are equally messengers of the Absolute One. They find it hard to give the devil his due.

Yet in our relative world of mayavic reality, all things have their opposites. To know anything is to know it by contrast with something that it is not. Knowledge implies opposition. Without low, there is no high. Without far, there is no near. Without pain, there is no pleasure. Without death, there is no life. Without the dark angels, there are no bright ones. Without Demon, there is no Deus. In eternity, none of those exist. In time, none can exist without its complement. So for the Elohim to be, Satan must also be.

"Homogeneity," says Blavatsky, "is one and indivisible," and "heterogeneity in its dualistic aspect, is its offspring – its bifurcous shadow or reflection," so "that divine Homogeneity must contain in itself the essence of both good and evil." (SD 1:411-12)



There are two aspects of this doctrine that are equally important and indeed are complementary, without either of which the

doctrine "is certainly most dangerous" because subject to misunderstanding and perversion.

The first aspect is that what we call evil and good are both derived from the divine absolute: "One cannot claim God as

the synthesis of the whole Universe, as Omnipresent and Omniscient and Infinite, and then divorce him from evil. As there is far more evil than good in the world, it follows on logical grounds that either God must include evil, or stand as the direct cause of it, or else surrender his claims to absoluteness. Everywhere the speculations of the Kabbalists treat of evil as a force, which is antagonistic, but at the same time essential, to Good, as giving it vitality and existence, which it could never have otherwise." (SD 1:413)

This first aspect of the Wisdom teaching about good and evil holds that both of those qualities are equally present in the divine source of all things. That teaching is also found in the great religious documents of all ages and cultures. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna identifies himself with everything in the universe, bad and good: "I am the gambling of the cheat, and the splendor of splendid things." And in the prophesy of Isaiah (45:7), the Almighty is quoted as saying: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." The God

of our good is likewise the God of our evil.

The second aspect of the doctrine is that evil is not an independent reality but merely the complement, the shadow, of good:

"There is no malum in se [self existent evil, anything inherently evil of its own nature]: only the shadow of light, without which light could have no existence, even in our perceptions. If evil disappeared, good would disappear along with it from Earth." (SD 1:413)

So evil is a reality, derived from the source of all reality, but also evil has no independent existence, being simply the complement by which we recognize good. Those who accept the first aspect but deny the second are dualists or atheists or cursers of God. Those who deny the first aspect but accept the second reject the evidence of their own senses and maintain against all reason that pain and sorrow do not exist.

But the Occultists – who recognize in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility

– view the great Mother [Nature] otherwise. *"Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage?"* (SD 2:475)

To solve "the great problems of life, pain, and death," we must experience them. To use the idiom of those today who pump iron: "No pain, no gain."

The doctrine of the wisdom tradition thus holds that there is but one inexhaustible source of reality from which all things come and apart from which nothing is. And it further holds that intelligent forces derived from that source bring into existence the universe we know, and in so doing they necessarily operate with dualities of many kinds, including those we call good and evil. The process of achieving good involves the strain of suffering evil.

The Dark Creative Forces

Some of the intelligent forces or angels, as we also call the creative agents in the cosmos, work to make the substance of the universe dense, to immerse consciousness in matter, and to isolate separate individual existences. These forces devoted to density, unconsciousness, and separateness are the dark angels whose goal is the emergence of the many from the One, the involution of matter, life, and spirit. They are the centrifugal, creative forces that bring forth the many from the One.

Other forces work to refine substance into subtler states of existence, to increase consciousness, and to connect separate selves into a network of cooperation and sympathy. The forces dedicated to subtlety, consciousness, and reunion are the bright angels whose goal is the conscious, voluntary reintegration of the many into the One, the evolution of the universe to its omega point. They are the centripetal, regenerative forces that return the many to the One.

Blavatsky describes the world process as



proceeding on three parallel lines: physical, intellectual, and monadic or spiritual. Those three lines lead respectively to the development of substance, consciousness, and unitary awareness.

On the physical or substantial line of development, matter at first becomes increasingly dense until it reaches some nadir of density, some singular state of inconceivable compaction, as in one of the black holes of the universe where physical law, as we know it, does not hold. From that point of maximum density, matter evolves into complex but also more rarefied states—the matter we know is more empty space than substance and therefore already very subtle. The future of matter is an increasing etherealization.

On the intellectual or conscious line of development, awareness is progressively restricted as it moves through the elemental kingdoms until it reaches its nadir in the mineral state, where its responses are limited to those restricted ones we call chemical reactions and the like. Thereafter it evolves through the vegetable and animal kingdoms, in which responsiveness to the environment and to other beings becomes increasingly acute, as plants respond quickly to the physical conditions around them and animals to other beings. When awareness reaches the human kingdom, interior reflection and self-consciousness flourish. Humanity is well along the road to increased awareness of the universe, but before us still lie vistas of perception and knowledge that we can yet scarcely imagine.

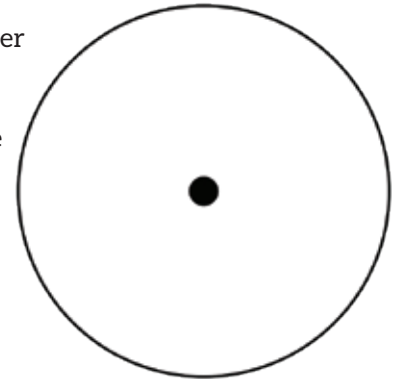
On the monadic or spiritual line of development, the Oneness of the source is

progressively divided into smaller and smaller, more and more restricted and limited units.

Ultimately, to be sure, there is only one Monad (from the Greek, meaning 'unity'). But as that Monad is reflected in evolved matter and the developed kingdoms of life, it is continually refracted, so that it seems to itself to become increasingly limited and fragmented. Thus, the One apparently divides into the many.

This process has also been described as one of "group souls" that individualize. In the mineral kingdom, vast areas and types of substance are ensouled by one aspect of the Monad. In the vegetable kingdom, the domain of each ray of the Monad is much restricted but still encompasses whole species of plants. In the animal kingdom, the Monad is even more restricted, expressing itself through an ever-decreasing range of physical forms. Among the higher animals, a single group soul (which is one separate ray of the Monad) may express itself through only a few separate bodies at a time. Finally, in the human kingdom, the monadic line of development reaches its nadir, for each human being is a distinct individuality, a persisting bit of separateness from the primal unity of existence.

In this sense, we humans, far from being the crown of evolution, as we are vaingloriously wont to imagine ourselves,



Above: The circled dot was used by the Pythagoreans and later Greeks to represent the first metaphysical being, the Monad or the Absolute.

are actually the nadir of spiritual development.

As the most individual of all beings, we are the most separate from the divine Unity and thus the farthest of all beings from our common source. In us, the monadic development reaches its lowest point. Our future is to re-establish connections, to forge the links that will bind us back to the Unity, to become One – consciously, deliberately, of our own free will. At the omega point of evolution, we are to merge without losing our identities, to recreate the Unity, but then a Unity that knows itself and has chosen its state. Through the outgoing phases of these three lines of development – the densification of matter, the limitation of consciousness, and the individualization of spirit – the dark angels are the governing forces. They guide the involution of the universe. They make it solid, unresponsive, and fragmented. They bring the world into being. They are the creators.

But once the nadir on each line of development has been reached and the forces turn backward to evolve out

of those limitations, the bright angels become the guides of evolution, and the work of the dark angels becomes evil in the sight of those who are evolving. The work of the dark angels continues, however: Black holes are still compacting matter throughout the cosmos; consciousness still flows

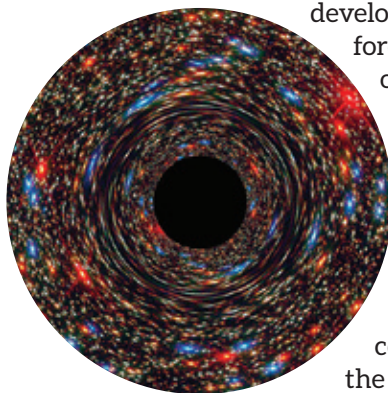
into the mineral forms and so is restricted; living creatures still move toward the spiritual separation of individuality. The

impulse of the dark angels – the involution of matter, consciousness, and spirit – is all around us. But the human path now lies in a different direction, and so for us, their work has become evil – not evil in itself, not malum in se, but evil relative to our direction.

As human beings, we value the work of the bright angels, because we are well along the paths of refined substance and increased consciousness, and we have turned the bend on the path of spiritual unity – although we have just made the turn, so the old forces of separateness are still strong within us. But however much we sympathize with the upward path of evolution and the work of the bright angels, we should not scorn the other. The work of the dark angels – to solidify matter, to funnel consciousness into it, and to make separate, distinct centers of identity – must come first. The work of the dark angels is necessary to the total ecology of the universe. Without them, there would be nothing to evolve, and the bright angels would have no role to play.

The Dark Angel Within

However, while we respect the work of the dark angels, we must take care not to become a part of it. Our destiny, our dharma, is elsewhere. Yet there is still a temptation within us to follow the dark path. That temptation does not concern the densification of matter, for black holes are far from our condition in time and space. Neither does it much concern the limitation of consciousness, for we evolved from mineral unresponsiveness eons ago. Only exceptionally and pathologically



do human beings sink back to animal or vegetative states of unconsciousness, and then it is no more than a temporary regression, not lasting beyond the bounds of a lifetime, and seldom as long as that.

Spiritual regression, however, is another matter. We have only just made the upward turn in monadic evolution; we are newly emerged from the nadir of spiritual isolation and separateness. Before our individualization, the dark angels were our friends and guides. We have old ties with them that are not easily unknotted. We sympathize still with their forces; we resonate still with their discordant melodies. They are still within us.

One of the teachings of the wisdom tradition is that we are composite beings – not simply souls with bodies but compounds of principles that evolved separately over the aeons and brought together to make up our natures. The elements that compose us are like distinct rays of light of various colors and intensities that are focused together to illuminate a scene in a play. The lights become one illumination, but they are projected from several lamps and reflect the nature of those lamps.

The creation myth of Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* has an episode in which the progenitors of humanity are discussing our making and what must go into us to produce a complete humanity (*Anthropogenesis* stanza 17; SD 2:105). The Earth gives our gross physical body, the Solar Spirits give our life energy, the Lunar Ancestors give the model of our personality, the Heat of the Sun gives our desires; but humanity needs also "a mind to embrace the Universe," and none can give

humanity that intellect, until the Sons of Wisdom add their light to the others. This creation myth has various interpretations, but one of its significant meanings is that we are composites of evolutionary impulses that are historically independent of each other, though they have combined in us.

Our prehuman development was directed toward making us spiritually independent, to bring us to the unique isolation which is the human state – the condition of individualization. The dark angels made us human by building up the individual ego. We are the creatures who are alone. As we evolve from the human to the superhuman kingdoms, we will move from spiritual isolation to spiritual connectedness, integration, and interdependence. However, our natures have been molded by the dark angels of spiritual isolation and separateness. And the effects of their labors remain strong within us.

The biblical myth of the Fall can be seen as alluding to this human individualization and its consequences. In that myth, Adam and Eve, who are proto-humanity, are led by the serpent (the dark angel) to eat the fruit of the Tree of

Knowledge. The knowledge that the fruit imparts is of their own separate identities. In their disobedience to the divine prohibition against eating, they assert their separate wills – they become choosing individuals. That is the



Above: Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Original Sin, whose punishment is expulsion from the unity of the Garden of Eden into the diversity of the fallen world. And the first man and woman retain and pass on to their descendants the consequences of their separation – a fallen nature and a susceptibility to the wiles and temptations of Satan, the adversary, the personification of spiritual separateness.

Within the stark simplicity of the myth of the Fall and original sin lies a great truth. We inherit the effects of our past, and an action that may have been necessary – a quest for knowledge, a coming of age, an attainment of independence – can have consequences that, if unchecked, are inappropriate for our further development. Good things of the past may become bad things of the future.

The dark angels guided us to human independence and still have a place in our lives, for they are the impulse to self-survival. They are ego exalting. They are self-assertive. Human society has not yet reached a stage at which we can do without such motives to action. And indeed, although in mature humans those motives must become transformed into something less violent and more considerate of others than they have been in the adolescence of our species, we will never be able to do without them altogether. The

world can progress only when all of us in it are pulled between the twin poles of good and evil – of unity and separateness. As Blavatsky put it:

"In human nature, evil denotes only the polarity of matter and Spirit, a struggle for life between the two manifested Principles in Space and Time, which principles are one per se, since they are rooted in the Absolute. In Kosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved. The operations of the two contraries produce harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which are necessary to each other – mutually interdependent – "in order that both should live." (SD 1: 4161)

To preserve the equilibrium and produce the harmony within the human constitution, all forces need to be balanced – including those of the dark angels. Their forces have been called collectively the Dweller on the Threshold, and Jungian psychology personifies them as the Shadow. In Christianity, they are spoken of as one's personal devil.

The devil within may not, like C. S. Lewis's Wormwood, get letters from his uncle Screwtape, have quite as distinctly human a personality, or be as fully committed to the Christian variety of dualism; but the personal devil is more than a literary convention. Each of us has impulses, habits, and proclivities that cluster and can be imbued with a



personality something like Wormwood's. The dark angels are cosmic powers that guide the involution of the universe, but they are also psychological forces from our past that shape our responses to the present.

The dark angel is a part of ourselves with which we must come to terms. As the impulse to separate ourselves from others, it is the mirror image of the bright impulse to unite with all life. Our omega point is to realize both impulses harmoniously – as separate individuals, to unite with all other separate individuals in a single pattern of compassion and benevolence. Thus the bright angels and the dark angels are both necessary to us. And what is most necessary is that we learn how to deal with both in their proper times and places and according to their proper powers.

At the end of her discussion of the kabbalistic motto, Blavatsky describes an

image of:

".. the "Magic Head" in the Zohar, the double Face on the double Pyramid: the black pyramid rising against a pure white ground, with a white head and face within its black triangle; the white pyramid, inverted – the reflection of the first in the dark waters, showing the black reflection of the white face... *Demon est Deus Inversus.*" (SD 1:424) ✱

This article is reprinted from Maria Parisen's book, *Angels and Mortals: Their Co-Creative Power.*



John Algeo was an American academic, trained as a linguist, and the author of one of the standard American textbooks on the history of the English language. He was also a Theosophist and a Freemason.

*I love you when you bow in your mosque,
kneel in your temple, pray in your church.
For you and I are sons of religion,
and it is the spirit.*

Kahlil Gibran

Theosophy: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age

What is Theosophy?

BlavatskyTheosophy.com

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

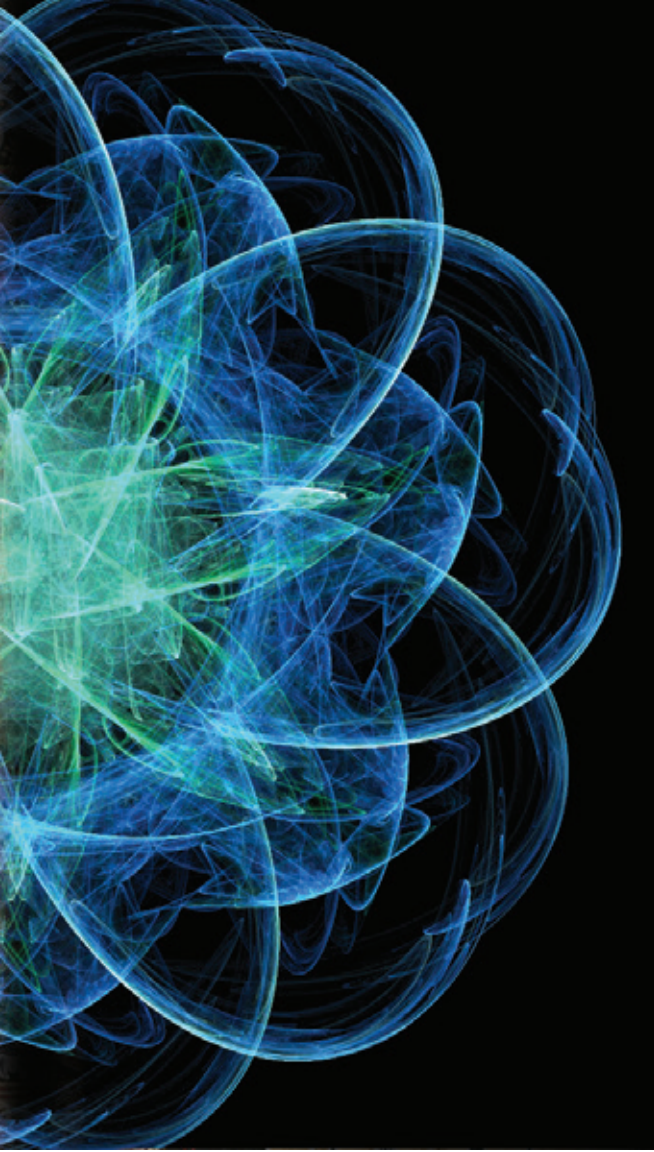
Does Theosophy claim to be some sort of new religion or previously unknown mystical revelation to the world? On the contrary, one of the Eastern Sages behind the Theosophical Movement wrote: “Theosophy is no new candidate for the world’s attention, but only the restatement of principles which have been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

The term “Ancient Wisdom” is in popular usage nowadays. Almost anything and everything is classified as “Ancient Wisdom” in the world of popular spirituality. It seems that many people consider the term to mean



something along the lines of “something wise that was said in ancient times.”

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



of religion, philosophy, and science. It is something which contains the answer to every question and the solution to every problem. It is timeless Truth.

"Ancient Wisdom" is only one name which has been applied to the Great Knowledge. It has also been called Ageless Wisdom, Divine Wisdom, Divine Science, Gnosis, Atma-Vidya, Brahma-Vidya, Gupta-Vidya, Sanatana

Dharma, Esoteric Philosophy, Esoteric Science, Occult Philosophy, Sacred Science, the Wisdom-Religion, and the Secret Doctrine. It is the Esoteric Teaching which underlies all the world's religions. It is also the archaic and primeval source and fountainhead of all the truth which may be found in the various religions, philosophies, and sciences of the world.

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

Beginning in the closing quarter of the 19th century, the Ancient Wisdom – or "*the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion*" [4] – was presented to the world under the name of "*Theosophy*." Theosophy, therefore, is the Ancient Wisdom.

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



Above: Representation of Ammonius Saccas

described as the very essence of Science itself.

The famous motto of the Theosophical Movement is “*There is no Religion higher than Truth.*” This can be interpreted or understood in various different ways. Its main meaning for Theosophists, however, is that Truth exists and that it of course transcends and pre-dates all religions. Theosophy maintains and demonstrates that all religions are the same in their esoteric essence. All religions contain some portion of the Truth, some to a greater degree than others. Since all religions

are inevitably self-limited, however, none can contain the whole Truth. Theosophy is thus something universal and neither adheres to nor promotes any one religion.

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

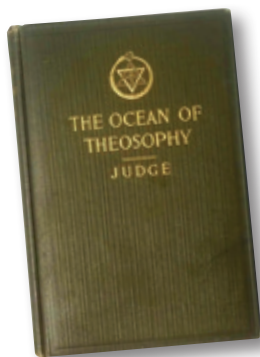
And since Theosophy is itself universal, there are naturally many people who are true Theosophists without ever having heard the word “Theosophy” or of the Theosophical Movement. For the sake of clarity, however, we will use the term “Theosophist” throughout the remainder of this article to mean anyone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

Something insisted upon by H.P. Blavatsky (hereafter referred to simply as HPB)

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

HPB never claimed any of her teachings to be the result of any “clairvoyant investigations” or “readings of the Akashic Records” carried out by herself. Nor are they the result of any theories, speculations, or ideologies arrived at by herself. She specifically disclaimed this, writing that “*The sole advantage which the writer has over her predecessors, is that she need not resort to personal speculations and theories. For this work is a partial statement of what she herself has been taught by more advanced students, ... The writer ... believes in the ancients, and the modern heirs to their Wisdom. And believing in both, she now transmits that which she has received and learnt herself to all those who will accept it.*”^[5]

Similarly, her colleague William Quan Judge stated in the Preface to his book *The Ocean of Theosophy* that “*No originality is claimed for this book. The writer invented none of it, discovered none of it, but has simply written that which he has been taught and*



Above: William Quan Judge and an early edition of *The Ocean of Theosophy*, first published in 1893.

which has been proved to him. It therefore is only a handing on of what has been known before."

He then begins the book with this explanation:

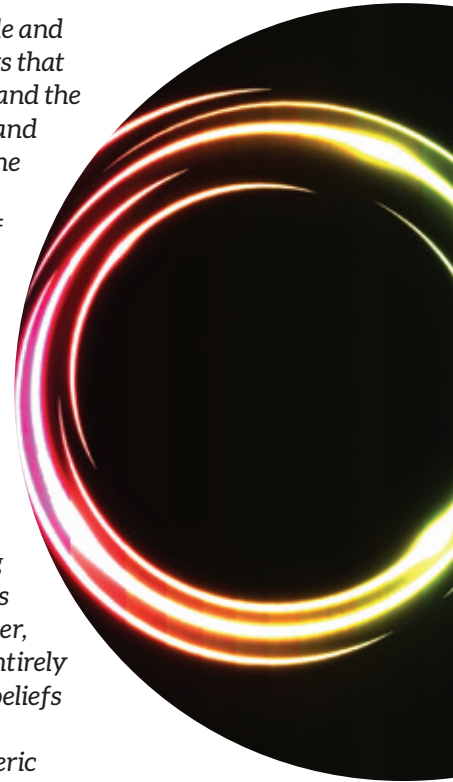
"Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet, shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child. It is wisdom about God for those who believe that he is all things and in all, and wisdom about nature for the man who accepts the statement found in the Christian Bible that God cannot be measured or discovered, and that darkness is around his pavilion. Although it contains by derivation the name God and thus may seem at first sight to embrace religion alone, it does not neglect science, for it is the science of sciences and therefore has been called the wisdom religion. For no science is complete which leaves out any department of nature, whether visible or invisible, and that religion which, depending solely on an assumed revelation, turns away from things and the laws which govern them, is nothing but a delusion, a foe to progress, an obstacle in the way of man's advancement toward happiness. Embracing both the scientific and the religious, Theosophy is a scientific religion and a religious science.

"It is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical, and intellectual constituents of nature and of man. The religion of the day is but a series of dogmas man-made and with no scientific foundation for promulgated ethics; while our science as yet ignores the unseen, and

failing to admit the existence of a complete set of inner faculties of perception in man, it is cut off from the immense and real field of experience which lies within the visible and tangible worlds. But Theosophy knows that the whole is constituted of the visible and the invisible, and perceiving outer things and objects to be but transitory it grasps the facts of nature, both without and within. It is therefore complete in itself and sees no unsolvable mystery anywhere; it throws the word coincidence out of its vocabulary and hails the reign of law in everything and every circumstance." [6]

In the view of HPB, "The Esoteric philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions."

"Moreover," she continues, "Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun. Esoteric philosophy has never rejected God in Nature, nor Deity as the absolute and abstract Ens. It only refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness, a blasphemous and sorry caricature



of the Ever Unknowable.”^[7]

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

One of the most important and inspiring passages in the whole of the vast Theosophical literature is the following, published at the close of an article by HPB and attributed by her to one of her Teachers, also known as the Masters:

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

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Extract from

Responding to Lies About H. P. Blavatsky

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The Fifth Root Race is called the Aryan because the beginnings of its civilisation were in the ancient land once known as Aryavarta but today known as India. All the various races in the world today descend originally from “Mother India,” according to Theosophy, with the exception of the Orientals, Africans, and some Aborigines such as the native Australians. (They are considered to be the surviving descendants of older races, particularly of the last Lemurian and especially Atlantean sub-races.)

But this does not mean that those races or the billions of people belonging to them are in any way inferior. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) taught that the real person is the soul within and that the soul reincarnates in the bodies of various races throughout its long cyclic journey of evolution. “Thus the reason given for dividing humanity into superior and inferior races falls to the ground and becomes a fallacy.” (*The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 2, p. 425)

Anyone who takes the time and effort to do even a little historical research will readily see that the word “Aryan” was frequently used as a synonym for “Indian” in Victorian times, the era in which HPB lived and began

the Theosophical Movement. *“Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences” in the second object of the Movement means exactly “Indian and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences.”*

In Theosophical terminology, all Europeans are also Aryans because of their being an offshoot from the Root Race which had its beginnings in old Aryavarta. To make the matter clearer, HPB also suggested the use of the term *“Indo-European Root Race.”* Although inhabiting a European body, she made no secret of the fact that she felt Indian in her heart.

There is not the slightest trace or faintest allusion to anything even mildly approaching *“white supremacy”* in any of her writings. Quite the opposite in fact, since she never failed to expose the prejudices, ignorance, hypocrisy, and viciousness which were at the time so prevalent amongst those races who nevertheless naively believed themselves to be the most superior, cultured, and civilised people in the world.

In Adolf Hitler’s use of the term *“Aryan”* he applied to it a completely different meaning from that used in Theosophy. Hitler’s theory was that the Aryans were a so-called *“perfect race”* of blonde-haired, blue-eyed people and that the Jews, whom he sought to exterminate, were not Aryans. Prior to this, the usage of the terms *“Aryan”* and *“Aryan Root Race”* caused neither concern nor fear for anyone, Theosophist or otherwise. It is only because of his gross misuse of this term, as well as his misuse of the ancient Indian spiritual symbol of the swastika, that some people – those who prefer jumping to conclusions rather than

doing independent and unbiased research into FACTS – have mistakenly thought there to be some type of connection between H. P. Blavatsky and Hitler.

The fact that Theosophists in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere were persecuted unsparingly by the Nazis during the Second World War and protested with all their might against Nazism, just serves as additional proof – as if any were needed – that neither HPB nor the followers of her philosophy could ever be sympathetic with such unspeakably evil ideologies and policies as those of the Nazis.

The translated text of an official document by the Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, declaring the compulsory dissolution of all Theosophical Societies in Germany, can be found on p. 607 of the extensive and excellently researched and referenced biography *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky* by Sylvia Cranston.

“What Theosophical teaching so aroused Hitler that Theosophists were among the first to be sent to concentration camps? The first object of the Theosophical movement; to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood, naturally including all human beings, was an alarming concept for a tyrant planning to dominate by eliminating races and groups through genocide. The Secret Doctrine has one sentence (2:266) that would inflame the Nazi mentality: “The Aryan and their Semitic Branch are of the Fifth Race.” . . .

Two teachers, Mary Linne and Emmi Haerter were imprisoned in Germany because of Theosophical literature found in their house – all of which was burned, including their own



Above: *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky* by Sylvia Cranston.

translation of *The Secret Doctrine*. This was also the fate of the letters from the Masters to Dr Hubbe-Schleiden." (Sylvia Cranston, HPB: *The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky*, p. 607-608)

According to H. P. Blavatsky, all the Middle Eastern peoples, including the Jews, are just as much Aryans as the Anglo-Saxons and white Europeans. Particularly important



Top: The so called Swastika Stone is a stone adorned with a design that resembles a swastika, located on the Woodhouse Crag on the northern edge of Ilkley Moor in West Yorkshire, England. Although the stone is not verifiably dated, academic consensus suggests it to have been carved sometime around the Neolithic or early Bronze Age; above: the design as it appears on the stone.

to our topic are her words on p. 200 of the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine* where she says, "The occult doctrine admits of no such divisions as the Aryan and the Semite . . . The Semites, especially the Arabs, are later Aryans . . . To these belong all the Jews and the Arabs." We also read there that the Jewish people "are a tribe descended from the Tchandalas of India, the outcasts, many of them ex-Brahmins, who sought refuge in Chaldea, in Scinde, and Aria (Iran), and were truly from their father A-bram (No Brahmin) some 8,000 years B.C." The same idea is also expressed on p. 471 of that volume.

As for the swastika symbol which adorns the official logo or seal of the Theosophical Movement, it is an ancient Indian spiritual symbol with inherent good and pure meaning.

Just because many centuries after the design or invention of the English flag it came to be used as a symbol of hate and

intolerance in the rallies of such racist idiots as the misleadingly named "English Defence League," that is no reason for the English flag to be denounced as an intrinsically evil or demonic sign. The same is true for the swastika. Prior to Hitler, it was never thought of by anyone as being a symbol of evil or hate.

Although originating in India and today predominantly the property of Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists, it was throughout history used all over the world, even by the early Christians, who used to accompany this archaic symbol with the inscription "Vitalis vitalia" – "Life of life." The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word "svastika" is "all is well."

"One difficulty in arousing the popular conscience with respect to the death camps is the fact that most people seem to find the very existence of the Nazi crimes unbelievable. Even when faced with the most exact corroborating testimony, complete with photographs and statistical records kept by the Nazis, the mind seldom accedes to the reality," wrote the ULT associates in the November 1948 Theosophy magazine.

It is indeed almost unbelievable and unimaginable that such atrocities were really committed and on such a huge and industrialised scale but all the facts are there – and unless we are careful, something similar, or even worse, could happen again.

It must also be added that the writings of Alice Bailey are indeed antisemitic but that the Bailey teachings are not representative of genuine Theosophy or the work and teachings of H. P. Blavatsky.

Writing during and shortly after the time that millions of Jewish people were being sent

by the Nazis to their deaths, Bailey callously remarked: *"The fires of suffering [will] at last succeed in purifying them . . . liberating them to the extent that they can recognise their Messiah . . . The Jews need humility more than any other nation. By humility, they may learn something of value as well as a needed sense of proportion. . . . The Jew, however, fought only for himself, and largely ignored the sufferings of his fellowmen in the concentration camps."* (Verified ed.)

Anyone who knows anything about history knows that that last point is simply untrue, not to mention horrendously cold and heartless. But then again, what else can be expected from someone who glorifies and praises the dropping of the atomic bomb on the Japanese as being the greatest spiritual event for millions of years? (Verified ed.)

Nothing even remotely approaching this can be found in the slightest degree in the words of H. P. Blavatsky and her Adept-Teachers, the Masters of Wisdom. ✱

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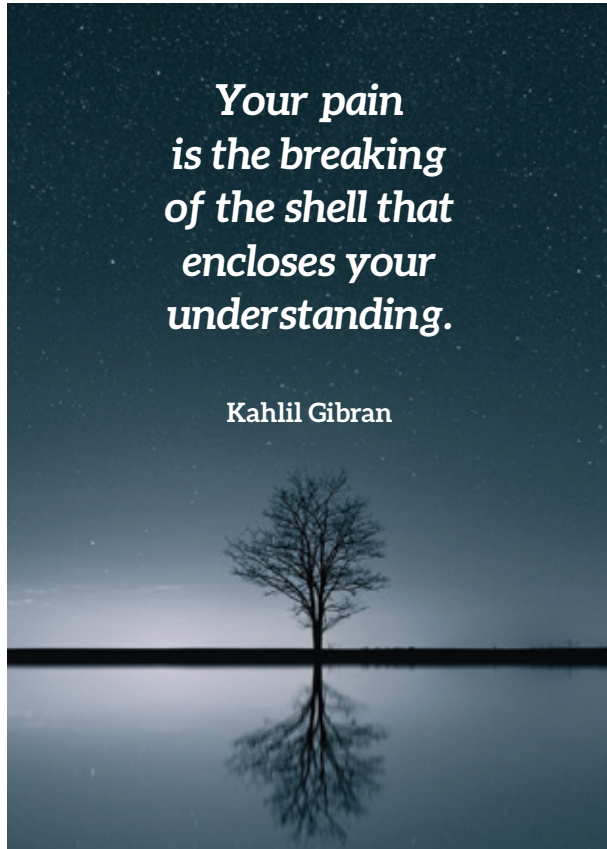
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**Your pain
is the breaking
of the shell that
encloses your
understanding.**

Kahlil Gibran



Daniel Barczikay

World Trees

By **Hazel S. Minot**



Jeremy Bishop



From the days of myth and legend to the busy whirl of modern life, the tree has held an honoured place in the hearts of men. The oak and pine, palm, laurel, silvery olive, and many another have had their votaries. The oaks at Dodona voiced through their whispering leaves the will of Zeus. The Druids of Britain and Gaul held groves of this mighty tree sacred. The palm from of old was a symbol of victory, as was also the laurel or daphne, the prize for those who were successful in the Pythian games in honor of Apollo.

The olive, too, though linked with the dove as a symbol of peace, is emblematic of victory, a wreath of olive being the prize contended for in the Olympic Games of ancient Greece. It was likewise the highest mark of honour that could be extended to a citizen meriting well of his country.

In Egypt, the tamarisk was held sacred as possessing occult virtues, and it was often planted around temples. It is also in Egypt that we find the Lady of the Sycamore, otherwise the goddess Nut, who is pictured as if standing in the midst of the tree from which she is offering to her worshippers the fruit or the water from the Tree of Life.

Here we meet a universal symbol - the World Tree. What more natural than that



Above left: Egyptian depiction of Lady of the Sycamore; above right: Hindu depiction of Ashwattha

early man should choose the tree to represent Life – not merely the never-ending force itself, but the very source from whence it comes. So truly did the ancient Hindus understand this that they represented their world tree, the Ashwattha, as growing with its roots in the heavenly worlds, and its trunk and branches extending downwards into the world of men.

When we consider the sevenfold nature of the Universe and of man its seed, and take into consideration the possibilities of only a seven times seven ramifications, we can easily envision the pattern of a majestically spreading tree. The pattern, however, is too intricate to suppose that awareness of it came to man from the piecing together of untutored observations.

The symbol of the World Tree, variously called the Tree of Life, the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Speech, is, by its very universality, a truth given to infant humanity by those wise ones who are ever our guides and protectors.

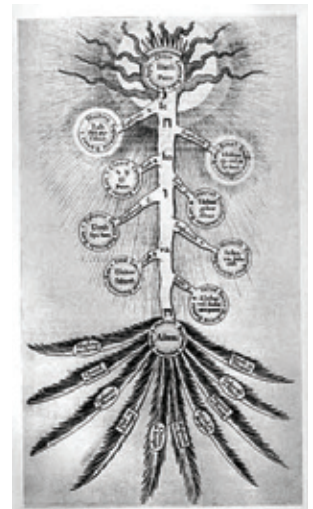
H.P. Blavatsky (HPB) refers to it as follows:

"The Symbol for Sacred and Secret Knowledge was universally in antiquity, a Tree, by which a Scripture or a Record was also meant. Hence the word Lipika, the "writers" or scribes; the "Dragons," symbols of wisdom, who guard the Trees of Knowledge: the "golden" apple Tree of the Hesperides; the "Luxuriant Trees" and vegetation of Mount Meru guarded by a

Serpent. Juno giving to Jupiter, on her marriage with him, a Tree with golden fruit is another form of Eve offering Adam the apple from the Tree of Knowledge." (The Secret Doctrine, I, 128-9).

She says further: *"The tenacious vitality it exhibits all over the globe ... is the best proof that the seed planted by our fathers on "the other side of the flood" was that of a mighty oak, not the spore of a mushroom theology. No lightning of human ridicule can fell to the ground, and no thunderbolts ever forged by the Vulcans of science are powerful enough to blast the trunk, or even scar the branches of this world-tree of KNOWLEDGE." (Isis Unveiled, I, 574).*

In one of the works of Robert Fludd, spoken of as *"the chief of the 'Philosophers by Fire,'" is an interesting pictorial interpretation of the Arber Sephirotheca, or the Sephirothal Tree*



Above: Arber Sephirotheca; image from *The Book of Earths*.

of the Kabbala. (See *The Book of Earths*, by Edna Kenton, Plate xxi.) This World Tree, like the Ashwattha, is shown with its roots above, and its branches below.

In this representation of Cosmogonic emanations, we have the ten Sephiroth extending from the highest, the Crown – the heart and centre of the spreading roots on the spiritual plane – surrounded by a glory of light whose rays extend with lessening power behind the remaining Sephiroth, ending with the tenth, or our world. From the Crown the succeeding Sephiroth are represented as globes extending from arms or branches on the trunk of the tree. The nine form three groups of three, each group or triad being the expression of the spiritual, intellectual, and material aspects or qualities of that particular plane. The tenth Sephirah, our globe, being the link, as it were, between the Universe and Man. HPB speaks of the ten as representing the seven manifest and the three unmanifest worlds.

In the illustration of Fludd referred to, the World Tree is a palm, whose ten spreading branches ray forth from the lowest world and, named after the ten Sephiroth respectively,

they are a symbol of the Macrocosm in its reflection, the Microcosm, Man. In this simple manner is represented a volume of esoteric truth.

H.P. Blavatsky turns a goodly number of the pages of this volume, giving many valuable keys to their interpretation both in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. She remarks, following a quotation of several paragraphs from Franck, the translator of the Kabbala, that:

"This kabalistic conception is ... proved identical with that of the Hindu philosophy. Whoever reads Plato and his *DIALOGUE* Timaeus, will find these ideas as faithfully re-echoed by the Greek philosopher." (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 40).

It is not surprising that the mediaeval Rosicrucians should have taken the rose itself as the symbol of their World Tree. (See *The Book of Earths*, Plate xxiv.) Pictured as a gigantic rose sought by bees from nearby hives, it tells a most interesting story. Anything said sub rosa, under the rose, was said in confidence; and if this applied to worldly affairs, how much more binding was it with teaching given only to those who had earned the right to it!

Among the ancient Greeks, "bees" was a name for disciples, and the sacred wisdom that they sought was "honey." Referring to this, Dr. de Purucker comments: "In Greece, *Melissai* or *Bees* was a title given in certain cases to priestesses having certain recondite functions to perform; while frequently 'honey' or 'honeydew' is spoken of by some ancient writers as signifying or symbolizing Wisdom, or wisdom gained from life's experiences: just as the bees collect and digest the nectar of flowers, turning it into honey, so do human beings collect knowledge from life and spiritually and mentally digest it into Wisdom. We are reminded of the 'ambrosia' and 'nectar' on which the gods, the spiritually wise ones, feed, and which nourishes them." (*The Esoteric Tradition*, page 848).

HPB links this thought with the Scandinavian Eddas, pointing out that: "The honey-dew – the food of the gods and of the creative, busy Yggdrasill – bees – falls during



Above: Rosicrucian symbol of the World Tree; image from *The Book of Earths*.

the hours of night, when the atmosphere is impregnated with humidity; and in the Northern mythologies, as the passive principle of creation, it typifies the creation of the universe OUT OF WATER; this dew is the astral light in one of its combinations and possesses creative as well as destructive properties. (Isis Unveiled, I, 133).

Possibly the best known of the World Trees, at least in the Occident, is the Ash Yggdrasil of the Eddas. This mighty tree has three roots reaching out into three different worlds, and, like the Sephirothal tree and the Ashwattha, links these worlds together.

One root extends into the land of the gods, the Asa folk, who gather each day beneath the branches of the tree to hold their council meetings; and under this root is the fountain of Urd.

The middle root goes to the land of the Frost giants, and Mimir's well or fountain lies beneath it.

The third root extends to the underworld, and here is the fountain Hvergelmer, while gnawing at the roots of Yggdrasil is Nidhogg, variously described as a demon, a giant, and a Serpent.

Now the well of Mimir conceals within its waters wisdom and knowledge, and the inspiration for poetry and song, but the fountain of Urd is the most sacred of the waters. "Here dwell the Norns, who sprinkle Yggdrasil



Above: Representation of Ash Yggdrasil of the Eddas.

daily with the waters of the fountain] that it may not wither. It remains verdant till the last days of the Golden Age. Then the Norns – the three sisters who gaze respectively into the Past, the Present, and the Future – make known the decree of Fate (Karma, Orlog), but men are conscious only of the Present." (The Secret Doctrine, II, 520).

HPB says of the Norse Legends that: "One recognizes in Asgard, the

habitat of the gods, as also in the Ases themselves, the same mystical loci and personifications woven into the popular "myths," as in our Secret Doctrine; ... The Norse Ask, the Hesiodic Ash-tree, whence issued the men of the generation of bronze, the Third Root-Race, and the Tzite tree of the POPOL-VUH, out of which the Mexican third race of men was created, are all one ...

As in the Gogard [the Hellenic tree of life], among the luxuriant branches of all those mundane trees, the "Serpent" dwells. But while the Macrocosmic tree is the Serpent of Eternity and of absolute Wisdom itself, those who dwell in the Microcosmic tree are the Serpents of the manifested Wisdom. One is the One and All. The others are its reflected parts. The "tree" is man himself, of course, and the Serpents dwelling in each, the conscious Manas, the connecting link between Spirit and Matter, heaven and earth." (The Secret Doctrine, II, 97-980).

Almost poles apart, geographically, yet with a marked sympathy of thought, is the



Above: Banyan tree on the Hawaiian island of Maui.

"A fine land is Bulotu, and happy are its people; for there, close to the house of Hiku-leo [the Loki of Tonga], is Vai-ola, the Water of Life, which the gods drink every day. Oh, that we had it here on earth, for it will heal all manner of sickness! Moreover, near the brink of the fountain stands Akau-lea, that wondrous tree, the Tree of Speech, under whose shadow the gods sit down to drink kava, the tree acting as master of the ceremonies, and calling out the name of him to whom the bowl shall be carried."

There came a time, however, when Maui, the king of the gods, decided to sail forth from Bulotu. It was the closing of the Golden Age, the passing of the first and second races, and the coming of the third with the knowledge of

World Tree of Fiji – a conception brought there from the Friendly Islands by the Tongans. Here, again, is a tale of the beginnings of things, and the Tree of Speech is but an episode in the recounting of the coming of men to earth and their subsequent knowledge of decay and death. As with the Ash Yggdrasill, this is the gathering-place of the gods, and the tree grows by a fountain, the Water of Life. Told by Ma'afu, a Tongan Chief, the legend charms and impresses one with its simple dignity.

The following passages come from the legend called The Beginning of Death – suggestive of the Norse legend! – in this instance the Tree of Speech fulfills the office of the Norns, making known the decree of Fate.

death. There was argument among the gods about this going forth, and then: "[They heard] a rustle and a stir among the leaves of the Tree of Speech, as if a sudden blast were sweeping through its branches; and all the gods kept silence, for they knew it was going to speak.

"Hear my words, Maui," it said. "Hear my words, Hiku-leo, and gods all. Go not! Evil will come to pass if you go – an evil so great and terrible that you could not understand if I were to tell you what it is. I pray you not to go."

In the parting injunctions of Maui, who will not be stayed, there is a sadness, and a boding of ill for the future: "Look you, my brothers," he said, "it will be well for you to stay behind and watch that evil one, lest he do

mischievous while we are away ... Do you keep the rest together, and have a care of Hiku-leo. What if he should cut down the Tree of Speech, or defile the Water of Life! There is nothing too evil for him when he is in one of his raging moods." (Folk Tales of All Nations, F.H. Lee, pages 444-45).

Thus, to every Race, as to every normal child, comes the urge to pass beyond the Golden Age, to learn from Life, and to grow through experience. Even the Lord Buddha had to meet the three awakening sights: sickness, old age, and death.

Lastly, let us speak of the Kounboun, the World Tree of Tibet. It is called the "tree of the 10,000 images and characters," and it is said that it will grow in no other latitude. HPB, in describing it, quotes from the Abbe Huc as one who could have no possible interest in magnifying its marvels, and we can do no better than follow her



example: "Each of its leaves, in opening, bears either a letter or a religious sentence, written in sacred characters, and these letters are, of their kind, of such a perfection that the type-foundries of Didot contain nothing to excel them. Open the leaves, which vegetation is about to unroll, and you will there discover, on the point of appearing, the letters or the distinct words which are the marvel of this unique tree! Turn your attention from the leaves of the plant to the bark of its branches, and new characters will meet your

eyes! Do not allow your interest to flag; raise the layers of this bark, and still OTHER CHARACTERS will show themselves below those whose beauty had surprised you. For, do not fancy that these superposed layers repeat the same PRINTING. No, quite the contrary; for each lamina you lift presents to view its distinct type. How, then, can we suspect jugglery? I have done my best in that direction to discover the slightest trace of human trick, and my baffled mind could not retain the slightest suspicion." (Isis Unveiled, I, 440).

HPB adds that:

"The characters which appear upon the different portions of the Kounboun are in the Sansar (or language of the Sun), characters (ancient Sanskrit); and that the sacred tree, in its various parts, contains in extenso the whole history of the creation, and in substance the sacred books of Buddhism." (Isis Unveiled, I, 440).

Nourished among the branches of the Tree of Life, Man can know the realms in which its roots find strength only through daring to eat of its sacred fruit. This is the knowledge of good and evil, but having dared to eat, he has the power to choose the GOOD. ✱

Hazel S. Minot





About Theosophical Organizations

By **Geoffrey A. Farthing**

I have come to some conclusions about theosophical organizations. In my old age, I am prepared to be charitable. The officers of these organizations, whether officially known as such (or not as in the case of the ULT), do what they have to against their background thinking, their personal idiosyncrasies, and a sense of duty.

What one organization does for the theosophical cause may not meet with the approval of those in other organizations, but the show goes on. Organizations provide the means for this with their libraries, their promotional activities, their literature, and now their web sites.

When I was very young, there used to be a saying in the Adyar Society attributed to Dr George Arundale: *"Together, differently."* We can say this of any human society doing almost anything. It certainly applies to the theosophical organizations.

At a time when I was searching, unsure of what I was looking for, I happened to encounter the Adyar Theosophical Society headquarters in London 'by accident.' In those days, there were a number of august, highly

respected members. In my view, they seemed so advanced along the theosophical path that they were High Initiates, well on the way to becoming Masters. I held them in great esteem and with a certain amount of awe.

I regarded them as such for many years. During that time, I became an ordinary member of a lodge in a provincial town and started to find my way into the world of Theosophy. Somehow, I knew that there was something for me to find, but it was undefined and indefinable. This was a view held at that time in the Adyar Society.

I worked hard. I raised questions. I sought answers. Very, very slowly, the light dawned. I experienced a series of enlightenments, which had a cumulative effect in my consciousness. While I was learning in the ordinary sense of the word, that learning at the same time modified my being. I realize that now, looking back over the process. I am not the same person now that I was when I started on the quest more than 60 years ago.

I have been through the mazes of the second-generation theosophical literature. I had to discover its incompatibility with the teachings of the Masters and HPB. I could not understand that there could be these inconsistencies and thought that the fault must lie in me. This was an uncomfortable situation until eventually I found that some of the pronouncements of the second-generation

literature just did not check, either with facts in Nature or with the pronouncements of the Masters.

I had to decide which the better authority was. I chose the Masters. At the same time, I discovered that I was not necessarily wrong in my deductions as to the truth or authenticity of statements. I began to get some confidence, and in the course of time, that confidence grew.

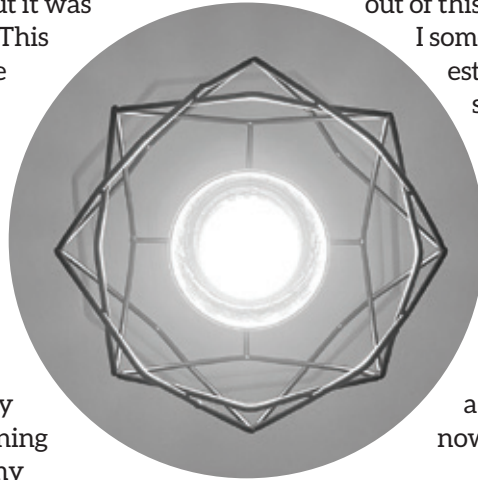
The most significant thing that has come out of this personal confidence is that

I somehow have become an established being, a partner so to speak in the world enterprise as opposed to a paid hand. The world enterprise of course is the process of Nature herself on her vast evolutionary journey. I see almost every phase of that applying most wonderfully to myself, both as far as I have travelled up to now and in prospect.

This establishment of beingness, or consciousness of one's own Self, is an unshakeable absolute, a kind of pivot around which everything revolves. The interesting thing is that "*everything*" in my experience includes all living creatures and one's fellow human beings. They also apparently possess this same central core of being which manifests as consciousness in them and me. It is in fact their "*Life*."

This discovery seems to me to be the significant result (at our stage) of our attempts to discover and apply Theosophy.

This beingness must be realizable,



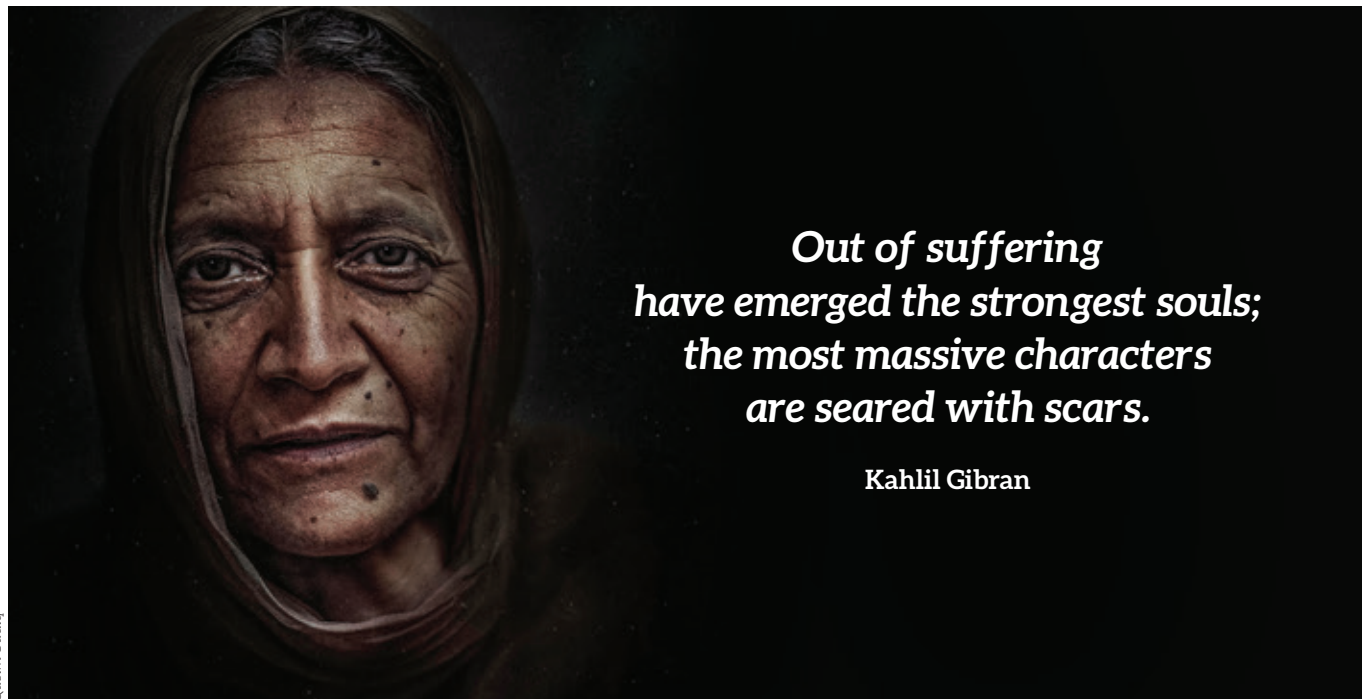
Osman Yunus Bekcan

regardless of one's theosophical organization. In the case of the Adyar Theosophical Society, all I have ever felt in it is total freedom. No one has interfered with me in my studies or in my efforts to understand things. Any work that I have done for the Society or any literary efforts that I have made have been received, even though I know that my views of Theosophy are very far from those acceptable by other members. What more can a student ask for but that his theosophical organization supply the literature, the lodge fellowship, and the opportunities for service that seem to be required by a struggling student?

I admit feeling a certain loyalty to the

Adyar Society for having provided this background to my life for so many years. I have no doubt that there are dozens of other students around the world who are members of other organizations who feel the same gratitude, and even affection, for the organization to which they belong.

I am well aware of how all these different organizations came into being. It seems insignificant compared with the discovery of living Theosophy within one's self. Why argue at lower mind level about the merits or demerits of the organization provided, and this is an essential proviso, that within that organization one can enjoy unrestricted freedom? ✨



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Last Words

Philosophy from an AI chat engine

Q: What is the Monad?

The term "Monad." In philosophy and metaphysics, particularly in the context of Neoplatonism and certain mystical traditions, the Monad refers to a fundamental, indivisible unity or source from which all things emanate. The concept of the Monad has been discussed by various philosophers and mystics throughout history, each with their own interpretation.

In the Neoplatonic tradition, the Monad represents the highest principle or the One, which is beyond comprehension and transcends all duality. It is the source of all existence and the ultimate reality from which everything emanates. The Monad is often depicted as pure, undifferentiated unity, existing beyond the realm of multiplicity and diversity.

In the writings of the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras, the Monad represents the divine principle of unity and harmony, from which all numbers and forms arise. It is considered the source of order and structure in the universe.

In certain mystical and esoteric traditions, the Monad is associated with the individual soul's highest aspect, representing its divine origin and ultimate destiny. The journey of the soul is seen as a process of returning to unity with the Monad, through spiritual evolution and enlightenment. ✧

ChatGPT

About The Theosophical Society

Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name:

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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

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

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

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

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

The next edition will appear on the summer solstice,
20th June 2024.

