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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Contributors: Raymond Rugland | Claire Jackson | Joy Mills | Carlos Cardoso Aveline

W Q Judge

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From the Editor's desk

Welcome to the Summer edition of *Esoterica*.

In 1993, Eric and I watched a television documentary about a reclusive South American tribe called the Kogi Indians. We were fascinated by their spirituality and the high ideals that they lived by. These beautiful people had a message for the developing people of our world: a message concerning the use of fossil fuels. Living as they do, in complete harmony with nature, they have no use for oil and gas and yet, whilst living in almost complete isolation, they knew about the harm that the so-called advanced nations were doing to the planet. They warned that the extraction and burning of these fuels was leading to the destruction of life – all life. The article – *An Important Message From the Kogi Elders* is an outline of the message which was given by the Elders to Alan Ereira in a rare communication with this highly spiritual and reclusive tribe. What a pity their message was not heeded at that time – thirty years ago.

Over the past several months an expert archivist has been working at headquarters to put our extensive archive into a workable order. This work has uncovered some interesting material including a record of the history of the Theosophical Publishing House London. Some of this material has been compiled into two articles, the first of which, is included in this edition. The second will be in the September edition.



Dwayne Reilander

Kogi man on one of the terraces at Ciudad Perdida, Colombia (2017).

Summer in England and Wales brings not only the warmth of sunny weather but also the warmth of like-minded company and fellowship at the Theosophical Summer School. This year's school will be held from the 2nd to the 6th of September at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. Having attended several Summer Schools over the past two decades, I can wholeheartedly recommend this to all our members.

I wish you well in whatever you are looking forward to this summer. ✨

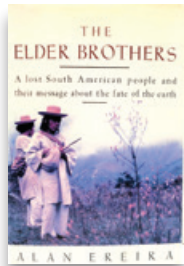
Julie Cunningham Editor

An Important Message from the Kogi Elders

By **Raymond Rugland**

“Our love of truth is evinced by our ability to discover and appropriate what is good wherever we come upon it.”

J. W. von Goethe



Top: *The Elder Brothers* by Alan Ereira; above: the book's author, in 2011.

The *Elder Brothers* by Alan Ereira (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992; 243 pages, ISBN 978-0679406181), tucked among the new books on display, caught my eye. Its subtitle, “A lost South American people and their message about the fate of the earth,” clinched the matter. The dustjacket portrayed Indians of unknown genre, dressed in neat cotton garments and wearing conical hats, against a backdrop of mist-shrouded mountain slopes. Alan Ereira, historian and film director/producer, was chosen by the Kogi Indians of Colombia to bring their message to the world. This he was able to do with his TV film *From the Heart of the World* (British Broadcasting Corporation, London) and



with his book *The Elder Brothers*.

Many of us were moved in the '30s by James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* with its Shangri-La, a city deep in the Himalayas ruled by a wise lama, where peace and harmony prevailed. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is no fiction. Its two peaks, nearly 19,000 feet high, seem to rise out of the sea in Colombia and are home to the Kogi. They have lived in harmony with the Great Mother with great fidelity for Millennia, following an ancient wisdom which affirms all things are rooted in divinity. All things, they believe, exist in the mind of the Creator before they finally become manifest. Spirit permeates everything.

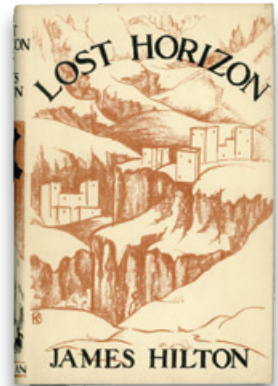
That binding thread of spirit, called *aluna*, is central to the Kogi philosophy. An enlightened teacher, Mama Valencia, explains:

"Everything we do is an event not only in the physical world but also in the spirit world. We live in a world shaped in spirit. Every tree, every stone, every river, has a spirit form, invisible to the Younger Brother. This is the world of aluna, the world of thought and spirit. Aluna embraces intelligence, soul and

fertility: it is the stuff of life, the essence of reality. The material world is underpinned, shaped, given life and generative power in aluna, and the Mama's work is carried out in aluna." (*The Elder Brothers*, p. 63) *

Because Kogi elders or Mamas are seers, graduates of a mystery school, they have the natural ability to penetrate higher planes of existence and hidden causes. They understand the vital truth of the maxim "*as above, so below*". When the Younger Brother in his vanity, urged by his greed and ambition, thinks that he is "*running things*", that is when the planet and our existence on it become endangered. The expression of the law of the Great Mother is interfered with.

The Kogi way of life – being content with the ways of old – is a deliberate choice on their part, rooted in a profound sense of duty for carrying out the will of the Great Mother and ensuring the well-being of this living planet. Other peoples of the New World were not *so much conquered* by the invader as they were seduced into believing that they were inferior to the race that identified "*progress*" with self-fulfilment in a limited sense. Many became Christians, assured that they would be considered more civilized. The Kogi have adopted the Spanish word *civilizados* ("*civilized*"), but when applied to the Younger Brother it expresses a contempt for the



Lost Horizon by James Hilton, first published in 1933.

* Page references given throughout the article are for the same book.

Western understanding of that word. The word civilization is an invention of the seventeenth century, but was, in fact, excluded by Dr. Samuel Johnson from his *Dictionary* on the basis that it merely duplicated “civility.” Since then civilization has been used to refer to almost anything that distinguishes man from the animal. Almost every culture regards its way of life as the supreme achievement of the ages.

Though much of the Kogi philosophy is unfamiliar, that should not deter us from opening “new doors” and widening our horizons. The end product is the strong conviction of brotherhood and respect for the earth. But how will the sophisticated “man of the world” react to it? Possibly millions of TV viewers saw *From the Heart of the World*; far fewer will read the book. The film permits a glimpse into the pure hearts and minds of this people, but to share in Alan Ereira’s adventure fully one should read

the book. Every paragraph is worthy of note and calls for a response. In this writer’s opinion, Ereira’s commitment to the Kogi, their elders or Mamas, is well taken. The message they bring indicates – as the evidence is totaled from many sources – that there is a sunrise of spiritual awareness in the world, and in response to that awareness the

“gods come out of hiding” and allow their voices to be heard once again.

Was there ever a time when humankind was not encouraged to come up higher – to truly evolve forth its inner capabilities to bring it to a higher moral, mental, and spiritual level than it has ever known? The proof is obvious: it resides in the existence of great souls who, history records, shone like beacons and, because they were once ordinary humans like ourselves, could identify with the masses and inspire them. How many more left no record of themselves? The Kogi have told us repeatedly the Highest dwells within us. They modestly consider themselves “a simple people” while striving to work ever more perfectly in harmony with the Great Mother. Few outsiders would have the grasp or the stamina to take instruction from the Mamas.

Does not the Kogi Genesis sound familiar?

*“In the beginning, there was blackness.
Only the sea.
In the beginning, there was no sun, no moon,
no people.
In the beginning, there were no animals,
no plants.
Only the sea.
The sea was the Mother.
The Mother was not people, she was not
anything.
Nothing at all.
She was when she was, darkly.
She was memory and potential.
She was aluna.”* (p. 115)

Mama is the name the Kogi give to the Great Mother, to the sun, or to a wise or enlightened



Village of the Kogi Indians in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range, in northern Colombia.

teacher (male or female). In the Inca pantheon, Mama Ocllo corresponds to the Egyptian Isis (*A Land of Mystery* by H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophist*, March 1880, p. 160). Even if we call this Mother “Space”, no matter how universal, it is not an emptiness but an existence, a manifestation, of

something. The wisest of the wise gave it no name. The Hindu calls it *Parabrahman*, “beyond Brahman” or limitless. Unnamed, this power is nonetheless real and nothing exists but what is derived, supported, and sustained by it.

While most native Americans left no written records, there is no doubt they identified with nature and the Great Spirit. The first invaders from Europe took slaves, gold, silver, and jewels. Full of missionary zeal, priests used every means to make converts. They had no sympathy for native cultures and did their best to eradicate them. The little we know about many early American cultures is derived from Spanish accounts. Alexander Humboldt, a man of universal interests, came to Colombia in the early nineteenth century. He visited the famed sacred lake of El Dorado (“*The Golden Man*”) that had proved such a magnet to the Spaniards. He brought back to Europe descriptions and drawings of Inca and Maya temples.

In 1915 Hiram Bingham, an American,



A Kogi Mamas (shaman) chews coca leaves in front of a hut.

made the first excavations at Machu Picchu, the sacred Inca city. On his team was O. F. Cook, botanist, a man of open mind. Because of our proclivity to regard ancients as uncivilized, their structures are usually labelled sacrificial altars, fortresses, or temples dedicated to gods and goddesses – all an expression of barbarism. Cook changed all that. He showed that the prehistoric walls and terraces were built to convert rocky hillsides and canyons to tillable land. Behind them, in every case, Mr. Cook found that selected soils had been brought in from afar and then placed in layers to achieve the ideal mix for agriculture. This unknown people was dedicated to the art of farming and, hence, to the well-being of the community. What was done there on a grand scale has never been equalled in any other place and must have taken millennia.

The Kogi, today’s custodians of the Tairona civilization, have managed to cling

made the first excavations at Machu Picchu, the sacred Inca city. On his team was O. F. Cook, botanist, a man of open mind. Because of our proclivity to regard ancients as uncivilized, their structures are usually labelled sacrificial altars, fortresses, or temples dedicated to gods and



The 15th-century Inca citadel of Machu Picchu is located in the Eastern Cordillera of southern Peru.

to their mountain refuge against great odds. In four hundred years they have had to contend with slavers, land-grabbers and plunderers, fanatic missionaries and, in our own time, hostile drug traffickers, warring politicians, and murderers. Realizing that this reclusive people had “*stuck their neck out*” by allowing themselves to be publicized, Ereira set up a trust fund to help them regain their rights and reclaim some of the coastal land which formerly was theirs. The Kogi learned from bitter experience they had nothing to gain from *hospitality*. Their first words to a stranger are: “*When are you leaving?*” Alan Ereira proved to be a rare “*gringo*” who treated the Kogi with respect, put his skills as a publicist at their disposal, and consented to take instruction from the Mamas for a period of one year.

Why did the tribe finally decide that now is the time for their message, and why is it important in their efforts to save the planet? They point out that the world was made by Serankua, the Son of the Mother, before we humans were. A long time ago all humanity held a common belief: there were no Younger Brothers. All recognized an indebtedness to the Creator for their worldly blessings. Understandably, payment has to be made for everything – game taken for food, air that we breathe, and all that we require in order to live.

When the Younger Brother was given knowledge of mechanical things, it became apparent that its application would prove destructive to Mother Earth. There was no place for him in the sacred land. Serankua, recognizing the danger, declared: “Let us send them away to

the other side and, so that they respect us and so that they do not pass, I make a division – the sea.” (p. 74)

The Kogi message, delivered by the Mamas in the Chibcha language in the *nuhue* (ceremonial house), was translated into Spanish, and finally into English. The English conveys some of its primitive majesty.

After centuries and centuries of years the Younger Brother passed from the other country, says the Mama,
Senor Christopher Columbus [the symbolic name for all invaders] came to this land and immediately saw the riches and killed, and shot, many natives.
He took the gold which had been here.
Sacred gold, gold of masks,
all kinds of gold.
They took so much.
So much.
So much.” (p. 59)

Younger Brother thinks:
“Yes! Here I am! I know much about the universe!”
But this knowing is learning to destroy the world, to destroy everything, all humanity.” (p. 197)

Because Younger Brother is among us, Younger Brother is violating the basic foundation of the world’s law.
A total violation.
Robbing.
Ransacking.
Building highways,
Extracting petroleum,
minerals. (p. 196)

If all the Kogi die, do you, Younger Brother, think that you will also go on living? Many stories have been heard that the sun will go out, the world will come to an end. But if we all act well and think well it will not end. That is why we are still looking after the sun and the moon and the land. (pp. 166-7)

The civilization we boast of does not embody what spiritual man is capable of. G. de Purucker in his *Studies in Occult Philosophy* states the kernel of the problem – so difficult for our dominant culture, which permeates the whole world, to grasp: “*That which sins in man is his intelligence. Sin lies in choice, in action.*” (p. 72). Now it becomes apparent what H. P. Blavatsky meant in *The Secret Doctrine* when she gives the reason for a “*select number of fragments*” of the ancient wisdom making an appearance again, after millennia of silence: “*The world of today. . . is rapidly progressing on the reverse, material plane of spirituality.*” (1:xxii). Modern man has been largely persuaded that he is *not* born of spirit. Whether he is aware of his divine origin or not, he exercises, as a matter of course, a sacred gift: his freedom to make choices, guided by his intelligence. When we use this gift solely for our own ends – more plainly, selfishly – we do it in the face of nature’s examples all around us of *selflessness*. This, in my opinion, is what is meant by proceeding on the “*reverse, material plane of spirituality.*”

In our heart of hearts – for all our declared beliefs and good intentions – we know better.

The Kogi Mamas see clearly; they are not naive. They are unmoved by pious declarations, alibis, excuses, and the down-deep conviction that nobody is looking and we can get away with it. If what we are doing is destructive to other humans, the lower kingdoms, and a living planet which provides a home for mankind, is it too much to ask us to consider changing our direction – say 180°?

Gloom and doom are not what we like to convey. Neither can the strength of good intentions undo the harm that has already been done. Good intentions are not enough. The bottom line is that there are those who will not stop plundering the earth for the dollar bill until they are compelled to do so by a rising tide of public indignation. Apparently, nothing is sacred to those who are determined to plunder the planet of its riches. There is no thought for the generations to follow. The exploitation of other human beings did not end with the abolition of slavery and serfdom. Our ingenuity never ceases. The Kogi Mamas see us for what we are: very Younger Brothers.

The last resort of the “*intellectual*” is: “*What are your proofs that the Kogi initiates have more insight than our Ph.D.s in the universities in preparing students for life?*” Compare the practicality of the Kogi with our own: possessing few of the gadgets we regard as necessities they, nevertheless, have no homeless or starving, no gangs, no banks, no “*working mothers*”; whatever urban renewal



Gottfried de Purucker (1874-1942), Theosophist, author and leader of the Theosophical Society Pasadena.

they need, they do themselves. They do not feel disadvantaged because they have no shopping malls.

A Mama was assigned to Alan Ereira to instruct him in basic teachings and make him welcome in the ceremonial lodge. At one point the pupil asked the teacher about creation. He was told there was no time for it: just to run through the chapter headings would take nine nights. The details would require nine times nine nights. "We will tell you what you need to know." From this, we may deduce that *The Elder Brothers* is based on the same logic. The Kogi message is limited to what the Younger Brother can receive.

Present-day scientists are beginning to investigate the world of sleep, in which we spend a third of our lives, but do

they really understand about death or the causes of birth?

The Kogi Mama knows that it is only in recognition of the reality of soul and spirit that the divine side of human nature can be cultivated.

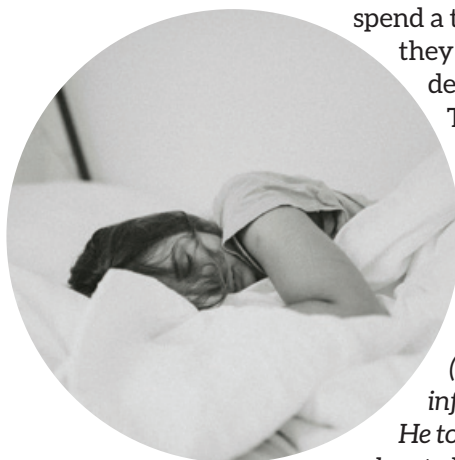
Over the next days, Javier (Rodriguez) was a mine of information about the Kogi.

He told me that Mamas are educated from infancy in the dark, and only allowed into the light when their education is complete, after two periods of nine years. Nine is the number required for completeness, as a foetus spends nine lunar months in the womb, and there are nine worlds. There are also characters called moros, he said,

whose education continues for two more periods of nine years. These I would never meet; they live high in the Sierra and speak only with Mamas. These are the oracles who determine ultimate policy. These creatures are the ones who have seen the approach of the end of the world. I later discovered that moro is the word for any pupil studying to be a Mama. It does seem quite possible that some students are not released into the light until they are over thirty. . . . The Kogi are profoundly ascetic, and prepare themselves for important moments by fasting, meditation and sexual abstinence; contact with anyone who is still locked into the gross physical world can, they believe, render this preparation useless. Javier's moros would be in this heightened state all their lives, and it would therefore be impossible for me ever to set eyes on them, but he suggested that they would have their eyes on me. (pp. 77-8).

Anyone who can discern the pure virtues of the bushman, the Australian aborigine, the Athapascan, Seminole, or the Hopi, should have no problem with the Kogi. They wear the seal of majesty: the recognition of the divinity in the heart of all. That gold insignia shows in their concern for their very Younger Brother. ✨

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Kinga Howard

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People, Places and Publishing

A Topographical History of the TPH, London: Part 1

By **Claire Jackson**

It is the 6th August 1921: “The Chairman informed the Committee that the Theosophical Publishing House in this country had been handed over as a free gift by Mrs. Besant and formed into a company limited by guarantee with the general secretaries for England, Scotland and Wales, and for Ireland as the sole members and Directors.”

My fingers paused in the reading of the minutes of the Executive Committee of the Theosophical Society in England (TSE) (**Fig. 1**). It is well known that when Annie Besant died in 1933 that she left the book shop business at 68 Great Russell Street to her son Digby Besant. According to the *Theosophy World* website:

“In the late 1940s the

English Section purchased a share of this business which became reconstituted as The Theosophical Publishing House (London) Ltd. The bookshop was first at 12 Bury Street and was known as the Quest Bookshop”.

What then is the true story of the TPH? I have been cataloguing the TSE archives since last August and I want to share with you my investigations into solving this mystery in a two-part article following the geographical wanderings through the title pages of its publications. These articles will be concentrating on the publishing function and bookshop of the Theosophical Society in England and not be covering the Theosophical Publishing Committee which was based in Harrogate and active c. 1904-1916, nor obviously the Scottish Theosophical Bookshop, later known as Uroborous books!

In Part 2 we will continue our tour, solve the problem of Mrs. Besant gifting the company twice and discover the personalities and people involved from 1922 until its move to Gloucester Place in 1992. Spoiler alert – despite the *Theosophy World* entry, as some of you will remember, the shop didn’t move to 12 Bury Place (not Street!) until 1988. In the meantime, you will need good walking shoes for this tour but don’t worry, there are many stops along the way.

The Theosophical Publishing Company Limited

We start our pilgrimage in 1887 at “Maycot” Crownhill (now Crown Dale) in the Upper Norwood area of London (**Fig. 2**) where Helena P Blavatsky was sharing a cottage

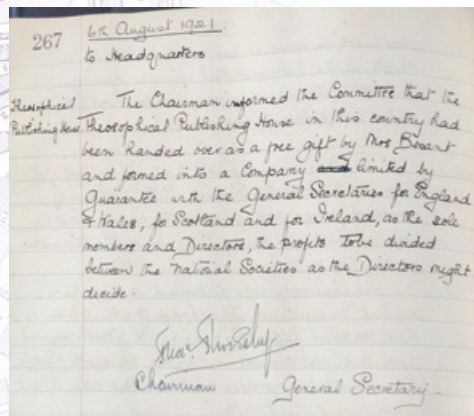


Figure 1: TSE Executive Council Minutes. (TSE Archives).



Figure 2: Detail from street map, 1888.

with the recently widowed Mrs. Keniworth Cook (aka Mabel Collins). The 1854 installation of the spectacular Crystal Palace from Hyde Park after the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the opening of two railway stations, providing easy access to central London, had turned this previously semi-rural area into a popular and convenient commuter suburb of London.

The newly-formed Blavatsky Lodge holds its second recorded meeting on 25th May 1887 at Maycot and the attendees discuss practical ways of fulfilling one of their agreed objects, that of spreading theosophical teaching and brotherhood. G B Finch proposes publishing a magazine and that a limited liability company named the “The Mystic Publishing Company” be formed. William Ashton Ellis prefers the title “The Octagon Publishing Company”, whilst Mabel Collins suggests the “Theosophical Publishing Company”, which, after a vote, with one dissention, was agreed. The discussion then passed on to what to call the magazine itself, with Ellis suggesting “Lucifer” and W B Hamilton “The Mystic”. The meeting was adjourned without a decision on this point.

Lucifer's first number, issued on 15th

September 1887 and edited by Collins and HPB, opens with a semi-serious editorial on the significance of the name. It was published by George Redway who also agreed, in November 1887, to publish *Light on the Path* by Mabel Collins. According to Olcott, terms could not be agreed for him to publish Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. A P Sinnett, who had some shares in Redway's company, wrote in his autobiography that things were actually more acrimonious and Blavatsky felt that Redway had “not dealt fairly with her” over the publication of the initial edition of *Lucifer* and had made an unsuccessful court action to reclaim £30.

7 Duke Street, 1887-1891

HPB writes to Countess Wachtmeister who is in Sweden: “not only have we started a new *Theosophical Journal*, but they insist on publishing themselves *The Secret Doctrine*, £200 down has been subscribed for *Lucifer* our new journal, and £500 for *The Secret Doctrine*, It is a Limited Publishing Co., and already signed and legally registered”.

The second stop on our trip takes us nearly 8 miles from the leafy suburbs, along the A214 from Crown Dale – as Crownhill was renamed when developers filled in the gaps between houses in the 1930s – into central London. Our destination, a short road between The



Figure 3: Cover of *Lucifer*, 1888.



Figure 4: John Adam Street, 2018.
(Google Maps).

Strand and the Embankment, developed in the eighteenth century by the Adams brothers John, James, William and Robert in their signature classical style for their Adelphi project.

The Theosophical Publishing Company is incorporated in September 1887 with a capital of £1,500 and by November offices are secured at 7 Duke Street (now John Adam Street – **Fig. 4**) from which *Lucifer* is edited.

The new company is ambitious, running off 15,000 offprints of *Lucifer*'s December 1887 *A Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury* editorial. Booklets are issued twice a month with “interesting original essays on Theosophical subjects by competent writers and contain from 16 to 32 pages” – they are originally called *TPS* and then *Theosophical Siftings*.

The Duke Street offices are advertised as being open on Tuesday and Sunday evenings, and on Friday afternoons to members and their friends, as well as to all enquirers and persons desiring information about the Society or the subjects which it was founded to study. By October 1888 Mabel Collins has relinquished the editorship of *Lucifer* (having fallen out with Blavatsky) and the first of two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* have been published. Olcott recalled Blavatsky “work[ing] at her writing desk from morning to night, preparing copy and reading proofs for *The Secret Doctrine* and her London magazine *Lucifer*.”

It is at the 7 Duke Street premises in 1889 that Annie Besant presents herself to join the Theosophical Society, not thinking that soon she will be working there herself. However, by July 1890, and not for the last time, there is a financial crisis, evidenced by a notice being published in the *London Gazette*, that states unless due cause is shown, the Theosophical Publishing Company will be struck off the register [of companies]; a second notice appears in October 1890 confirming that this has happened. *Lucifer* however, continues with Besant, firstly as joint editor with HPB, and after the latter's death in 1891, with G R S Mead. Besant brings with her experience of having previously run the Freethought Publishing Company with Charles Bradlough.

The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1891-1917

Still based at Duke Street, Constance Wachtmeister becomes the manager of a brand new imprint, begun in 1891, called *The Theosophical Publishing Society*. This publishes three magazines, books, booklets and leaflets, including Besant's lecture *In Defence of Theosophy*. *A catalogue of books to be obtained at the offices of the Theosophical Publishing Society* is advertised in 1893.

An announcement printed in *Lucifer* in 1894 states that the Theosophical Publishing Society has been transferred by Countess Wachtmeister to Mrs. Besant and Mr. Keightley, who have in turn appointed with “full powers” Mr. Faulding as their Business Manager. *The Theosophist*, quoting *Lucifer*,

also mentions this transfer but this time saying that it was Mrs. Faulding who was to be the manager. I believe that this was a typesetting error, as it is Alfred Faulding who is credited with preparing the index to the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1895, and who is mentioned both in the *TSE Annual Report* and in the *Post Office Street Directory* as being the manager of the Theosophical Publishing Society. Alfred Faulding had been a Director of publishing company Hutchings and Crawley and also worked for Truslove and Hanson, who ran bookshops in fashionable parts of London.

The records show that it is Mr. Faulding who has to deal with the next crisis for the new Publishing Society when, in 1895, legal action against the Society is taken by Mabel Collins, claiming infringement of copyright of her book *Comments on Light on the Path*. After intensive negotiations with solicitors this action results in a settlement being paid out and an agreement with Collins being signed on 27th November 1895. This contract with TPS covers royalties and copyright of some existing works and the granting, for a limited period, of first refusal of publishing any of Mabel Collins' works relating to theosophical and occult matters, although she forgoes claims to any articles in *Lucifer*. TPS went on to publish several of Collin's future publications, although relations were at best cordial, and when permission was sought to republish "Light" in America in 1927 she refused to sign a contract claiming it was out of copyright and ended the letter "I have been so cheated over that book.. that I am glad to be out of the whole matter".

26 Charing Cross, 1896-1899

We continue on with our literary ramble, strolling less than ten minutes to Charing Cross, where a row of buildings facing Trafalgar Square, the structures of which still survive today, have the address of the Square (**Fig. 5**). Charing Cross is known today primarily for the adjoining main station terminus, its name taken from the Charing or "River Bend" and the Eleanor Cross (destroyed in 1647) which a grieving Edward I had installed to commemorate stops along the route that Queen Eleanor's body took to her interment in Westminster Abbey in 1291. A model of the cross was installed in 1864 when the railway station was built.

The 1st June 1896 issue of *Vahan* reports that: "*The continued growth of the business of the Theosophical Publishing Society necessitates a removal to larger and more commodious premises, and we therefore wish to announce that on and after June 24th, the address of the*



Figure 5: Charing Cross, looking across Trafalgar Square, 1896. (Survey of London).

T.P.S. will be 26 Charing Cross, London". In the next issue more details are provided: "Instead of a second floor in a back street the T.P.S is now possessed of ground floor premises in one of the most crowded thoroughfares of London. No. 26, formerly used as a bank, extends back from the street some eighty feet; there is also a basement of the same dimensions for storage purposes, and the whole is fitted with electric light. Stands of shelves laden with books fill the place, and give the visitor the idea that Theosophy is not some narrow creed of modern growth, but a great subject of serious study with its roots in the best literature of many lands and ages. One of the windows is crowded with new publications, and the other is filled with rare and second-hand books."

We can see from this that it is not just offices and for mail order books but it acts as a public-facing bookshop for the first time. The second-hand books were sold by John

Watkins, who had purchased that stock for £800 on the move from Duke Street, the Publishing Society not wanting to deal with second-hand trade at that time. The building was shared with the London offices of the *Manchester Guardian* (now *The Guardian* newspaper), the Christian Evidence Society and a solicitor's firm called Hughes and Co.

However, by August 1899, we are on the move again, traversing a mile further north this time, and with no great fanfare in *Vahan*, the address of the Theosophical Publishing Society is simply changed to 3 Langham Place (next to the current BBC

headquarters). A couple of months later The Theosophical Society in England moved temporarily to 4 Langham Place, after the sale of Avenue Road, (this prior to their move to 28 Albemarle Street in 1900).

The original building at 3 Langham Place was a carriage repository, designed c. 1822-1822 by John Nash's partner, James Morgan, but was later rebuilt and developed into four houses in the 1840s by James Fergusson, using designs of the Anglo-Jewish architect David Mocatta.

In 1900, Langham Place, just north of Oxford Street, was known for All Soul's Church with its distinctive circular Chapel (the only part of John Nash's original vision still existing today) as well as the quite new and fashionable Queen's Hall. This 2,500 seater hall and concert venue opened in 1893 and was the venue for "Proms" between 1895 and 1941 when it was destroyed during the Blitz. Although the 1904 and 1906 TSE and 1905 European conventions were held in Queen's Hall, by that time the Theosophical Publishing Society had again moved, announcing on 1st January 1904 that it was to be based at 161 New Bond Street in "more convenient and larger premises".

161 New Bond Street, 1904-1916

The Theosophical Publishing Society stayed in New Bond Street for 12 years under the management of Edith Ward, who had taken on that role c. 1899, combining it for a number of years with treasurership of the Theosophical Society in England. The Bond Street thoroughfare, named after the 17th

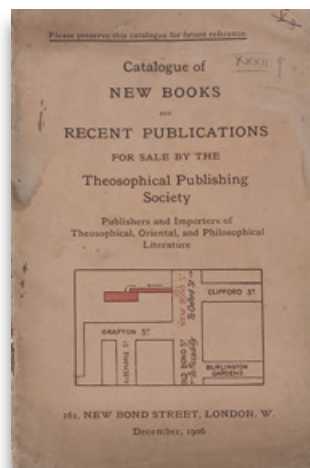


Figure 6: 1906 catalogue. (TSE Archives).

century property developer Sir Thomas Bond, runs from Oxford Street to Piccadilly. It became notorious during the eighteenth century for the dandies who paraded along it, some of whom took rooms above the shops and called out outrageous bets to each other from the windows. This was still a smart shopping area when the TPS was in residence there, as the next block was home to Asprey the jewellers (until 2021). Today, number 161, a listed building and one of the first tranche of the second phase of laying out of Bond Street (hence the “New”), is home to the London retailers of the French fashion house Dior.

Although the frontage was narrow, the Bond Street premises were extensive and included a reading room and library. The lending library had been housed at Duke Street but due to lack of space had not moved back to Charing Cross and had instead been taken to the Avenue Road headquarters. The library was returned from the bookshop premises to the headquarters in 1920.

There is in the archives, a catalogue of books for sale from New Bond Street (**Fig.6**). It lists over 400 entries, including magazines; transactions; pamphlets; leaflets; Theosophical writings by Besant, Leadbeater, Blavatsky, Mabel Collins, Mead, Olcott and Sinnett; books for beginners and for children; books on Astrology, Buddhism, Christianity, Egypt, Hinduism, Japan, and Mysticism; as well as a large number of miscellaneous works encompassing classical philosophy, poetry, science, diet, psychology and music. Also available were photographs of Blavatsky etc. and TSE emblem brooches.

Theosophical Publishing House, 1 Upper Woburn Place, 1917-1920

It is June 1917 and in the midst of the First World War big changes are afoot in our story – an announcement is made in *The Theosophist* that not only is the Publishing Society moving from New Bond Street to 1 Upper Woburn Place, but from henceforth, it will be known under the name Theosophical Publishing House, or TPH (**Fig.7**).

A Theosophical Publishing House had opened in India in 1909 and to differentiate them the company was often known as TPH London.

1 Upper Woburn Place, J I Wedgwood’s home, is part of the Duke of Bedford’s London estates. It is one and half miles from New Bond Street and close to Tavistock Square where the TSE was situated whilst the government requisitioned its part-built headquarters (now BMA House). A rare mention of the TPH in the Executive Committee minutes records that some monies stolen from Tavistock Square belonged to the Publishing House.

Winifred Parley is appointed manager and writes a nine-page report to a newly formed management committee chaired by the TSE General Secretary, David Graham Pole.

This candid report decries the existing conditions and systems in which she finds the business: “... *there is no system of stock-keeping... the sale room [has] no organization... there is no check whatsoever on incoming or outgoing stock... books are taken discriminately*

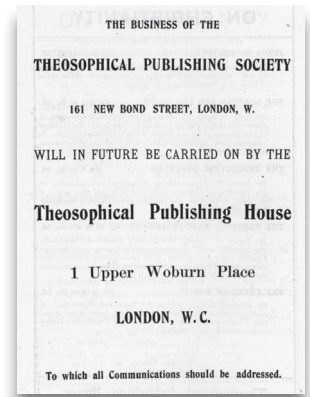


Figure 7: From *The Theosophist* June 1917. (TSE Archives).

from the shelves, stock runs low or runs out completely, there is not definite arrangement or classification. The room is shabby looking. The saleswoman is pleasant and has an obliging manner; but otherwise possesses none of the qualifications necessary for the work... the basement is damp, there is no heating in the manager's room. The general filing system, both for accounts and correspondence is quite inadequate... much of the correspondence is done by hand with no copy kept... [however] the replies to some of our outgoing correspondence suggest that tact has been lacking... Mr. Fitzgerald is somewhat of a problem. He has been relegated to the basement as being temporarily unsuitable to deal with the public. Miss Ward told me that he was extremely excitable and unreliable, and Mr. Howgate acknowledges to being frightened of him!

Although there was a notice in *The Theosophist* Miss Parley also complains that the change of address has not been advertised outside of the membership: "At the old Bond Street address a torn envelope with the new address scribbled on it represents the only form of advertising to the public calling there."

The TPH minutes run from 5th September 1917 to 12th March 1919, during which time, under Miss Parley's urging, a shop is opened at 169 Piccadilly, there being no display window possible in the residential style of

buildings in Woburn Place. The 1905 building on Piccadilly, including a reading room,

is a few doors up from the long established Hatchards bookshop. The shops at 169 and 173 had been created as part of the rebuilding works after the adjoining Egyptian Hall had been demolished. That landmark building, with a façade decorated with caryatids of standing Egyptian figures, exhibited both art and natural history "spectacles" during the 19th Century.

Despite the damning report and attempts to ensure that the TPH is run in a more business-like way, E Claire Soper from the Theosophical Educational Trust, in a letter dated 23rd July 1919, requests Miss Parley to send extra supplies of their leaflet and Dr. Armstrong Smith's book to take to Cambridge: "we [are] leaving all the advertising and reviewing of both of these books to you do we not? I am afraid that we have been rather un-businesslike about our "Philosophy of Education" as we have not written facts or agreements of any kind about it."

The Piccadilly shop and reading room was only open a few months, as early in 1920 the TPH moved from Woburn Place to 9 St. Martin's Street (**Fig. 8**).

9 St. Martin's Street, 1920

St Martin's Street runs from Leicester Square almost to Trafalgar Square, close to the TPS's old premises at Charing Cross. The road first appears in the rate-books for 1693 and later residents included Isaac Newton but the street has been extensively rebuilt, Newton's house now housing the Westminster Reference Library. The site of number 9 is now used as offices for National Gallery staff.

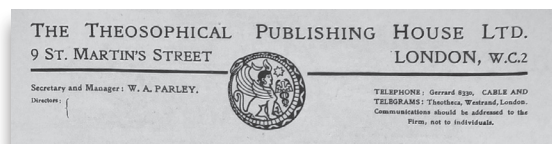


Figure 8: Headed paper of The Theosophical Publishing House c. 1920. (TSE Archives).

Having travelled 11.4 miles and covered 50 years of theosophical publishing we are within a mile of the original offices in Duke Street (**Fig. 9**). The business seems on track

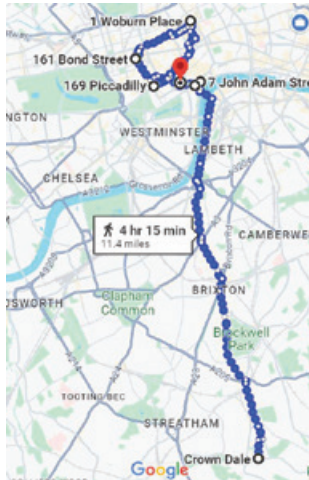


Figure 9: Route from Maycot (1888) to St Martin's Street (1920). (Google Maps).

under Miss Parley and there are even discussions about the possibility of taking over the theosophical bookshop in Oxford. As we know from the minutes at the start of this article, it is only a few months' later that Annie Besant contacts the general secretaries to tell

them that she is gifting them the business. A new name appears as witness to Winifred Parley's signature in the author agreements from 1920 onwards – that of an L Severs who is going to play a significant role in the second part of our history of the Theosophical Publishing House. ✨

The concluding part of this article will appear in the next issue of *Esoterica*, to be published in September 2024.

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O, Hidden Life...

By **Joy Mills**



Maria

S ometime in early 1923, Dr. Annie Besant, then President of the Theosophical Society, penned some lines that have since become familiar to members throughout the world, have been translated into several languages, and have, indeed, become a nearly indispensable part of every theosophist's vocabulary. The words have been set to music. They have been chanted and sung. Few gatherings of the Society have been held since that year that have not been opened with the recitation of these words. At every International Convention, successive Presidents of the Society have inaugurated the proceedings with the antiphonal recitation of what has come to be known as the "Universal Prayer" or "Universal Invocation." Simple in the extreme, the words possess the magical power of a mantram:

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

So familiar have these words become that it may be their significance and depth of inner meaningfulness have escaped us. When we become habituated to anything, be it a person, a situation, or an idea clothed in the fabric of

language, there is always the danger that we come to take it for granted. In times of stress, we may even mouth words we learned in our childhood, as in the simple prayers of our faith. People have been known to do this automatically at times of crisis. Even avowed atheists have been heard to utter prayers they deny knowing or remembering. But words are precious and often fragile vehicles not only for thought but for the aspirations of the heart. They can convey not only mundane meanings that get us about in the world and relate us to each other, but also the hunger of the soul and the beauty of the spirit in their reaching out to that “more-ness” which remains forever indefinable and therefore unspeakable.

Can we pause, then, to examine the lines which Dr. Besant gave the Society and the world? What inner meanings, what deeper realities lie behind the words themselves? To what new insights may we be led, even as we pronounce the words and speak the separate phrases? Have we become attached to these words simply because they came from that heroic soul, Annie Besant? Would it matter if some other individual had served as a channel for their impartation to the world? Undoubtedly, constant repetition has endowed the verse with a certain inner significance, a sacredness if we may call it that, but repetition can also dull the spirit and memorized phrases can be mouthed with little attention of either mind or heart.

Before we examine some, at least, of the inner meaning of the verse, it may be of interest to note its specific origin. In her *Watch Tower* notes from *The Theosophist* of June 1923, Dr. Besant wrote that the lines

were prompted by a request from a number of members who were helping to organize a “Brotherhood Campaign” in South India. This “campaign” had been inaugurated some time earlier in Great Britain and was just then being taken up in India. Her comment continues:

"I wrote... a few lines for daily repetition, morning and evening, as I did not feel that I could write a meditation, as they had asked me to do. Meditation seems to me to be a very individual thing, the working of one's own mind on some special theme; the most I could do was suggest a theme. Here it is, as it chanted itself..."

Then follows the verse already given above. Further, she adds: *"It sends forth successive waves of color, pulsing outwards from the speaker, if rhythmically intoned or chanted, whether by the outer or the inner voice, and if some thousands would send these out over successive areas, we might create a very powerful atmosphere..."*

The fact that Dr. Besant tells us that the verse “*chanted itself*” to her may indeed indicate that its true source lay in a deeper or higher realm beyond her own conscious mind, perhaps even from that Source to which she herself always gave the deepest and most profound reverence and obeisance. Surely, we must concur that the words, as she gave them, are of such beauty and majestic sweep that any alteration or modification would be improper. The effect on the surrounding environment or community, and on the individual who may



Annie Besant
(1847-1933).

be reciting the words as the verse is spoken can only be guessed at, although many testify to its efficacy in producing an inner peace and even actual healing.

Turning now to the verse itself, we may consider it phrase by phrase, suggesting some of the meanings latent within it. First,

“O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom...”

The immediate question that arises is: Why hidden? Is not life in evidence all about us?

Life surely is not hidden! But what is referred to here, what is invoked,

must be beyond or above the obvious. Dr. I.K. Taimni, in his

work, *Glimpses into the Psychology of Yoga*, reminds us that: *“The Ultimate Reality exists only in the Ever-Unmanifest and is the source of all relative realities which can be within the realm of human experience...”*. The highest principle, then, is

present everywhere, and yet, is beyond all existence. It is truly the *“hidden life”* that underlies all of manifestation. Inherent within that

Reality is its own dynamism, as it were, making possible the production of all things, all existence, for there, at the heart of Reality, is the throbbing pulse of creation. Without that pulse, nothing can exist. It is ubiquitous and contains within itself the power of resonating throughout all that ever is or will be. That potency is locked up in every atom and every element of the manifested universe. Truly, it is *“vibrant in every atom.”* So all of nature pulsates with the rhythm of the

Eternal One, hidden forever, but known by its countless manifestations, as the One becomes the many, and yet remains forever One. This initial phrase is a call to that eternal, Unmanifest Principle: the Supreme Reality which is both beyond the cycles of manifestation and yet forever vibrating through the manifested universe. In terms of human consciousness, it is an invocation to that Atman which is hidden in our very nature, as present here in the physical as at its own level because its resonance vibrates through all the atoms of all our vehicles—carriers of that Atman—from Buddhi to the physical.

“O Hidden Light, shining in every creature...”

Again, we may ask: Why hidden? If there were a light shining in every creature, surely that light would be observable. The very nature of light is that it glows and therefore it can be seen. Light radiates outwards, but we are called on to invoke a hidden light, a light that shines within but is not radiating outwards in a visible manner. So, a deeper meaning must be implicit in the words.

The One Reality, when it manifests, may be said to become Light. It is this interior light of the Supreme Reality, of Ishvara, the manifest Deity that is present in every creature. Life has now become light; its very vibrancy is now shining with an inner dynamism. In humanity, Buddhi - the *“light of the soul”* - is now united with Atma, ready to turn outwards into activity. It is this light which must illumine our entire nature. This light makes consciousness possible, and it is *“hidden”* because it is not objective to consciousness but is of the very nature of



Wonderlane

pure consciousness itself. And that light is present, shining through every atom in space.

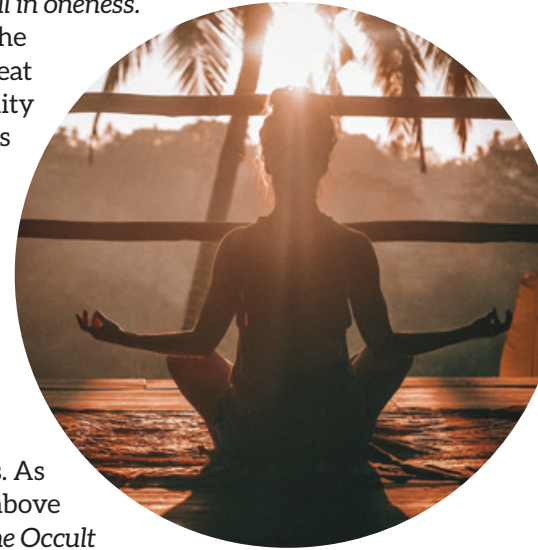
“O Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness...”
From the polarity of Life and Light there now springs creative activity, Love. Wherever there is polarity, the relationship between the poles comes into existence. The purest of all relationships, the one relationship that is not sullied in any manner by any object of either attachment or repulsion, is the relationship of Love. This we may call the underlying “glue” which holds together all manifested things, all parts of the universe, all elements that appear with manifestation. Therefore it is Love that “embraces all in Oneness.” The One has become the many; out of unity has come multiplicity. Yet however great the multiplicity, all is held in the one embrace of that pure relationship which arises when Life and Light come into existence, that relationship of Love. Love lies at the very heart of the creative process. It is therefore the principle of universal lawfulness, which underlies evolution. Hidden, then, at the heart of the manifold is Love, which binds the many into the unity of the One. This is the law and the fulfilment of the law, bringing everything into perfect equilibrium, for whatever happens anywhere in the universe has its repercussions everywhere. There is no external authority, no extra-cosmic deity weighing the scales of justice. Love is at the heart of the universe and brings about balance because all that is in the universe is held in its embrace.

Here, too, is the creative principle: Atma-Buddhi joined with Manas, turned outwards now on the great involutory-evolutionary

journey. Manas, or creative activity, is truly love in action. The mind, when infused with intuition, embraces the universe, perceiving all things as they truly are. The mind that can fragment the Real in order to grasp or realize its manifold nature can also be brought into a condition of stillness, in which the modifications of the thinking principle have ceased. In that condition, perception, or awareness, is undivided. The undivided state of consciousness embraces “all in oneness.”

The first three phrases of the mantram remind us of the great triplicity of the Supreme Reality – Life, Light and Love. But this triplicity is “hidden,” because it is not known objectively, but rather underlies the entire process of manifestation. It is “hidden” because the mind alone cannot grasp its essentialness, nor can it be experienced through the instrumentality of the senses. As Dr. Taimni points out, in the above quoted work, “According to the Occult philosophy there is a method of knowing the Reality... and this method consists in suppressing the modifications of the mind completely.” That method, of course, is yoga. “Then,” continues Dr. Taimni, “the individual consciousness becomes freed from the veil which separates the individual consciousness from the universal consciousness and knows this Reality directly by becoming one with it.”

In the first three lines of our verse, we invoke the triple nature of the One Reality.



Jared Rice

In that invocation, we may perform a supreme yoga of Self-Realization. Our attention is drawn to the sublime fact that underlying each individual and the universe is the One Reality in its triple aspect of Life, Light and Love. Its realization lies in a realm beyond the mind, but by invoking it, we bring that Reality into direct awareness, into our consciousness attuned and harmonized with the One. The final two lines of the verse affirm this realization:

"May all who feel

themselves as one with

Thee..." The use of the

word Thee indicates

that the triplicity of

Life, Light and Love is

indeed One - the One

Supreme Reality.

Note, however, that

the emphasis first is on

the word feels. What is

it to feel oneself as one

with the Supreme?

Feeling is acute awareness

- awareness without any

distracting thought, without any

disturbing influence. It is an awareness that

is total, which overwhelms us and takes hold

of us wholly and utterly. Perhaps it may be

compared to the moment of pain when one

stubs one's toe against a stone abutment. At

such a moment, there is no other awareness

than the awareness of pain. No thought even

intrudes at the sharp moment of impact. Only

later may we say, "I stubbed my toe" or "I felt

pain in my toe."

The feeling that must come, and must be



Note Thanun

affirmed in the realization of oneness, is such a feeling: total, entire, complete, without analysis or reason or logical deduction. Only in such a condition can true knowing arise.

In one sense, this ability to "feel ... as one with Thee" may be described as the pain of oneness, the burden of oneness, that we all must bear if we would know the reality of life itself. It is not, in other words, a selective feeling: "I will

feel one with you, but not with that

person; I will feel one with a tree,

but not with a snake," etc.

When we say, "May each..."

or "May all..." we are

invoking in ourselves a

consciousness that has

no divisions, no

barriers. It is a

consciousness infused

only with Life, Light

and Love, and therefore

it is pure and whole.

Out of that acute

awareness of "feeling,"

must follow a knowing:

"Know they are therefore one

with every other."

So the mantram concludes with an affirmation of the certainty of knowledge.

Humanity is not only meant to feel; it must

know. This is the full burden of self-

consciousness. It is a knowing that is not

simply a surmise, an opinion, an idea, or a

belief that may be altered when some other

notion comes along. It is rather a conscious

act that arises because we have been

immersed in a consciousness that was

uncompounded, undivided, whole and

pristine in its nature. As a result of the contact with that consciousness, of that non-verbal awareness that we are one with the Universal Reality, that we are truly Atma-Buddhi-Manas, we have to know, to be fully conscious of our oneness with all other units of Life who are equally infused with that Reality, vibrating with it, shining with it, embraced by it.

In some versions of the mantram, the word also has been substituted for the word therefore, but it may be noted that in Dr. Besant's original version, the latter word is used. There is a subtle, but very definite, difference between the two words. "Also" is an additive word; it means "in addition to," "this plus that," etc. "Therefore" has the connotation of "subsequent upon," "as a result of"; it is not augmentative. What is intended in the mantram is the realization that when the feeling of unity is present, recognition of the oneness with the Supreme Reality that is Light, Life and Love, then there follows upon that recognition the realization that one is inevitably united with all other creatures. For how can we be one with the Supreme and remain separate from, distinct from, all others who are equally rooted in the One Reality?

Many more meanings may be discovered in this magnificent verse that Dr. Besant bequeathed to us. It is truly a reaffirmation of the entire creative process in which we – and all life – are immersed; a reaffirmation that we hold within our power, as self-conscious units of life, the ability to perceive life, whole and splendid. This is the vision we can send shining out over the entire world, the vision to which we can give wings and voice and

form. This is the vision that can recreate ourselves every time we chant the mantram, and so, recreate and transform our world. Such a vision alone can bring about a new consciousness in the world, a consciousness of unity, of brotherhood, of peace and harmony, of wholeness and holiness. When we repeat these few simple lines, either alone or in a group, we invoke the One Reality to manifest itself anew, and this is to make whole and make holy all that is in the universe about us. No more wonderful act could we perform. ✨

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Joy Mills (October 9, 1920 - December 29, 2015), was an International Vice-President of The Theosophical Society and a National President of its American and Australian Sections. For over sixty years she was an international

lecturer for the TS, having spoken in many countries. She was also a Director of the Krotona School of Theosophy, Ojai, California. She was the author of a numerous articles and books. In 2011 she was awarded the Subba Row Medal for contributions to Theosophical literature.

A Card To The American Public

Editorial by **H. P. Blavatsky** with **H. S. Olcott**, *Spiritual Scientist*, July 1875

In compliance with the request of the Honourable Alexander Aksakoff, Counselor of State in the Imperial Chancellery at St. Petersburg, the undersigned hereby give notice that they are prepared to receive applications from physical mediums who may be willing to go to Russia, for examination before the Committee of the Imperial University.

To avoid disappointment, it may be well to state, that the undersigned will recommend no mediums whose personal good character is not satisfactorily shown; nor any who will not submit themselves to a thorough scientific test of their mediumistic powers, in the city of New York, prior to sailing; nor any who cannot exhibit most of their phenomena in a lighted room, to be designated by the undersigned, and with such ordinary furniture as may be found therein.

Approved applications will be immediately forwarded to St. Petersburg, and upon receipt of orders thereon from the Scientific Commission or its representative, Mr. Aksakoff, proper certificates and instructions will be given to accepted applicants, and arrangements made for defraying expenses.

Address the undersigned, in care of E. Gerry Brown, Editor of the *Spiritual Scientist*, 18 Exchange Street, Boston, Mass, who is hereby authorized to receive personal applications from mediums in the New England States.

Henry S. Olcott
Helena P. Blavatsky

Originally published in *Spiritual Scientist*, No. 18, Volume II, July 8th 1875, The Scientist Publishing Company.



A. Aksakoff



Theosophical Society in England



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THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
in ENGLAND & WALES

The Art of Service

From *The Theosophical Movement*, October 2014

“KARMIC CAUSES already set in motion must be allowed to sweep on until exhausted, but this permits no man to refuse to help his fellows and every sentient being.”

Aphorism on Karma

Even a beginner in theosophy knows that everything a man is, or is not, everything he possesses or lacks, is the result of Karma. Each soul is the maker of his own destiny; everyone has to work out his own salvation with diligence. The Way can be pointed out to him; yet each must walk it relying only on himself. This principle of the Law of Karma is very important, especially in India where Karma is mistaken for unalterable fate or predestination fixed and immovable. That is not the teaching either of Theosophy or of ancient Indian Philosophy. It is taught: *“As by elimination of oil in the lamp its light is extinguished, so is the influence of destiny by the abatement of one’s own present deeds.”* And the contrary is equally true: *“Even as a fire of small proportion, when fanned by the wind, becomes of mighty power, so does destiny increase in force when joined to individual exertion.”* In these aphorisms, everyone gets



instruction as to his correct attitude towards all things in life. What is that attitude? Whatever the cause, the effect properly handled in the present will not only enable us to pay our debts and remove the offending cause, but, that effect in itself will become a channel for improvement and growth. The whole of life is a school in which every event



and experience yields a lesson, and the learning of the lesson is the most important factor. From this, we can deduce another principle of the Law of Karma. The only evil karma is that in which a man has no control over himself owing to intoxication of some kind, so that he is disabled from learning the lesson of the Karma he really is not out of

luck, is not unfortunate, and his Karma has beneficent potentialities. Therefore it is said: *“One’s own present acts are like the soil and destiny is the seed, the result of past deeds.”*

These principles of the law of Karma are sound and right, but a twisted vision, or a mind clouded by desires and passions, can draw wrong conclusions from them. Thus, for instance, sometimes the question is raised: if each one suffers and enjoys because of his own past deeds, and if self-reliance is a prime virtue, then are we not depriving others of opportunities of self-growth by trying to help them? If we are to work out our own salvation, then why worry about the salvation of others? We have no right to interfere directly with the lives of others, for this would not be true help.

What, then, constitutes true help? We are all part of one great whole. **Whatever good or evil we do will have its influence not only upon ourselves but also upon the whole world.** Nations are realizing now that they cannot work for themselves alone, but that they must take into account all the other nations. And so it is with man. We must love and cherish our companions, and the best thing that we can do to help them is to point out the Way, to encourage them impersonally to tread the path of wisdom-virtue, not only

**Whatever good
or evil we do
will have its influence
not only upon
ourselves but also
upon the whole
world.**

by precept but by actual example. Never should we render them weaker or more dependent, but, on the contrary, we must aim at sustaining and strengthening their own self-reliance. It is true that in our civilization wrong forms of charity and service retard and even injure the soul-growth of many people. If false knowledge distorts the mind, false expressions of kindness, misplaced charity, and desire to help others because one feels satisfaction in thus helping, weaken the heart. H.P.B. has said that the art of service is most difficult. We need to see not only why brotherly service should be

rendered, but also how it should be rendered. *“Work for the shedding of light upon other minds*

through yours,” wrote a Master of Wisdom.

In his usual lucid manner, with it, for it is beyond our power, and we are, indeed, the very instruments it uses to carry out the decrees we have ourselves been the means of passing. The idea of possible

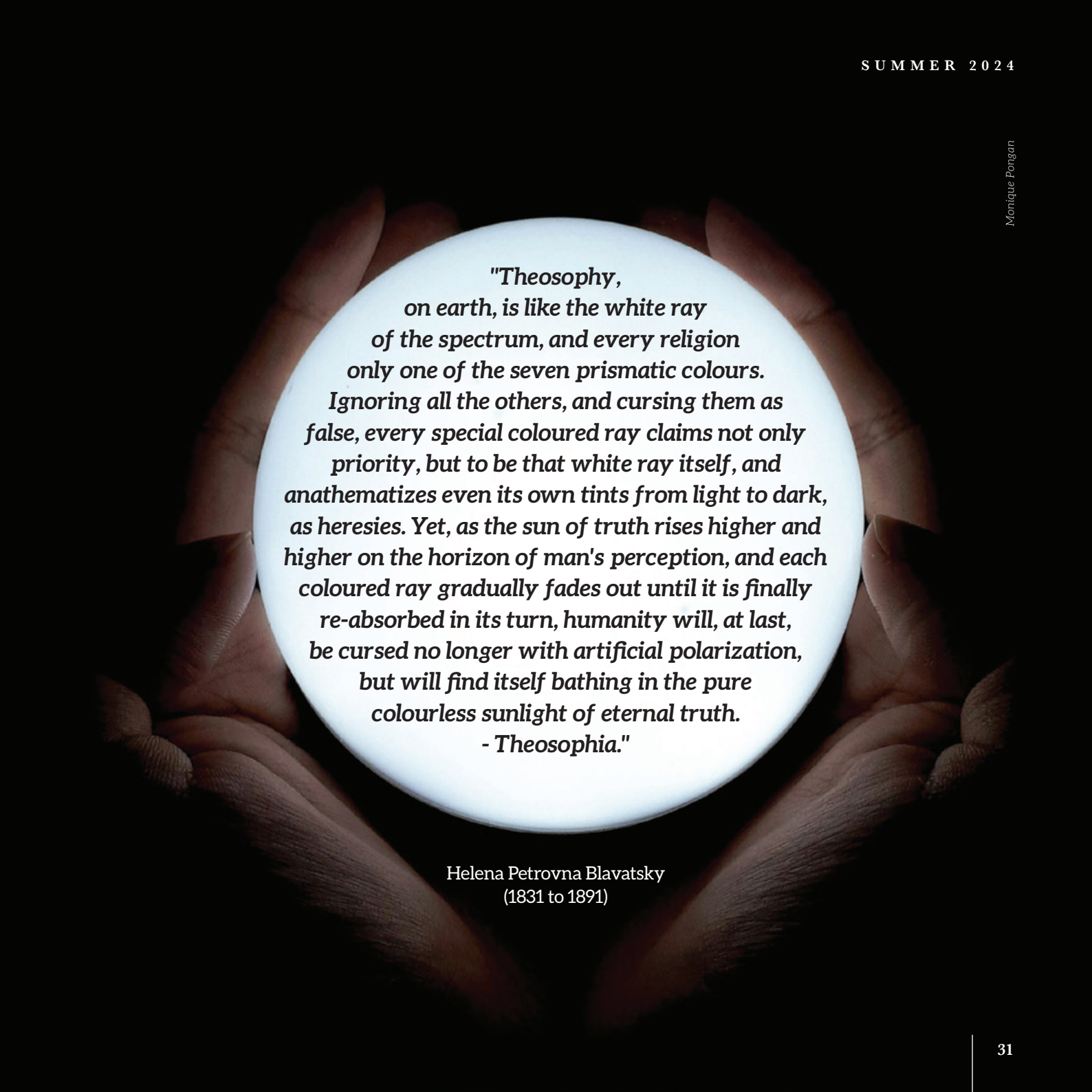
interference has arisen out of the statement now and then made that Adepts have not done this or that because it would interfere with karma but this has not been understood. What was meant by such words was that the Adepts themselves are karma just as we are, only they see what we do not, and, as some of us asked for a reason, they said they would not interfere, or in other

words, the law is strong and no being, god or devil or man can interfere with it. Any attempt to “interfere” is merely new karma carrying out that seed of karma already sown, no matter how many ages or years ago. But, still further, it seems to me that if we assume to decide what we shall do out of fear that our brother may not be sufficiently punished, we not only lay up wrath against ourselves but at the same time set the germs in our own character which will sprout in selfishness and pain. We need not fear that karma will not do justice. It often does it by offering us a chance to help another, and, if we stand aside, it will another day give us the punishment of our selfishness and arrogance. ✨

Article taken from *The Theosophical Movement*, October 2014.



Maria Thalassinou

A pair of hands, one on the left and one on the right, are shown from the wrist up, cupping a glowing white circle. The hands are dark-skinned and appear to be holding the circle gently. The background is dark, making the white circle stand out prominently. The text inside the circle is centered and reads:

**"Theosophy,
on earth, is like the white ray
of the spectrum, and every religion
only one of the seven prismatic colours.
Ignoring all the others, and cursing them as
false, every special coloured ray claims not only
priority, but to be that white ray itself, and
anathematizes even its own tints from light to dark,
as heresies. Yet, as the sun of truth rises higher and
higher on the horizon of man's perception, and each
coloured ray gradually fades out until it is finally
re-absorbed in its turn, humanity will, at last,
be cursed no longer with artificial polarization,
but will find itself bathing in the pure
colourless sunlight of eternal truth.
- Theosophia."**

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
(1831 to 1891)

Abandoning the Gospel of Money or How to Prepare the Birth of a Better Civilization

By **Carlos Cardoso Aveline**

The true religion of present civilization, in its dominant, materialistic aspect, was well expressed by British writer George Orwell. In the opening page of his novel *Keep The Aspidistra Flying*, Orwell presents an ironic version of *I Corinthians xiii*, in the New Testament:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not money, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not money, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not money, it profiteth me nothing. Money suffereth long, and is kind; money envieth not; money vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth

all things... And now abideth faith, hope, money, these three; but the greatest of these is money.”

Such are the dominant philosophy and religious feelings in some quarters, as one can see by simply looking around. Not all of the theosophical movement is far beyond such a variety of pious mysticism; and there are other challenges to face as well.

Oblivious to mankind, part of the esoteric movement is still proud of its attachment to old routine. The Titanic civilization is about





to sink and some of us play fiddle. Humanity is still the great orphan, for few among us have the time to actually care about it. Most people are too busy thinking of their personal and short-term interests, “spiritual” or otherwise.

The mental foundations of the present civilization seem to be valid no more, at least in their dominant form, which remains submitted to commercial interests and selfish goals. This is a civilization led by lower-minded members of the Vaishya caste. Many

of its philosophical concerns are limited to the metaphysics of short-term investment money. Most economists consider “good” news any expansion of consumerism. They don’t care about happiness. “Bad” for them is to have less opportunities to expand consumerism.

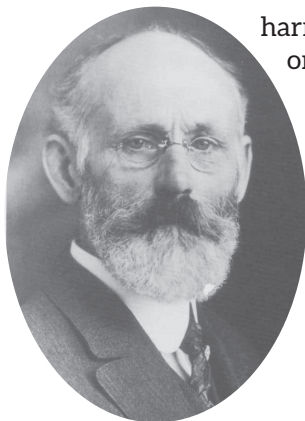
Voluntary simplicity, social justice, nature preservation, search for self-knowledge and wisdom are all “bad” for the present civilization, because these principles take the focus of life away from money, materialistic pride, search for social position and personal ambitions.

Theosophy and Universal Brotherhood are dangerous ideas to a materialistic society, just as materialistic societies – since Atlantean times – are usually inimical to Theosophy, to Ethics, and to the feeling of goodwill among nations.

Bankers and big-money investors are the high priests of present civilization. As they worry about their own papers, they stimulate war, conflict, arms sales, financial crises and nuclear proliferation. Undisturbed by their activities, the planet undergoes its cyclic changes. At the grassroots level, more citizens begin to awaken from the nightmare of spiritual ignorance to a new ethical consciousness that paves the way to universal brotherhood.

What does that have to do with theosophists? What is their dharma regarding the future of mankind? It does no





Robert Crosbie (1849-1919), was a theosophist and founder of the United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT).

harm to remain vigilant and to question oneself. It is useful to compare the present civilization to what we have about Atlantis in the works Plato and H.P. Blavatsky. The main founder of the United Lodge of Theosophists, Robert Crosbie, had something to say about economies based on greed: *"Business has been defined as 'a lot of useless activities which we have created and now bow down to and worship'. But there are some we know who are heretics in that direction, and I like these best."* [1]

No ideology can fix the world. The key to right action is best given by one's individual sense of duty and

higher potentialities. The voice of the conscience must be heard with care: it is a privilege to be loyal to it in one's heart.

Civilizations are passing vehicles of human evolution. Although they can be improved up to a certain point, when it becomes necessary they are abandoned so

that new and better societies can emerge.

An awakening of universal ethics is a good idea during the 21st century. It can heal most human wounds almost at once. It remains to be seen how much suffering is needed before we get there. ✨

Notes

1. Robert Crosbie; *The Friendly Philosopher*, p.163; The Theosophy Company, 1934.



Carlos Cardoso Aveline was born in Brazil in 1952, and joined the theosophical movement in 1980. A journalist by profession, he has seven books published in the Portuguese language, on theosophy, ecology and the

present planetary transition. Since March 2012, Aveline has been editor of "The Aquarian Theosophist" and its associated websites, working in several languages.

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Email Julie Cunningham:
esoterica@theosoc.org.uk

An Ancient Telephone

By **W. Q. Judge** Taken from *The Path*, July 1894

It has been the custom of many people to belittle the ancients by assuming that they knew but little of mechanics, certainly not so much as we do. The builders of the pyramids have been described by modern guessers as making their calculations and carrying on the most wonderful engineering operations with the aid of pools of water for obtaining levels and star angles: they could not, it was assumed, have instruments except the most crude. So also the old Chinese were mere rude workmen, although it is well known that they discovered the precession of the equinoxes over 2,000 years ago. Of late, evidence has been slowly coming out that tends to show the ancients as perhaps having as much, if not more, than we have. So the following from the *New York Evening Sun*, an influential daily paper, will be of interest. It says, on May 31, 1894:

An English officer by the name of Harrington has discovered in India a working telephone between two native temples which stand over a mile apart. The testimony of the Hindus, which, it is said, is backed up by documentary proof, shows that the system has been in operation for over 2,000 years. Scientists engaged in excavating the ruins of ancient Egyptian temples have repeatedly found unmistakable evidence of wire

communication between some of the temples of the earlier Egyptian dynasties.

It will probably be found, in the course of time, that the oft-repeated statements of H. P. Blavatsky that the ancients had all of our arts and mechanical devices were true. She asserted that they had flying machines. In Buddhist books is a story of Buddha which refers to a flying machine or mechanical bird used in a former life of the Lord, and Indian tradition speaks also of air walking machines. Reading this item in the newspaper reminds me too of a conversation I had with H. P. Blavatsky in New York before the phonograph came out, in which she said that some Indian friends of hers had a machine by which they spoke with each other over distances of miles with great ease.

Perhaps when the great West is convinced that the old Aryans had mechanical contrivances equalling our own, it will be ready to lend a readier ear than now to the philosophies the East has so long held in keeping. ✱



Theosophy and the Masses

Taken from *Theosophy*, November 1930

Theosophy is an all-inclusive philosophy; not to be separated from it is the Theosophical Movement, whose objective is the practical realization of this philosophy in life. The philosophy and the movement are one, though all the problems of students have their source in a separation between the teachings

as such and their practical applications. Take the problems which revolve about the condition and welfare of the masses. Since the dawn of known history, the plight of the masses has been the issue-making factor in the rise, growth and decay of nations and civilizations. This is no less true today than in the ages of the trackless past. Did humanity possess a larger perspective of history than the few thousand years which mark the remotest limit of our records, then the repeated mistakes of the past would be so impressed on our present age that men might at last resolve to build their civilization on a securer foundation. Man's initial mistake is to separate the welfare of the masses from that of the more progressed part of mankind; the result has been that the so-called classes have



been plagued by the poverty and the suffering of those whom they have chosen to regard as their inferiors, while the “classes” found that, do what they might, they could not separate themselves from their more unfortunate and ignorant brothers.

What are the masses but fellow pilgrims in the journey of all towards divinity – pilgrims whose rate of progress might be slower than those who think themselves well-advanced in the race of life? As a matter of fact, with the exception of a mighty few, the bulk of the pilgrims are moving almost shoulder to shoulder, man’s delusion of superiority arising from the fact that external circumstances are regarded as indicia of spiritual progress. In their mad competition for the material and ephemeral prizes of life, men have thrown away the Jewel of Great Price – a prize which by its very nature must be shared with All, since the very instant one attempts to monopolize the philosopher’s stone, it is lost; such is the impersonal law of life.

The woes of the world and the misery of the masses have their source in the refusal of men to share their gifts with their fellows. No true teacher of the science of the soul has ever barred anyone from the sphere of his compassionate efforts. When the Great Message reaches humanity, attempts are made by certain individuals and classes to appropriate the teachings for themselves. They would fence in Wisdom very much as men stake off land and claim it as exclusively their own. The spirit capable of the one is also capable of the other. Does a man seek to keep divine knowledge for himself, all he gets are the external husks, the shell from which the

spirit has departed; no sooner does a man stake off a choice plot for himself, than he finds himself a prisoner in his own enclosure. The only possessions which do not possess us are those which can be shared by all. *“Desire possessions above all. But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united.”*

The dark side of nature ever tries to simulate the work and the methods of the Masters of Compassion. Deception carries on its nefarious work with the tools and in the name of Truth; and the unwary, which includes the great masses of men, have been ensnared over and over again. No one has ever founded a party, or a sect without loudly proclaiming that it was done primarily in the interest of the masses. No despot or dictator, political or religious, ever imposed his will on the people without protesting great solicitude for their welfare. Avowed enemies the masses never have had; but Oh, for a saviour to rescue them from their self-imposed friends! Torquemada considered himself the friend of the souls of those he burnt at the stake; and so has every demagogue, who, while pretending to champion the cause of the people, has used them to further his own insatiable ambition. It is through their needs and their aspirations that the masses of mankind are exploited



Tomás de Torquemada (1420-1498), was a Castilian Dominican friar and first Grand Inquisitor of the Tribunal of the Holy Office (otherwise known as the Spanish Inquisition).

by those who prefer to use their knowledge and position selfishly.

Man can never hope to remove the errors of the past until he first sees these errors in their true light. He can only really see them when he gets a proper perspective, and so judges of their true value in relationship to the whole picture of life. Theosophy alone furnishes such a perspective in its three basic propositions and objects. Universal Brotherhood is the immediate vision of the oneness of all life; the realization of this vision is the attainment of universal self-consciousness – the union of the individual self with the self of All.

While “profane” history cannot go back for more than a few thousand years, and can trace the rise and fall of but a comparatively few civilizations such as Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, Theosophy records in its annals the growth and decay of nations and empires which flourished in a remote past, when, according to most scientific teachings of our day, human life had not even begun on this globe. History has repeated itself, not for thousands, but for millions of years. The law of cycles is the Key which will unlock more than one scientific mystery.

Yiran Ding



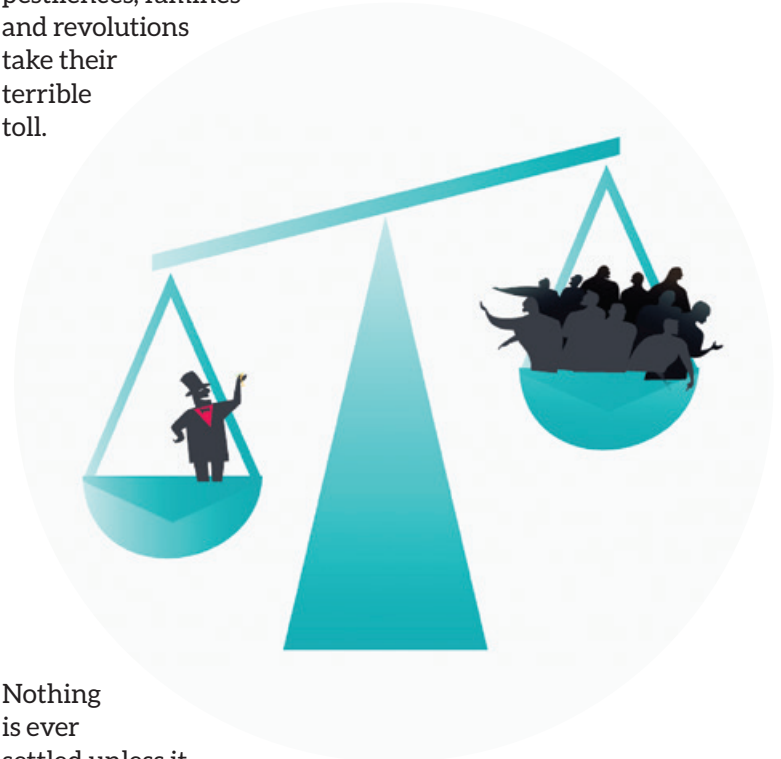
Once grasped, the doctrine of cycles will not only enlarge our historical perspective a thousand-fold, and so enable us to appraise accurately the actions and bases of past civilizations; but it will make us realize that no matter how remote the past, or whether we have any concrete records or not, the same impersonal and inexorable laws determine the birth, life and the death or immortality of Man. Theosophy’s final assertion is that there are no special privileges anywhere in the boundless Kosmos and that all must progress “by self-induced and self-devised efforts”; that we are as we are both as individuals and as a Race because of our doings in the immemorial past.

No problem is new. Every tendency, every idea, every attitude which exists among us today, has had their precursors and prototypes at the very dawn of our cycle of evolution. The panorama and the drama of evolution set forth in the cosmogony and anthropogenesis of *The Secret Doctrine* are nothing more than our own biography. We were there all the time in one condition or another. Life is beginningless and endless and in studying the evolution and history of a nation, an age, a planet or a solar system, it is our past and our future that we are considering all the time. The plot of the drama of life is the same everywhere and in every age, though the scenery, the setting and the scale on which the drama is enacted may differ from age to age. When man knows himself, as admonished by the Delphic oracle, he knows the whole of life – past, present and future.

Study of the past misses its mark if it does not teach us how to live in the present and

how to build for the future. What is history's one outstanding lesson? Is it not the utter futility of selfishness and separateness? In spite of all the learned disquisitions of our university professors and textbook writers, even a child, if untainted by mere learning, has a direct perception of the truth that selfishness is the root of all evil. Brahmin and Sudra, capitalist and laborer, master and slave are in the same boat. When one or the other rocks that boat, the lives of both are endangered; and when one or the other upsets that boat, they both go down. It is the mad scramble for the choice seats that rocks and finally upsets the ship of life – the foolish voyagers having lost sight altogether of the haven towards which they were all bound. That haven can only be reached when each one from his place works in unity with all the others for the success of their common glorious adventure. No one can separate himself from the common lot. The plight of the masses and the equal suffering by reaction of the others is due to the stubborn idea that the distinctions of race, creed, sex, condition and organization are divinely ordained, and constitute fixed divisions in Nature, instead of intermediate states in the march towards perfection. A more responsible attitude towards the masses will arise only when the whole of humanity shall awaken from the maya that mankind was created and divided into masters and slaves. *“Accept your inferiority,”* says Brahmin to Untouchable, *“for such is the order of life”*; and the poor slave is in mortal terror of the dire consequences here and hereafter of even an unintentional offence to his Lord and Master. Priestcraft

everywhere first subdued man in his inner spiritual and religious nature, and when man's soul no longer was his own, every other form of exploitation and enslavement was made possible. But periodically the worm turns and strikes back blindly; and wars, pestilences, famines and revolutions take their terrible toll.



Nothing is ever settled unless it is settled right. After every social cataclysm, when the time for readjustment and reconstruction arrives, Man patches up a peace and the same errors are repeated over again. At best men deal with the immediate and external causes of their difficulties, losing sight entirely of the Central Cause from which all has arisen.

Theosophy may be defined as a philosophy of causes. As any particular cause can be traced back to a prior cause, so finally there is a Central Cause *“from which all emerged, around and towards which all gravitates, and upon which is hung the philosophy of the rest.”* Theosophy works from the inner and spiritual planes of being and on these planes are seen the workings of the laws of unity and harmony. The tragedies of life arise from losing sight of the inner laws of harmony when we descend to the realm of separative life. Instead of a dispassionate and impersonal evaluation of life, passion and personality divide man from man, the strong enslaving the weak.

Unless all indications fail, a new light is dawning upon the masses of mankind – a light which is being born from the travail and the suffering which followed in the wake of

the recent cataclysmic war. The Great War brought in its train far more than politicians and statesmen bargained for. They did not bargain for the Russian Revolution and similar upheavals on a smaller scale in other lands. They did not bargain for the fierce reaction against the various religions, the cant and hypocrisy of the self-styled rulers and leaders of the masses. Theosophy has nought to do directly with politics, but every political and social upheaval which makes for the freedom of

man’s soul is part of the Theosophical Movement and must receive the sympathy of all true Theosophists. But sympathy is not enough – Theosophists must give these struggles direction, that the energy evoked be not merely expended in destructive channels.

Now more than at any other time does the world need the doctrines of karma and reincarnation; without them, the aroused masses will either sink into a blind, gross materialism or again fall prey to the cunning of the sacerdotal caste. The truths implicit in the teachings of karma and reincarnation will not overwhelm the intelligence of a child, and were it not for the fact that the minds of the masses are poisoned by the dogmas of religion, they would have a direct perception of the reign of individual and collective responsibility throughout the boundless universe. No one would then seek power without a realization that he will be answerable throughout all eternity for the use made of that power. All would realize that there is only one safe way to use any power – for the good of all. All would then understand that nothing of an external nature, no mere change in the form of society can ever bring peace and contentment to the nations and races of the earth. It is only by the purification of the inner man through right knowledge, that we can solve all the problems of life and make of brotherhood more than a mere declaration of intention, whose practical attainment is forever deferred to some more convenient time in the future.

Much of the Karma, with which the more favored in intelligence are burdened is due to the mistreatment of such peoples as the



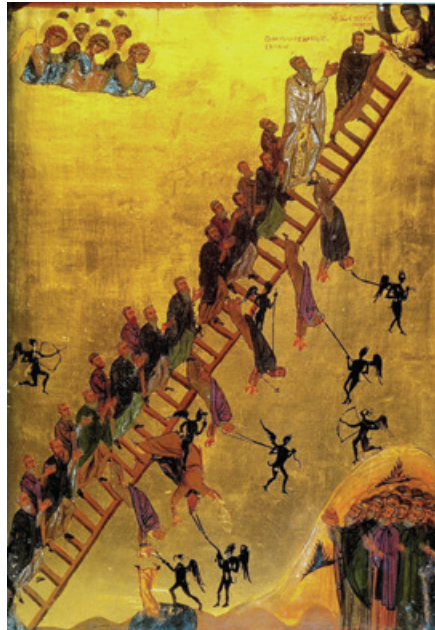
Clay Banks

American Indians and the African Negroes. Many of our racial problems, our crimes, and the general conditions of the slum population of our European and American nations might very well be the karmic retribution for the misuse of our intelligence and power in enslaving and exploiting them. The only way to work off this karma is by a complete reversal of past policy, in setting an example for good to less advanced brothers, thus saving them from setting up causes, in their turn, for consequences terrible and far-reaching.

The fact that so many classes of beings are evolving together on this globe ought to suggest to any thoughtful person that their destinies are interrelated, in spite of the fact that some may be further advanced on the ladder of evolution.

Man is not to be separated from any part of life, whether that life is on the rungs above or on those below. Man is the whole ladder and he cannot afford to despise any part of it. So wrote Mr. Judge, on page 18 of *Letters That Have Helped Me*:

I was reading a book and looking around within myself to see how I could enlarge my idea of brotherhood. Practice in benevolence will not give its full growth. I had to find some



The Ladder of Divine Ascent, a late-12th Century Christian icon at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.

means of reaching further, and struck on this, which is as old as old age. I am not separate from anything. "I am that which is." That is, I am Brahma, and Brahma is everything. But being in an illusionary world, I am surrounded by certain appearances that seem to make me separate. So I will proceed to mentally state and accept that I am all these illusions. I am my friends, – and then I went to them in general and in particular. I am my enemies; then I felt them all. I am the poor and the wicked; I am the ignorant. Those moments of intellectual gloom are the moments when I am

influenced by those ignorant ones who are myself. All this in my nation. But there are many nations, and to those I go in mind; I feel and I am them all, with what they hold of superstition or of wisdom or evil. All, all is myself. Unwisely, I was then about to stop, but the whole is Brahma so I went to the Devas and Asuras; the elemental world, that too is myself. After pursuing this course awhile I found it easier to return to a contemplation of all men as myself." ❀

Article taken from *Theosophy* magazine, November 1930.

Sakshi – The Unchanging Inner Witness

"Atma alone is the one real and eternal substratum of all – the essence and absolute knowledge – the Kshetragna. It is called in the Esoteric philosophy "the One Witness"..."

H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, p. 570

One point made numerous times in Theosophical literature is the important fact that *change* cannot *see* change. Only the permanent, the unchanging, the REAL, can perceive any type of change that goes on in any degree of manifestation.

So when we sit to *meditate*, we may first see the external world around us, which is characterised by changes.

Then going inward we encounter the internal energies of our physical and, in fact, astral body; they too are in constant alteration and transformation.

Going deeper within, we encounter our desires and passions, which are continually in flux.

Then our thoughts, whether emotional or intellectual; our thoughts, ideas, mental images, and imaginations, are constantly in

motion, coming and going.

So then we're faced with the question: "What is it that is witnessing, observing, perceiving, seeing, all this?"

Whatever it is, we soon recognise that it does not change, it is *not* in a state of change or transience or flux. If it were, how would we ever be able to perceive and observe and realise any of these *changes* that occur on the various levels of our being?

It doesn't take hours, let alone years, of meditation, to confidently realise that within us, at the deepest innermost level, is a changeless *Spectator*, whose very nature is calm, tranquil, unmoving, unswayed, peace... silence... CONSCIOUSNESS *itself*. It is a *Spectator* rather than an "actor" or "doer." It does not engage in action and nor is it moved, touched, or modified by action or the Karmic fruits and effects of action.

In fact, even people who are only willing to use their intellect and logical mind, and who may be uninterested in gaining meditative experience, can still arrive at some comprehension of this, for everyone knows simply through ordinary daily experience that we are all able to know *what* we are thinking and be aware of *what* is going on in our mind. If there were no aspect or

component of our being beyond, or higher than, the mind and its thoughts, how could we ever possess such knowledge and awareness?

This subject, this awareness, is one of the most ancient and timeless of spiritual truths.

In the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit, the unchanging witness or perceiver or observer or spectator of all changes is called Sakshi. This is not a “name” but simply the most equivalent Sanskrit word for the several English words just listed.

Around 5,000 years ago, Krishna spoke of himself (in the *Bhagavad Gita*, 9:18) as really being the Sakshi or Witness of all. Commenting on this verse, Adi Shankaracharya noted, “Thus comprehending, the contemplative faculty must also be merged into that final Witness, the Absolute atman.” Atma or Atman is the Sanskrit word for “Self” and typically refers to the Higher Self, which is One, universal, and the same in all.

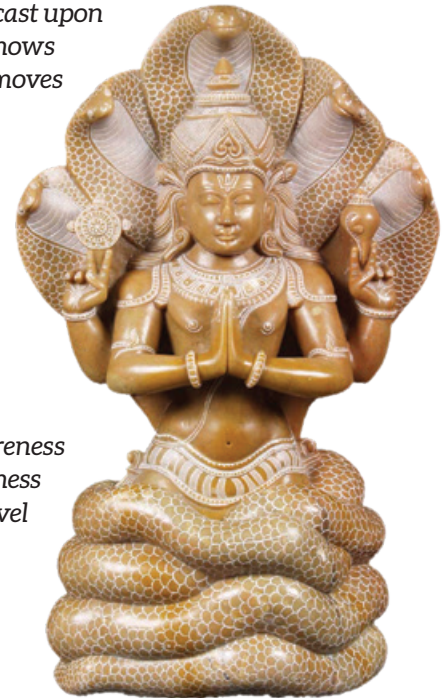
Around 2,600 years ago, the Hindu Sage Patanjali wrote the text which became known as the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

In a rendition of it by William Q. Judge (a co-founder of the modern Theosophical Movement with H. P. Blavatsky and her closest colleague), made particularly for Westerners unfamiliar with Hindu terms and ideas, we read: “The modifications of the mind are always known to the presiding spirit, because it is not subject to modification.” (Book IV, aphorism 17). WQJ comments, “Hence, through all the changes to which the mind and soul are subject, the spiritual soul, Ishwara, remains unmoved, “the witness and spectator.”” In fact, that particular aphorism or sutra of

Patanjali is really 4:18 but Judge’s version accidentally misses out the actual verse 16 of Book IV, causing the numbering from that point onwards to be incorrect. A century later, Raghavan Iyer of the United Lodge of Theosophists made a literal and textually accurate translation of Patanjali, now published by Theosophy Trust. Commenting on 4:18-22, Iyer writes:

“Purusha witnesses all mental modifications and is the true Knower precisely because it does not alter or waver. The mind is not self-luminous and cannot know itself by its own effort. Subject to change, it can be seen as an object by another, and ceaselessly changing, it cannot know itself, for change cannot discern change, ... Purusha, the ever changeless, is alone the Knower, whose reflection is cast upon consciousness, which then knows derivatively. Since the mind moves from moment to moment, it cannot both function as that which cognizes and that which is cognized. Hence, that which cognizes the mind whilst it [i.e. the mind] cognizes objects (and so undergoes modification) is above the mind. Since consciousness operates on many levels, the level of awareness which apprehends consciousness necessarily transcends the level of the apprehended consciousness. Ultimately, Purusha comprehends all consciousness.”

In Patanjali’s system of



internal Yoga, also known by the name of Raja Yoga, Purusha is synonymous with Atman, the true Self, the Spirit, the inner Witness or the “Seer” within, and so forth.

Although in Hinduism this Sakshi or Witness tends to always be correlated with the Atman – which in turn is literally one and the same as Brahman, the Absolute, the Supreme Self – the Theosophical statements on the subject *sometimes* associate it with Atman and *sometimes* with our Higher Manas principle, the immortal, divine, *higher* Mind-Entity within; an *individual* (rather than literally universal and absolutely impartite, which Atman is) divine Being or Being of Light within us and which is an individualised ray of the Universal Mind.

Although it is called the *Higher Mind*, it is something which transcends and totally differs in its activity from our personal “*brain-mind*,” the latter being called the *Lower Manas* or lower mind. The Lower Manas is the temporary, imperfect, and quite often chaotic and unruly reflection of the Higher Manas, for the duration of one lifetime, whereas the Higher Manas is the Higher Ego (not *Higher Self*) which is the soul or permanent Individuality which reincarnates through a long series of successive Lower Manases or personas. It would thus stand to reason that our Higher Manas – our true, *immortal “I”* – is the most immediate divine Witness of our Lower Manas and of everything else pertaining to our personal self. The three highest components of our being – Atman, Buddhi, and Higher Manas – are spoken of as a unity, in Theosophy, and so it technically does not



greatly matter whether the Sakshi we are discussing is really Atman or the Higher Manas or the conjunction of the immortal Atma-Buddhi-Manas.

Robert Crosbie, founder of the United Lodge of Theosophists, in his article titled *What Reincarnates?* writes:

“That in us which is itself unchanging is the only real. Nothing is real that changes. It is only the real that perceives change. Change cannot see change. Only that which is constant perceives change; only the permanent can perceive impermanence. However dimly we may perceive it, there is that in us which is eternal and changeless.”

“This unchanging, constant, and immortal something in us is not absent from any particle or any being whatever. There is only one Life in the world to which we, as well as all other beings, pertain. We all proceeded from the

same one Source – not many – and we are proceeding on the same path to the same great goal. The ancients said that the Divine Self is in all beings, but in all it does not shine forth. The real is within, and may be realized by any human being in himself. Everyone needs that realization that he may shine forth and express the God within, which all beings but partially express.”

Only the naturally and inherently stable and steady can perceive the unstable and unsteady.

In his Notes on *The Bhagavad Gita* (p. 23-24), William Judge has also written on this important theme:

“The substratum, or support, for the whole Cosmos, is the presiding spirit, and all the various changes in life, whether of a material nature or solely in mental states, are cognizable because the presiding spirit within is not modifiable. Were it otherwise, then we would have no memory, for with each passing event, we, becoming merged in it, could not remember anything, that is, we would see no changes. There must therefore be something eternally persisting, which is the witness and perceiver of every passing change, itself unchangeable. All objects, and all states of what western philosophers call Mind, are modifications, for in order to be seen or known by us, there must be some change, either partial or total, from a precedent state. The perceiver of these changes is the inner man...”

“This leads us to the conviction that there must be a universal presiding spirit, the producer as well as the spectator, of all this collection of animate and inanimate things... the immortal part of each man – the Krishna who talks to

Arjuna... being in essence unmodified, it has the capacity to perceive all the changes going on around the body.”

“This Self must be recognized as being within, pondered over, and as much as possible understood, if we are to gain any true knowledge.”

Robert Crosbie wrote the later chapters in *Notes on The Bhagavad Gita* and there we read:

“The meditation spoken of as necessary to the highest attainment is sometimes called “a lifetime’s meditation”; it means that the immortality of man has first to be assumed, and then rigidly adhered to as the basis for every thought and action, for it is only in this way that a realization of immortality can be obtained by embodied beings. As it is from the Spirit in Man that all law and power proceeds, each human being creates his own limitations on every plane of being; he can transcend those limitations only by reverting to and maintaining his immortality, as the observer and experiencer of all the passing changes, himself unchanged and unchanging.” (p. 148-149).

“We know that we are not our bodies, for they constantly change, while we remain the same identity through all the changes. We are not our “minds,” for we change them whenever we find occasion to do so; if we were our minds we could not change them, and further, it is apparent that “change” cannot see

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Robert Crosbie

“change;” only that which is permanent can see change. That permanency is the Real, the immortal Man, or, as the “Voice of the Silence” states it, “the Man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.” Each is the Self, the Perceiver; non-being, yet the cause and sustainer of being; as the Gita states it in this chapter, “thou art the Knower and that which is to be known; “thou art the final supreme receptacle of this universe” – the garnerer of all experience when this universe is dissolved. At the end of the Great Cycle, which includes all minor cycles, all beings return to the primordial state, plus the experience gained. The next great stream of evolution will proceed on the basis of the acquired knowledge of all beings concerned.” (p. 175-176)

Robert Crosbie has commented:

““Perfection” is an ever-receding goal; “we can always approach the light, but we can never touch the flame”, because IT is our very Self, the Perceiver and Knower... ”

Robert Crosbie

““Perfection” is an ever-receding goal; “we can always approach the light, but we can never touch the flame”, because IT is our very Self, the Perceiver and Knower... The Absolute is a name for the One Reality, the Infinite, Unchanging basis of All. All the rest is “Maya” – that is, the

ever-changing modes, expressions, degrees of intelligence and their forms, ever approaching the Light, but never touching the Flame; for the Real in each being is the Flame itself. . . . The ancient saying is that we can always approach the light, but we can never touch the flame, for that Flame is our Self – the Self of All.”
(Answers To Questions on The Ocean of

Theosophy p. 14, 41, 125)

“And we may consider this: change cannot see change. Only that which is permanent can see change. So there is that in us which is permanent, which is Real, which is of the highest, which is a ray from and one with the Supreme, the universal Principle or Power, the creator, the sustainer, the regenerator of all that was, is, or ever shall be. We have to realize That – each one for himself – first by recognizing that IT IS, omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable; second, by divesting ourselves of those things we thought It to be: that It is this body, this mind, these circumstances. All these are changing things, things seen; but that which is the Real, the Supreme, our very Self and the Self of all things, is not subject to change; It is changeless; It cannot be seen, for It is the Perceiver.”

It should not be thought that awareness and experience of the Witness is only found in Hinduism or Buddhism. Truth is universal, the motto of the Theosophical Movement being “There is no Religion higher than Truth.” Throughout the ages, people of all countries, cultures, religions, or no religion, beliefs or no belief, have acquired some awareness and experience of that which lies at the heart of all.

The Theosophical classic *Light on The Path* (p. 3-4) tells the aspirant to esoteric development and serious mystical unfoldment:

“For within you is the light of the world – the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you; because when you reach it you have lost yourself. It is unattainable, because it forever

recedes. You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame.”

However, **it is one thing to just become theoretically aware that such a pure unchanging Witness exists at the core of our being and it is another to obtain some experiential awareness of it whilst actually stilling and watching the mind.** It is still quite another thing to reach to a point where one experiences one's individual consciousness fully merging into that pure universal consciousness to the extent that it is felt we have **become it** for at least a brief moment. As wonderful, beautiful, and awe-inspiring as the latter sounds, it is still far from being the highest possible development in *esoteric* meditation, although it is often presented as the goal in popular and exoteric meditation systems.

Modern science is researching the phenomenon, in order to try to explain it from the physiological, material perspective. Bernard J. Baars of the Neurosciences Institute in La Jolla, California, USA, speculates: “Conscious experience is believed to involve widespread cortico-thalamic oscillations in the 4–12 Hz range, modulated by higher frequency waveforms up to 200 Hz (Baars et al., 2013). Silent consciousness may therefore correspond to increased theta-alpha power, spreading in cortex with minimal higher “content” frequencies, as has been reported during contemplative techniques.”

It can be interesting and useful to understand the “brain side” of meditation but it's important to always remember that the brain itself is only the recipient of the impressions of our spiritual nature, which

is meta-physical, and which maintains consciousness regardless of whether the body and brain are alive or dead... for that part of us, the only enduring part, IS Pure Consciousness Itself.

.....

In a posthumously published article simply titled *Occultism*, William Q. Judge shares these important and useful insights for our benefit and to practically apply in the way that seems best to us:

“The true student of Raja Yoga knows that everything has its origin in MIND; that even this Universe is the passing before the Divine Mind of the images he desires to appear...”

“The substratum or support for the whole Kosmos is the presiding Spirit. All the various changes in life, whether of a material nature or solely in mental States are cognizable because the presiding Spirit within is not modifiable. The Perceiver of these changes is the Inner Man – the Self. All objects and all states of what Western philosophers call mind, are modifications. This Self must be recognized as being within, pondered over, and as much as possible understood, if we are to gain any true knowledge. There is only One Life, One Consciousness... The One Consciousness of each person is the Witness or Spectator of the actions and experiences of every state we are in or pass through.

“There is but one Universal Mind. It is differentiated in human beings of the average order, and more or less vitiated by desire. When



Bernard J. Baars is a former Senior Fellow in Theoretical Neurobiology at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego, US and is best known as the originator of the global workspace theory, a concept of human cognitive architecture and consciousness.

man broadens to the Universal – a condition only understood by Adepts who are themselves that condition – this Higher Mind in its original purity, is a State of Being, and not an organ. In order to realize this in any large degree it is necessary to withdraw our consciousness gradually and persistently from the illusion of the senses to the ecstasy of inward vision; that is, to gradually elevate the plane of consciousness. Man may thus come to know the supersensuous world precisely as he knows the things of sense and time; viz. by experience...

“Occultism has been defined by H. P.

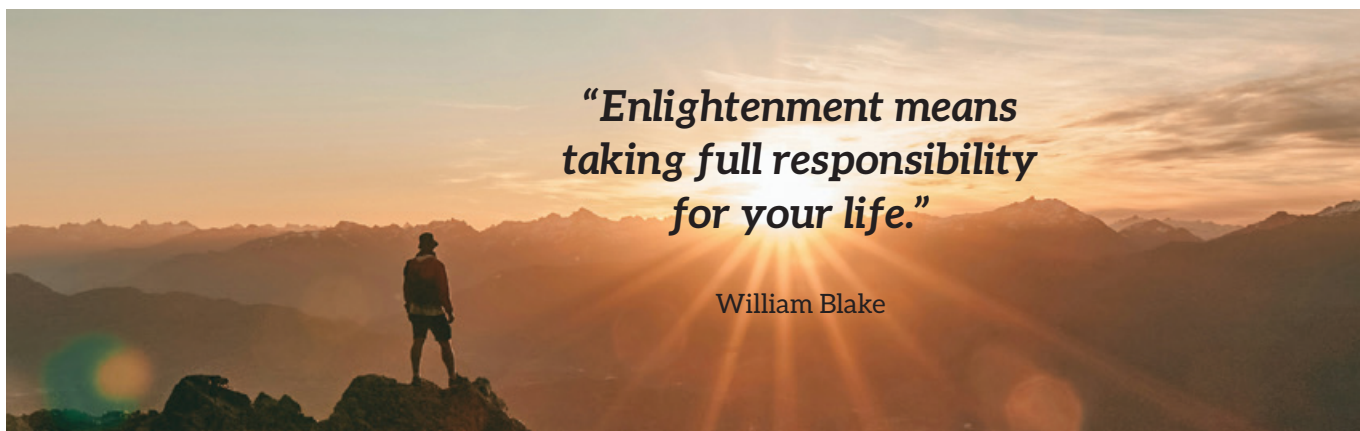
Blavatsky to be “the study of the workings of the Universal Mind.” Our primary study of that Mind is at first confined to its reflection in ourselves. We must endeavor to find some trace of it within our own consciousness or in one of the modes of that consciousness...

“If we examine ourselves critically we see that there is, lying back of ceaseless mental change, of all the continual going to and fro of Thought, a power to observe, sum up, analyze,

and direct the whole process. **We find ourselves possessed of another mode of consciousness, above or behind the fluctuations of thought, which calmly observes the whole panorama moving before us.** Through this power even the sinner who knows his sin still feels that sin not to be representative of his entire nature; feels himself at the core, to be better than that. **The student [must discover] this centre, place, mode or state of consciousness in which he surveys his whole mental field as something not himself, and feels that Self to be the perceptive power per se.** For he has then only to **enter that mental plane as often as possible, and to realize it as vividly as possible,** and he has evolved a rudiment – if I may so call it – of the Universal Mind. **That Mind, that state of consciousness, observes the illusionary panorama spread before it as something apart from itself. The person who realizes that state of consciousness is nearer the Universal Mind.” ✨**

“Enlightenment means taking full responsibility for your life.”

William Blake



Diego Gennaro



The Theosophical Order of Service

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White Lotus Day

Taken from *The Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold

"Dear Friends,

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky gave us the Wisdom of Theosophy to make us free from superstitions and doctrines that imprison the mind.

Let us remember that great lady whose life's work was the enlightenment of mankind.

She suggested that we might gather together on the anniversary of her passing (May 8, 1891) and read from Sir Edwin Arnold's 'The Light of Asia' and from The Bhagavad-Gita.

Lotuses grew in unusual profusion one year later on the anniversary of her death.



Hence, May 8th became known as White Lotus Day.

The lotus represents our life in the four worlds: The roots of the lotus are in the physical at the bottom of the pond. The stem of the lotus rises through the surging waters of emotion. The blossom of the lotus opens in the fresh air of mentality. And the blossom looks toward the fiery sunlight of spiritual inspiration that radiates down upon it."

Last Words



"You thought, as a boy, that a mage is one who can do anything. So I thought, once. So did we all. And the truth is that as a man's real power grows and his knowledge widens, ever the way he can follow grows narrower: until at last he chooses nothing, but does only and wholly what he must do..."

Ursula K. Le Guin, A Wizard of Earthsea

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.

Esoterica is available both in printed form and online. Please let us know if you have friends or family members who would like to receive the printed version, free of charge, by filling out the form below and posting to **50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA**, or by contacting office@theosoc.org.uk
A downloadable version, also free of charge, is available on our website homepage www.theosoc.org.uk

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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Esoterica, the journal of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales,
is a magazine for the inquiring and the curious.

It is for those seeking spiritual answers to those big questions of life:

Who are we?

Where did we come from?

What's our purpose and destiny in life?

Its mission is to explore those timeless truths, occult knowledge and universal laws
which pre-date but underpin all philosophy, science and religion.

We offer thought-provoking and original interpretations
of these fascinating ideas from the perennial philosophy
to unlock the secrets of ourselves and the cosmos.

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

The next edition will appear on the autumn equinox,
22nd September 2024.

