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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM



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Eric McGough | James A. Long | Kahlil Gibran

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From the Editor's desk

Dear Friends, welcome to the winter edition of *Esoterica*.

The winter solstice is only a few days away and this will see the lighter days gradually returning to brighten our existence and bring new hope to a world view that is nothing short of depressing. With this in mind, I recommend Eric's article *What is War?* (page 36) for an esoteric view of the inner workings of violence and how important it is to be aware of the responsibility that we all share.

This edition holds some in-depth articles which should keep you occupied and theosophically inspired.

Among these offerings, we look at Christmas from a theosophical point of view by kind permission of the United Lodge of Theosophists, London in *Christmas Then and Christmas Now*. We also have a very interesting extract from Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, where he tells us of his experiences while helping H. P. B. with the writing of *Isis Unveiled*. This is a fascinating read and in Olcott's words: "If any book could ever have been said to make an epoch, this one could. Its effects have been as important in one way as those of Darwin's first great work have been in another."

Michele Sender offers insight on *Creating Sacred Spaces – The Transforming Power of Meditative Enquiry*. Michele writes: "Members of the Theosophical Society are entrusted with the task of sharing the living power of

Theosophy. In a letter to the American Convention, H. P. Blavatsky instructed us to 'teach, practise, and promulgate that system of life and thought which alone can save the coming humanity'." Creating sacred spaces is something that we could all benefit from even if it is just somewhere where we can be alone with our inner self and experience the silence and peace that such places give us.

Charlie Leake shares his thoughts about social dreaming in *Threads of the Collective: What Social Dreaming Reveals About Us*. He tells us that dreams belong to the collective and that social dreaming is when you gather a group of people together to share dreams. Gordon Lawrence coined the term and the process in 1982. The focus is on the dream, not the dreamer or individual's psychology. Instead, the matrix focuses on the social meaning, through its primary goal of making connections. A truly fascinating article. (Ed)

As this is the last edition of 2025, I would like to wish you a great festive holiday and all good wishes for the coming year. ✱

Julie Cunningham Editor



Fabrice Villard

Christmas Then and Christmas Now

We are reaching the time of the year when the whole Christian world is preparing to celebrate the most noted of its solemnities – the birth of the Founder of their religion. When this paper reaches its Western subscribers, there will be festivity and rejoicing in every house. In North Western Europe and in America the holly and ivy will decorate each home, and the churches bedecked with evergreens; a custom derived from the ancient practices of the pagan Druids *“that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain unnnipped by frost till a milder season.”* In Roman Catholic countries large

crowds flock during the whole evening and night of “Christmas-eve” to the churches, to salute waxen images of the divine Infant, and his Virgin mother, in her garb of “Queen of Heaven.” To an analytical mind, this bravery of rich gold and lace, pearl-broidered satin and velvet, and the bejewelled cradle do seem rather paradoxical. When one thinks of the poor, worm-eaten, dirty manger of the Jewish country-inn, in which, if we must credit the Gospel, the future



“Redeemer” was placed at his birth for lack of a better shelter, we cannot help suspecting that before the dazzled eyes of the unsophisticated devotee the Bethlehem stable vanishes altogether. To put it in the mildest terms, this gaudy display tallies ill with the democratic feelings and the truly divine contempt for riches of the “Son of Man,” who had *“not where to lay his head.”* It makes it all the harder for the average Christian to regard the explicit statement that – *“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,”* as anything



Anna Hecker



Birmingham Museums Trust

more than a rhetorical threat. The Roman Church acted wisely in severely forbidding her parishioners to either read or interpret the Gospels for themselves, and leaving the Book, as long as it was possible, to proclaim its truths in Latin – *“the voice of one crying in the wilderness.”* In that, she but followed the wisdom of the ages – the wisdom of the old Aryans, which is also *“justified of her children”*; for, as neither the modern Hindu devotee understands a word of the Sanskrit, nor the modern Parsi one syllable of the Zend, so for the average Roman Catholic the Latin is no

better than Hieroglyphics. The result is that all the three – Brahmanical High Priest, Zoroastrian Mobed, and Roman Catholic Pontiff, are allowed unlimited opportunities for evolving new religious dogmas out of the depths of their own fancy, for the benefit of their respective churches.

To usher in this great day, the bells are set merrily ringing at midnight, throughout England and the Continent. In France and Italy, after the celebration of the mass in churches magnificently decorated, *“it is usual for the revellers to partake of a collation [reveillon] that they may be better able to sustain the fatigues of the night,”* saith a book treating upon Popish church ceremonials. This night of Christian fasting reminds one of the Sivaratree of the followers of the god Siva, – the great day of gloom and fasting, in the 11th month of the Hindu year. Only, with the latter, the night's long vigil is preceded and followed by a strict and rigid fasting. No reveillons or compromises for them. True, they are but wicked *“heathens,”* and therefore their way to salvation must be tenfold harder.

Though now universally observed by Christian nations as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, the 25th of December was not originally so accepted. The most movable of the Christian feast days, during the early centuries, Christmas was often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated in the months of April and May. As there never was any authentic record or proof of its identification, whether in secular or ecclesiastical history, the selection of that day



Henry Pearsall



Above: Cyril of Jerusalem, c. 313–386, was a theologian of the Early Church. About the end of AD 350, he succeeded Maximus as Bishop of Jerusalem, but was exiled on more than one occasion due to the enmity of Acacius of Caesarea, and the policies of various emperors.

long remained optional; and it was only during the 4th century that, urged by Cyril of Jerusalem, the Pope (Julius I) ordered the bishops to make an investigation and come finally to some agreement as to the presumable date of the nativity of Christ. Their choice fell upon the 25th Day of December – and a most unfortunate choice it has since proved! It was Dupuis, followed by Volney, who aimed the first shots at this natal anniversary. They proved that for incalculable periods before our era, upon very clear astronomical data, nearly all the ancient peoples had celebrated the births of their sun-gods on that very day. *“Dupuis shows that the celestial sign of the VIRGIN AND CHILD was in existence several thousand years before Christ”* – remarks Higgins in his *Anacalypsis*.

As Dupuis, Volney, and Higgins have all been passed over to posterity as infidels, and enemies of Christianity, it may be as well to quote, in this relation, the confessions of the Christian Bishop of Ratisbone, *“the most learned man that the middle ages produced”* – the Dominican, Albertus Magnus. *“The sign of the celestial Virgin rises above the horizon at the moment in which we fix the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ,”* he says, in the *Recherches Historiques Sur Falaise*, by Priest Langevin. So Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, Apollo, etc., were all born on the 25th of December. Christmas comes just at the time of the winter solstice; the days then are shortest, and Darkness is more upon the face of the earth than ever. All the sun Gods were believed to be annually born at that epoch; for from this time its Light

dispels more and more darkness with each succeeding day, and the power of the Sun begins to increase.

However it may be, the Christmas festivities, that were held by the Christians for nearly fifteen centuries, were of a particularly pagan character. Nay, we are afraid that even the present ceremonies of the church can hardly escape the reproach of being almost literally copied from the mysteries of Egypt and Greece, held in honour of Osiris and Horus, Apollo and Bacchus. Both Isis and Ceres were called *“Holy Virgins,”* and a DIVINE BABE may be found in every *“heathen”* religion. We will now draw two pictures of the Merrie Christmas; one portraying the *“good old times,”* and the other the present state of Christian worship. From the first days of its establishment as Christmas, the day was regarded in the double light of a holy commemoration and a most cheerful festivity: it was equally given up to devotion and insane merriment. *“Among the revels of the Christmas*



Above: an engraving titled *The Festival of the Fools* (or *Das Narrenfest*), created by Pieter van der Heyden after a drawing by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

season were the so-called feasts of fools and of asses, grotesque saturnalia, which were termed 'December liberties,' in which everything serious was burlesqued, the order of society reversed, and its decencies ridiculed" – says one compiler of old chronicles. During the Middle Ages, it was celebrated by the gay fantastic spectacle of dramatic mysteries, performed by personages in grotesque masks and singular costumes. The show usually represented an infant in a cradle, surrounded by the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, by bull's heads, cherubs, Eastern Magi, (the Mobeds of old) and manifold ornaments. The custom of singing canticles at Christmas, called Carols, was to recall the songs of the shepherds at the Nativity. "The bishops and the clergy often joined with the populace in carolling, and the songs were enlivened by dances, and by the music of tambours, guitars, violins and organs..." We may add that down to the present times, during the days preceding Christmas, such mysteries are being enacted, with marionettes and dolls, in Southern Russia, Poland, and Galicia; and known as the Kalidowki. In Italy, Calabrian minstrels descend from their mountains to Naples and Rome, and crowd the shrines of the Virgin-Mother, cheering her with their wild Music.

In England, the revels used to begin on Christmas eve, and continue often till Candlemas (Feb. 2), every day being a holiday till Twelfth-night (Jan. 6). In the houses of great nobles a "lord of misrule," or "abbot of unreason" was appointed, whose duty it was to play the part of a buffoon. "The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar

and honey. A glowing fire, made of great logs, the principal of which was termed the 'Yule log,' or Christmas block, which might be burnt till Candlemas eve, kept out the cold; and the abundance was shared by the lord's tenants

amid music, conjuring, riddles, hot-cockles, fool-plough, snap-dragon, jokes, laughter, repartees, forfeits, and dances."

In our modern times, the bishops and the clergy join no more with the populace in open carolling and dancing; and feasts of "fools and of asses" are enacted more in sacred privacy than under the eyes of the dangerous argus-eyed reporter. Yet the eating and drinking festivities are preserved throughout the Christian world; and, more sudden deaths are doubtless caused by gluttony and intemperance during the Christmas and Easter holidays, than at any other time of the year. Yet, Christian worship becomes every year more and more a false pretence. The heartlessness of this lip-service has been denounced innumerable times, but never, we think, with a more affecting touch of realism than in a charming dream-tale, which appeared in the *New York Herald* about last Christmas. An aged man, presiding at a public meeting, said he would avail himself of the



Above: *Twelfth Night (or The King Drinks)* by the 17th-century Flemish artist David Teniers the Younger, that depicts a lively genre scene of a popular Flemish folk tradition celebrated during the Feast of the Epiphany (Twelfth Night).

opportunity to relate a vision he had witnessed on the previous night.

"He thought he was standing in the pulpit of the most gorgeous and magnificent cathedral he had ever seen. Before him was the priest or pastor of the church, and beside him stood an angel with a tablet and pencil in hand, whose mission it was to make record of every act of worship or prayer that transpired in his presence and ascended as an acceptable offering to the throne of God. Every pew was filled with richly-attired worshippers of either sex. The most sublime music that ever fell on his enraptured ear filled the air with melody. All the beautiful ritualistic church services, including a surpassingly eloquent sermon from the gifted minister, had in turn transpired, and yet the recording angel made no entry in his tablet! The congregation were at length dismissed by the pastor with a lengthy and beautifully-worded prayer, followed by a benediction, and yet the angel made no sign!"

"Attended still by the angel, the speaker left the door of the church in rear of the richly-attired congregation. A poor, tattered castaway stood in the gutter beside the curb stone, with her pale, famished hand extended, silently pleading for alms. As the richly-attired worshippers from the church passed by, they shrank from the poor Magdalen, the ladies withdrawing aside their silken,

jewel bedecked robes, lest they should be polluted by her touch."

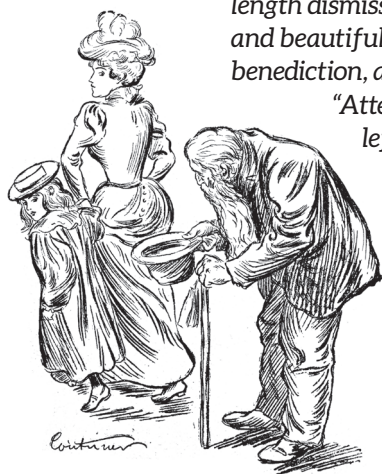
"Just then an intoxicated sailor came reeling down the sidewalk on the other side. When he got opposite the poor forsaken girl, he staggered across the street to where she stood, and, taking a few pennies from his pocket, he thrust them

into her hand, accompanied with the adjuration, 'Here, you poor forsaken cuss, take this!' A celestial radiance now lighted up the face of the recording angel, who instantly entered the sailor's act of

sympathy and charity in his tablet, and departed with it as a sweet sacrifice to God."

A concretion, one might say, of the Biblical story of the judgment upon the woman taken in adultery. Be it so; yet it portrays with a master hand the state of our Christian society.

According to tradition, on Christmas eve, the oxen may always be found on their knees, as though in prayer and devotion; and, "there was a famous hawthorn in the churchyard of Glastonbury Abbey, which always budded on the 24th, and blossomed on the 25th of December"; which, considering that the day was chosen by the Fathers of the church at random, and that the calendar has been changed from the old to the new style, shows a remarkable perspicacity in both the animal and the vegetable! There is also a tradition of the church, preserved to us by Olaus,



archbishop of Upsal, that, at the festival of Christmas, *“the men, living in the cold Northern parts, are suddenly and strangely metamorphosed into wolves; and that a huge multitude of them meet together at an appointed place and rage so fiercely against mankind, that it suffers more from their attacks than ever they do from the natural wolves.”* Metaphorically viewed, this would seem to be more than ever the case with men, and particularly with Christian nations, now. There seems no need to wait for Christmas eve to see whole nations changed into *“wild beasts”* – especially in time of war. ✱

Anon

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*Let not the fruit of good
Karma be your motive;
for your karma, good or bad,
being one and the common
property of all mankind,
nothing good or bad can happen
to you that is not shared
by many others.
There is no happiness for one
who is ever thinking of Self and
forgetting all other Selves.*

H P Blavatsky

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The Writing of Isis Unveiled

By **Henry Steel Olcott**



Moreno Matkovic

Of the writing of Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, let us see what reminiscences memory can bring out of the darkroom where her imperishable negatives are kept.

If any book could ever have been said to make an epoch, this one could. Its effects have been as important in one way as those of Darwin's first great work have been in another: both were tidal waves in modern thought, and each tended to sweep away theological crudities and replace the belief in miracle with the belief in natural law. Yet nothing could have been more commonplace and unostentatious than the beginning.

Henry Steel Olcott

Beginning of Isis

One day in the summer of 1875, HPB showed me some sheets of manuscript that she had written, and said: "I wrote this last night 'by order,' but what the deuce it is to be I don't know. Perhaps it is for a newspaper article, perhaps for a book, perhaps for nothing. Anyhow, I did as I was ordered." And she put it away in a drawer and nothing more was said about it for some time.

But in the month of September – if my memory serves – she went to Syracuse (N.Y.), on a visit to her new friends, Professor and Mrs. Corson of Cornell University, and the work went on. She wrote me that it was to be a book on the history and philosophy of the Eastern Schools and their relations with those of our own times. She said she was writing about things she had never studied and

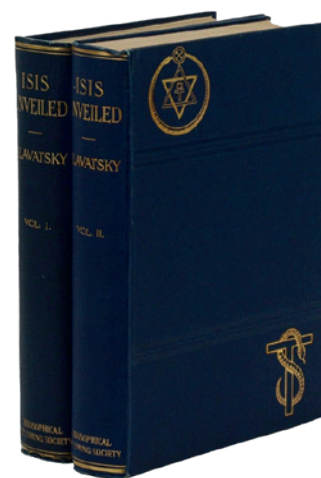
making quotations from books she had never read in all her life. To test her accuracy, Prof. Corson had compared her quotations with classical works in the University Library and had found her to be right.

Upon her return to town, she was not very industrious in this affair, but wrote only spasmodically, and the same may be said as to the epoch of her Philadelphia residence. But a month or two after the formation of the Theosophical Society, she and I took two suites of rooms at 433 West 34th St., she on the first and I on the second floor, and thenceforward the writing of *Isis* went on without break or interruption until its completion in the year 1877.

In her whole life she had not done a tithe of such literary labor, yet I never knew even a managing daily journalist who could be compared with her for dogged endurance of tireless working capacity. From morning till night she would be at her desk, and it was seldom that either of us got to bed before 2 o'clock A.M. During the daytime I had my professional duties to attend to, but after an early dinner we would always settle down together to our big writing table and work, as if for dear life, until bodily fatigue would compel us to stop.

What an experience! The education of an ordinary lifetime of reading and thinking was, for me, crowded and compressed into this period of less than two years. I did not merely serve her as an amanuensis or a proof-reader, but she made me a collaborator. She caused me to utilize – it almost seemed – everything I had ever read or thought, and stimulated my brain to think out new problems that she put me in

respect to occultism and metaphysics, which my education had not led me up to, and which I only came to grasp as my intuition developed under this forcing process. She worked on no fixed plan, but ideas came streaming through her mind like a perennial spring that is ever overflowing its brim. One minute she would be writing upon Brahma, the next minute upon Babinet's electrical "meteor-cat." One moment she would be reverentially quoting from Porphyrios, the next from a daily newspaper or some modern pamphlet that I had just brought home. She would be adoring the perfections of the ideal Adept, but diverge for an instant to thwack Professor Tyndall or some other pet aversion of hers, with her critical cudgel. Higgledy-piggledy it came, in a ceaseless rivulet, each paragraph complete in itself and capable of being excised without harm to its predecessor or successor. Even as it stands now, and after all its numerous recastings, an examination of the wondrous book will show this to be the case. If she had no plan, despite all her knowledge, does not that go to prove that the work was not of her own conception; that she was but the channel through which this tide of fresh, vital essence was being poured into the stagnant pool of modern spiritual thought? As a part of my educational training she would ask me to write something about some special subject, perhaps suggesting the salient points that should be brought in, perhaps just leaving me to do the best I could with my own intuitions. When I



Above: 1910 editions of the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled*.

had finished, if it did not suit her, she would usually resort to strong language and call me some of the pet names that are apt to provoke the homicidal impulse. But if I prepared to tear up my unlucky composition, she would snatch it from me and lay it aside for subsequent use elsewhere, after a bit of trimming, and I would try again.

Her own manuscript was often a sight to behold; cut and patched, re-cut and repasted, until if one held a page of it to the light, it would be seen to consist of perhaps six, or eight, or ten slips cut from other pages, pasted together and the text joined by interlined words or sentences. She became so dexterous

in this work that she used to often humorously vaunt her skill to friends who might be present. Our books of reference sometimes suffered in the process, for her pasting was frequently done on their open pages, and volumes are not wanting in the Adyar Headquarters and London libraries, which bear the marks to this day.

From the date of her first appearance in the *Daily Graphic* in 1874, throughout her American career, she was besieged by visitors, and if among them there chanced to be any who had some special knowledge of any particular thing cognate to her field of work, she invariably drew him out and, if possible, got him to write down his views or reminiscences for insertion in her book. Among examples of this sort are Mr. O'Sullivan's account of a magical séance in Paris, Mr. Rawson's interesting sketch of the secret

initiations of the Lebanon Druses, Dr.

Alexander Wilder's numerous notes and text paragraphs in the *Introduction* and throughout both volumes, and others that add so much to the value and interest of the work.

I have known a Jewish Rabbi to pass hours and whole evenings in her company, discussing the Kabbalah, and have heard him say to her that, although he had studied the secret science of his religion for thirty years, she had taught him things he had not even dreamed of and thrown a clear light upon passages which not even his best teachers had understood.

Whence did she get this knowledge? That she had it was unmistakable; whence did she get it? Not from her governesses in Russia; not from any source known to family or most intimate friends; not on the steamships or railways she had been haunting in her world-rambles since her fifteenth year; not in any college or university, for she never matriculated at either; and not in the huge libraries of the world.

To judge from her conversation and habits before she took up this monster literary task, she had not learnt it at all, whether from one source or another; but when she needed it she had it, and in her better moments of inspiration – if the term be admissible – she astonished the most erudite by her learning quite as much as she dazzled all present by her eloquence and delighted them by her wit and humorous raillery.

One might fancy, upon seeing the numerous quotations in *Isis Unveiled* that she had written it in an alcove of the British Museum or of the Astor Library in New York.



Above: *The Daily Graphic: An Illustrated Evening Newspaper* was the first American newspaper with daily illustrations. It was founded in New York City in 1873 by Canadian engravers George-Édouard Desbarats and William Leggo, and began publication in March of that year. It continued publication until September 23, 1889.

The fact is, however, that our whole working library scarcely comprised one hundred books of reference.

Now and again single volumes would be brought her by Mr. Sotheran, Mr. Marble or other friends, and, latterly, she borrowed a few of Mr. Bouton. Of some books she made great use – for example, King's *Gnostics*; Jennings' *Rosicrucians*; Dunlap's *Sod and Spirit History of Man*; Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*; Des Mousseaux's furious attacks on Magic, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, etc., all of which he denounced as the Devil; Eliphas Lévi's various works; Jaccoliot's twenty-seven volumes; Max Müller's, Huxley's, Tyndall's, Herbert Spencer's works, and those of many other authors of greater or less repute: yet not to exceed the hundred, I should say.

Then what books did she consult, and what library had she access to? Mr. W. H. Burr asked Dr. Wilder in an open letter to the *Truth-seeker* whether the rumor was true that he had written *Isis* for HPB; to which our beloved old friend would truthfully reply that it was a false rumor, and that he had done as much for HPB as I have stated above – had given her much excellent advice, and had, for a consideration, prepared the very copious *Index* of some fifty pages, from advanced plate-proofs sent him for the purpose. That is all. And equally baseless is the oft-repeated tale that I wrote the book and she touched it up. It was quite the other way about. I corrected every page of her manuscript several times, and every page of the proofs.

I wrote many paragraphs for her, often merely embodying her ideas that she could not then (some fifteen years before her death

and anterior to almost her whole career as a writer of English literature) frame to her liking in English. I helped her to find out quotations and did other purely auxiliary work. But the book is hers alone, so far as personalities on this plane of manifestation are concerned, and she must take all the praise and the blame that it deserves. She made the epoch with her book, and, in making it, made me – her pupil and auxiliary – as fit as I may have been found to do Theosophical work during these past twenty years.

Then, whence did HPB draw the materials which compose *Isis*, and which cannot be traced to accessible literary sources of quotation? From the Astral Light, and by her soul-senses, from her Teachers – the “*Brothers*,” “*Adepts*,” “*Sages*,” “*Masters*,” as they have been variously called. How do I know it? By working two years with her on *Isis* and many more years on other literary work.

To watch her at work was a rare and never-to-be-forgotten experience. We usually sat at opposite sides of one big table, and I could see her every movement. Her pen would be flying over the page, when she would suddenly stop, look out into space with the vacant eye of the clairvoyant seer, shorten her vision as though to look at something held invisibly in the air before her, and begin copying on her paper what she saw. The quotation finished, her eyes would resume



Above: The front page of *The Truth Seeker* from January, 1874. After being founded in Paris, Illinois, in September, 1873, D.M. Bennett relocated to New York City where *The Truth Seeker* remained until 1964.

their natural expression and she would go on writing until again stopped by a similar interruption.

I remember well two instances when I, also, was able to see and even handle books from whose astral duplicates she had copied quotations into her manuscript, and which she was obliged to “materialize” for me to refer to when reading the proofs, as I refused to pass the pages for the “strike-off” unless my doubts as to the accuracy of her copy were satisfactory. One of these was a French work on physiology and psychology; the other, also by a French author, upon some branch of neurology. The

first was in two volumes, bound in half calf, the other in pamphlet wrapper. It was when we were living at 302 West 47th street – the once famous “Lamasery,” and the executive headquarters of the Theosophical Society.

I said: “I cannot pass this quotation, for I am sure it cannot read as you have it.” She said: “Oh don’t bother; it’s right; let it pass.” I refused, until finally she said: “Well, keep still a minute and I’ll try to get it.” The far-away look came into her eyes and presently she pointed to a far corner of the room, to an étagère on which were kept some curios, and in a hollow voice said: “There!” and then came to herself again. “There, there; go look for it over there!” I went, and found the two volumes wanted, which, to my knowledge, had not been in the house until that very moment. I compared the text with HPB’s quotation, showed her that I was right in my suspicions as to

the error, made the proof correction and then, at her request, returned the two volumes to the place on the étagère from which I had taken them. I resumed my seat and work, and when, after awhile, I looked again in that direction, the books had disappeared! After my telling this (absolutely true) story, ignorant sceptics are free to doubt my sanity. I hope it may do them good. The same thing happened in the case of the apport of the other book, but this one remained, and is in our possession at the present time.

The “copy” turned off by HPB presented the most marked dissemblances at different times. While the handwriting bore one peculiar character throughout, so that one familiar with her writing would always be able to detect any given page as HPB’s, yet, when examined carefully, one discovered at least three or four variations of the one style, and each of these persistent for pages together, when it would give place to some other of the calligraphic variants. That is to say, there would not often – never, as I now remember – be more than two of the styles on the same page, and even two only when the style which had been running through the work of, perhaps, a whole evening or half an evening would suddenly give place to one of the other styles which would, in its turn, run through the rest of an evening, or the next whole evening, or the morning’s “copy.”

One of these HPB handwritings was very small, but plain; one bold and free; another plain, of medium size, and very legible; and one scratchy and hard to read, with its queer, foreign-shaped a’s and x’s and e’s. There was also the greatest possible difference in the



Above: The building situated at 302 West 47th Street, in New York, so-called the Lamasery (a word that denotes a monastery where lamas, or Tibetan Buddhist monks, live and practice their faith), which served as a home for Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky from August 1876.

English of these various styles. Sometimes I would have to make several corrections in each line, while at others I could pass many pages with scarcely a fault of idiom or spelling to correct. Most perfect of all were the manuscripts that were written for her while she was sleeping. The beginning of the chapter on the civilization of Ancient Egypt (vol. i., chap. xiv.,) is an illustration. We had stopped work the evening before at about 2 A.M. as usual, both too tired to stop for our usual smoke and chat before parting. She almost fell asleep in her chair while I was bidding her good night, so I hurried off to my bedroom. The next morning, when I came down after my breakfast, she showed me a pile of at least thirty or forty pages of beautifully written HPB manuscript, which, she said, she had had written for her by – well, a Master, whose name has never yet been degraded like some others. It was perfect in every respect and went to the printers without revision.

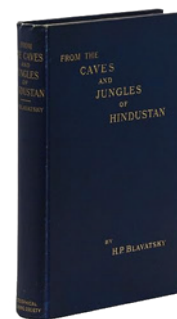
Now it was a curious fact that each change in the HPB manuscript would be preceded either by her leaving the room for a moment or two or by her going off into the trance or abstracted state, when her lifeless eyes would be looking beyond me into space, as it were, and returning to the normal waking state almost immediately. And there would also be a distinct change of personality, or rather personal peculiarities, in gait, vocal expression, vivacity of manner, and above all, in temper.

The reader of her *Caves and Jungles of Hindustan* remembers how the whirling pythoiness would rush out from time to time and return under the control, as alleged, of a different goddess. It was just like that with

HPB. She would leave the room one person and then return to it another. Not another as to visible change of physical body, but another as to tricks of motion, speech, and manners; with different mental brightness, different views of things, different command of English orthography, idiom, and grammar, and different – very, very different command over her temper, which, at its sunniest, was almost angelic, at its worst, the opposite. Sometimes my most stupid incapacity to frame in writing the ideas she wished me to put would be passed over with benevolent patience. At others, for perhaps the slightest of errors, she would seem ready to explode with rage and annihilate me on the spot! These accesses of violence were, no doubt, at times, explicable by her state of health, and hence quite normal. But this theory would not in the least suffice to account for some of her tantrums.

A. P. Sinnett admirably describes her in a private letter as a mystic combination of a goddess and a Tartar, and in noticing her behavior in these different moods, says: *"She certainly had none of the superficial attributes one might have expected in a spiritual teacher; and how she could, at the same time, be philosopher enough to have given up the world for the sake of spiritual advancement, and yet be capable of going into frenzies of passion about trivial annoyances, was a profound mystery to us for a long while, etc. Yet, upon the theory that when her body was occupied by a sage it would be forced to act with a sage's tranquillity – and when not, [it would] not."*

Her ever-beloved aunt, Mme. N. A. F., who loved her, and whom she loved passionately to her dying day, wrote Mr. Sinnett that her



Above: *From The Caves And Jungles Of Hindustan* by H. P. Blavatsky, published in 1892.

strange excitability of temperament – still one of her most marked characteristics – was already manifest in her earliest youth. Even then she was liable to ungovernable fits of passion, and showed a deep-rooted disposition to rebel against every kind of authority or control. The slightest contradiction brought on an outburst of passion, often a fit of convulsions. She has herself described in a family letter her psychical experience while writing her book:

"When I wrote Isis I wrote it so easily, that it was certainly no labour, but a real pleasure. Why should I be praised for it? Whenever I am told to write, I sit down and obey, and then I can write easily upon almost anything – metaphysics, psychology, philosophy, ancient religions, zoology, natural sciences, or what not. I never put myself the question: 'Can I write on this subject?'. . . or, 'am I equal to the task?' but I simply sit down and write. Why? Because somebody who knows all dictates to me. My



Above: Taken in London in October 1888, above from left to right are Vera Johnston (Blavatsky's niece), her husband Charles Johnston, Henry Steel Olcott, and below are Helena Blavatsky and her sister, also called Vera.

MASTER, and occasionally others whom I knew on my travels years ago. Please do not imagine I have lost my senses. I have hinted to you before now about them . . . and I tell you candidly, that whenever I write upon a subject I know little or nothing of, I address myself to Them, and one of Them inspires me, i.e., he allows me to simply copy what I write from manuscripts, and even printed matter that pass before my eyes, in the air, during which process I have never been unconscious one single instant.

She once wrote her sister Vera about the same subject – the manner of her writing. "You may disbelieve me, but I tell you that in saying this I speak but the truth; I am solely occupied, not with writing Isis, but with Isis herself. I live in a kind of permanent enchantment, a life of visions and sights, with open eyes, and no chance whatever to deceive my senses! I sit and watch the fair goddess constantly. And as she displays before me the secret meaning of her long-lost secrets, and the veil becoming with every hour thinner and more transparent, gradually falls off before my eyes, I hold my breath and can hardly trust to my senses! . . . For several years, in order not to forget what I have learned elsewhere, I have been made to have permanently before my eyes all that I need to see. Thus, night and day, the images of the past are ever marshalled before my inner eye. Slowly, and gliding silently like images in an enchanted panorama, centuries after centuries appear before me . . . and I am made to connect these epochs with certain historical events, and I know there can be no mistake. Races and nations, countries and cities, emerge during some former century, then fade out and disappear during some other one, the precise date of which I am then told by . . . Hoary antiquity gives room to historical periods; myths are explained by real events and personages who have really existed; and every important, and often unimportant event, every revolution, a new leaf turned in the book of life of nations—with its incipient course and subsequent natural results—remains photographed in my mind as though impressed in indelible colours . . . When I think and watch my thoughts, they appear to me as though they were like those little bits of wood of various

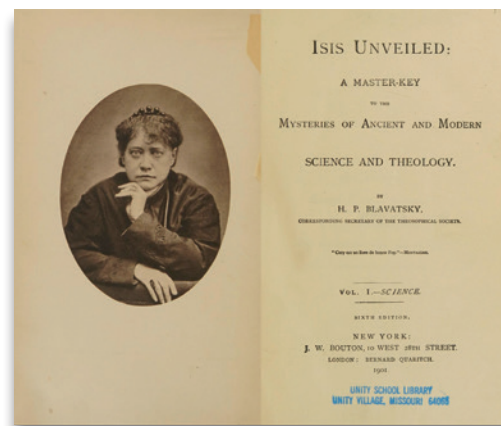
shapes and colours, in the game known as the casse-tête: I pick them up one by one, and try to make them fit each other, first taking one, then putting it aside until I find its match, and finally there always comes out in the end something geometrically correct . . . I certainly refuse point-blank to attribute it to my own knowledge or memory, for I could never arrive alone at either such premises or conclusions . . . I tell you seriously I am helped. And he who helps me is my GURU".

She tells her aunt that during her Master's absence on some other occupation: "He awakens in me, His substitute in knowledge . . . At such times it is no more I who write, but my inner Ego, my 'luminous-self,' who thinks and writes for me. Only see . . . you who know me. When was I ever so learned as to write such things? . . . Whence was all this knowledge?"

Readers, whose taste leads them to probe such unique psychical problems as this to the bottom, should not fail to compare the above explanations that she gives of her states of consciousness with a series of letters to her family that was begun in the *Path* magazine (N.Y. 144 Madison Ave.) for December, 1894. In those she plainly admits that her body was occupied at such times, and the literary work done by foreign entities who taught me through her lips and gave out knowledge of which she herself did not possess even a glimmering in her normal state. Taken literally, as it reads, this explanation is hardly satisfactory; for, if the disjointed thought-bits of her psychical casse-tête always fitted together so as to make her puzzle-map strictly geometrical, then her literary work should be free from errors, and her materials run

together into an orderly scheme of logical and literary sequence. Needless to say, the opposite is the case; and that, even as *Isis Unveiled* came off the press of Trow, after Bouton had spent above \$600 for the corrections and alterations that she had made in galley, page, and electroplate proofs, it was, and to this day is, without a definite literary plan. Volume I professes to be confined to questions of Science, Volume II to those of Religion, yet there are many portions in each volume that belong in the other; and Miss Kislingbury, who sketched out the *Table of Contents* of Vol. II on the evening when I was sketching out that of Vol. I, can testify to the difficulty we had in tracing the features of a plan for each of our respective volumes.

Then, again, when the publisher peremptorily refused to put any more capital into the venture, we had prepared almost enough additional MS to make a third volume, and this was ruthlessly destroyed before we left America. HPB not dreaming that she should ever want to utilize it in India, and the *Theosophist*, *Secret Doctrine*, and her other subsequent literary productions, not even being thought of. How often she and I mingled our regrets that all that valuable material had been so thoughtlessly wasted!



Above: The opening pages of a sixth edition Volume I of *Isis Unveiled*, from 1901.

We had labored at the book for several months and had turned out 870-odd pages of manuscript when, one evening, she put me the question whether, to oblige – (our “Pâramaguru”), I would consent to begin all over again! I well remember the shock it gave me to think that all those weeks of hard labor, of psychical thunderstorms and head-splitting archaeological conundrums, were to count – as I, in my blind-puppy ignorance, imagined – for nothing. However, as my love and reverence and gratitude to this Master, and all the Masters, for giving me the privilege of sharing in their work was without limits, I consented, and at it we went again.

Well for me, was it, that I did; for, having proved my steadfastness of purpose and my loyalty to HPB, I got ample spiritual reward. Principles were explained to me, multifarious illustrations given in the way of psychical phenomena, I was helped to make experiments for myself, was made to know and to profit by acquaintance.

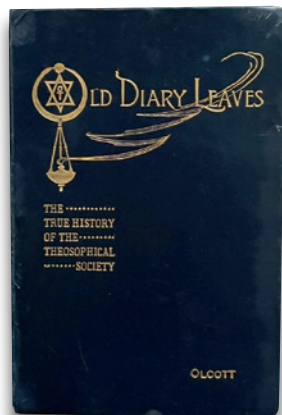
Letter received May 17th, 1887, “the alterations have already cost \$280.80, and at that rate, by the time the book appears it will be handicapped with such fearful expense that each copy of the first, 1,000 will cost a great deal more than we shall get for it, a very discouraging state of affairs to begin with. The cost of composition of the first volume alone (with stereotyping) amounts to \$1,359.69, and this for one volume alone, mind you, without paper, press work or binding! Yours truly, J. W. Bouton”

Not only did she make endless corrections in the types, but even after

the plates were cast, she had them cut to transpose the old matter and insert new things that occurred to her or that she had come across in her reading with various Adepts, and, generally, to fit myself – so far as my ingrained stubbornness and practical worldly self-sufficiency would permit – for the then unsuspected future of public work that has since become a matter of history.

People have often thought it very strange, in fact incomprehensible, that of all those who have helped in this Theosophical movement, often at the heaviest self-sacrifice, I should have been the only one so favored with personal experiences of and with the Mahâtmas that the fact of their existence is a matter of as actual knowledge as the existence of my own relatives or intimate friends. I cannot account for it myself. I know what I know, but not why many of my colleagues do not know as much. As it stands, many people have told me that they pin their faith in the Mahâtmas upon my unchanging and unimpeached personal testimony, which supplements the statements of HPB. Probably I was so blessed because I had to launch the ship “Theosophy” with HPB for HPB’s Masters, and to steer it through many maelstroms and cyclones, when nothing short of actual knowledge of the sound basis of our movement would have influenced me to stick to my post. ✱

Published in *Old Diary Leaves*, Volume One, 1895. This excerpt has been edited by the Department of Education.





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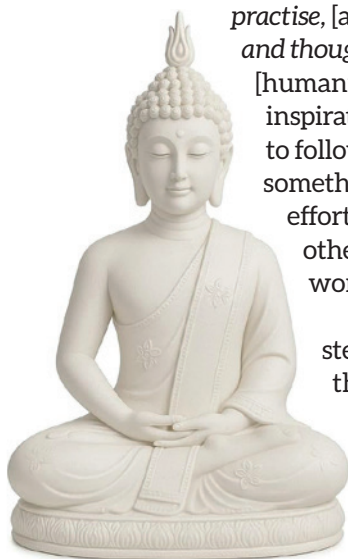
Creating Sacred Spaces – the Transforming Power of Meditative Enquiry

By **Michele Sender**

Members of the Theosophical Society (TS) are entrusted with the task of sharing the living power of Theosophy.

In a letter to the American Convention, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) instructed us to “*teach, practise, [and] promulgate that system of life and thought which alone can save the coming [humanity]*”. This statement is a useful and inspirational guiding principle, but in order to follow it effectively we must examine something that is essential in all collective effort – how we communicate with each other and how this affects our ability to work together.

Conventional communication often stems from the lower mind, which is the concrete and divisive aspect of our consciousness. Consequently, even when seeking consensus or common ground, people unconsciously are inclined to prove points or win arguments.



In order to work in mutual understanding and support, we need to move from a perception susceptible to conflict and misinterpretation towards a gentler and more accepting mindset that engages in conversation in the spirit of altruism. This attitude is fundamental to build true brotherhood, which can lead us closer to our ideal of unity.

The practice of Meditative Inquiry is often used in theosophical meetings. However, a lack of structure or guidelines tends to weaken its potential usefulness. In this article, I propose a formatted method of Meditative Inquiry to help us practise it more effectively. I am not presenting new concepts here.

Borrowing HPB’s statement, I have “*made only a nosegay of culled flowers*”, taken from various theosophical teachings and “*brought*



nothing of my own but the string that ties them”.

The practice of Meditative Inquiry is a form of Jñānā Yoga. Its purpose is to awaken wisdom by helping us reach a direct perception of truth via a meditative process. The practice of meditation aims at leading us toward a state of interior silence through which we can access our true nature – the source of strength, wisdom, and courage. This connection helps us transcend our personal ego and bring a sense of harmony in our lives and relationships. However, when in the setting of a group discussion, it is often more challenging to reach this alignment.

Through Meditative Inquiry we can create a collective sacred space that helps us tap into the “*substratum of memory*” of our essential unity, as mentioned by HPB in her “*Diagram*

of Meditation”.

Meditative Inquiry offers profound potential with numerous applications. It enhances self-examination, personal study, Lodge study, and even everyday interactions by:

1. engaging in an active exploration of our mind’s inner workings through a present, dynamic, moment-to-moment investigation;
2. recognizing and addressing misunderstandings and misperceptions that may occur in conversations; and
3. transforming the way in which we study, both individually and as a group.

With practice and proficiency, this approach can have an almost magical effect, fostering affinity and rapport in relationships, and deep insights in our studies. In this article we will explore four teachable elements to better take advantage of the potential that lies in this practice.



The Why

“The average [person], even among the most intellectual, giving all their attention to the testimony of appearance and outward form, and disabled as they are from penetrating a priori to the core of things, are but too apt to misjudge the whole situation.”

– Mahatma Morya.

Our interactions are often dominated by sensory perception and the instinctive activity

of the brain. Wired primarily for survival, brain-driven perceptions lead us to focus on differences rather than shared commonalities.

In its turn, this kind of activity engages our lower minds which, colored by past conditioning, memories, and judgments, generate fertile conditions for misunderstanding and discordance. When we try to cooperate from this level of consciousness, we are at best able to achieve a fragile, superficial equilibrium that can crumble easily under pressure. Additionally, when we tend to avoid difficult conversations, mistakenly believing that this is how we maintain peace, we not only fail to create lasting harmony but often this strategy increases underlying tension.

Is it possible to build relationships on unshakeable foundations, leading to true peace and understanding? This is, after all, the ideal presented to us in our First Object – “to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood”. One way to do this is to consciously create a sacred space where we can be open and honest, allowing us to move beyond tension and discomfort toward a deeper way of relating with one another.

Four Elements

During my time as a high school teacher and my involvement in the TS, I have explored and implemented a variety of dialogue methods that seek to stimulate more profound engagements and gain new insights. These

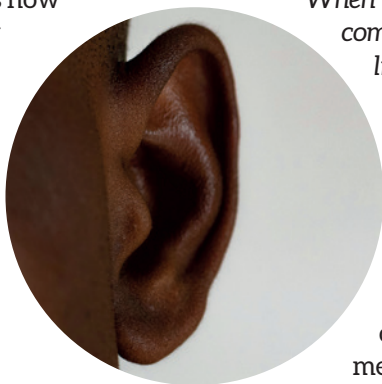
include Socratic Dialogue, Native American Council techniques, David Bohm’s technique for dialogue, J. Krishnamurti’s method of inquiry, among others. Viewing these diverse approaches through the lens of theosophical teachings, I have identified four key elements that are helpful when seeking to communicate from a more unifying perspective. These skills can be cultivated individually; however, they naturally interweave, becoming exponentially more effective when practised in concert.

1. Listen with a Silent Mind

“When you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed, to the whole of it, not just part of it.”
– J. Krishnamurti.

When we listen from the level of the lower mind, we are listening to our conditioning, concepts, and memories. In addition, we are prone to half-listen, hearing what we think is being said while already formulating responses or opinions. We also have a habit of communicating with a sense of already knowing what the other person is going to say. Naturally, if we are seeking a deeper communication, we must try to go beyond the filter of our own opinions so that we can truly perceive what is being communicated.

Just as meditation can take us beyond the mundane world grasped through the senses, listening with a silent mind can help us perceive what is behind the words we hear.



Dylann Hendricks

The cornerstone of Meditative Inquiry is learning to bring the silent attentiveness we seek in meditation into our group meetings and, indeed, into all our encounters. It is in this mental quietude that we open ourselves to an inner world full of potential where we can discover our true nature: whole, resilient, resourceful, and perfect.

The space once filled with restlessness and chaos becomes one of stillness and order, and our consciousness expands inward, granting access to valuable insights. We are then able to engage in a collective exploration with a consciousness free from judgments and automatic reactions, nurturing empathy and understanding as the basis for our actions.

Finding a silent mind during conversation is not always easy. A way to induce this state is to begin to listen with a curious mind. When we listen with a genuine attitude of interest, we naturally leave our own self-centered thoughts behind and engage with openness and receptivity, one that not only allows us to connect more meaningfully, but also makes others feel welcome, heard, and valued.

2. Respond from the Heart

"The Heart is the center of the Spiritual Consciousness, as the Brain is the center of Intellectual Consciousness."

– H. P. Blavatsky.

Theosophical teachings describe two levels of consciousness from which we can act:

brain-centered (*kâma-manas*) and heart-centered (*buddhi-manas*). Brain-centered consciousness refers to the mind swayed by desires, fears, and strong emotions. It judges, names, and categorizes based on sensory input, resulting in fragmented, limited, and often unreliable perceptions. Influenced by the desire nature (*kâma*), this mind gravitates toward pleasure and away from discomfort, and it is often instinctive, self-serving, and reactionary.

To transcend this reactionary state, *manas* must be influenced by *buddhi*, the source of spiritual wisdom and empathy. This heart-centered consciousness manifests when we let go of the ego with its personal agenda and ambition, when we operate from a place of affection, not severity, of cooperation, not opposition. Interactions from this level of consciousness yield softened responses characterized by a sense of equability, self-sacrifice, and wholeness.



Giulia Bertelli

3. Speak with Purpose and Precision

"Discussions also should not be a matter of venting opinions. Opinions are not truth. Can we succeed in discussing vital questions without being anxious to present our opinions, seriously trying to learn more about the subject discussed, its depth of meaning, and all the implications?"
– Radha Burnier.

Another important element allowing for more genuine deeper communication is to become aware of what motivates us in

general, but specifically in our speech. We must ask ourselves, “Why do I speak?” “What is the intention behind voicing my point of view?”

Do we speak to show what we know; or for a need to be heard, to be seen, to be respected; or to teach, to correct; or just to break the silence? Through an open and honest inquiry about these questions we are better positioned to be aware of the thoughts and feelings that arise during interactions, allowing us to choose what is worth sharing. Being less anxious to speak, our responses are motivated by what is best for the present moment, thus bringing precision and conscious intention to our words. This awareness may often lead us to be less active externally, yet in this space of silence we may find insights into what we are seeking, as well as to what others may need to support their quest for truth.

For those who tend to remain silent, it is equally important to ask, “Why don’t I speak?” Examine this question deeply. Is the silence due to fear, lack of confidence, low energy, or absence of motivation?

However, it is important to recognize that a group does not thrive solely on verbal contributions. Mindful silence is a form of action and is valuable in its own right. Engaging in this kind of introspection will help us find an attitude that benefits both the individual and the group as a whole.

4. Tap into the Substratum

“When you are in this uplifted state, ideas can

reach you. ... Even as you are talking ... keep as it were a mental antenna up so that from somewhere above on high, within, an idea can reach you and enrich your [contributions].”

– Geoffrey Hodson.

“When the manasic entity [higher ego] sends an impulse downwards to the lower nature ... it appears to the personality as spontaneous, free, uncaused by any action on the lower plane; and so it is, for the causes that work on the personality are of the higher not the lower planes.”

– Annie Besant.

HPB explains that, as we make efforts to elevate our consciousness, an enduring substratum or foundation of higher consciousness is gradually generated. The final skill in this method is to hold the conscious intention of tapping into this substratum while we interact with others. Then, the door may open, bringing forth a wisdom that transcends our ordinary, conditioned responses.

From the perspective of the personality, the influence coming from buddhi/manas often manifests as a seemingly natural and spontaneous occurrence. However, this is unlikely to happen unless we have laid the groundwork for it. Meditative Inquiry helps us create a sacred space where the contact between our higher and lower natures can take place.

As we work on these skills, not only in our Lodge meetings but also in our daily interactions, we become a clearer channel



Timothy Dykes

through which the higher consciousness can influence our thoughts, emotions, and actions, thus allowing a more cohesive and integrated expression of our true nature.

Summary of the Method

Here I provide a summary of the action items for each element in this framework making it easier to remember during practice.

1. **Listen with a Silent Mind:**
Engage in the exploration with an attitude of curiosity and wonder.
2. **Respond from the Heart:**
Let go of the ego with its personal agenda and ambition, and operate from a place of mutual understanding and collaboration.
3. **Speak with Purpose and Precision:**
Be aware of your motivations for speaking or remaining silent.
4. **Tap into the Substratum:** Cultivate the conscious intention of interacting with others from your higher nature.

Our Work

When practising this approach to Meditative Inquiry, it is helpful to recognize the challenges inherent in both personal and communal transformation, while keeping in mind the importance of persistent effort in becoming proficient in any practice. Setbacks are a natural part of the process, and maintaining our commitment to growth and

service despite obstacles is fundamental.

The individual has limited power when compared to the collective. In community, the work of

transformation gets easier, grows in strength, and becomes a powerful force in the service of humanity. Yet, we should not forget that the individual change adds to the power of the group, so we should not discount the value of bringing change in the seemingly small, personal daily actions.

Creating sacred spaces can

facilitate a lasting transformation, not only individually but collectively. Start today, fail, start again, fail again – fail gloriously, our success is in starting again. All the Mahatmas ask is that we simply – TRY! ✨

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Jared Rice



Michele Sender has been a student of Theosophy for almost 20 years. She is the founder of Fohat Productions, a publishing company created to share the living power of Theosophy.

Origins

By **Geoffrey A. Farthing**

In the preceding chapters, a vast scheme of existence has been outlined. Infinite in its diversity, it is nonetheless a Unity, experienced by human consciousness as both objective and subjective, as visible and invisible, as phenomenal and noumenal. The seven planes of the manifested universe are formed of hierarchies of lives in gradations ranging from the unimaginably minute to hosts of incalculable magnitude, the whole being subject to inherent, unerring and invariable laws.

The very words and phrases used in the literature of Esoteric Science, if their significance be examined in depth, convey something of the grandeur and complexity of the cosmic process, viz.: primeval origins; manifestation; undifferentiated primordial substance; the majestic sequence of processes according to immutable Law; septenary manvantaric differentiations; the ALL of manifested Nature in activity.

Today many of the wonders of this small part of the whole; our Earth, have become part of everyone's experience through the television screen. At one end of the scale, the electron microscope reveals the marvellous intricacies of the cell, while at the other end the radio-telescope brings within the reach of the ordinary man information about the

remotest parts of the immediate universe. Yet Esoteric Science affirms that there are other systems, other universes, and that there are other modes of being, especially in the inner worlds, besides the world of *"things and lives and minds"* of everyday human experience.

It is time to look at the question of origins. Whence the almost unbelievable diversity of living things? Whence the ordered complexity, the design and form, of moss and tree, of butterfly and eagle, and of man himself, of whom Carlyle said, *"We are the miracle of miracles, the great inscrutable mystery of God"*? Esoteric Science speaks both of the external world perceived by the senses, the phenomenal world of form, colour and sound, and also of the inner realms of feeling, thought, power and force, of the noumena behind the phenomena.

There are certain general principles that pertain to the total process: the universality of law, the process of evolution as a becoming *"from within outwards"*, the alternation of phases of activity and phases of rest. The second of these principles is particularly relevant to the question of origins; the Cosmos is projected from the noumenal or subjective states of being into the phenomenal or objective planes, by a process that may be regarded analogously as a gradual densification of the spiritual into the material, as water-vapour is condensed into ice. This means in effect that everything in the Cosmos, and the Cosmos itself, exists already before it becomes. The occult teaching says:

"Nothing is created, but is only transformed. Nothing can manifest itself in this universe - from a globe down to a vague, rapid thought

– that was not in the universe already; everything on the subjective plane is an eternal IS; as everything on the objective plane is an ever-becoming – because transitory."

[The Secret Doctrine -I, 570 /I, 623 /II, 293]

In a footnote to her commentary on the process of the becoming of a universe, Mme Blavatsky underlines the fact that Creation is an incorrect word to use, as no religion ... believes in creation out of *nihil*, as Christians and Jews do, but in evolution out of pre-existing materials.

[The Secret Doctrine -I, 233 fn /I, 253 /I, 279]

She returns later to the same theme: "Modern exact Science, as soon as it began to grow out of its teens, perceived the great, and, to it, hitherto esoteric axiom, that nothing – whether in the spiritual, psychic, or physical realm of being – could come into existence out of nothing. There is no cause in the manifested universe without its adequate effects, whether in space or time; nor can there be an effect without its primal cause, which itself owes its existence to a still higher one – the final and absolute cause having to remain to man forever an incomprehensible CAUSELESS CAUSE.

[The Secret Doctrine-I, 569 /I, 622 /II 293]

The periodic emergence of a universe from the plane of subjectivity into the plane of objectivity is the theme of an important explanatory passage in *The Key to Theosophy* – explanatory, but by no means easy for the mind to grasp, for the "final and absolute cause" referred to above is "an abstraction, on the verge of which human reason – however trained to metaphysical subtleties – trembles, threatening to collapse."

[The Secret Doctrine -I, 569 /I, 622 /II 293]

The dialogue between Enquirer and Theosophist proceeds as follows:

ENQ. But who is it that creates each time the Universe?

THEO. No one creates it. Science would call the process evolution; the pre-Christian philosophers and the Orientalists called it emanation: we, Occultists and Theosophists, see in it the only universal and eternal reality casting a periodical reflection of itself on the infinite Spatial depths. This reflection, which you regard as the objective material universe, we consider as a temporary illusion and nothing else. That alone which is eternal is real.

ENQ. All this does not explain to me how this illusion called the universe originates; how the conscious to be proceeds to manifest itself from the unconsciousness that is.

THEO. It is unconsciousness only to our finite consciousness. Verily may we paraphrase verse v, in the 1st chapter of St. John, and say "and (Absolute) light (which is darkness) shineth in darkness (which is illusionary material light); and the darkness comprehended it not". This absolute light is also absolute and immutable law. Whether by radiation or emanation – we need not quarrel over terms – the universe passes out of its homogeneous subjectivity on

No one creates it. Science would call the process evolution; the pre-Christian philosophers and the Orientalists called it emanation: we, Occultists and Theosophists, see in it the only universal and eternal reality casting a periodical reflection of itself on the infinite Spatial depths.

to the first plane of manifestation, of which planes there are seven, we are taught. With each plane it becomes more dense and material until it reaches this, our plane, on which the only world approximately known and understood in its physical composition by science is the planetary or Solar system – one *sui generis*, we are told.

ENQ. What do you mean by *sui generis*?

THEO. I mean that, though the fundamental law and the universal working of laws of Nature are uniform, still our Solar system (like every other such system in the millions of others in Cosmos) and even our Earth, has its

own programme of manifestations differing from the respective programmes of all others. We speak of the inhabitants of other planets and imagine that if they are men, i.e. thinking entities, they must be as we are. The fancy of poets and painters and sculptors never fails to represent even the angels as a beautiful copy of man – plus wings. We say that all this is an error and a delusion; because, if on this little earth alone one

finds such a diversity in its flora, fauna and mankind – from the seaweed to the cedar of Lebanon, from the jellyfish to the elephant, from the Bushman and Negro to the Apollo Belvedere – alter the conditions cosmic and

planetary, and there must be as a result quite a different flora, fauna and mankind. The same laws will fashion quite a different set of things and beings even on this our plane, including in it all our planets. How much more different then must be external nature in other Solar systems, and how foolish it is to judge of other stars and worlds and human beings by our own, as physical science does!

[*The Key to Theosophy*, 84]

Now the titles of the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, *Cosmogogenesis* and *Anthropogenesis*, indicate the two aspects into which the subject of origination may usefully be divided for purposes of study and exposition – the becoming of the Cosmos and the becoming of Man. Yet, although they may be studied separately, the student is warned against allowing himself to regard them as two unrelated fields.

Let us study Man, therefore; but if we separate him for one moment from the Universal Whole, or view him in isolation ... we shall either land in black magic or fail most ingloriously in our attempt.

[*The Secret Doctrine* -III, 437 / V, 419 / *The Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky* -XII, 517 / *The Esoteric Writings of H. P. Blavatsky*, 350]

The reason for this is clear; both Cosmos and Man arise in the One, and indeed are that one: If the student bears in mind that there is but One Universal Element, which is infinite, unborn, and undying, and that all the rest – as in the world of Phenomena – are but so many various differentiated aspects and transformations (correlations, they are now called) of that One, from Cosmical down to microcosmical effects, from superhuman

We speak of the inhabitants of other planets and imagine that if they are men, i.e. thinking entities, they must be as we are. The fancy of poets and painters and sculptors never fails to represent even the angels as a beautiful copy of man – plus wings.

down to human and subhuman beings, the totality, in short, of objective existence – then the first and chief difficulty will disappear and Occult Cosmology may be mastered.

[*The Secret Doctrine* -I, 75 /I, 104 /I, 142]

At the end of the first part of Volume I of *The Secret Doctrine*, Mme Blavatsky attempts to recapitulate some of the basic teachings thus far expounded. In the following passage from a comprehensive summary of the whole process, the footnotes have been incorporated into the paragraph: The active Power, the "Perpetual motion of the great Breath", only awakens Kosmos at the dawn of every new Period, setting it into motion by means of the two contrary Forces [the centripetal and the centrifugal forces, which are male and female, positive and negative, physical and plane of Illusion. In other words, that dual motion transfers Kosmos from the plane of the Eternal Ideal into that of finite manifestation, or from the noumenal to the phenomenal plane. Everything that is, was, and will be, eternally IS, even the countless forms, which are finite and perishable only in their objective, not in their ideal Form.

They existed as Ideas, in the Eternity [Occultism teaches that no form can be given to anything, either by nature or by man, whose ideal type does not already exist on the subjective plane. More than this; that no such form or shape can possibly enter man's consciousness, or evolve in his imagination, which does not exist in prototype, at least as an approximation], and, when they pass away, will exist as reflections. Neither the form of man, nor that of any animal, plant or stone, has ever been created, and it is only on this

plane of ours that it commences "becoming", i.e. objectivizing into its present materiality, or expanding from within outwards, from the most sublimated and super sensuous essence into its grossest appearance. Therefore, our human forms have existed in the Eternity as astral or ethereal prototypes; according to which models, the Spiritual Beings (or Gods), whose duty it was to bring them into objective being and terrestrial Life, evolved the protoplasmic forms of the future Egos from their own essence. After which,

when this human Upadhi or basic mould was ready, the natural terrestrial Forces began to work on those super sensuous moulds which contained, besides their own, the elements of all the past vegetable and future animal forms of this globe in them. Therefore, man's outward shell passed through every vegetable and animal body before it assumed this human shape.

[*The Secret Doctrine* -I, 282 /I, 302 /I, 324]

What is stated here with regard to the forms of the different kingdoms of Nature, that is, that their archetypes existed in the Eternity before they were brought forth and given physical expression – is equally true of their subtle counterparts in each of the planes of Nature.

... our human forms have existed in the Eternity as astral or ethereal prototypes; according to which models, the Spiritual Beings (or Gods), whose duty it was to bring them into objective being and terrestrial Life, evolved the protoplasmic forms of the future Egos from their own essence.

*All potentialities,
all the capabilities of
Life, are here present,
involved during earlier
cycles of manifestation
and now to be evolved
during the present one.*

The origins of the inner principles of man, as of everything else, are to be sought in the primordial Substance that comes into being with the polarization of the One Element and its differentiation into the primary Elements. All potentialities, all the capabilities of Life, are here present, involved during earlier cycles of

manifestation and now to be evolved during the present one. Every faculty we have as human beings has been developed in this way, to be further developed by use in our humanity.

The cyclic process has, it has been well said, no conceivable beginning or imaginable end, yet each

recurrent cycle "evinces a progressive march towards a higher life".

[*The Secret Doctrine* -I, 277 /I, 297 /I, 319]

The active period of phenomenal existence, the Manvantara, expresses in the time-space world the possibilities impressed into the dormancy or "nonexistence" of noumenal being, the Pralaya.

Three distinct representations of the Universe in its three distinct aspects are impressed upon our thought by the esoteric philosophy: the PRE-EXISTING (evolved from) the EVER-EXISTING; and the PHENOMENAL – the world of illusion, the reflection, and shadow thereof. During the great mystery and drama of life known as the Manvantara, real Kosmos is like the object placed behind the white screen upon which are thrown the Chinese shadows, called forth by the magic

lantern. The actual figures and things remain invisible, while the wires of evolution are pulled by the unseen hands; and men and things are thus but the reflections, on the white field, of the realities *behind* the snares of *Mahamaya*, or the great Illusion. This was taught in every philosophy, in every religion, *ante-* as well as *post-*diluvian, in India and Chaldea, by the Chinese as by the Grecian Sages. In the former countries these three Universes were allegorized, in exoteric teachings, by the three trinities emanating from the central eternal germ and forming with it a Supreme Unity: the *initial*, the *manifested* and the *creative Triad*, or the three in One. The last is but the symbol, in its concrete expression, of the first *ideal* two. Hence Esoteric philosophy passes over the necessarianism of this purely metaphysical conception, and calls the first one only the Ever-Existing. This is the view of every one of the six great schools of Indian philosophy – the six principles of that unit body of *WISDOM* of which the "gnosis", the hidden knowledge, is the seventh. ✱

[*The Secret Doctrine* -I, 278 /I, 298 /I, 320]

Extract reproduced from Geoffrey Farthing's *Deity Cosmos and Man* – pgs 49 to 50 (digital version).



Geoffrey A. Farthing TD, CEng, MIEE (1909-2004) was an English lecturer and writer who was very active in the Theosophical Society, Adyar.

Sources of Theosophy

The truths of *The Secret Doctrine* are not the result of one person's opinion. Rather they have been preserved and extended according to a "scientific method" employed over long, long centuries by adepts "testing, checking, and verifying" the results of fellow adepts. As HPB explains:

"*The Secret Doctrine* is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages ... such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs. The flashing gaze of those seers has penetrated into the very kernel of matter, and recorded the soul of things there ... It is useless to say that the system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted

beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. That for long ages, the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race, of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives in learning, not teaching. How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts; i.e., men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual organisations to the utmost possible degree. No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions – so obtained as to stand as independent evidence – of other adepts, and by centuries of experience." ✱

The Secret Doctrine - Vol I, H. P. Blavatsky, page 273.



Threads of the Collective: What Social Dreaming Reveals About Us

By *Charlie Leake*



In a recent social dreaming group (or rather social dreaming ‘matrix’ to coin the proper term), I shared a dream about a vast, blue bell-shaped tent, its canopy taut with intricate ropes. In the middle of the tent was a huge cake, weighing in at a show-stopping 35kg, but I could sense it was delicious all the same. As I finish sharing my dream there’s a pause of silence in the room.

Then someone else shares they have also had a dream featuring intricately tied ropes and an equally delicious rainbow coloured cake. A ripple of recognition spreads around the group. Then someone else shares that they have had a similar dream about ropes, but this time no cake, more’s the pity. The group shudders in collective acknowledgement that deep connections are present.

A coincidence? Perhaps. Yet in every single social dreaming matrix I've hosted (more than 20 to date) there is a significant moment that reveals a shared knowing. It is as if the dreamworld itself has insisted on being recognised.

The night before (or days before) a social dreaming matrix meets up, an intention is set. For example, the intention of the matrix example above was *"to better understand how we can support each other through a challenging situation at work"*. One brave soul in the matrix offers to share a dream and the rest listen. Then the matrix freely associates with what they've heard and then patterns begin to emerge from the web of associations.

This group did three social dreaming matrices in total. By the last matrix session their intention had been clearly answered: their dreams gave the matrix real-world, practical and pragmatic ways to navigate the challenging situation at work.

What might these shared dreams tell us about consciousness, community and our place in the cosmos?

Dreams Belong to the Collective

Social dreaming is when you get a group of people together to share dreams. Gordon Lawrence coined the term and the process in 1982. The focus is on the dream, not the dreamer or individual's psychology. Instead, the matrix focuses on the social meaning, through its primary goal of making connections.

For the longest time I was under the illusion that my dreams were part of my own

private, individual domain. It turns out my dreams are not only part of my own domain but also woven into a wider fabric, carrying symbols that mirror the lives of others and the society we share. As Blavatsky said, *"Symbols are the language of the soul, and dreams but the alphabet in which it speaks."* In a sense, Social Dreaming invites us to explore these symbols together, learning to read that alphabet not in isolation, but collectively.

For a social dreaming matrix, the set-up is simple: a room with chairs set in a snowflake pattern. I do many of my social dreaming matrices online, which works well, too. The session starts with a dream being. From this point onwards the dreamer no longer holds it alone but becomes part of the matrix itself.

From there, the matrix begins to free-associate around the dream. These associations can be anything that they have experienced or dreamed. It is my job as host to make sure the matrix stays away from interpreting the dream or the dreamer, hold the space (there are lots of moments of prolonged silence) and write down the associations. I spread out a large sheet of paper and map each thought, memory, or image, branching out from the original dream. By the end of the session this looks like a mind map, from which we can start to discuss the themes that have emerged and draw meaning from the patterns in light of the intention we had previously set.



The Subtle Technology of Dreaming

Dreams are a neglected technology, native to the human condition. In a world of AI and smartphones, this social dreaming technology feels fundamentally human: you need only to fall asleep, to dream and if you can, jot down your dreams in a journal, though this is not essential.

When the social dreaming matrix sets an intention, then over the course of the following days, the matrix members will have dreams that relate directly to the intention.

In her book *A Mind Beyond Words*, Jes Kerzen beautifully describes connecting with the field of consciousness as like being connected to a 'Subtle Navigation' system. In our dreams, it is like our collective unconscious holds up a cold pane of glass to the rising vapour from the ocean of all consciousness. Thoughts, wisdom and knowledge are the vapour that condenses onto our pane of glass and then drips down into our minds.

An Ancient Practice, Renewed

I may be a latecomer to the practice of social dreaming (and to Theosophy, come to think of it), but I can confirm that it has been happening for millennia. Many different tribal civilisations continue to dream share today. Aboriginal Australians have their dreamtime, the Senoi people of Malaysia practice dreamwork and the Schuar tribe of Ecuador drink tea and share dreams first thing in the morning, every morning. These traditions echo

the Theosophical view that consciousness is layered and interconnected, and that dreams offer a bridge between planes of being.

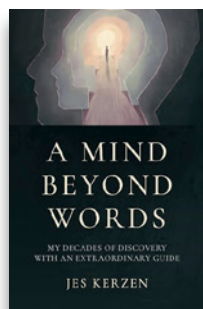
In our dreams we are guided to different planes of existence where we find everything from the rational to the down-right crazy and everything in between. As Carl Jung put it, *"the dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the soul"* (Collected Works, Vol. 10).

And if you've been lucky enough to engage in a social dreaming matrix, you will know that the connection resonates deeply. The practice of sharing dreams seems to connect with the inner-most parts of our humanity – it's as if each matrix collectively rings a huge brass bell that resonates for weeks and months after the matrix has finished its discussions.

Dreams as Mirrors of the Community

What I've noticed is that dreams carry the unspoken concerns of a community. They give voice to anxieties that might never surface in ordinary conversation, yet in the safety of the matrix they find their way into the light. I can think of not other setting where we so easily touch on the vast themes of death, loss or catastrophe, and do so without fear. It's almost as if the dreams themselves are guiding us into territory we secretly need to explore.

In the patterns that emerge, the dreams remind us where our energies lean too far in one direction, where balance is lost, and where the pendulum longs to swing back. And in that recognition, something shifts. Each of us leaves the matrix changed. Not changed by



analysis but changed by a collective resonance.

The more I engage with social dreaming, the more convinced I become that it is a modern form of theosophical enquiry: not confined to the study of words on a page, but lived as a direct experience of consciousness shared.

So, the next time you awaken with one foot still in the dreamworld, pause for a moment. Listen. Retrace the shimmers of your dream memories. Write them down if you can. In time you may notice the patters threading through your own dreams are not yours alone.

They belong to all of us, these subtle filaments in the great, luminous tapestry of collective consciousness. ✨



Charlie Leake works in a global logistics organisation, with responsibilities in transformation and instructional design, creating and facilitating experiences that support collective growth and transformation. A member of the Theosophical Society, he brings together his interests in psychology, social dreaming, and spiritual traditions to explore the shared dimensions of consciousness.

Theosophical Society in England & Wales

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THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
in ENGLAND & WALES

What is War?

By **Eric McGough**



We are at war! Are we not? Every evening the TV news brings us pictures of conflict, of soldiers with guns patrolling occupied territory while the populations plot to blow them up. We see nation despising nation, terrorists bombing innocents in unsuspecting busy streets, and religious fervour calling for revenge and death sentences. Politicians incite hatred and justify the use of terrifying and deadly force. Hatred is piled upon hatred and fear upon fear. Big brother is in his element, and all in the name of justice. We are at war – otherwise where is the peace?

Apart from starvation and poverty, the most distressing aspect of life is violence (and

the former often stems from political violence). If I were to ask you to identify the cause of violence – of wars for instance – you would probably site a number of things. Among the causes that most people would come up with would be politics, imperialism, nationalism, capitalism, communism, racism, fascism, economics, resources, sectarian religions, national interest including defence, the protection of a persecuted minority, and so on. But none of these things are really the causes of war – they are only the excuses, the justifications. These are the scapegoats. The real cause lies buried deep in our own subconscious minds. That which we find distasteful in ourselves we project outwards to reject it because we are afraid of its

implications, we are afraid that we will act out such thoughts and feelings. By exteriorising our negativity we are trying to divorce ourselves from it.

We say that we hate war and all its horrors. We want no part in it. We campaign against it, marching with banners and writing letters of protest to those in power. “*Not in our name*” we shout loud and clear. But it is our own ‘beast’ that we have shifted out into the world of things that we are discrediting. It is our own personal horror that we will not take responsibility for, which we will not admit even to ourselves.

Every disappointment, every feeling of hurt, of hate, jealousy, envy, greed, revenge, suspicion, betrayal, distrust, anger, every ambition that is centred around self-interest, every indulgence in self-pity, all of our fears, these are the fuels – the very living power of war. These are to be found within every one of us, and every such thought, every such feeling is fuel to the stockpile of horror on the psychic planes, to the beast whose only expression can be violence and horror.

Psychologists will confirm that we make others scapegoats for the evil in ourselves. It is not the man who fires the first bullet that is responsible for a world at war, for a world in flames, it is we – who have stockpiled the fuel in the collective unconscious, who have piled evil onto evil until it has become a raging beast that must needs to act, to express itself in a world of violent action.



FOR ALL ACTION FOLLOWS THOUGHT.
ALL WARS START ON THE PSYCHIC
PLANES – MIND/EMOTION.

ALL WARS ARE ALREADY
RAGING IN THE ASTRAL
WORLD LONG BEFORE
THEY EMERGE INTO THE
MURDERING OF FLESH
AND BLOOD.

War is like the troubled and unalterable trail of a ship's wake, the prow of which is already cutting through the waves far ahead.

None of us can claim immunity from this responsibility. All of us contribute in some measure to the collective beast that is every evil in the world. We are the cause, individually and collectively.

“*Cry havoc and let loose the dogs of war.*” (Julius Caesar). This is no mere poetic sentiment – it is truth. In war the ‘Hell Hounds’ are let loose from within us and all that was sinful and forbidden by polite society is then encouraged. Hatred, violence,



Evrita Paraskevopoulou

Artistic Frames

ferocity, cruelty, and every kind of cunning and deceit, all these become transformed into virtues in those who direct them at the 'enemy'. In one way and in various degrees we welcome war because there is this caged beast within us whose substance we should like to gratify but cannot for fear of the consequences. This beast is in part exteriorised onto scapegoats but its basic being still remains within feeding off our fantasies and daydreams, our fears and insecurities. Occasionally, one of us gives vent to the beast within and then such a person commits vile acts for which we would prescribe the worst of punishments. In this too, there is the element of scapegoating, of venting some of our own steam through punishing others.

Wars can only be stopped at the psychic level; they will never be stopped by politics. War is the way that we think and feel, the beast that we create but will not admit to. Eventually, such a beast must rage its path to the light of day and then all is war – within and without. Even when a war comes to an end there is the starting of the next in the steady build-up of hatred and the feelings of injustice and revenge. These are the inevitable results of the manifest act, of that which has gone before.

Thus we see that violence begets violence, that war begets war. Theosophy shows us the true nature of these things, it tells us how and where violence is born, and it tells us therefore how to identify the real cause. Above all, this Perennial Wisdom

reveals us to ourselves. It shows us what we are, how we work, and thereby how to change ourselves and in time, the world.

Until we can understand and face up to this truth, wars and all forms of violence are inevitable. In the inner worlds we have made war: in those same inner worlds we must make peace. We must re-absorb our personal beasts into our conscious selves and transmute their substance by the alchemy of spiritual wisdom.

The wisdom Teaching is the science of consciousness – it is the measure of all things. Within the great field of this creation, of life, mankind is a potential God. We have the power of a God, albeit in smaller measure, it is the power to create with our minds. At the moment we are like children who, when given some sticks, use them to make spears, swords, and bows and arrows. We use our minds to create hell on earth, but we could just as easily create heaven. What a frightening power we have in our minds! Everyone should know this truth, a truth which theosophy reveals to the wise. ✨

Klara Kulikova



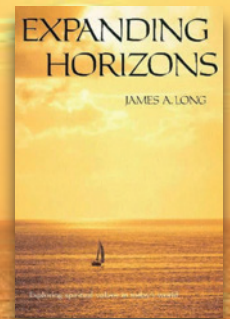
Eric McGough is an author and writer. He has written and produced several, widely acclaimed audio courses on Theosophy. He was President of the English Section of the Theosophical Society from 2008 to 2014.

The Karmic Script

"... in our struggles toward a fuller understanding, we begin to realize we can develop the ability to read the unfolding karmic script of our lives. When we work with this, then we find ourselves better able to feel out the situations as they arise, and deal with them more intelligently. We can think of it as a Book — the Book of Records as the Koran calls it — in which is inscribed in its entirety our individual life. Each of our days, representing a page of so-called karmic merit and demerit, will contain the signposts, the impellings and repellings, the conscience knocks, and even the intuitions that are there to be utilized. Once we are able even slightly to read the daily script of our experiences, we realize something else: that there is a direct relation between the quality of a reaction and the quality of action that brought it into being. This is not going to be spelled out, but if we keep in mind that our major task in the long run is to unfold fully the divine values within us, we will know that the process of transmuting the lower by the higher self must be accompanied by a continued effort to improve the quality of our attitude in every circumstance..."

James A. Long

Expanding Horizons – Chapter 2



A Glance at the Future

I Didn't Found Any Priest, for Conscience Had Become the High Priest

By **Kahlil Gibran**

From behind the wall of the Present
I heard the hymns of humanity.
I heard the sounds of the bells
announcing the beginning of the prayer in the
temple of Beauty. Bells moulded in the metal of
emotion and poised above the holy altar – the
human heart.

From behind the Future I saw multitudes
worshipping on the bosom of Nature, their
faces turned toward the East and awaiting the
inundation of the morning light – the morning
of Truth.

I saw the city in ruins and nothing remaining
to tell man of the defeat of Ignorance and the
triumph of Light.

I saw the elders seated under the shade of
cypress and willow trees, surrounded by youths
listening to their tales of former times.

I saw the youths strumming their guitars and
piping on their reeds and loose-tressed damsels
dancing under the jasmine trees.

I saw the husbandmen harvesting the wheat,
and the wives gathering the sheaves and singing
mirthful songs.

I saw woman adorning herself with a crown
of lilies and a girdle of green leaves.

I saw Friendship strengthened between
man and all creatures, and clans of birds and
butterflies, confident and secure, winging
toward the brooks.

I saw no poverty: neither did I encounter excess.
I saw fraternity and equality prevailing among
man.

I saw not one physician, for everyone had the
means and knowledge to heal himself.

I found no priest, for conscience had become
the High Priest. Neither did I see a lawyer, for
Nature has taken the place of the courts, and
treaties of amity and companionship were in
force.

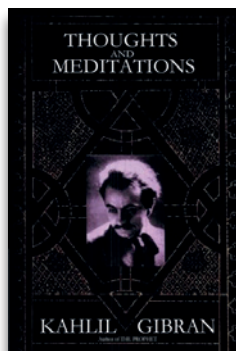
I saw that man knew that he is the
cornerstone of creation, and that he has raised
himself above littleness and baseness and cast
off the veil of confusion from the eyes of the
soul; this soul now reads what the clouds write
on the face of heaven and what the breeze draws
on the surface of the water, now understands the
meaning of the flower's breath and the cadences
of the nightingale

From behind the wall of the Present, upon the
stage of coming ages, I saw Beauty as a groom
and Spirit as a bride, and Life as the ceremonial
Night of the Kedre.¹✱

Note:

1. A night during the Moslem Lent when God is
said to grant the wishes of the devout. (Note by
Anthony R. Ferris)

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The extract of text
opposite is reproduced
from the book *Thoughts
and Meditations* by
Kahlil Gibran, translated
from the Arabic and
edited by Anthony R.
Ferris, The Citadel Press,
New York, 1960, 128 pp.,
pp. 70-71.

New Year's Resolutions and How to Keep Them

We will soon be at that point in the calendar when many of us make New Year's resolutions. Are we initiating new and better living habits or are we wasting our time and probably setting ourselves up for failure?

The futility of New Year's resolutions is a widely discussed topic, with research indicating that most people fail to keep their goals. A 2023 poll from *Forbes Health* found that most people give up their resolutions after less than four months, with only 1% lasting for 11 or 12 months. Despite this, some argue that the practice is not inherently futile but rather a reflection of how goals are approached, with experts suggesting that focusing on habit formation and realistic, incremental changes can improve success rates.

- A 2012 study in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* found that while nearly half of Americans make New Year's resolutions, only 8% actually see them through.
- According to research by Strava, 12th January is the day when most people give up on their resolutions, and a 2015 ComRes poll for Bupa showed that 43% of UK participants who gave up did so in under a month.
- The failure of resolutions is often attributed to "abstinence violation", a negative cognitive response after a lapse, which can lead individuals to abandon their goals entirely.
- Some experts argue that the problem lies not in the concept of resolutions but in the approach; shifting focus from grand, all-or-nothing goals to building sustainable habits can increase success.
- A 2020 study published in *PLoS One* found that 55% of respondents considered themselves successful at a one-year follow-up, challenging the notion that resolutions are universally futile.
- Alternative approaches, such as creating a "Don't-Do List" to eliminate low-value tasks, have been proposed as more effective ways to achieve personal and professional goals. ❄️



Evelina Kasparaitė

Last Words

'Sawubona!'

The Zulu people of South Africa traditionally greet one another with this word, 'Sawubona', which literally means, 'I see you' – not 'you' primarily as a fleshly entity, but 'you' as a living spirit.

Similarly, Bushmen (indigenous inhabitants of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana/South Africa) have a greeting that translates as, 'I saw you coming from afar', acknowledging spiritual presence, rather than mere physical proximity.

This way of greeting makes one aware of how important it is in human relationships to be able to see a fellow human being as just that spiritual entity, rather than as a skin colour, class, religion or ideology.

Maud Oosterwijk



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.

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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Esoterica, the journal of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales,
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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
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We offer thought-provoking and original interpretations
of these fascinating ideas from the perennial philosophy
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The next edition will appear on the spring equinox,
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