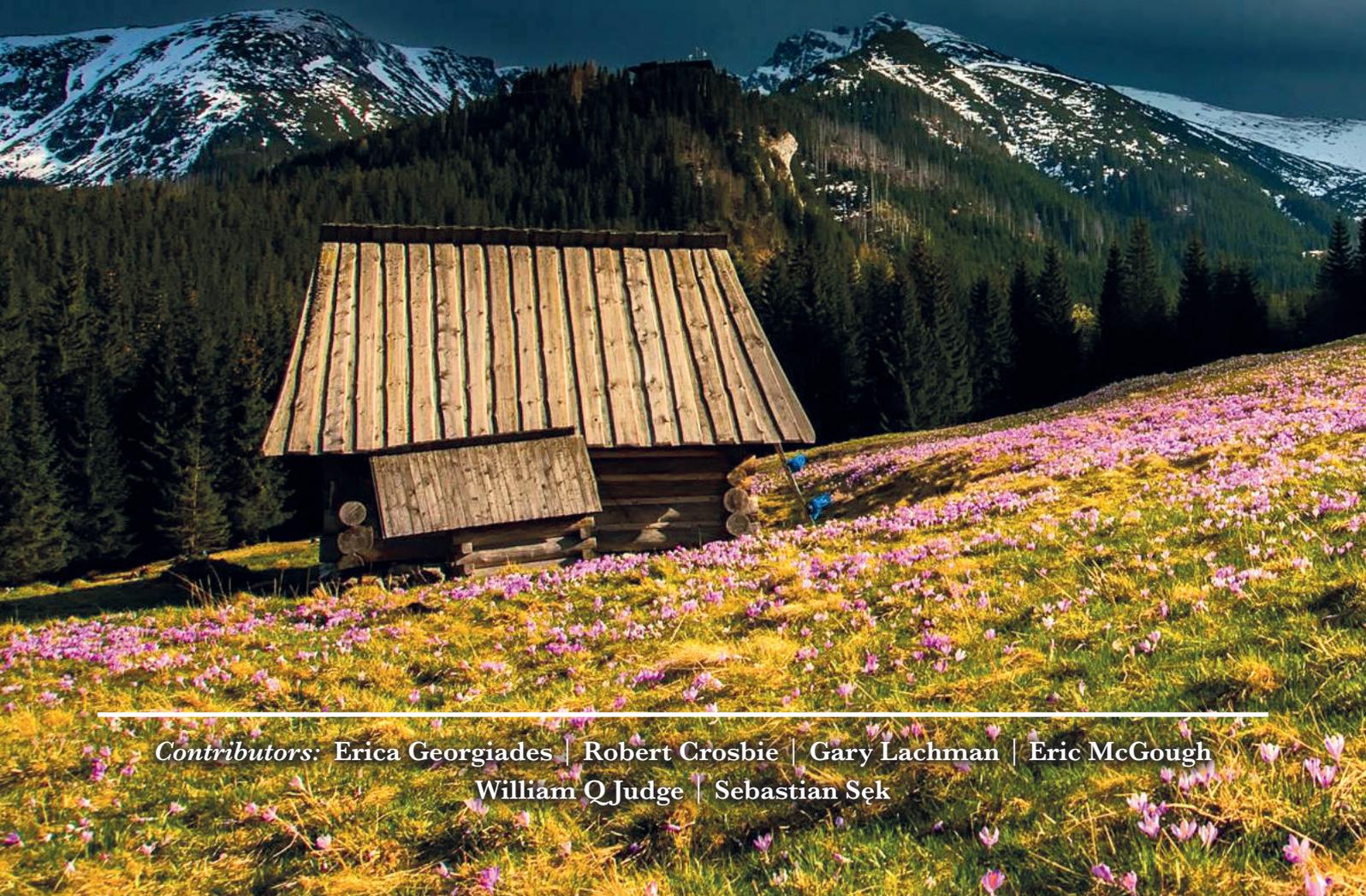


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ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM



Contributors: Erica Georgiades | Robert Crosbie | Gary Lachman | Eric McGough
William QJudge | Sebastian Şek

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From the Editor's desk

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Esoterica*. We are starting to put the Winter behind us at last. Looking ahead to warmer days and seeing the burgeoning growth everywhere gives me a renewed sense of inspiration and energy. This is a boost for my daily life but is not needed for my theosophical life. Theosophy is a light in my consciousness that never diminishes, and is always making sense of the moving shadows of our shared physical lives and world.

Erica Georgiades is a director of the European School of Theosophy and the School of Wisdom, and the vice president of the Theosophical Society (TS) in Greece. In 2022, Erica interviewed Svitlana Gavrylenko, the general secretary of the TS in Ukraine. Svitlana became a member of the TS in 2000. She is a PhD and was assistant professor in mathematics (probability theory) at Ukraine's National Agrarian University, although now retired. She is also the head of the organizing committee of the annual international forum of Spiritual Development for Man and Society and of the Council of the Committee for Ethics and Humanitarian Expertise. This interview was originally conducted for the YouTube channel of the European School of Theosophy (EuST).

Promoting the idea of Brotherhood in a war-torn country requires an unshakable commitment to the first object. We can only praise the fortitude and spiritual and theosophical commitment of the Ukraine

theosophists as they continue the Master's work in a time of war. As I'm sure you'll know, H. P. B. was born in Dnipro, Ukraine.

Speaking of consciousness, this edition offers a comprehensive exploration of the evolution of consciousness in terms of the state of the world, civilization, and society written by Gary Lachman. Gary is a well-respected writer with more than twenty books and countless articles to his name. He is a regular speaker on the Sunday programme at Headquarters.

Sebastian Sęk has written for us before and we include another of his excellent articles, *The Raven and the Dove – Mystical Messengers Between Worlds*. A very thought-provoking read.

With all the controversy and strong feelings, both for and against the ever-increasing influx of asylum seekers into the UK and across Europe, now reported on an almost daily basis, *Last Words* offers a short piece by William Shakespeare just to give a four-hundred-year-old perspective on the matter.

Lots more in the following pages.
Best wishes to all. ✨

Julie Cunningham Editor



Marek Studzinski

Theosophy in Today's Ukraine

An Interview with Svitlana Gavrylenko

By *Erica Georgiades*

Svitlana Gavrylenko is general secretary of the Theosophical Society in Ukraine. She became a member of the TS in 2000. She is PhD and assistant professor in mathematics (probability theory) at Ukraine's National Agrarian University, now retired. She is also the head of the organizing committee of the annual international forum of Spiritual Development for Man and Society and of the Council of the Committee for Ethics and Humanitarian Expertise. This interview was originally conducted for the YouTube channel of the European School of Theosophy (EuST).

Erica Georgiades: Dear Svitlana, I am very happy to see you. Thank you for being here with us today. To begin, why did you not leave Ukraine when the war started?

Svitlana Gavrylenko: You see, this was not my mental, logical decision. This was my inner position without any variants. My only move was from my home to our TS headquarters; both are in the center of Kyiv. I did it four days before the war started. I felt that this is now my place.



Above: Svitlana Gavrylenko.



Erica: How is the humanitarian situation over there?

Svitlana: There is no person in Ukraine who has not been touched by the war. This is an extraordinary test for everyone. Huge queues formed from the very first day of the war to military offices and formation points of territorial defence units. They were men and women, pupils, students, pensioners. Military operations began on a very wide front line; shelling and offensive operations began in the north, east, and south of the country. Because of this, millions of people were displaced in



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search of safe places to stay. Some of them left the country, and the majority moved to the central and western regions. It was a major humanitarian problem, for the solution of which both state services and volunteer organizations were involved in Ukraine and in most European countries. Thus, Ukraine gave an impetus to reveal the spirit of brotherhood in the world. We greatly appreciate this spirit of Unity.

Erica: War is such a cruel thing: it separates family and friends, affects animals, and devastates the environment. In such difficult

moments, it is important to have courage. I recall the words of Martin Luther King Jr: *“We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.”* In this way, we can move forward with infinite hope in our hearts, while of course always trying to avert the evils of war and actively working for peace. Could you please share with us what have you been doing to improve the situation over there?

Svitlana: Most of the members of the TS remained in Ukraine; some moved to the western regions. Undoubtedly, at the call of the heart, they began to look for opportunities to help people. At first, it was help for refugees and displaced persons. Many sent financial aid for the military and hospitals. After some time, huge destruction was revealed in the cities and villages that were freed from occupation. People needed the most necessary things. Our colleagues from the Theosophical Order of Service from different countries of the world came to the rescue. They sent their financial support, and our volunteers used these funds to provide humanitarian aid. We are very grateful to everyone for such cooperation. I also want to say that there is another side to our work as Theosophists. We all know about the power of thought.

Erica: We know how a small positive thought in the morning can change the entire day – how a positive attitude in face of



Dmytro Tolokonov

Above: Kyiv, Ukraine, 1 January 2024 after an attack from Russian missiles. A residential building was destroyed. Rescuers and firefighters provided assistance to civilians and extinguished the fire.

hardships can give us and those around us strength to move forward, paving the way for better and brighter days. In this way, we have organized online meditations from the first days of the war.

Svitlana: From the first days of the war, we felt very much the mental help of all those who sympathize with the Ukrainian people and cooperate with us, and the spiritual help of the subtle planes of existence and contact with them. From the first days, we started conducting short meditations for the

protection of Ukraine with the reading of the Universal Prayer ("O Hidden Life") according to the scheme 8-12-8.

We invite our friends to join. This scheme has already been worked out since the time of Covid, which can be supplemented by an appeal to subtle forces for help for the people of Ukraine.

Some of our branches hold their own internal daily meditation online meetings. At the all-Ukrainian level, joint meditations are held every Thursday at 9 p.m. to strengthen the core of the Brotherhood, support and protect Ukraine, and unite all the Light forces of the planet.

One more piece of news: there are three groups of the Order of Healing in Ukraine. They now work online. We have developed a special ritual to assist in the transition to other worlds all those killed and martyred during military operations. We feel a great need for such work in today's situation and conduct it regularly and weekly, separately from the main service of the Order of Healing.

Erica: It is very inspiring to know you all

have been doing joint meditations, focusing on peace and siblinghood. Is the TS in Ukraine active?

Svitlana: Oh, yes. Two years of experience of online activism during Covid-19 allowed us to confidently continue our activism during the destabilizing period at the beginning of the war. For some members, the only problem was the availability of an Internet connection. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that the work of the Theosophical Society should be continued and even deepened. From the first days, the idea arose that it is precisely in these conditions that our work is extremely necessary both for ourselves and for the people around us.

Moreover, right now we in Ukraine are passing the most important test for truly carrying out the idea of Brotherhood. It is precisely in the conditions of crisis that people begin to realize the priority of the spiritual component in the life of individuals and societies, as well as to put universal human values above personal values. So popularization of the ideas of Theosophy is important and timely right now.

Erica: Yes, it is precisely in moments of crisis, as you say, that people begin to realize the importance of changing their lives, prioritizing what really matters: the well-being of others, the land, and the world we live in. So what kind of work you have been doing?

Svitlana: First of all, I want to note the intensification of TOS activities. Theosophists are trying to be effective in a broad volunteer movement that has swept the whole country. No one remains indifferent. This includes



Yurii Khomitskiyi

assistance to refugees and displaced persons, informational assistance, provision of essentials for residents of cities and towns liberated from occupation, help to hospitals, and assistance to animals. We are very grateful to our TOS colleagues from different countries of the world for the financial support that makes it possible to carry out our TOS humanitarian support actions. This is really a practical realization of the idea of Brotherhood. Many thanks to you, dear Erica, for your hearty participation in such an activity. I would like to especially note the active help of our TOS colleagues from Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, America, Germany, Greece, France, Slovenia, and other countries.

Our regular activities continue. All our permanent local groups work online, all-Ukrainian events are regularly held, we invite foreign lecturers, and Internet resources are constantly updated: the website, the Facebook page, the TOS information blog, the YouTube channel. Magazines are published in electronic form: two monthly magazines: a newsletter for members and Herald of Unity (on general esotericism). Our main TS magazine, *Svitoch*, is published every two months, and another magazine, *Theosophy and Science*, comes out twice a year.

The only thing missing is physical communication, personal contacts, and touch. We want to hug our brothers and sisters, sit next to them, talk. But probably this is not the only case here.

Erica: Solidarity is the foundation of our humanity. If we cannot help each other, be there for each other in challenging moments,

what would the world be? What would our humanity be? The TOS is certainly doing such a wonderful work by offering support. We also want to see you all, sit close to you, and have close contact. I am sure that this will soon will be possible, and that very soon these dark days will be a thing of the past. You have planned a pilgrimage tour to Dnipro, Odesa, and Kyiv for visiting places connected with HPB and getting to know the TS work in Ukraine. Can you share with us what places Theosophists would visit and see in this pilgrimage?

Svitlana: Yes, we have such a dream. We already expressed such a proposal at the meeting of the TS General Council just before Covid. This proposal was met with great interest and enthusiasm. Now we probably have to wait for the end of the war. We are waiting for such an opportunity and will be happy to see our brothers and sisters in the motherland of Helena Petrovna. You will be able to feel the special energy of this land, its powerful, indomitable spirit; you can breathe the air of the house where she was born and enjoy the steppe spaces where she spent her childhood years. This will be a journey to her origins, to her primary points of entry in her extremely significant incarnation, which had a planetary significance and determined a new era of evolution of humanity's consciousness. For an initial acquaintance, we offer our guests a visit to Dnipro, Kyiv, and possibly Odesa as well.



Above: The January-February 2026 issue of *Svitoch*.



Above: The birthplace of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and now the Museum Center of her and her family, at 11 Yaroslava Mudrogo Street, Dnipro, Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, the key place is the house where HPB was born in Dnipro. Since 2009, the Museum Center of HPB and her family has been established there, it is a state institution. As soon as the war is over, we will again resume preparations for the reception of guests. It will be a special joy for us to see our friends and give them the opportunity to visit the sacred places of the motherland of HPB.

Erica: It will be truly wonderful to have the opportunity to visit Ukraine. In fact, since 2018 I have been entertaining the idea of organizing the EuST in Ukraine, but soon Covid and the war started, and that was no longer possible. We were planning to host the EuST at the Blavatsky house. Do you know the current condition of Blavatsky's house?

Svitlana: Museums are cultural assets; they are closed during the war. The most valuable exhibits have been evacuated or hidden in a safe place. The building itself has security. It is currently not damaged by the explosions, but the war continues.

Erica: Cultural assets are important, but not as important as the well-being of others and the environment. Is there anything we can do to help our brothers and sisters in Ukraine?

Svitlana: Thank you, dear Erica, for your kind heart and for this question. There is no doubt that today museums are not the primary recipients of funding in our country. Since the beginning of their existence, volunteers have done a lot of good deeds; volunteer meetings were held twice a year. Thanks to such public efforts, today it is

possible to gather and hold exhibitions in this building. When you come, dear Erica, and see everything with your own eyes, you will get the answer to your question about helping the Museum Center. As for helping Ukraine, your prayers, meditations, good wishes, and letters mean a lot to us today. Ukraine really needs help and does not hide it. You were one of the first to respond and offer help.

Erica: Is there anything else you would like to say?

Svitlana: I am very grateful to you, Erica, for the invitation to this conversation. I want to convey greetings from all the Theosophists of Ukraine to brothers and sisters all over the world. Today we really need your support and help. As soon as peaceful times come, we will be glad to see you in our place and meet you personally. I am sure that in these difficult times, humanity has taken a step towards Unity and Brotherhood. Let's keep the link! I hope for meeting again at the soonest opportunity.

Erica: I am very grateful to you, Svitlana, for accepting the invitation to be here with us



Above: Carpathian mountains, Ukraine.

Rostyslav Savchyn

today. I want to convey greetings to all Ukrainians, and to assure you we are doing our best to help the situation improve. As soon as peace is established, we will visit Ukraine and join the wonderful pilgrimage you envision. We wish you all strength and perseverance, moving forward with infinite hope in your hearts, for certainly better and brighter days will come. ✨

If you wish to assist in humanitarian and animal welfare efforts, please contact Dr. Svitlana Gavrylenko at info@theosophy.in.ua. This article was published in the Summer 2023 issue of *Quest* magazine.

Other resources

Website: www.theosophy.in.ua

TOS info: <https://ukr-tos.blogspot.com/>

FaceBook: www.facebook.com/theosophy.in.ua

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_Gfg8YO5iaXekyxPf0p_Gg

Telegram channel: https://t.me/Theosophy_in_Ukraine

Telegram chat: <https://t.me/+ilwrNVYEeOhlZjRi>



Erica Georgiades is the director of the European School of Theosophy and the School of Wisdom. She is also the vice president of the Theosophical Society in Greece.

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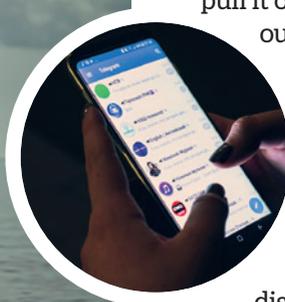
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Culture of Concentration

By *Robert Crosbie*



Christian Weidiger

Concentration, or the use of the attention in the direction of anything that we wish to do, consistently and persistently, has long been recognized as the most effective means of arriving at the full expression of our powers and energies. The ancients called the power to focus the attention upon a subject or object for as long a time as is required, to the exclusion of every other thought and feeling, “one-pointedness.” Concentration is difficult to obtain among us as a people, because the keynote of our civilization is, in fact, distraction rather than concentration. Constantly and in every direction we are having presented to our minds objects and subjects – one thing after another to take our attention and then to pull it off from what we are putting it on. So, our minds have acquired the tendency to jump from one thing to another; to fly to a pleasant idea or to an unpleasant idea, to remain passive. Remaining passive is normally sleep; abnormally, its tendency is towards insanity. That we have become habituated to these distractions and are not able to place our minds on any given thing for any length of time may be easily proved by anyone. If he will sit down and try to think of one single thing, one single object or subject, for only five minutes, he will find even in a very few seconds, perhaps, that he has wandered miles away mentally from the thing he intended to place his mind upon.

We have first to understand what man is, his real nature, what the cause of his present

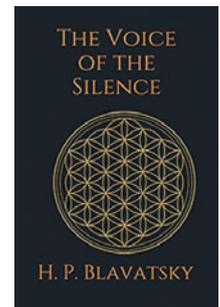
condition, before we can arrive at any pure and true concentration, before we can use the higher mind and the powers that flow from it. For the powers that we use in the body are transmitted powers, drawn, indeed, from our inner spiritual nature, but so disturbed and limited that they are not powerful. We need to know about our minds, and we need to control our minds – that is, the lower mind, occupied with personal and physical things, known in Theosophical phraseology, as Lower Manas. It is this “organ”, the thinking principle, which the ancients said is the great producer of illusion – the great distracter of concentration. For there is no possibility of obtaining real concentration until the possessor of the mind can place it where he will, when he will, and for as long a time as he pleases.

It is written in *The Voice of the Silence*: “Mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the Slayer.” The disciple, who is the Real Man – the spiritual man – has to act as such. He has to stop the switchings and fittings of his thinking principle and become calm in that knowledge to which the consideration of his own true nature brings him. The object of all advancement is the realization of the true nature of each one and an employment of the powers which belong to it. What hinders is the thinking principle. We are the thinkers, but we are not what we think. If we think wrongly, then all the results of our thoughts and actions must lead to a wrong conclusion, or to a partial one, at best; but if we realize that we are the thinker, and the creator – the evolver of all the conditions through which we have been, in which we now are, and in which we shall find ourselves in the future –

then we have reached the point of view of the Real man, and it is only to the Real man that the power of concentration belongs.

Again, in order to obtain concentration, we need an understanding of the classification of the principles of man. We all have the same principles, the same kinds of substances within us, the same spirit within us. We all contain every element that exists anywhere or in any being. So, too, each one has all the powers that exist anywhere, in himself, though latent. We are all of the same Source, all parts of one great Whole, all sparks and rays from the Infinite Spirit, or the Absolute Principle. The second principle is Buddhi, or the acquired wisdom of past lives, as well as this one. It is the cream of all our past experiences. The next principle is Manas, the Higher mind, the real power to think, the creator – not concerned with this physical phase of existence, but with the spirit and the acquired wisdom. These three principles together make the Real Man – Atma Buddhi-Manas – and these three each one of us is in his inner nature.

Our Lower Manas is the transitory aspect of the Higher mind; that is, the portion of our attention, our thoughts and feelings addressed to life in a body. But if our thinking faculty is concerned only with the personal self – only with the body – the powers which reside in the Triad, the Real man, and the acquired wisdom of the past, can not force themselves through that cloud of illusion. Lower Manas is the principle of balance. It is the place from which the man in a body either goes up towards his higher nature or down towards his earthly nature, made up of the desires



The Voice Of The Silence by H. P. Blavatsky, first published in 1889.

pertaining to sensuous existence. Life about us is throwing its impressions and energies upon us all the time. We are constantly subject to them and connected with them by our ideas, our feelings and emotions, so that there is a constant turmoil going on within that inner mind which makes a barrier to absolute calmness and concentration.

Then we have the astral body, itself an aspect of the real inner body which has lasted through the vast period of the past and must continue through the far distant future. This astral body is the prototype, or design, around which the physical body is built, and which, considered from the point of view of the powers, is the real physical body. Without it the physical body would be nothing but a mass of matter – an aggregation of smaller lives. It is the astral body which contains the organs, or centers from which the organs have been evolved in accord with the needs of the thinker within. The real senses of man are not in the physical but in the astral body. The astral body lasts a little over one lifetime. It does not die when the physical body dies, but is used as a body in the immediate after-death states.

Now as soon as we begin to make the effort to control the mind, and desire to know and to assume the position of the inner man, the effort and the assumption bring an accession of power and of steadiness. We have started something going in the astral body. What were before merely centers of force around which organs were builded now

tend to become separate astral organs. A gradual building of those organs goes on within us, until in the completion of our effort we have an astral body, with all the organs of the physical completely synthesized, and we are beyond the vicissitudes of physical existence; we have the power of the action of the astral body. The astral body is even more complete and effective on its own plane than our bodily instrument here on the physical plane, for it has a wider range of action in its seven super-senses, where physically we have use of only five senses.

Many hindrances arise, however, as soon as the effort is begun. Old habits of thought and feeling press us on every hand, because we have not yet been able to check our responsiveness to them, and so we find ourselves subject to certain feelings and emotions which tend to destroy that astral body which is being built. First, and most potent, is anger. Anger has an explosive effect, and no matter how much we may have progressed in our growth, the uncontrollable inner shock coming from anger will tear that inner body to pieces so that the work has to be done all over again. Next to contend with is vanity – vanity of some kind or another, of some accomplishment, of ourselves, our family, our nation, or what not.

Vanity tends to grow and grow, until finally we will not listen to anybody and are too vain to learn anything. So, vanity tends to disintegrate this inner body, although it is less disruptive than anger. Envy is another hindrance. Fear is another, but fear is the



Alexis Fauvet



Engin Akyurt

least of them all because it can be destroyed by knowledge. Fear is always the child of ignorance. We fear those things we do not know, but when we know, we do not fear.

We are all a prey to those fears that tend to disrupt the very instrument by means of which true concentration may be attained; but it may be attained. The peculiar power and nature of concentration is that, when complete, the attention can be placed on any subject or object to the exclusion of every other for any given length of time; and this thinking principle - this mind of ours which has been flitting about - can be used to shape itself to the object gazed upon, to the nature of the subject thought about. While the mind takes the shape of the object, we get from that shape the form, the characteristics of every kind that flow from it; and when our inquiry is complete, we are able to know everything that can be known of the subject or object. Such a height of concentration we can easily see is not to be attained by intermittent efforts, but by efforts made from "a firm position assumed" with the end in view. All efforts made from that basis are bound to be of avail; every effort made from the point of view of the spiritual man counts, because it makes the body subservient to the thinking principle.

Other things come about from that true power of concentration. We begin to open up the channels that reach from our brains to the astral body, and from the astral body to the inner man. Then, that which is temporary tends to become a part of that which is eternal. All the planes become synthesized from above down, and all the vestures of the soul which we have evolved from the past become in

accord with each other. It is just like the tumblers in a lock: when they work together, the lock works accurately. So we have to bring all the sheaths of the soul into exact accord, and that we can do only by taking the position of the spiritual being and acting as such.

The height of concentration is possible to us, but not on a selfish basis. The concentration of the brain mind stands beside true concentration as a rush light beside the sun. True concentration is, first of all, a position assumed out of regard for the end in view of union with the Higher Self. That is the highest Yoga. Concentration upon the Self is true concentration. And concentration must be attained before we can ever reach that stage where eternal knowledge of every kind is ours to the last degree; before we shall once more resume and wield those powers which are the heritage of all. ✨



Anne Nygard

Published (posthumously) in *Theosophy Magazine*, December 1921.



Robert Crosbie (1849-1919) was a theosophist and founder, in 1909 of the United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT). In 1912, Crosbie first published the theosophical magazine 'Theosophy'. A book, 'The Friendly Philosopher', was

compiled from his letters, talks and articles, and published fifteen years after his death by appreciative students.

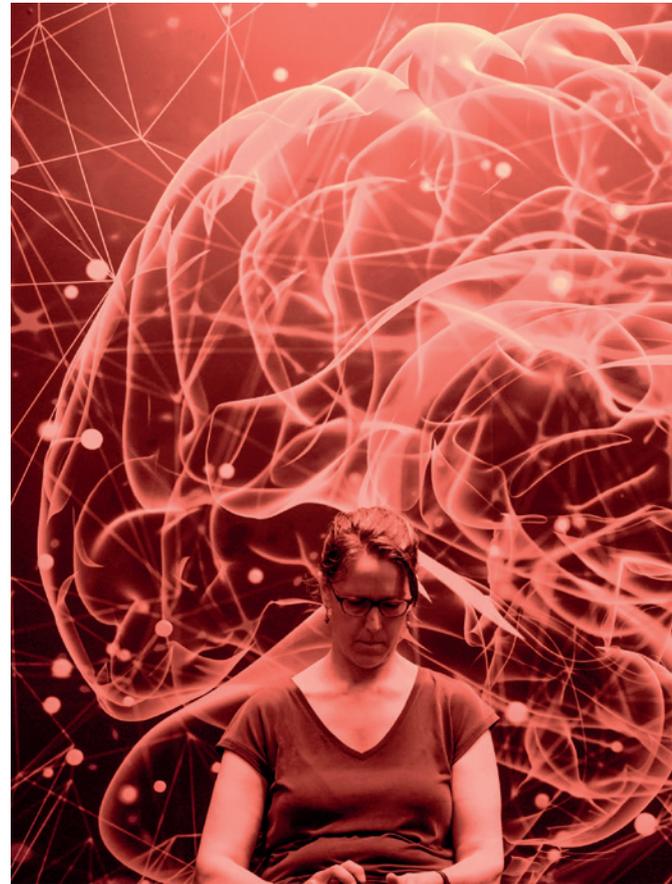
If Consciousness Is Evolving, Why Aren't Things Getting Better?

By **Gary Lachman**

When people ask me what I write about, I have a few standard replies, but one answer that covers most of my work is “*the evolution of consciousness.*” Of course in most cases this only leads to more questions, the most common of which are “*How can you say that consciousness is evolving?*” or “*Really? What evidence do you have for its evolution?*” Or, as the title of this article has it, “*If consciousness is evolving, why aren't things getting better?*”

Drew Beamer

That things aren't getting better is taken as obvious, and if serious consideration of the idea of an evolution of consciousness depended on arguing that, to the contrary, they were, then I'd have to agree that any such speculation would be doomed from the start. By *things* of course we mean the state of the world, civilization, society. In multiple ways the world faces challenges today that, as the cliché goes, are unprecedented. Every day the news media reports a variety of crises. It seems that we are,



and have been for some time, experiencing what the historian Arnold Toynbee called a civilization's “*time of troubles.*” So it is not surprising that some people are surprised when I speak of an evolution of consciousness.

Fortunately, the evolution of consciousness does not depend on the state of things being better or worse. It does not depend on the state of things at all – quite the contrary. Consciousness, its evolution, and the world in which it finds itself, are of course linked. They are not separate, watertight realities. But I don't believe we will find evidence for an

YOU DIDNT COME THIS FAR TO ONLY COME THIS FAR



Markus Kämmermann

evolution of consciousness on the news, or in the latest headlines or tweets, or on Facebook or other social media.

I believe that even if all the evidence available announced the imminent collapse of Western civilization, this would not necessarily mean that consciousness doesn't evolve, merely that we had not grasped the meaning of its evolution. Consciousness can evolve and things can get worse – or better. The one is not a gauge of the other. Changes in consciousness may bring about changes in society that we consider beneficial. Or they

can precipitate upheavals that throw everything into chaos. The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead remarked that *“the major advances in civilization are processes that all but wreck the societies in which they occur”* (Whitehead, 88). As Whitehead suggests, what is wreckage for some may be the raw material for new creation for others.

Here I want to distinguish between the evolution of consciousness and what we can call *“progress”* or *“social change”* or *“world betterment.”* This is aimed at making the world a better place, which most intelligent people in some way desire, even if they are often unsure about how to do it. The other is a recognizable change in the shape and character of consciousness itself. As I've tried to show in some of my books, this kind of change in consciousness can, I believe, be traced throughout our history. We can say that the latter is about the form or kind of consciousness prevalent at a particular time and the change from this to another dominant kind of consciousness. The other, we can say, is about what the people experiencing this consciousness did with it. The first is the way in which consciousness experiences the world. The second is made up of the ideas, thoughts, concepts, and beliefs held by this consciousness.

The idea of making the world a better place is of relatively recent origin – say from the 1700s on. This makes it a very modern idea, one predicated on the recognition of human agency as a real force at work in the world. Although we now assume this and really question it only when faced with some insurmountable obstacle, it was not always



Above: Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) was an English mathematician and philosopher. He created the philosophical school known as process philosophy, which has been applied in a wide variety of disciplines, including ecology, theology, education, physics, biology, economics, and psychology.



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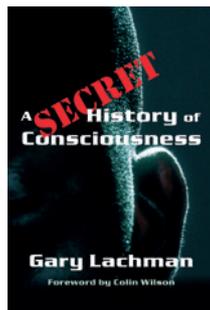
the case. With few exceptions, for centuries men and women simply accepted things-as-they-were with an unquestioning endurance, just as they accepted the weather or as an animal acquiesces in its fate. The idea that human beings were able to take action and change their circumstances rather than merely suffering them is itself, I believe, a product of a change in consciousness that took place around the seventeenth century. This shift endowed humanity with greater freedom and control over its destiny, but, precisely because of this, also confronted it with perhaps its most daunting challenge.

There are many different approaches to the idea of an evolution of consciousness. Even if we start a history of this idea with the beginning of the twentieth century – as I do in my book *A Secret History of Consciousness* – the number of different versions we get is considerable. I start my history at around 1900 because by this time the idea of evolution itself had taken hold of the Western imagination. (I should point out that the kind of evolution I am speaking about isn't Darwinian, although Darwin's version was the best-known.) It was also around this time that people began to use the term consciousness to talk about our inner, subjective worlds. What we call consciousness today would have been called "mind" or "spirit" at an earlier time. And while "mind" and "spirit" are resistant to the kind of scientific study that characterizes our time – and which has often led some scientists to consider them unreal – consciousness, as something more

abstract, seems more amenable to it. At least scientists find it less awkward to say they are studying consciousness than to say they are studying spirit.

A quick run-through of some exponents of an idea of an evolution of consciousness gives us quite a few names. Here we find, in no particular order, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, one of the founders of Theosophy; R. M. Bucke, author of *Cosmic Consciousness*; the Christian palaeontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin; the Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo; the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy; the philosopher Henri Bergson; the playwright Bernard Shaw; the biologist Julian Huxley; the Egyptologist René Schwaller de Lubicz; the spiritual philosopher Ken Wilber; the existential philosopher Colin Wilson; Samuel Butler, of *Erewhon* fame; and the esoteric philosopher P. D. Ouspensky, among many others.

Some of the versions presented by these people are similar to each other, some are complementary, and some are radically different. These figures include scientists, philosophers, esoteric teachers, and writers; some have a religious background, some do not. Thus the idea of an evolution of consciousness is not the property of one or two thinkers, and neither science nor philosophy nor mysticism has any monopoly on it. It appeals to a variety of minds – all of whom, though, appreciate its dynamic character, the emphasis on growth, development, becoming rather than being. Two proponents of an evolution of consciousness whose ideas I have found



especially fruitful are the philosopher of language Owen Barfield (1898–1997) and the cultural philosopher Jean Gebser (1905–73).

Barfield spelled out his ideas in a series of books, *History in English Words*, *Poetic Diction*, and *Saving the Appearances* being probably the best-known. He came to the idea of an evolution of consciousness – which he defines as “the concept of man’s self-consciousness as a process in time” – through a study of language, specifically poetry, which, strangely enough, is the same way that Gebser came to it (Barfield, *Romanticism*, 189). While reading his favorite poets, the Romantics, Barfield noticed something. He saw that the delight he found in reading their lyric poetry was the effect of a change in his consciousness that it produced. It somehow made his consciousness more “alive.” This was the effect of the poets’ using figurative language, that is, metaphor, especially the metaphors they used to speak of their souls, their inner worlds, their feelings and emotions. So, for example, in “Ode to the West Wind,” a favorite of Barfield’s, Percy Bysshe Shelley asks the wind to “make me thy lyre, even as the forest is.” Shelley wants the wind to blow through his soul as it does through the trees, and the inspiration it will bring is like the rustling of the leaves.

As Barfield said, there was something more to these metaphors than “merely reading and enjoying” them: “One could somehow dwell on them.” They altered the way in which he saw the world; it became “a profounder and a more meaningful place when seen through eyes that had been reading poetry.” Poetry, he found, “had the power to change one’s consciousness a little” (Barfield, *Origin of Language*, 3).

Barfield later came to see that a similar change in consciousness occurred when he looked at language from earlier times. This language was not intended to have a poetic effect. It just seemed to have it. Like poetry, this earlier language was much more figurative, much more metaphorical than our modern language. Barfield saw that the further we go back in history, the more figurative language seems, the more metaphorical and poetic. This was the argument of his first book, *History in English Words*. As we move closer to the present, language becomes less metaphorical and more literal.

For example, according to several dictionaries, our word electricity means “a form of energy,” which is rather abstract. But electricity derives from the Greek *elektron*, which to the ancient Greeks meant “amber.” This is because, when rubbed with fur, amber produces what we call static electricity. To the ancient Greeks this phenomenon had a lively, less abstract character, because their *elektron* was related to *elektor*, which meant “gleaming” or “the beaming sun.” So for our bare term denoting a form of energy, the Greeks, it seemed, used a more pictorial language (Barfield, *History in English Words*, 17).

We seem to have moved from what the literary philosopher Erich Heller called “the age of poetry” to “the age of prose.” Many metaphors that at an earlier time seemed fresh and vital either have become clichés or have become so worn down by use – a metaphor itself – that we no longer notice them and accept them without thinking as figures of speech.



Top: Arthur Owen Barfield (1898-1997) was an English philosopher, author, poet and critic. Above: Jean Gebser (1905-1973) was a Swiss philosopher, linguist and poet who described the structures of human consciousness.

Barfield concluded that while poetry may transform consciousness because it purposefully strives to do this – each individual poet using his imagination to create the effect – early language about the most ordinary things did the same thing, not because it went out of its way to do it, but because this consciousness was in the character of the language itself. Rather than accept that people of, say, the Middle Ages or ancient Greece were all remarkably poetic, he concluded that their language had this living quality because the world it spoke of was that way for them. It was an age of poetry not because everyone was a poet, but because, as Heller writes, it was an age in which “*poetry was not merely written but, as it were, lived . . . The poetic comprehension of life,*” Heller goes on, “*was at that time not a matter of the poetic imagination at work in the minds of a few chosen individuals, of artists . . . but was ‘natural,’ a matter of fact, of ways of thinking and feeling shared by the whole community*” (Heller, 3).

Barfield saw that the change from an age of poetry to one of prose meant a change in the way people saw the world, and this meant a change in their consciousness. Earlier language is much more alive than ours because the people speaking it saw a world that was much more alive than ours, which meant for Barfield that their consciousness presented the world that way. Barfield’s term for this living character of perceiving is participation. For him, the language of an earlier time is livelier than ours because the people of that time somehow participated in the life of the world around them in a way

that we now only experience occasionally. They were somehow aware of the inside of things, of the inner life of nature, in a way that our more prosaic consciousness, which concerns itself simply with the surface of things, isn’t. Our consciousness is different from that of the people who spoke this earlier language. It has changed, shifted, moved, or evolved from that state to our own.

We can, though, get flashes of this “*inside.*” It can happen, as it did with Barfield, through poetry – the other arts can also do it – or it can happen through certain mind-altering substances. Even something as simple as wine can do it, hence the longstanding association of poetry with the fruit of the vine.

Jean Gebser came to a similar conclusion through reading the work of the Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke in the early 1930s (Barfield himself began writing in the late 1920s). For Gebser, Rilke’s use of language suggested that in the twentieth century a shift had happened in Western consciousness. If Barfield and Heller recognized a shift from an age of poetry to one of prose – a shift from an age of living, metaphorical language to a more literal, matter-of-fact one – Gebser saw that this prosaic way of seeing the world was itself starting to change and that the stable, common-sense vision that it presented was beginning to break down.

In Rilke’s use of language, and in many other forms of human expression at the time, Gebser saw a movement away from the sequential, logical form of consciousness – a characteristic of plodding, prosaic thinking – and toward a kind of simultaneity. Rather than one-thing-following-another in a nice,



Above: René Karl Wilhelm Johann Josef Maria Rilke (1875-1926), known as Rainer Maria Rilke, was a Prague-born, Bohemian poet who wrote in German. Acclaimed as an idiosyncratic and expressive poet, his work possesses undertones of mysticism, exploring themes of subjective experience and disbelief.

orderly, steplike fashion, Gebser saw that in Rilke and in other writers and artists – Proust, James Joyce, Picasso – and scientists – Einstein, Max Planck – what was emerging was a kind of vision of “*everything all at once*,” a world in which past, present, and future were not as stable as they had been. Gebser spoke of this as an “*irruption of time*,” which he saw as the overall consequence of a new “*structure of consciousness*” that, he argued, was appearing in the West. Our own digital age, which prides itself on simultaneity and instant availability, may give us pause to consider Gebser’s idea.

Gebser’s magnum opus, *The Ever-Present Origin* – originally published in 1949 but not translated into English until 1984 – charts in great detail the cultural evidence for what he calls the different “*mutations of*

consciousness” that the human mind has gone through from prehistoric times until our own.

Like Barfield, Gebser believed that consciousness evolved, although he preferred the term “*mutation*” to “*evolution*,” to avoid the nineteenth-century notions of progress associated with evolution. I don’t have space to go through the different structures of consciousness Gebser depicts; an interested reader can find an outline of them in my book *A Secret History of Consciousness*. Here it is enough to say that Gebser believed that this irruption of time was both the result and the agent of what he called the “*breakdown of the mental-rational structure*.”

Gebser’s “*mental-rational*” structure of consciousness is much like the kind of consciousness that Barfield and Heller recognized in the age of prose. Barfield and Heller knew that these shifts take place over long stretches of time, and that the passing of the age of poetry into that of prose began in the distant past, perhaps during what the philosopher Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age, the period around 500 BC that saw the start of Western philosophy and its peculiar focus on logical reasoning and rational explanation.

Both Barfield and Gebser agreed that this

trend reached an apogee in the early seventeenth century with the rise of what we have come to call science. Science, we can say, is the epitome of the age of prose. In order to succeed, it had to denude the

world of its mythological, mythopoetic character. Science works because it treats the world as a dead object, not a living being, as our earlier, more metaphorical consciousness had. It sees the world as a machine, subject to rigid mechanical laws, not something in which we participate.

Earlier I remarked that the change in consciousness in the seventeenth century gave humanity greater freedom and control of its destiny, but also confronted it with perhaps its greatest challenge. The rise of science marks this change precisely. Certainly the world has changed more in the four centuries following this revolution than in the millennia

"The rise of science marks this change precisely. Certainly the world has changed more in the four centuries following this revolution than in the millennia that preceded it."

JEAN GEBSER

THE
EVER-
PRESENT
ORIGIN

Authorized Translation by
Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas

Above: The Ever-Present Origin by Jean Gebser is a philosophical work exploring the evolution of human consciousness through different structures, including archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and integral, each representing distinct stages in cultural and historical development.

that preceded it. To enumerate all the benefits that have come from the development of science and its offshoot, technology, would be tedious. We see them all around us, from space probes voyaging beyond our solar system to the latest breakthroughs in medicine. We live today in ways that kings of old could not imagine. So the change in Western consciousness at the beginning of the seventeenth century did, it seems, make things better.

Yet this change also led to many of the challenges facing us in our “time of troubles.” The loss of our sense of participation in the world allows us to detach from it and observe it impersonally – the essence of science – but it has also left us, as the novelist Walker Percy said, “lost in the cosmos.”

Gebser believes something similar. The mental-rational consciousness structure is the furthest removed from what he calls “Origin,” the ever-present source of consciousness itself. Our radical break with it began in the early fourteenth century; one sign of this, he argues, is the discovery of perspective in art, which marks a change from the flat, tapestry like perception of the Middle Ages to what became our own “space age,” a vision of

infinity extending in all directions. This shift enabled man to stand on his own, to confront the world with his own intelligence and will. The computer I am using to write this essay is

one result of this shift. But Gebser would agree with Walker Percy that it also led to our existential angst in the face of a mute universe that seems oblivious to us.

Blaise Pascal, one of the great mathematical minds of the seventeenth century, and also a deeply religious one, recognized this early on. In his *Pensées*, a collection of notes found after his death, Pascal had written about the new model of the universe arising from the nascent science: “*The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me.*” But today Pascal’s terror has dwindled to a numb acquiescence in the notion that the universe is meaningless. The respected astrophysicist Steven Weinberg dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s when he announced in his book *The First Three Minutes* that “*the more the universe seems comprehensible the more it also seems pointless.*”

So we have a change in consciousness that resulted in many things getting better, but which has also landed us with the greatest challenge humanity has faced: overcoming the passive nihilism that has become our accepted way of understanding ourselves and the world.

Barfield and Gebser believed that consciousness continues to evolve or mutate and that we today are involved in this process. Both believe that the meaninglessness behind our cultural and social malaise can be overcome, and that there are signs of another change in consciousness – one that will somehow allow us to reconnect with our source while at the same time maintaining the independent, free, creative consciousness that was the reason we lost touch with it in the first place. The loss of what Barfield calls



Above: *The School of Athens* by Raphael, painted between 1509 and 1511 for the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.

"original participation," resulting in our modern, alienated consciousness, can be seen as a fall, but Barfield would say it was a necessary one. Human consciousness needed that separation in order to individuate into its own independent "I." Now the aim is to achieve final participation, a conscious grasp and understanding of participation instead of our earlier, unconscious immersion in it. This can be achieved, Barfield believes, through a certain effort of the imagination, akin to the change in consciousness he felt when reading poetry. In essence it is a way of seeing the world figuratively, as alive, as a kind of metaphor to be grasped rather than an object

"Human consciousness needed that separation in order to individuate into its own independent 'I'."

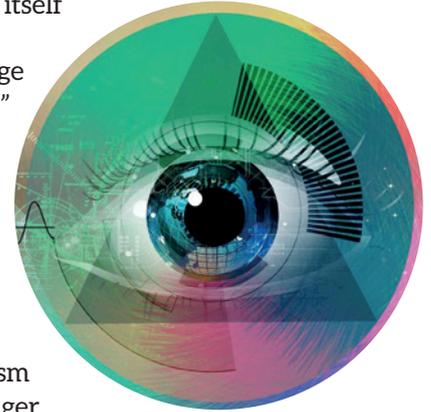
to be used. Unlike original participation, this is something we must bring our will and attention to; it requires effort on our part. It is an evolution we bring about, not one that happens to us. Barfield himself found the deepest insight into this process in the work of Rudolf Steiner, but we may read Barfield with profit without having to agree.

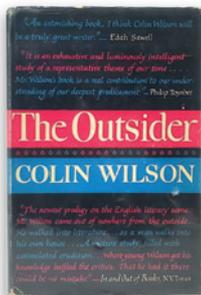
Gebser believed that the breakdown of the mental-rational structure was necessary for the next structure of consciousness to appear. He called it the integral structure, because it integrated all the previous structures and completed the unfolding of Origin. Gebser's vocabulary is difficult, and his descriptions of

the integral structure of consciousness require much effort to grasp; but as Barfield recognized while reading poetry, the attention directed at this kind of consciousness can itself induce a glimpse of it. Gebser speaks of a fundamental change from our current "perspectival" consciousness to an "aperspectival" one, a shift from a linear, utilitarian, ego-based view to a holistic, contemplative, ego-free one. What Gebser meant by "ego-free" was not that we lose our egos, as some forms of mysticism suggest, but that we are no longer limited to them. Our perspective is broadened to include much wider horizons. We achieve a bird's-eye view; we see from above, and not just what is smack in front of us. We get the big picture, not just the close-up.

Gebser and Barfield knew that such a change in consciousness is not passive and that the people in whom it stirs must make the effort to bring it about. Neither of the two believed in any millenarian singularity – some event that will trigger the shift and change things overnight. Gebser believed that such notions were illusions. "Let us not deceive ourselves," he wrote. "The world will not become much better, merely a little different, and perhaps more appreciative of the things that really matter" (quoted in Feuerstein, 166). The work of actualizing consciousness remains, whether things get better or not.

My own belief is that any new consciousness will emerge first in individuals, and for them it may be as much a burden as a





Above: *The Outsider* by Colin Wilson, first published in 1956.

blessing. They will have glimpses of what others do not, and will be driven by needs others find absurd. They will be what Colin Wilson calls Outsiders, people who see too deep and too much, where most others are near-sighted. Until they understand who they are, they will be misfits, but if consciousness has a future, it depends on them.

Space will not allow me to say more. I encourage readers to go to Barfield and Gebser themselves or, for an overview of their work, my own books, where you will find their ideas discussed along with those of other thinkers who are confronting the same problems. I can say with some assurance that if you do, you will find more evidence for an evolution of consciousness there than you will on the evening news. ✱

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Intuition – Solar Fire

By **Eric McGough**

Follow your intuition. We humans are endowed with two kinds of mind. These are commonly referred to as lower mind and higher mind, but esoteric science has other names. Two of these names are, respectively, Lunar and Solar. The Lunar mind is linked with the emotional nature, or lunar aspect, and seeks pleasure, satisfaction, and expression in the physical world. The Solar mind is linked with the Buddhi nature and seeks perfect expression of spiritual ideals.

The True faculty of intuition is manifest through the Solar mind via its connection with the intelligence of pure spiritual beings. These beings, ‘Solar Angels’, whose consciousness is Solar fire, are known as Agnishwatta Pitris, a compound of two Sanskrit words – *agni*, ‘fire’ and *shvatta*, ‘tasted’ or ‘to sweeten’ – therefore, one who has tasted or been sweetened by fire. As ‘fire’ in esoteric science is used to denote light, consciousness, wisdom, intelligence, and mind these Solar Angels are the source from which we as self-aware beings derive intelligence in its many forms.

In recent years many references have been made to our ‘Guardian Angels’. The idea is that each of us has a guardian angel looking over us



and therefore protecting us from all manner of ills. But this does not seem to be the case, not when we look around at all the evils that befall humanity the world over. Where is the guardian angel of a child when she is subjected to forms of abuse? Surely no guardian angel would fail to protect an innocent child. The fact of the matter is that the word ‘guardian’ is a substitute for the original description – ‘guiding’. The angel, that each of us possess, is our Solar Angel, which will guide us via the faculty of intuition, once we have developed it.

Intuition must be developed in us from its

Leo Weising





latent state or potential. To do this we must learn to focus our awareness in our higher (Solar) mind. This is the level of mind that is connected to Buddhi. Our Buddhic vehicle is our body of Spiritual fire or divine wisdom. We all have a thread of intuition already developed - not that we pay much attention to it most of the time. This is commonly known as our conscience, the tiny voice in the back of our heads that nibbles away at us with dos and don'ts; in other words, trying to guide us. If we want to develop our intuition, a good place to start would be to pay real attention to the

voice of our conscience.

From this it can be seen that we possess divine wisdom within us, and that this has not been tainted by involvement in the lower worlds. It is this connection, directly to the source of spiritual wisdom that is the attainment of the Masters.

The Lunar mind also has an inner connection, and this is often mistakenly referred to as intuition when in fact it is instinct. Instinct is not a spiritual power, it is psychic and was evolved aeons ago as a survival tool. As mankind developed the power of intelligence (courtesy of the Solar Angels) there was less need for psychic abilities, and these gradually became dormant.

The Solar mind is where we deal with abstract notions. It is here, in the higher reaches of mind, where we think philosophy, theoretical physics, meditation, and where we indulge in creative pursuits such as art, music, and awareness of mystical states. Intuition often plays a decisive part in these pursuits.

At such times we say, 'it was pure inspiration', or 'I don't know where the idea came from. It just popped into my mind'. Often, we will refer to a creative work as 'inspired'. Inspired is the word we use when we don't understand what has happened or where an idea came from, but it is really an example of the uncontrolled power of intuition (from within).

The Masters have said that the true key to their secrets is the controlled use of Intuition. Through many lifetimes of deliberate and self-directed evolution, taking full

Rein Z



responsibility for their own spiritual growth, through the practice of high moral ethics and with disciplined study of the esoteric sciences; they have elevated themselves far above the rest of us in both wisdom and compassion. The fruit of this dedicated and prolonged work is full control of the lower mind and a high degree of intellectual capacity, the power to work in abstract principles at the creative centre of higher mind, and direct contact with the divine intelligence and the Wisdom Teaching.

Intuition reveals to the Masters the living experience of the 'One Life'. Their password is Brotherhood. Their motive is compassion for all life. Their aim is the awakening of all souls to their divine inheritance. It is because of these things that they have released Part of the Wisdom Teaching to humanity. By giving out these teachings they hope to bring more of us into direct line with the divine plan and encourage us to ascend by our own efforts to higher levels of consciousness and power.

We can take up this work; it is not too hard for us to make the next step. Each new step, each new challenge is a call to perfection that we can follow just as the Masters have done before us. Our own connection to spiritual intuition lies just below the surface of our everyday minds; it is covered up by our feelings of mortality, our fears, and our addiction to self-interest. By studying the Wisdom Teaching we can gradually replace the illusions generated by our lunar minds as

“I believe in intuitions and inspirations. I sometimes feel that I am right. I do not know that I am.”

Albert Einstein

they are supplanted by the illumination which a developing solar mind brings. In this way we can start to gain real mastery of our thought processes, truly taking charge of our minds and evicting the Squatters of self-interest and greed, most of which are the work of others whose interest is to keep us ignorant of spiritual truths.

Self-liberation is the only liberation, because no one else can do it for us. In this most worthy of tasks the development of the latent power of intuition lying deep within us is paramount. Without it we are left with no option but to take the word of others, and there is no end of conflicting opinion out there in today's pseudo spiritual gold rush. ✨

Marie-Thalassinou



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.

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Theosophy and the Masters

An extract from *The Ocean of Theosophy* by **William Q Judge** (co-founder of the Theosophical Society)



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

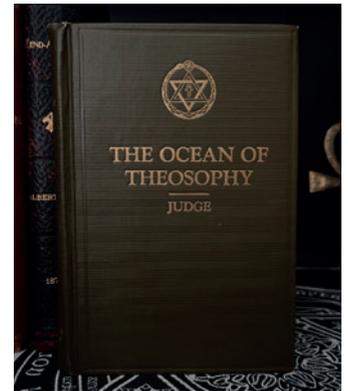
It is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the

laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical, and intellectual constituents of nature and of man. The religion of the day is but a series of dogmas man-made and with no scientific foundation for promulgated ethics; while our science as yet ignores the unseen, and failing to admit the existence of a complete set of inner faculties of perception in man, it is cut off from the immense and real field of experience which lies within the visible and tangible worlds. But Theosophy knows that the whole is constituted of the visible and the invisible, and perceiving outer things and objects to be but transitory it grasps the facts of nature, both without and within. It is therefore complete in itself and sees no unsolvable mystery anywhere; it throws the word coincidence out of its vocabulary and hails the reign of law in everything and every circumstance.

That man possesses an immortal soul is the common belief of humanity; to this Theosophy adds that he is a soul; and further that all nature is sentient, that the vast array of objects and men are not mere collections of atoms fortuitously thrown together and thus without law evolving law, but down to the smallest atom all is soul and spirit ever evolving under the rule of law which is inherent in the whole. And just as the ancients taught, so does Theosophy; that the course of evolution is the drama of the soul and that nature exists for no other purpose than the soul's experience. The Theosophist agrees with Prof. Huxley in the assertion that there must be beings in the universe whose intelligence is as much beyond ours as ours

exceeds that of the black beetle, and who take an active part in the government of the natural order of things. Pushing further on by the light of the confidence had in his teachers, the Theosophist adds that such intelligences were once human and came like all of us from other and previous worlds, whereas varied experience had been gained as is possible on this one. We are therefore not appearing for the first time when we come upon this planet, but have pursued a long, an immeasurable course of activity and intelligent perception on other systems of globes, some of which were destroyed ages before the solar system condensed. This immense reach of the evolutionary system means, then, that this planet on which we now are is the result of the activity and the evolution of some other one that died long ago, leaving its energy to be used in the bringing into existence of the earth, and that the inhabitants of the latter in their turn came from some older world to proceed here with the destined work in matter. And the brighter planets, such as Venus, are the habitation of still more progressed entities, once as low as ourselves, but now raised up to a pitch of glory incomprehensible for our intellects.

The most intelligent being in the universe, man, has never, then, been without a friend, but has a line of elder brothers who continually watch over the progress of the less progressed, preserve the knowledge gained through aeons of trial and experience, and continually seek



Above: *The Ocean of Theosophy* by William Quan Judge was first published in 1893 and serves as an introduction to Theosophy. (1937 edition shown).

for opportunities of drawing the developing intelligence of the race on this or other globes to consider the great truths concerning the destiny of the soul. These elder brothers also keep the knowledge they have gained of the laws of nature in all departments and are ready when cyclic law permits to use it for the benefit of mankind. They have always existed as a body, all knowing each other, no matter in what part of the world they may be, and all working for the race in many different ways. In some periods they are well known to the people and move among ordinary men whenever the social organization, the virtue, and the development of the nations permit it. For if they were to come out openly and be heard of everywhere, they would be worshipped as gods by some and hunted as devils by others. In those periods when they do come out some of their number are rulers of men, some teachers, a few great philosophers, while others remain still unknown except to the most advanced of the body.

It would be subversive of the ends they have in view were they to make themselves public in the present civilization, which is based almost wholly on money, fame, glory, and personality. For this age, as one of them has already said, "*is an age of transition,*" when every system of thought, science, religion, government, and society is changing, and men's minds are only preparing for an alteration into that state which will permit the race to advance to the point suitable for these elder brothers to introduce their actual presence to our sight. They may be truly called the bearers of the torch of truth across the ages; they investigate all things and beings;

they know what man is in his innermost nature and what his powers and destiny, his state before birth and the states into which he goes after the death of his body; they have stood by the cradle of nations and seen the vast achievements of the ancients, watched sadly the decay of those who had no power to resist the cyclic law of rise and fall; and while cataclysms seemed to show a universal destruction of art, architecture, religion, and philosophy, they have preserved the records of it all in places secure from the ravages of either men or time; they have made minute observations, through trained psychics among their own order, into the unseen realms of nature and of mind, recorded the observations and preserved the record; they have mastered the mysteries of sound and color through which alone the elemental beings behind the veil of matter can be communicated with, and thus can tell why the rain falls and what it falls for, whether the earth is hollow or not, what makes the wind to blow and light to shine, and greater feat than all — one which implies a knowledge of the very foundations of nature — they know what the ultimate divisions of time are and what are the meaning and the times of the cycles.

But, asks the busy man of the nineteenth century who reads the newspapers and believes in "*modern progress,*" if these elder brothers are all you claim them to be, why have they left no mark on history nor gathered men around them? Their own reply, published some time ago by Mr. A. P. Sinnett, is better than any I could write.

"We will first discuss, if you please, the one relating to the presumed failure of the

'Fraternity' to 'leave any mark upon the history of the world.' They ought, you think, to have been able, with their extraordinary advantages, to have 'gathered into their schools a considerable portion of the more enlightened minds of every race.' How do you know they have made no such mark? Are you acquainted with their efforts, successes, and failures? Have you any dock upon which to arraign them? How could your world collect proofs of the doings of men who have sedulously kept closed every possible door of approach by which the inquisitive could spy upon them? The prime condition of their success was that they should never be supervised or obstructed. What they have done they know; all that those outside their circle could perceive was results, the causes of which were masked from view. To account for these results, men have, in different ages, invented theories of the interposition of gods, special providences, fates, the benign or hostile influences of the stars. There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and 'making history,' the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by historians to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets? We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis despite the general drift of the world's cosmic relations. The cycles must run their rounds. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other as day does night. The major and minor yugas must be accomplished according to the established order of things. And we, borne along on the mighty tide, can only modify and

direct some of its minor currents."

It is under cyclic law, during a dark period in the history of mind, that the true philosophy disappears for a time, but the same law causes it to reappear as surely as the sun rises and the human mind is present to see it. But some works can only be performed by the Master, while other works require the assistance of the companions. It is the Master's work to preserve the true philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to rediscover and promulgate it. Once more the elder brothers have indicated where the truth – Theosophy – could be found, and the companions all over the world are engaged in bringing it forth for wider currency and propagation.

The Elder Brothers of Humanity are men who were perfected in former periods of evolution. These periods of manifestation are unknown to modern evolutionists so far as their number are concerned, though long ago understood by not only the older Hindus, but also by those great minds and men who instituted and carried on the first pure and undebased form of the Mysteries of Greece. The periods, when out of the Great Unknown there come forth the visible universes, are eternal in their coming and going, alternating with equal periods of silence and rest again in the Unknown. The object of these mighty waves is the production of perfect man, the evolution of soul, and they always witness the increase of the number of Elder Brothers; the life of the least of men pictures them in day and night, waking and sleeping, birth and death, "for these two, light and dark, day and night, are the world's eternal ways."

In every age and complete national history

these men of power and compassion are given different designations. They have been called Initiates, Adepts, Magi, Hierophants, Kings of the East, Wise Men, Brothers, and what not. But in the Sanskrit language there is a word which, being applied to them, at once thoroughly identifies them with humanity. It is Mahatma. This is composed of Maha great, and Atma soul; so it means great soul, and as all men are souls the distinction of the Mahatma lies in greatness. The term Mahatma has come into wide use through the Theosophical Society, as Mme. H. P. Blavatsky constantly referred to them as her Masters who gave her the knowledge she possessed. They were at first known only as the Brothers, but afterwards, when many Hindus flocked to the Theosophical movement, the name Mahatma was brought into use, inasmuch as it has behind it an immense body of Indian tradition and literature. At different times unscrupulous enemies of the Theosophical Society have said that even this name had been invented and that such beings are not known of among the Indians or in their literature. But these assertions are made only to discredit if possible a philosophical movement that threatens to completely upset prevailing erroneous theological dogmas. For all through Hindu literature Mahatmas are often spoken of, and in parts of the north of that country the term is common. In the very old poem the Bhagavad-Gita, revered by all Hindu sects and admitted by the western critics to be noble as well as beautiful, there is a verse reading, "*Such a Mahatma is difficult to find.*"

But irrespective of all disputes as to specific names, there is sufficient argument and proof

to show that a body of men having the wonderful knowledge described above has always existed and probably exists today. The older mysteries continually refer to them. Ancient Egypt had them in her great king-Initiates, sons of the sun and friends of great gods. There is a habit of belittling the ideas of the ancients which is belittling to the people of today. Even the Christian who reverently speaks of Abraham as "*the friend of God,*" will scornfully laugh at the idea of the claims of Egyptian rulers to the same friendship being other than childish assumption of dignity and title. But the truth is, these great Egyptians were Initiates, members of the one great lodge which includes all others of whatever degree or operation. The later and declining Egyptians, of course, must have imitated their predecessors, but that was when the true doctrine was beginning once more to be obscured upon the rise of dogma and priesthood.

The story of Apollonius of Tyana is about a member of one of the same ancient orders appearing among men at a descending cycle, and only for the purpose of keeping a witness upon the scene for future generations.

Abraham and Moses of the Jews are two other Initiates, Adepts who had their work to do with a certain people; and in the history of Abraham we meet with Melchizedek, who was so much beyond Abraham that he had the right to confer upon the latter a dignity, a privilege, or a blessing. The same chapter of human history which contains the names of Moses and Abraham is illuminated also by that of Solomon. And thus these three make a great Triad of Adepts, the record of whose deeds can not be brushed aside as folly and devoid of basis.

Moses was educated by the Egyptians and in Midian, from both of which he gained much occult knowledge, and any clear-seeing student of the great Universal Masonry can perceive all through his books the hand, the plan, and the work of a master. Abraham again knew all the arts and much of the power in psychical realms that were cultivated in his day, or else he could not have consorted with kings nor have been "*the friend of God*"; and the reference to his conversations with the Almighty in respect to the destruction of cities alone shows him to have been an Adept who had long ago passed beyond the need of ceremonial or other adventitious aids. Solomon completes this triad and stands out in characters of fire. Around him is clustered such a mass of legend and story about his dealings with the elemental powers and of his magic possessions that one must condemn the whole ancient world as a collection of fools who made lies for amusement if a denial is made of his being a great character, a wonderful example of the incarnation among men of a powerful Adept. We do not have to accept the name Solomon nor the pretense that he reigned over the Jews, but we must admit the fact that somewhere in the misty time to which the Jewish records refer there lived and moved among the people of the earth one who was an Adept and given that name afterwards. Peripatetics and microscopic critics may affect to see in the prevalence of universal tradition naught but evidence of the gullibility of men and their power to imitate, but the true student of human nature and life knows that the universal tradition is true and arises from the facts in the history of man.

Turning to India, so long forgotten and ignored by the lusty and egotistical, the fighting and the trading West, we find her full of the lore relating to these wonderful men of whom Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Solomon are only examples. There the people are fitted by temperament and climate to be the preservers of the philosophical, ethical, and psychical jewels that would have been forever lost to us had they been left to the ravages of such Goths and Vandals as western nations were in the early days of their struggle for education and civilization. If the men who wantonly burned up vast masses of historical and ethnological treasures found by the minions of the Catholic rulers of Spain, in Central and South America, could have known of and put their hands upon the books and palm-leaf records of India before the protecting shield of England was raised against them, they would have destroyed them all as they did for the Americans, and as their predecessors attempted to do for the Alexandrian library. Fortunately events worked otherwise.

All along the stream of Indian literature we can find the names by scores of great adepts who were well known to the people and who all taught the same story – the great epic of the human soul. Their names are unfamiliar to western ears, but the records of their thoughts, their work and powers remain. Still more, in the quiet unmovable East there are today by the hundred persons who know of their own knowledge that the Great Lodge still exists and has its Mahatmas, Adepts, Initiates, Brothers. And yet further, in that land are such a number of experts in the practical application of minor

though still very astonishing power over nature and her forces, that we have an irresistible mass of human evidence to prove the proposition laid down.

And if Theosophy – the teaching of this Great Lodge – is as said, both scientific and religious, then from the ethical side we have still more proof. A mighty Triad acting on and through ethics is that composed of Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus. The first, a Hindu, founds a religion which today embraces many more people than Christianity, teaching centuries before Jesus the ethics which he taught and which had been given out even centuries before Buddha. Jesus coming to reform his people repeats these ancient ethics, and Confucius does the same thing for ancient and honorable China.

The Theosophist says that all these great names represent members of the one single brotherhood, who all have a single doctrine. And the extraordinary characters who now and again appear in western civilization, such as St. Germain, Jacob Boehme, Cagliostro, Paracelsus, Mesmer, Count St. Martin, and Madame H. P. Blavatsky, are agents for the doing of the work of the Great Lodge at the proper time. It is true they are generally reviled and classed as impostors – though no one can find out why they are when they generally confer benefits and lay down propositions or make discoveries of great value to science after they have died. But Jesus himself would be called an impostor today if he appeared in some Fifth Avenue theatrical church rebuking the professed Christians. Paracelsus was the originator of valuable methods and treatments in medicine now

universally used. Mesmer taught hypnotism under another name. Madame Blavatsky brought once more to the attention of the West the most important system, long known to the Lodge, respecting man, his nature and destiny. But all are alike called impostors by a people who have no original philosophy of their own and whose mendicant and criminal classes exceed in misery and in number those of any civilization on the earth.

It will not be unusual for nearly all occidental readers to wonder how men could possibly know so much and have such power over the operations of natural law as I have ascribed to the Initiates, now so commonly spoken of as the Mahatmas. In India, China, and other Oriental lands no wonder would arise on these heads, because there, although everything of a material civilization is just now in a backward state, they have never lost a belief in the inner nature of man and in the power he may exercise if he will. Consequently living examples of such powers and capacities have not been absent from those people. But in the West a materialistic civilization having arisen through a denial of the soul life and nature consequent upon a reaction from illogical dogmatism, there has not been any investigation of these subjects and, until lately, the general public has not believed in the possibility of anyone save a supposed God having such power.

A Mahatma endowed with power over space, time, mind, and matter, is a possibility just because he is a perfected man. Every human being has the germ of all the powers attributed to these great Initiates, the difference lying solely in the fact that we have

in general not developed what we possess the germ of, while the Mahatma has gone through the training and experience which have caused all the unseen human powers to develop in him, and conferred gifts that look god-like to his struggling brother below. Telepathy, mind-reading, and hypnotism, all long ago known to Theosophy, show the existence in the human subject of planes of consciousness, functions, and faculties hitherto undreamed of. Mind-reading and the influencing of the mind of the hypnotized subject at a distance prove the existence of a mind which is not wholly dependent upon a brain, and that a medium exists through which the influencing thought may be sent. It is under this law that the Initiates can communicate with each other at no matter what distance. Its rationale, not yet admitted by the schools of the hypnotizers, is, that if the two minds vibrate or change into the same state they will think alike, or, in other words, the one who is to hear at a distance receives the impression sent by the other. In the same way with all other powers, no matter how extraordinary. They are all natural, although now unusual, just as great musical ability is natural though not usual or common. If an Initiate can make a solid object move without contact, it is because he understands the two laws of attraction and repulsion of which "gravitation" is but the name for one; if he is able to precipitate out of the viewless air the carbon which we know is in it, forming the carbon into sentences upon the paper, it is through his knowledge of the occult higher chemistry, and the use of a trained and powerful image making faculty which every

man possesses; if he reads your thoughts with ease, that results from the use of the inner and only real powers of sight, which require no retina to see the fine-pictured web which the vibrating brain of man weaves about him. All that the Mahatma may do is natural to the perfected man; but if those powers are not at once revealed to us it is because the race is as yet selfish altogether and still living for the present and the transitory.

I repeat then, that though the true doctrine disappears for a time from among men it is bound to reappear, because first, it is impacted in the imperishable center of man's nature; and secondly, the Lodge forever preserves it, not only in actual objective records, but also in the intelligent and fully self-conscious men who, having successfully overpassed the many periods of evolution which preceded the one we are now involved in, cannot lose the precious possessions they have acquired. *



William Quan Judge
(1851-1896) was an Irish-American mystic, esotericist and occultist, and one of the founders of the original Theosophical Society. Born in Dublin, he emigrated to the USA with his family when he

was 13 years old and became a naturalised citizen of the US at age 21. He passed the New York state bar exam, specialising in commercial law.

The Raven and The Dove

Mystical Messengers Between Worlds

By *Sebastian Şek*



Debbie EM

Across diverse cultures, the raven and the dove occupy a symbolic threshold, representing two birds positioned across a profound internal divide. The raven's black wing evokes shadow, mystery, death, cunning, and hard-won knowledge, while the dove's white feather signifies peace, innocence, love, spirit, and renewal. At first observation, these birds appear as opposites: dark and light, severity and gentleness, descent and ascent.

This apparent opposition underscores their interconnectedness. Throughout myth, scripture, and esoteric philosophy, both birds consistently appear as messengers between realms: earth and sky, life and death, conscious and unconscious, human and divine. They function as guide of souls and intermediaries, figures that convey meaning across boundaries that challenge rational understanding. Considered together, the raven and the dove form a unified symbolic narrative: the soul's journey through shadow into illumination, and the deeper unity that encompasses both.

The Raven in Myth and Religion

The raven frequently appears as a trickster, creator, and bearer of uncomfortable truths.

In Norse tradition, Odin's ravens, Huginn ("Thought") and Muninn ("Memory"), traverse the world and return with knowledge, positioning the raven as a conduit between the human realm and divine intelligence. The raven is not merely an omen; it serves as an instrument of perception, discerning what others overlook and returning with insights that may be unsettling.

In Celtic mythology, raven imagery is closely associated with prophecy and conflict, particularly in connection with the Morrígan, where battlefield, fate, and foreknowledge are intertwined. In numerous Indigenous North American traditions, especially among Pacific Northwest peoples, Raven emerges as a culture-hero and world-maker, acquiring light or reshaping creation through cunning. These narratives often present a paradox: Raven's chaos is not solely destructive but is disruptive in a manner that generates new possibilities. The figure may serve as both protagonist and antagonist, reflecting the untidy nature of creation in these myths.

Biblical references to the raven maintain this inherent ambiguity. In Genesis, Noah dispatches a raven over the floodwaters before sending the dove; the raven moves "to and from," failing to return with clear reassurance. The raven thus becomes associated with the unresolved, lingering at the edge of chaos. In *1 Kings*, however, ravens provide sustenance to Elijah in the wilderness, acting as agents of



Above: A plate from a Vendel era helmet featuring a figure riding a horse, thought to depict Odin with his horse Sleipnir, his spear Gungnir, and with his ravens, Huginn and Muninn, flying above.

provision in extraordinary circumstances. In these accounts, the raven's message is not sentimental but instead embodies survival, endurance, and the unexpected mercy that emerges through unremarkable means.

Across various traditions, the raven's defining characteristic is its association with elemental forces: death, wilderness, the unknown, and the hidden. It serves as a messenger that does not embellish its message, instead conveying unvarnished reality.

The Dove in Myth and Religion

The dove embodies complementary symbolic meanings, including peace, love, soul, and spirit. In the Genesis flood narrative, the dove's return with an olive leaf remains one of the most enduring images of hope in Western thought, signifying the return of life, the emergence of land, and the possibility of a future. While the raven represents the unresolved, the dove signifies the moment when renewal becomes apparent.

Long before Christianity, the dove was strongly associated with the sacred feminine, fertility, and generative powers of life. Archaeological and iconographic evidence from the ancient Near East frequently links dove imagery with mother-goddess traditions, including forms associated with Asherah and Astarte, where the bird becomes a sign of fecundity and blessing. In Mediterranean contexts, doves are also connected to erotic





Above: Used to symbolize the Holy Spirit, the motif of a dove, often appears in religious stained-glass windows.

love and beauty, appearing in association with Aphrodite and Venus. In these lineages, the dove is not only “peaceful”; it is life-bearing.

Within Christianity, the dove is inextricably linked to the Holy Spirit. The Gospels recount the Spirit descending “like a dove” at Jesus’ baptism, an image that unites breath, blessing, and divine presence. In this context, the dove is not simply a symbol of gentleness; it represents the movement of God toward the world, the intersection of spirit and matter, and the connection between heaven and earth. Mystical interpretations further expand this symbolism, presenting the dove as an emblem of inner consolation and the “voice” that reassures and aligns the soul.

Gnostic and esoteric traditions further enrich dove symbolism by associating it with Sophia, representing divine Wisdom or the World-Soul, often expressed in maternal or feminine terms. In certain early Syriac Christian and related mystical texts, the Spirit is invoked using explicitly maternal language and is linked to the dove. This association does not simply embellish the symbol; it deepens its meaning. The dove thus becomes a figure of compassionate intelligence, embodying wisdom that heals rather than dominates.

Two Birds, One Threshold

Considered together, the raven and the dove form a symbolic pair that emerges whenever the human psyche confronts a boundary condition, such as crisis, transition, initiation, or transformation. The raven is drawn to thresholds because it inhabits the in-between: the liminal terrain where old structures

dissolve and new ones have not yet stabilised. The dove is drawn to thresholds because it signals the possibility of coherence returning, such as peace after rupture, spirit after despair, or meaning after confusion.

A deeper pattern emerges: the peace symbolised by the dove does not negate the darkness represented by the raven. In the most profound traditions, the hope offered by the dove gains credibility because the raven has already compelled an encounter with difficulty. These birds are not competing moral symbols; rather, they function as sequential messengers within a unified transformative process.

Jungian Archetypes: Shadow and Spirit

Depth psychology, particularly within Jungian thought, interprets these birds as archetypes – recurring images that represent psychic realities extending beyond individual biography. In this context, the raven typically corresponds to the shadow, encompassing the unintegrated or denied aspects of the psyche: instincts, taboo emotions, disowned drives, grief, anger, fear, and disruptive truths that challenge self-perception. The raven appears when the psyche demands confrontation with what has been excluded.

Jungian analysis further aligns the raven with alchemical symbolism, particularly the nigredo, or “blackening” stage, which is associated with breakdown, dissolution, and confrontation with darkness. Psychologically, nigredo represents the phase in which familiar identities disintegrate and previous

narratives lose their efficacy. The raven is emblematic of this moment; it does not instigate the collapse but serves as its messenger, emphasising that significant transformation is occurring beneath the surface.

By contrast, the dove frequently symbolises the anima or the Self in its reconciling, spiritual dimension: the inward call toward unity, conscience, compassion, and integration. Jungian scholarship notes the prominence of dove and Holy Spirit imagery in Jung's work and in analytic symbolism more broadly, suggesting that the dove appears when the psyche begins to reconnect to meaning, trust, and inner guidance. Raven and dove are not opposites in a simple moral sense. They are two necessary agents of transformation: one forces the encounter with shadow, while the other offers the possibility of spiritual wholeness following that encounter.

Alchemy and the Great Work: Nigredo and Albedo

Alchemy provides one of the clearest symbolic maps for the raven-dove relationship.

Medieval and early modern alchemists used birds as shorthand for stages of inner and outer transformation.

The raven (or crow) commonly signifies nigredo: the dark phase of putrefaction, dissolution, and symbolic death. The dove commonly signifies albedo: the whitening phase of purification, washing,

clarification, and the emergence of new light.

From a psychological perspective, this represents a process of change. Nigredo corresponds to the experience of losing old certainties, while albedo reflects the phase in which the psyche attains clarity, meaning re-emerges, and new possibilities arise. The dove does not appear by bypassing nigredo; rather, it arrives as a result of having undergone this transformative process.

This also speaks to a philosophical principle found across mysticism and esotericism: the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the unity of opposites. Raven and dove are not merely two birds; they are two poles that must be held together if transformation is to be real rather than cosmetic. The soul becomes whole not by choosing light and rejecting darkness, but by discovering a deeper unity that can contain both without collapsing.



Above: An engraving from the 1613 book *Azoth, Sive Aureliae Occultae Philosophorum* by Basilius Valentinus, illustrating the state of nigredo.

Esoteric and Religious Interpretations across Traditions

Different traditions place different emphases, but the underlying intuition often converges.

Within Gnostic and esoteric Christian traditions, dove imagery may represent the Spirit as a feminine or maternal principle and may allude to

Sophia as the intelligence responsible for birthing and guiding souls. This perspective positions the dove as more than a symbol of calmness; it becomes a cosmic midwife,

embodying wisdom that generates and restores.

Hermetic and alchemical currents treat raven and dove as stages of the Great Work: necessary destruction leading toward a refined, luminous state. The “black bird” is not a sign of failure; it is a sign that the work has begun. The “white bird” is not an escape; it is the fruit of inner clarification.

Dharmic traditions do not foreground raven-dove symbolism in the same way, but related bird imagery appears. The hamsa (swan/goose) in Hindu symbolism, for example, functions as a purity-and-discrimination emblem – an image of the soul’s capacity to separate the essential from the inessential. In Buddhist contexts, white bird imagery can suggest compassion and non-attachment, with



Above: The Hindu Goddess Saraswati has the swan as her vahana (vehicle). In Hinduism, the hamsa (swan/goose) is seen as a symbol of purity, detachment, divine knowledge, cosmic breath (prana) and the highest spiritual accomplishment. It symbolizes divine detachment and the liberated soul, often associated with moksha (liberation from samsara).

birds often serving as metaphors for the awakened mind that touches the world without being trapped by it. The precise bird varies; the symbolic function often remains: ascent, clarity, compassion, liberation.

Indigenous cosmologies often honour Raven as a world-shaper and messenger, and in certain traditions, doves or pigeons are also associated with prayer, prophecy, and soul-flight, conveying messages to the spirit world. Although the forms vary, a notable shared intuition persists: birds are inherently linked to

thresholds, traversing domains and communicating what cannot be conveyed through ordinary language.



Why This Symbolic Pair Endures

The enduring presence of the raven and the dove can be attributed to their articulation of two fundamental truths that humanity continually rediscovers.

First, the human experience encompasses darkness, not as an error, but as a prerequisite for transformation. Periods of entering the wilderness, confronting the shadow, relinquishing old identities, and encountering the unknown are integral to this process. The raven is present in these circumstances due to its inherent association with such terrain.

Second, the human path also includes renewal – not as naïve positivity, but as earned coherence. Meaningful peace typically follows a reckoning, and a spirit of substance often emerges after disillusionment. The dove

appears not to erase the raven, but to complete the cycle.

Considered collectively, these birds suggest a mature spirituality – one that neither sentimentalises neither light nor demonises darkness, and that acknowledges the soul’s development as a progression through opposites toward a deeper unity. The raven imparts the courage to confront reality, while the dove fosters the trust necessary for renewal.

And in the meeting-place between them – where black wing and white feather are no longer enemies – we find a symbolic promise: that transformation is possible, and that

meaning is not lost even in the shadowed places where it first seems to disappear. ✧



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Theosophical Society in England & Wales

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THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
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Last Words

Some Thoughts On Unwanted Strangers

Excerpt taken from Act 2, Scene 4 of *Sir Thomas More*
by **William Shakespeare**



Act 2, Scene 4 of *Sir Thomas More* features a powerful speech by More, addressing a rioting crowd. He urges them to consider the plight of immigrants and to reflect on their own humanity, emphasizing the importance of compassion and understanding.

I imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage,
Plodding to the ports and coasts for transportation,
And that you sit as kings in your desires,
Authority quite silent by your brawl,
And you in ruff of your opinions clothed;
What had you got? I'll tell you: you had taught
How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
How order should be quelled; and by this pattern
Not one of you should live an aged man,
For other ruffians, as their fancies wrought,
With self same hand, self reasons, and self right,
Would shark on you, and men like ravenous fishes
Would feed on one another.

... Say now the king,
(As he is clement if th'offender mourn),
Should so much come too short of your great trespass



As but to banish you, whither would you go?
What country, by the nature of your error,
Should give you harbor? Go you to France or Flanders,
To any German province, to Spain or Portugal,
Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England,
Why, you must needs be strangers: would you be pleased
To find a nation of such barbarous temper,
That, breaking out in hideous violence,
Would not afford you an abode on earth,
Whet their detested knives against your throats,
Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God
Owed not nor made not you, nor that the claimants
Were not all appropriate to your comforts,
But chartered unto them, what would you think
To be thus used? This is the strangers' case;
And this your mountainish inhumanity. *

About The Theosophical Society

Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Esoterica is available both in printed form and online. Please let us know if you have friends or family members who would like to receive the printed version, free of charge, by filling out the form below and posting to **50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA**, or by contacting office@theosoc.org.uk
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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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It is for those seeking spiritual answers to those big questions of life:

Who are we?

Where did we come from?

What's our purpose and destiny in life?

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

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

Above all, it's our intention to offer not just dry theory but, wherever possible,
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The next edition will appear on the summer solstice,
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