

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: Dandelion (*taraxacum officinale*) seeds have feathery bristles and can be carried long distances by the wind, spreading the wonder of Nature.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

Propagating and Demonstrating Theosophy

TIM BOYD

THE Theosophical Society (TS) was founded in 1875. In *The Key to Theosophy* H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) makes the seemingly simple statement that it was founded to show that such a thing as Theosophy exists. This was the underlying purpose of the TS and the movement that was formed by its introduction. The intention had been that this should occur along two different lines.

The first line was the propagation of the concepts and truths embodied in Theosophy. In the Maha Chohan's Letter it was stated that we must "preach and popularize" the various truths that the theosophical wisdom contains. There was emphasis on the introduction of certain powerful ideas that were deemed to have the capacity to shift the direction of human thought and behavior.

The second line was demonstration, which is to say that the truths embodied in this wisdom were always intended to be applied, and in that application self-transformation became a possibility. The idea presented was that such profound and powerful seed ideas, if allowed to take root in the consciousness of the individual, would necessarily have transformative results. So on the one hand

there was the propagation, and on the other hand there was the demonstration of the validity and power of these truths.

In 1888, almost thirteen years after the TS was founded, HPB wrote a Preliminary Memorandum for the formation of a new body initially named the Esoteric Section (ES) of the Theosophical Society. (Later the name was changed to Esoteric School of Theosophy.) In that memorandum one of the things that she noted was that the TS had accomplished "stupendous" results since its founding in showing that such a thing as Theosophy exists.

But she confined those stupendous results to the areas that she called "exoteric". The outer work had been remarkably accomplished, particularly in the realm of seeding theosophical ideas into the global consciousness. For the first time a conversation was taking place around these powerful ideas. She said *that* had been the great success of the Theosophical movement, as well as its embrace of the world's religions and the popular acknowledgement that flowed to the Society as a result.

The area in which she said the TS had failed was in demonstrating the validity of the teachings through the behavior of

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its members. From her point of view there was only one thing that needed to be demonstrated. For some of the early members the focus was on cultivating those inner potentials that could give them control over psychic powers and the forces of Nature. HPB produced numerous phenomena demonstrating that inner powers were real and available to the properly trained and motivated individual. But that was not the type of demonstration that she was concerned with in speaking about the difficulties that the TS had faced.

From HPB's perspective and that of the TS Inner Founders, the fundamental purpose for the existence of the TS was to demonstrate the possibility of a universal brotherhood. It was in that area that she found that the TS and its members consistently fell short. From her point of view at that time, TS members did not even rise to the level of an average fraternal organization.

The basis for her opinion was that the criticisms of fellow members (and she experienced the brunt of that), the slanders that had taken place, the interpersonal relations that became so important above and beyond the idea and the practice of brotherhood were so pronounced that she felt that unless something was done to correct this tendency, all of the work done by her and the Inner Founders would be wasted. She commented that the Masters can give little assistance to a body which is not completely united in purpose and feeling, and which turns its back on the fundamental reason for its being: uni-

versal brotherly love. A corrective agent needed to be introduced. In the absence of some demonstration of Universal Brotherhood there was no way for the influence of the Inner Founders to be felt through the TS.

There would always be profound individuals who would periodically be coming into the world, such as HPB, J. Krishnamurti, who *could* be utilized in that manner. But the apparent intent is not just to have a bright light shine into the world for a moment, but to stimulate the creation of active groups of people motivated by their teachings and willing to express it in their lives. The theosophical movement came into being with the hope that through this demonstration of a brotherly possibility, the Masters' influence could be felt in the world.

In the initial founding of the Esoteric Section it is interesting to note that in developing it, HPB also stated certain rules for its members. She actually listed 21 different rules that were to govern the behavior and direction of the members of this Section. Of those 21 rules, 11 of them were focused on behaviors among the members of the Esoteric Section: things that should *not* be engaged in. She felt it was *that* important to designate *how* the members must behave.

Blavatsky would not have given such designations if the members had already known about them, but gossip, unfair judgment of a fellow member, bringing charges of any sort against a fellow member, pretending to be more advanced than one actually is, and so on,

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she stated categorically as rules for the Esoteric Section members not to engage in. These are behaviors that we would regard as basic common sense in the attempt to practice even goodwill, let alone brotherly love. These are the things she emphasized.

The remaining rules talked about practice, diet, how we need to regard the Masters, altruism, the nature of the inner life, but the most important rules she emphasized were simple, normal outer behaviors. I do not think this was accidental on HPB's part, or that she was just carried away with the current of the moment. There are reasons for the way we behave. Our inner development expresses itself in outer behaviors.

Often our approach is to first attempt to cultivate the ideal inner state, so that the outer behaviors can then take on its proper character. HPB recognized that the process can work in the opposite direction as well — from outer to inner. If we act as if we are kind, we take on the mind that dictates that behavior. There is a certain value to taking on behaviors until we actually become rooted in the consciousness. The old adage that we should “fake it until we make it” expresses a certain wisdom.

Theosophy is profound in its ability to describe dimensions of the human condition, but the real value to us is when we are actually able to apply these teachings to our *own* condition, or, more accurately, to the conditioning of our mind.

It is very clear in theosophical teachings that we live in a multidimensional

universe. Each of us functions on many levels at every moment. The functioning of the human mind generally is described as the mind rooted in desire (*kāma-manas*) and the fulfillment of those desires. This is the way that our “normal” thinking functions.

Obviously, there are *other*, more expansive, ways in which the mind can function. There is the capacity we have for this same mind to express itself very differently, often described as the “illuminated” mind. Rather than the mind that is rooted in the fulfillment of desire, there is a capacity for the mind to have a light shine upon it and to become illumined by the light of the intuition (*buddhi*) — the universal mind.

Like any good doctor, just as theosophy can diagnose, it can also prescribe. The diagnosis of our condition is that our mind is rooted in a certain place in a certain way. Part of what we need to do to expand the limitations of our consciousness is to understand what we mean when we talk about desire and the mind rooted in desire.

What *is* desire? It is a word we are familiar with. In *At the Feet of the Master* the young J. Krishnamurti states that there are four qualifications, of which desirelessness is the most difficult. The reason is that as human beings we tend to think of ourselves *as* our desires. They seem to define us in many ways. Our desires are so rooted in our sense of self that it is difficult to even see it. To speak of desirelessness is almost like speaking of extinction; but what is a desire?

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In its simplest terms a desire is a thought chasing after a feeling, or a sensation. Our five senses give us information — knowledge about the world we live in — through sensations (sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing). Sensations in and of themselves are neutral; they are not desires. But as these sensations interact with our consciousness, they become transformed. So, there are certain sensations that we find pleasant, and others that are not. Because of these preferences we become attracted to some things and repelled by others.

What starts as a simple sensation of taste, or touch, becomes an attachment or an aversion. When the mind asserts itself in seeking those things which are pleasurable, and moving away from those which are not; there we have a desire. When mind, sensation, feeling, and emotion merge in this single pursuit, then you have the desire mind in which humanity as a whole finds itself rooted. What do we do with this diagnosis and description? In order for them to have any value there must be some prescription for what it is that can be done. This is the other side of the theosophical wisdom — application.

During the life of the Buddha he had an experience of enlightenment in which it became clear that there were possibilities beyond this mind of desire. So he spent a lifetime trying to teach about how it is that human beings can be relieved of the various ways in which this desire mind causes suffering.

Among those things that the Buddha taught and which find their way into

HPB's *The Voice of the Silence*, are some powerful tools which he encouraged his monks and his followers to pursue. In *The Voice*, HPB took the six *pāramitās* of Buddhism, and added a seventh. The idea was that there is a universal possibility, and that these *pāramitās* had the potential for us, when we engage with them, to lead us beyond the limitations that are our norm, to the experience of the “master soul”, or *alaya*, that she speaks of.

The first *pāramitā* is charity (*dāna*), generosity. Very often this is the one that is considered the easiest to practice. It is said that we can do this at three different levels. One of the ways is in being generous with material things, which impacts the physical being. So we learn how to give and share physical things, and the habits of generosity start to impact the mind beginning at the physical level.

At a deeper level of this practice of generosity we take on the view that all people are suffering, so we try to find ways to be generous in terms of identifying, and then addressing the sufferings of others. We meet people at the level of their emotional and mental need. Finally there is the potential for universal generosity, which is the basis of theosophy: the awareness of an overriding, mostly dormant, universal truth buried deep within every person, which requires awakening. As we develop in this deeper potential for generosity, it becomes a power to help awaken the presence of universal consciousness in others. This is the “higher” expression of the one perfection or *pāramitā* of generosity.

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In describing the perfections in *The Voice* HPB speaks of each one of these *pāramitās* as a key. There are seven *pāramitās*, and she says each one is the key for seven “portals”, or doorways, that lead us to the experience of the universal. Each one is to be practiced in its turn.

What would it mean for us to more deeply understand this first of the perfections? What does it mean to live a life that is generous? In terms of the rules that HPB drafted for the Esoteric Section, if this one rule is fully understood and applied all of the ten or eleven rules related to behavior would be addressed.

One of the difficulties that H. P. Blavatsky faced, and that every member of the Theosophical Society since has faced, is that the Society and its work are intended for imperfect people. It is intended for us, and the world we inhabit.

If we can ever truly see it, to approach each other in anything less than the spirit of generosity would be impossible.

Generosity is the first of the *pāramitās* for a reason. Until there can be a sense of what it means to truly be open, to truly be generous, the other perfections remain out of our reach: harmony, patience, the type of resistless energy that does not lose focus, indifference to pain and pleasure, the cultivation of the profound silence of meditation, and ultimately wisdom, the seventh *pāramitā*, all of them remain out of our reach until we actually come to understand this first one. This first *pāramitā* was the one that engendered the rules for the ES, the first one that in its absence was the problem for the Society’s work in the world.

Perhaps it would be worth dwelling on what we might mean by “generosity”.

And who are you that men should rend their bosom
and unveil their pride, that you may see their worth
naked and their pride unabashed?

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

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

Kahlil Gibran
The Prophet

Doubt, Deception, and Conviction on the Spiritual Path

WILLIAM WILSON QUINN

Our doubts are traitors, and make us
lose the good we oft might win, by fear-
ing to attempt.

Shakespeare

After years or even lifetimes in the solemn and unremitting pursuit of spiritual truth, the serious seeker — the wayfarer — invariably reaches a point in his or her path which triggers the need to make one radical and life-altering decision. For such wayfarers this momentous decision, this choice, is between (i) preserving the status quo of one's familiar spiritual path and continuing to make gradual progress in terms of selflessness and other related qualities needed for eventual admission to probation as a prospective chela of an Adept or "Mahatma" in the Brotherhood/Sisterhood of the spiritual hierarchy of humanity; or (ii) *acting* on the firm belief that one is ready and leaving behind everything familiar and comfortable, plunging headlong without equivocation into the quest for probation and chelaship under an Adept to whom one perceives a connection. This choice was succinctly stated by the Adept

known as Koot Hoomi: "Let those who really desire to learn *abandon all* and come to us, instead of asking or expecting us to go to them."¹

We are fortunate to have a detailed description and analysis of exactly such a consequential decision being made — in a single evening — by Henry S. Olcott, which is useful in examining the question of doubt versus conviction on the higher spiritual path. Among the many fascinating accounts and experiences of occult phenomena recorded by Olcott in his published memoir *Old Diary Leaves*, perhaps the most memorable is the account of Olcott's initial meeting with his guru, the Mahatma Morya. This unusual meeting took place in the final days of 1877 at the address in New York City that Olcott shared with his sister Mary, and with H. P. Blavatsky, which was dubbed the "Lamasery". Olcott records that after a long and tiring day, while he was alone in his room late one evening and relaxing in a chair reading:

All at once, as I read with my shoulder
a little turned from the door, there came

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a gleam of something white in the right-hand corner of my right eye; I turned my head, dropped my book in astonishment, and saw towering above me in his great stature an Oriental clad in white garments . . . He was so grand a man, so imbued with the majesty of moral strength, so luminously spiritual, so evidently above average humanity, that I felt abashed in his presence, and bowed my head and bent my knee as one does before a god or god-like personage.²

Olcott devotes several pages of his published memoir to this remarkable event where his guru, then resident in the Himalayas, sat and disclosed to him much about his future and that of HPB, and in which he shares his thoughts and conclusions formed in the years that followed, until he wrote this account. Among other descriptions, Olcott relays that of all the occult phenomena and experiences he witnessed in his life, this one “was the most momentous in its consequences upon the course of my life”, and that “it was the chief among the causes of my abandoning the world and coming out to my Indian home.” Most significantly, as relates to our topic here, was his assertion that until this occurred he could not see his way clear to “breaking the ties of circumstance” that “bound” him to America. He concluded further that unless it had occurred, he may have felt compelled to continuously postpone this difficult decision to a more “convenient season”, as procrastinators tend to do. But, having in fact occurred,

this meeting with his guru by occult means settled his fate, and “in an instant *doubts melted away* [emphasis added]” and “the clear foresight of a fixed will showed the way.”³

The outcome of the entire event was effectively distilled by Olcott into a single sentence, which perfectly highlights the gaping schism between doubt and conviction — conviction based on knowledge. Olcott declared as a result of this experience, as applied to (i) the existence of the Adepts and (ii) whether the decision to abandon all and become a full-time chela was right, that “However others less fortunate may doubt, I KNOW.”⁴ The emphasis on “know” is Olcott’s.

Much can be drawn from Olcott’s experience as it pertains to the proper state of mind needed for arriving at the decision to devote oneself fully both in thought and *deed* to the principle of the eternal, rather than continuing to apply a significant portion of one’s energy to that which is impermanent and ephemeral. In making such a decision, it is perhaps more accurate to refer to one’s “state of intuition” in collaboration with one’s “state of mind”, than solely to one’s state of “mind”. What is required to make such a decision wisely involves a collaboration of the fifth and six principles, *manas* and *buddhi*, or that which comports with the better and higher capabilities of reason and intuition operating in tandem, if not in synthesis.

It may be tempting to draw from this single experience of Olcott a functional paradigm of the decision that all who

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aspire to ascend the higher reaches of the spiritual path must one day make: to decide and thus to abandon *all* — or “the world” as Olcott then knew and described it — and wholly surrender oneself to the resulting adversities of probation and beginning chelaship under one of the Adepts. But Olcott’s experience is not a useful paradigm applicable to most today who may be at the crossroads of making such a decision, and then such a commitment. Olcott’s experience, while inspiring and uplifting to read, was at the same time a rare anomaly that would apply only to a minute percentage of those who may be, for various reasons, specially positioned to assist the Adepts in their missions to bring spiritual clarity and enlightenment to humanity. This is because these Adepts, by their own repeated admissions, “rarely show any outward signs by which to be recognized or sensed”.⁵

To be honest, in the aftermath of such an experience as Olcott’s, most spiritual wayfarers would likely consider it a relatively easy decision to reach the point of abandoning all, and to surrender themselves full-time to the sacred work of the Adepts. Following any similar event, an immutable conviction would no doubt strike them, as it did Olcott, with all the speed and power of a lightning bolt that would instantly cauterize any and all doubts they may have had.

The decision more difficult to make, however, and the decision to be faced by most such wayfarers — ever since the extraordinary, and voluntary, multiple

appearances of several of these Adepts in the last quarter of the nineteenth century — is to “abandon all” in the *absence* of any such empirical confirmation of their existence, their rules and methods, and their oversight of probationers and chelas. Olcott’s great fortune was to have had all doubt dissolved in an instant by this overwhelming empirical experience of his guru’s visit, even though occult in nature, resulting for him in the manifestation of a steel conviction of the truth of the existence of the Adepts, and the fundamental purpose and methods of their mission.

In contrast, most spiritual wayfarers today who approach the precincts of probation must rely *exclusively* on their reason and intuition to make this momentous decision: to excise doubts about the existence of the Adepts and their mission and replace them with an invincible conviction. Once made, and thus in an interim state of free fall, there must follow an exertion of will in “forcing circumstances to bow before you”⁶ in advancing on this path to “come to us”, in the Adept’s words, as a probationer and chela. The wonderful favor given to Olcott by his guru Morya was no doubt both well deserved and necessary for the mission at that moment, but it would be a mistake for those spiritual wayfarers now on the cusp of such a decision to imagine such an event occurring in their cases. Normally, further advancement on the higher spiritual path would require that the reason and intuition be developed to a point where by them alone, in the

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absence of any extrinsic evidence or phenomena, the *same* steeled conviction as Olcott announced in his memoir is achieved by the wayfarer. But to overcome doubt and achieve conviction in this way is no easy feat, both in the past and especially now in modernity, though there exist resources today that were unavailable in the 1870s that should be useful to those who approach the door through which they may advance in earnest toward chelaship and initiation.

Even if among the true tests for being accepted as a chela of an Adept is achieving conviction in the absence of extrinsic evidence by reliance on a close collaboration of reason and intuition, it is fair to say that *some* doubt may continue to exist within the consciousness of a probationer until he or she reaches that point of complete conviction. Most of any wayfarer's doubts either about the impact of their decision on those in their lives, or about the Adepts — their extraordinary powers (siddhis), their hard rules and enigmatic methods, or the strategies used in their sacred mission — would need to be excised prior to entering probation. But as the normally seven-year period of probation is the proving ground for aspiring chelas, some stubborn doubts may not only remain a challenge for the wayfarer during this time, but may even be stoked by the guru as the blacksmith stokes his furnace using, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the method of deception. Deception can both inflame existing doubts and create new ones in the mind of the probationer, if he or she lacks

sufficient discrimination and intuition to detect deception.

Deception is an efficient method unapologetically affirmed by Adepts for training and testing prospective chelas. As Koot Hoomi (KH) asserted, "A chela under probation is allowed to think and do whatever he likes. He is warned and told beforehand: 'You will be tempted and deceived by appearances. . . .'"⁷ But KH and Morya were also both acutely aware that to the European gentleman or lady of the late-nineteenth century, if not to the Western mind generally, deception — the willful act of deceiving another — was considered an offense of some magnitude. More than one letter in the correspondence of these two Adepts to their Western chelas contained some discourse on this principle. What these Adepts sought to convey to these chelas were the high stakes involved in the training they would be undertaking, and especially in the use of will where doubt may exist — doubts often being the progeny of deception. Only the ability, or skill, of being able to unmask deception and deceit and see the underlying truth by a prospective chela would allow him or her to proceed to the next level of training, to develop the will and, perhaps, even certain occult powers. "[W]e work and toil," concludes KH, "and allow our chelas *to be temporarily deceived*, to afford them means never to be deceived hereafter, and to see the whole evil of falsity and untruth, not alone in this but in many of their afterlives."⁸

If the probationer is able to be

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deceived, and having been deceived such deception leads to doubt regarding one's spiritual path forward, as it often does, then this ability to be deceived is in fact a disability as it pertains to progress on that path. This is because doubt, which can also be defined as the antithesis of conviction, is unarguably a hindrance and often an obstacle to occult training and ascending higher on the spiritual path. KH, without mincing words, advised one of his chelas this way: "Take care Mohini Mohun Chatterjee — doubt is a dangerous cancer."⁹ We also learn, significantly, that doubt is a common problem for probationers: "Why is it that doubts and foul suspicions seem to beset every aspirant for chelaship?"¹⁰

The resolution to defeat these "doubts and foul suspicions" is simpler than it may appear. It is resolved by adhering to the wise counsel of the Adept Tuitit Bey: "TRY. Rest thy mind — banish all foul doubt."¹¹ It is only by *trying*, and if at first the wayfarer fails, by trying again, and so on, that doubts preventing his or her advancement will ultimately be banished from the psyche, and a decision to abandon *all* can at last be made. Trying is never a guarantee of success, but success will never be achieved without first trying. This momentous decision, once engaged, can amplify conviction, which similarly aligns with the concluding advice of Tuitit Bey to "open thy Spirit to conviction". Proportionally, as doubt is banished conviction increases, and greater conviction leads the wayfarer to the strength needed to decide to "*abandon all* and come to us".

There has been no time either in the relatively short span of "recorded history" or in the later rounds and lesser cycles of the spiritual evolution of humanity on Earth, as carefully outlined in HPB's *The Secret Doctrine*, in which the Adepts of the spiritual hierarchy of humanity did not receive, according to their tradition, aspiring neophytes as new probationers and chelas for training and advancement toward Adeptship. At special zeniths of these cycles, representing both the end of a past and beginning of a future cycle, extraordinary efforts have been made by these Adepts to promulgate the ancient wisdom to a wider segment of humankind. One such effort, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was the publication in modern English of immemorial spiritual truths and principles through the pen of HPB and others. Closely allied to the publication of these materials were not only multiple appearances by several of these Adepts during this time but, for the first time in recorded history, writings by them in the form of letters that became available to the public which provided a wealth of facts and details about the existence, rules, methods, labors, and mission of this sacred order of Adepts.

Henry Olcott, as we have seen, was fortunate to have had direct contact with his guru, Morya, and as a prospective accepted chela with such contact was instantaneously and with little difficulty enabled to make his decision to abandon all and follow his guru. However, those wayfarers today who may be on the cusp

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of such a decision are also blessed in their own way, having the unprecedented benefit of access to a large corpus of materials written by several of these Adepts that provides in its pages a map to guide such wayfarers in the ways of chelaship and ascending the higher reaches of the spiritual path. Since the publication of *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, 1st and 2nd Series, in 1919, and *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* in 1923, the world at large and the wayfarers in it have had an exceptional opportunity to realize and to accept the truth of their existence, which are both powerful antidotes to doubt.

None of the first fellows of The Theosophical Society in the 1870s and 1880s had access to any such published letters. With the exception of those like Olcott who had direct access to the Adepts, or very few others who had access to them through HPB, the majority of those fellows, it could be argued, were in that category of wayfarers who need to rely exclusively on reason and intuition to make the decision to abandon all and exert their will in following an Adept. Prior to 1875, knowledge of the Adepts and their Brotherhood/Sisterhood was typically acquired by traditional means, within the esoteric elements of contemplative religious orders or secret societies, and was not widely circulated. This process, however, underwent a change with the publication of the letters of these Adepts, and with the writings of HPB on chelaship and treading the spiritual path, so that any of today's way-

farers —wherever they may be — have at their discretion an opportunity to read and familiarize themselves with these truths. The more expert the wayfarer becomes in the command of this literature, the fewer doubts he or she should have.

As a final thought to this discussion, the question of *self*-doubt must be addressed. Within this context, it may be described as an introversion of any larger, existing doubts that plague the wayfarer regarding the Adepts and their existence. Under these circumstances, self-doubt usually appears as a question of whether one is truly equipped to succeed on the spiritual path to become a chela — or whether one has the requisite courage, strength, selflessness, charity, and purity to succeed. But this issue is more a matter of inner self-confidence than doubt about outer circumstances.

And while self-doubt can be a hindrance on the spiritual path whose significance should by no means be minimized, it is only indirectly related to that level of conviction the wayfarer must achieve regarding the existence of the Adepts, their powers (siddhis), their hard rules and enigmatic methods, the strategies used in their hieratic mission, or the necessity of abandoning all and going to them. Within these circumstances, self-doubt also reaches to one's own fear of failure to achieve reaching or interacting with an Adept, after having made the hard and often irreversible decision to abandon all in order to do so. Nonetheless, such self-doubt must also be controlled, if not overcome

Doubt, Deception, and Conviction on the Spiritual Path

entirely, before the wayfarer can meaningfully proceed.

Doubt in all its forms can be both a hindrance to and a danger upon the spiritual path. As KH observed, “Once fairly started on the way to the great Knowledge, to doubt is to risk insanity; to come to a dead stop is to fall; to recede is to tumble backward, headlong into an abyss.”¹² While doubt may be the principal cause of insanity for those on probation or beginning chelaship, it may as easily incite the wayfarer’s coming to

a dead stop or receding along the path, as well. But if the wayfarer will but daily live a pure and spiritual life, and *try*, and keep trying, this is what he or she will discover: “Little by little your sight will clear, you will find the mists pass away, your interior faculties strengthen, your attraction towards us gain force, and certainty [conviction] replaces doubts.”¹³ Then can the life-altering decision be made to “*abandon all and come to us*”, without being diverted by trepidation, equivocations, or crippling doubt. ✧

Endnotes

1. Barker, A. T., comp., *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. Manila: TPH, 1993, p. 73.
2. Olcott, Henry S., *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, 3rd printing. Adyar: TPH, 1974, p. 379.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
5. Jinarājādāsa, C., comp. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, 1st Series (7th Ed.), Adyar: TPH, 2011, p. 74.
6. ———, 2nd Series (4th Reprint). Adyar: TPH, 2002, p. 69.
7. Barker, p. 222.
8. *Ibid.* A similar statement was made by Morya to E. W. Fern, who piously proclaimed high rank in an esoteric society he claimed would never condone deceit: “Well, this suspicion led me to think that one so high in a Society *that neither tolerates nor practises deceit*, could not care to belong to our poor Brotherhood that does both — regarding its probationists.” Jinarājādāsa, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, 2nd Series, p. 143.
9. Jinarājādāsa, 1st Series, p. 42.
10. Barker, p. 451.
11. Jinarājādāsa, 2nd Series, p. 11.
12. Barker, p. 48.
13. Jinarājādāsa, 1st Series, p. 74.

In Search of Happiness

D. P. SABNIS

A somewhat intimate contact with life will convince anyone that happiness and sorrow are inseparable. They are a pair; one of several such which the *Bhagavad-gītā* designates as “pairs of opposites”. So long as we are caught in the snares of these pairs they will continue to manifest in alternate succession, throwing the person into oscillations of joy and sorrow, of tears and laughter. When we say that he wants to be happy, he really desires that for himself all sorrows should cease, at least for the remaining years of his life. He wants to arrest the swing of the pendulum at the point where it reaches the zenith of happiness and to fix it there by some process which can counter and neutralize that karmic pull of Law.

As long as there are pendulums in one’s life that swing under outside stimuli, so long must pain and pleasure, success and failure, fame and ignominy dog his footsteps. Each pair mirrors the life of vibratory existence and one who lives in an atmosphere where such oscillations prevail must continue to be tossed hither and thither, a helpless flotsam on an ocean, where calms are but the harbingers of storms. It is by emotion,

by unsatisfiable desire, and by thirst for sensation that one violently pushes the pendulum into oscillations which must then run their course.

In the *Bhagavadgītā* (III.34–35) Sri Krishna says that attachments and aversions of the senses are natural and that therefore no one should fall under their sway. He calls these the enemies of man. Attachments to things and persons, which by their nature are perishable, can bring pain and anguish at the moment of parting. But if the attachments have the power to bind the person, and swing him now here, now there, so that no light comes, aversions too have an equally strong power to shake him from his moorings. For instance, there are many otherwise intelligent and kindly persons who get attracted to work which it is not their duty to perform. This covetousness brings into action the opposite constituent of the pair, namely abhorrence.

Brooding over the misfortune of not getting a duty to his liking, the person begins to dislike and then abhor his own. The more powerful his aversion, the greater the force that he exerts on the pendulum. Even when the coveted thing is

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obtained, the oscillations make a mockery of the possession and all too often, where happiness was expected, there misery sets in. If as the *Bhagavadgītā* has it, affection and dislike are my possessions, then what is pleasing to the senses and therefore conducive to happiness will in time yield to a condition of worry and sadness. Therefore such experience may become pleasingly painful or painfully pleasant — to put it in a crude manner of speaking. Tears will never be too far away from laughter.

Possessions that corrode and dwindle under the action of time and circumstance are ephemeral, and the happiness they can give is ephemeral also. Further, these possessions, that may give intense happiness during a particular state of consciousness, may become revolting when a higher state supervenes. No sustained happiness can therefore result either through possessions or lack of them. They are redundant to the soul and must therefore be used only as avenues to live a soul-life upon earth. If in his blindness the person uses force to gain the object of his desires, or uses occult forces for selfish ends, then the force so expended may have the tendency to arouse the undesirable psychic part of his nature and ultimately erupt in the body, mind, or psychic part of his makeup. The seeds of true happiness and joy are not to be found on the material plane, and if brought from above and sown on earth, lose their intrinsic qualities in the stifling atmosphere.

The archetype of happiness is found

in *kāma*, not as now materialized into a power that gratifies desire, but as originally described in the Vedas. It is the first conscious, all-embracing desire for universal good, a love for all that lives and feels and needs help and kindness. It is the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative One Force as soon as it came into life. *Kāma* is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love. Where spirit and matter meet, and where the electric fire which is the force that impresses matter with the ideation that resides in Spirit — there are laid the foundations of true happiness.

Where the mind loses its hold upon the starry soul within, the rhythm of evolution is destroyed. Thus, losing his hold on the True, the person tries to snatch his semblance of happiness in the elation that waxes, wanes and dies in acts of indulgence of sense-life. “True happiness can be found only in the bond that connects entity with non-entity or *manas* with pure *ātma-buddhi*”. From this confluence of the streams of life happiness descends at each succeeding stage on the descending stairways of life. Where the reasoning mind becomes intoxicated in its love and union with the higher mind, where intellect pays its homage to intuition, there a calmness settles the harassed soul and a peace prevails that cannot be shattered even though the storms rage.

In the quest for happiness, many lose sight of the fact that happiness is not an end by itself. It is an effect that follows upon each progressive awakening of the

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soul. The processes of its fruition cannot be rushed, nor can its bloom be duplicated by dubious means. There have been and there will continue to be those who not seeing beyond their broken lamps have tried to seek happiness by torturing and mutilating their senses and organs and by the development of the tremendous force of the Will.

In the ultimate analysis, it will be found that happiness sprouts and fructifies on the sidelines and borders of the

path which the questing soul must tread. *Light on the Path* says:

Seek it [the Way] by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. . . . Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of Nature, the laws of the supernatural, and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the Way. ✧

Realize that all happiness is divine, and then you will know where to hold, and where to let go. Then you will have the test-stone by which is shown the difference between the life which is joy and the form which is often the source and the cause of pain. Look through the form to the life; look through the outer vehicle to that which is within it. In your friends, in your daily circumstances, in everything around you, look through that which appears to the eye to that which the Spirit knows and feels. Then in the midst of earthly troubles, your joy shall be secure; then in the midst of loss, your wealth shall be safe; then in the midst of trouble, your peace shall be unruffled; in the midst of storm, calm shall remain with you.

Annie Besant
The Search for Happiness

The Power of Joy

CLARENCE PEDERSEN

No one really knows enough to be a pessimist.

— Norman Cousins

The one truly inescapable fact about the history of humankind is that, over the ages, mountains and mountains of words have been written and spoken about the human situation. Equally true is that this propensity for words is a most valuable tradition and largely responsible for the unfoldment of our human potential. Certainly this examination of the nature of the human being through our vocabulary has played a central role in the history of the theosophical movement. Books, lectures, and discussions have been a major forte in our efforts to understand and disseminate the Ancient Wisdom.

And yet it would seem that there is one factor of creation, of life, that has remained in relative obscurity among the voluminous theosophical writings. This is what might be called “the joy factor”. Here and there we do of course come across literature about this subject. The delightful Quest miniature, *Finding Deep Joy* by Robert Ellwood for example. And

the recent article “Stairs of Gold, Stairs of Joy” by Diana Dunningham Chapotin that appeared in the *The Theosophist* of November 1992.

But these are exceptions. And this is too bad. Because in spite of the strains and pains of living, in spite of famines, pollution, wars, disease and so on, there is always the joy factor to be considered — the joy of being human. The joy of being alive. The joy at the core of our being that suffuses every atom of the universe and is responsible for the ultimate phenomenon we call “life”.

There are many synonyms we might use for joy. Such as bliss, or creation, or *lilā*, or God. Each refers to that perpetual undercurrent of pure ecstasy that permeates our being and the being of all that is alive. This is not of course a reference to that relative joy one feels when good health and wealth prevail. That is happiness, a transitory and relatively poor relation, the imperfect shadow of the joy of being. Happiness is vulnerable — doomed to extinction, doomed to become sorrow. Happiness comes, happiness goes. Joy is forever, so long as

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there is life. And life it would seem is endless. This joy then might be called the tenth beatitude: “Blessed be the joyful.” It is what William Wordsworth experienced when he wrote:

While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

Lines composed a few miles above
Tintern Abbey, ll. 47–49

It is the joy J. Krishnamurti talks of:

Happiness and pleasure you can buy in any market at a price. But bliss you cannot buy for yourself or for another. Happiness and pleasure are time-binding. Only in total freedom does bliss exist. Pleasure, like happiness, you can seek, and find, in many ways. But they come, and go. Bliss — that strange sense of joy — has no motive. You cannot possibly seek it. Once it is there, depending on the quality of your mind, it remains — timeless, causeless, a thing that is not measurable by time.

(*Meditations*, Harper & Row, p. 15)

Simply put, beyond the torments of our daily life, transcending happiness and hurt, there is this ever-present undercurrent of bliss. It cannot be defined as it is not a quality. It is nothing less than the fundamental reality of all life.

Torrents of words and pictures describe the evil things man does to his fellow man and to other forms of life, including the very earth itself. On the other hand, such a pitifully little has been addressed to “the good life”. Perhaps it is time to re-examine our priorities, to

focus, to write and speak somewhat more about the glories of existence. Our one-sided preoccupation with misery does not do justice to life. The good life must have some kind of case, just as Mark Twain suggested about Satan when he wrote his *In Defence of Harriet Shelley*:

I have no special regard for Satan; but I can at least claim that I have no prejudice against him. It may even be that I lean a little his way, on account of his not having a fair show. All religions issue Bibles against him, and say the most injurious things about him, but we never hear his side. We have none but the evidence for the prosecution, and yet we have rendered the verdict. To my mind this is irregular. . . . Of course Satan has some kind of case, it goes without saying. It may be a poor one, but that is nothing; that can be said about any of us.

So too for the joyful side of existence. Optimism and hope and cheerfulness must have some kind of case, even if at this point it appears to be a poor one. For optimism and hope and cheerfulness are based on reality: on the reality of a beneficent joy at the heart of existence, a joy of being which anybody can realize at any moment under any circumstance, because it has nothing to do with circumstance. Only with life.

In his book *The City of Joy* Dominique Lapierre describes the lives of people living in the Calcutta district of Anand Nagar — the City of Joy. Here is the poorest, most deprived, most overpopulated area of Calcutta, where families live

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their lives, day and night, on the streets, with none of the basic amenities and no hope of changing their lifestyle. Yet at the heart of this community, Lapierre could find no permanent despair, but rather heroism, love, sharing, and more happiness than in many cities of the affluent West. Under such totally depressing conditions, this wellspring of good cheer would seem to represent compelling evidence that essentially life at the deepest level is a state of omnipotent bliss.

The problem with people however would seem to be an inability to become consciously aware of this blissful state. As a matter of fact, the mere suggestion that we are creatures of joy brings forth immediate ridicule and cynicism, and the reasons for this reaction are quite obvious when we view the world through the eyes of the ego. Still, there are WAYS to come into touch with our inner joy in spite of our “ego-centricities”. Ernest Wood, for instance, suggests:

When we have a race of better men, they will not count their wages; they will do what we call work for the delight of creation, as part of that divine activity spoken of in Hindu scriptures as “the play of Lila — the delight to sport”. Our God-man will take no account of necessity or death. Like the flower, he will live for the day.

Let us explore this ego, ego dilemma. Let us conjecture together — lightheartedly — for a moment about the purpose of creation. Let us speculate that God created us and the animals and the trees, and so forth, because his very being

is joy, and the nature of joy demands that it be shared. If it is not shared, it disappears. Better yet, it never was. And so, God, being joy, cannot help himself. His joy, his very being makes him create, makes him share his joy — himself. Thus, under this scenario, we find all life to be nothing but the pure bliss of Godhood “stepped-down” in us to manifest as a radiant, if personality-bound, joy. And we find that this stepped-down version of our Godhood becomes for us a perpetual need for fulfillment; for moreness. And let us say that we can achieve this state of moreness through sharing our selves with other life. Perhaps that is the reason we have been created: to share in the joy of being. “Grief,” wrote Mark Twain, “can take care of itself, but to get the full value of a joy, you must have somebody to divide it with.” And of course, dividing our joy is like dividing a flame. The original flame is not diluted; it has shared its essence and become more.

So much for conjecture. But what is there in the collective history of man and in his individual history that might convince us that we, along with all other life, are creatures of joy? Reliable individual conviction should of course come from subjective experience, perhaps from intense scrutiny of Nature. It must come from a deepened awareness of life similar to the mystical moment Ralph Waldo Emerson experienced when he wrote in his *Journals*: “Four snakes gliding up and down a hollow for no purpose that I could see — not to eat, not to love, but

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only gliding.” “Being, not doing, is my first joy”, wrote Theodore Roethke.

More and more we are coming to understand the interdependence of all life in the universe. As there is life-consciousness — in the animal and vegetable kingdoms as well as in the human — perhaps we can also sense, as did Emerson, that there is an unself-conscious “joyhood” present throughout creation. Actually, as human beings, we at times spontaneously project our good feeling onto these kingdoms of Nature. We thrill for instance to the awakening and growth of life as we watch a rose unfold to the outside world. We smile in spontaneous delight as we observe puppies and kittens cavort in pure playfulness, a derivative of joy. And we experience the good feeling of contentment as we watch the more mature animal just “gliding up and down a hollow”. For the animal does not need a purpose to be joyfully content. It does not need a reason for its existence. It just is.

The state of bliss, our joy, manifests in a variety of ways at the personality level of our being. It can express itself in playfulness, or in more sophisticated ways such as the exhilarating experience of oneness with life outside the self. Frequently, it begins with the most ubiquitous characteristic apparent in the human and in much of the animal world: curiosity. The need to know implies interest, which in turn leads to a deeper awareness of the object of our curiosity. Thus, if we are interested in the meaning of life, we will become more keenly aware of life. So it

is possible, for instance, as we observe the unfoldment of the rose, if our contemplation is intense enough, we might find ourselves at-one with the rose and actually experience its “roseness”. Surely a most joyful moment which leads in its turn to a sense of awe and wonder at the glory of creation.

Such is the ultimate act of the “participation mystique” which, declares Levi Bruhl, is stronger than the survival instinct. This quality of creation is made clear by Alexandra David-Neel in her book *The Secret Oral Teachings of Tibetan Buddhist Sects*, where she writes:

Whether we are aware of it or not, the thoughts, the desires, the needs which we feel for life, our thirst for it — nothing of all this is completely ours, for all of it is collective, it is the flowing river of incalculable moments of consciousness having its source in the impenetrable depths of eternity.

(City Lights Books, 1968, p. 72)

And so our growth, the unfoldment of our joyful nature, begins with curiosity, leading to participation, and culminating in awe and wonder at the mysteries of creation. Albert Einstein wrote:

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity is its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvellous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.

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Surely if a sense of awe and wonder at the mysteries of creation is an indication of our essential joyous nature, then we shall never find ourselves in total despair. For awe and wonder are powerful stimuli to unfoldment and this ongoing process brings us an ongoing state of exultation. Interestingly, this small piece of wisdom is not reserved for the spiritual philosophers among us, but was noted by the General Motors Corporation at the “Century of Progress” during the Chicago World’s Fair of 1933. It was here that this normally prosaic conglomerate displayed a large sign among its products that declared: “The world will never starve for wonders; but only for the want of wonder.” And in his poem *Thieving Time* DeWolfe Howe wrote:

Now, thieving Time, take what you must
— Quickness to move, to hear, to see.
When dust is drawing near to dust
Such diminutions needs must be.
Yet leave, O leave exempt from plunder
My curiosity, my wonder!

All of which might lead us to conclude that there is indeed an imprisoned splendour within life, such an intense splendour, that whenever we become immersed in it, wherever we look, we find a sense of joyhood. It penetrates, perhaps originates, in our spiritual being as the “delight to sport” that the Hindus believed to be the essence of creation: “Vishnu, being thus discrete and indiscrete substance, spirit, and time, sports like a playful boy, as you shall learn by listening to his frolics.” (*The Secret*

Doctrine, TPH, Adyar, 3 vol. ed., p. 126)

A further manifestation of our joyful nature can be found in our universal eagerness to laugh, and laughter can be a catalyst to the experience of joy. Arthur Koestler, in his classic, *The Act of Creation*, perceives, not laughter, but the thinking that precedes the laughter as a creative act brought about by a situation of “two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference”. Translated, this suggests that our laughter is the result of ferreting out the ridiculous from the rational. There is evidence that such laughter can be beneficial both to our personal being and our spiritual. For example, Norman Cousins claims to have regained his health by watching comedy shows (*The Three Stooges*, and so on) that kept him in a laughing mode for sustained periods of time. And in his book *Mother: The Divine Materialism* about the Mother in Pondicherry, Sat Prem writes:

She laughed about everything, this Mother. She laughed especially in the face of difficulties — the best way to dissolve them: “I must admit to you that I personally feel much more myself when I am cheerful and playing (in my own way) than when I am grave and serious — much more. When I am grave and serious, I feel as if I were dragging the weight of this whole heavy and dark creation: but when I play in it — when I can play and laugh, and enjoy myself — it feels like a powdering of joy were drifting down from above, imparting a special glow to this creation

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and this world, bringing it much nearer to what it is essentially supposed to be. For joy is the real truth of the earth, only we have forgotten it: we are sad and suffer. Why suffer? I say one should not suffer, there's no need for it. The supramental is, in fact, the joy of the world prior to the advent of mind; not to be what one is, is suffering. The real earth is an earth of joy, it is for joy that the whole thing was created in the first place. Only we have not got there yet.

(*Mother of the New Species*, Institute for Evolutionary Research, 1983, p. 47)

Perhaps this is how creation works. For we read in the Upanishads: "From joy all things are born, by joy they are sustained, being born, and into joy they enter after death." (Swami Prabhavananda & Frederick Manchester, Tr. *The Upanishads*, New American Lib., 1963, p. 59)

Now all of the above does not suggest we should assume a Pollyanna outlook at the obvious problems in life, but rather a recognition that there is within each living thing a transcendental core of pure joy that cannot be extinguished. After all, all life, from infancy to death is a constant series of challenges, and this suggests

recurrent turmoil, suffering, and heart-break. But even here we find that our challenges provide us with an inner satisfaction, a sense of "doing" which is *dhārmic*-like in its strength and persistence. There appears to be something in the nature of man which absolutely prohibits him from accepting the status quo, a state of physical, emotional, and mental inertia, death. For consciousness as we know it can exist only in an atmosphere of tension, and man's response to tension is his response to the challenges of life.

"Joy is wisdom, time an endless song", wrote William Butler Yeats in his poem *Land of Heart's Desire*. Perhaps Yeats had just finished reading from Fra Giovanni who wrote in 1513 AD:

The gloom of the world is but a shadow.
Behind it, yet within our reach, is Joy.
There is radiance and glory in the darkness.
You have only to look. Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by their coverings, cast them away as ugly, or heavy, or hard. Remove the covering, and you will find beneath it a living splendour, woven of love, by wisdom, with power. ✧

**In the explosion of bliss the eyes are made innocent,
and love is then benediction.**

J. Krishnamurti

First, Second, and Third Person

PRADEEP TALWALKER

IN a 1948 BBC Radio program, “The Brains Trust”, Bertrand Russell was asked an example of a strong verb. Russell chose the verb “to be”. But instead of putting it simply as “I am; you are; he is”, he said: “I am firm; you are obstinate; he is a pig-headed fool!”

With his lively sense of humour, Russell so playfully brought out a very common human foible. The fun-loaded example given by Russell caught public imagination. Mock-serious grammarians classified it as “Emotive Conjugation” or “Russell Conjugation”. Magazines launched contests, and people flooded the magazines with more and more humorous examples. The genre was used well in the 1980s BBC TV comedy serial “Yes, Minister”. The pompous minister tells his secretary: “I have reconsidered my opinion, you have changed your mind, he has gone back on his word”; and “I give confidential press briefings, you leak, he is being charged under section 2A of the Official Secrets Act”.

People see their own faults in a glorious light, but are not so benign with others. Even in this, when speaking *directly* with someone about the same fault in him they

avoid harshness, yet put it “frankly” — but they waste no charity on an absent person. A change of viewpoint changes the view. Self-centredness keeps playing mischief in human transactions — an offspring of the “heresy of separateness”! As evolved persons, we all are aware of this. That is why we so heartily enjoy “Russell conjugation”. People behave so very funnily!

But the twist is: much as we make fun of others, each one of us is prone to the same weakness. We play the same games with each other. Laughing at others is fun, but when others laugh at us it is not half as funny. If they tell us *our* shortcoming with equal frankness, we are not amused. Even if a perceptive friend tells us kindly about it we do not agree. Though we know in our heart that our friend is right, such advice is not welcome. In the circumstances, if we want to find a way out of this quandary, we must take a hard look at *ourselves*.

This self-examination is not easy. Not that there is anything particularly difficult about it, but our own faults are not readily visible to us. Even with the best of intentions, we tend to be blind to our

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own failings. Having behaved “correctly” in our best judgment already, it becomes hard to see the fault. Any remedy to be found has to be out of this very jumble. It will take incisive thinking.

If we take up rigorous introspection, we will see that our deepest emotion, tucked away in the innermost recesses of mind, is one of defence — particularly of our “image”. Anything that seems belittling, or exposing us to ridicule is seen as an affront. We react. Unwittingly, we have formed an emotional shell of self-defence around us that is by now *many incarnations old*, and rather hardened over the period. It is now so much a part of our being, that we are utterly unaware of its existence, and will dismiss any such suggestion.

But by dismissal we cannot wriggle out of it and, as long as it is there, we continue to be reactive. In all ignorance, we do our best to protect this shell. The thinking arising out of this attitude is naturally centred round ourselves. We see reality only through this bias — and think it is the “obvious reality”. We are amazed that others do not agree with us.

In a conflict both parties insist it is *they* who are right. Both try sincerely to set the other party “right”. We see this happening all the time; no examples are necessary. These “crusades” are never-ending. Today it might be one side that wins, tomorrow the other. But even *winning* a feud is tiring. Losing goads us for revenge. Winner and loser both head for more trouble. They might be individuals, nations or religious groups. The causes

and the results are the same, only the scale and complexity differ. It goes on. We *all* know this. We also know the common folly that lies at the root of all this.

But a human quirk is: we think such things happen to “others”, not to *us*. We forget that we also are touchy about our interests. A large part of karma is centred on this. Those close to us — family, colleagues, friends (and enemies) — bound to us by karma, keep coming in reshuffled relationships over successive lives. Discords keep building up, adding to the unending frictions. If we *still* think we are an exception to the rule, that we are not in this “silly” sequence, let us ponder the following discussion.

We may not *notice* this, but carrying incessant stress over long periods (lifetimes!) causes insidious fatigue in our physical and mental systems, and tells heavily on our health. In fact, *this* is where most of our complexes and illnesses originate. On the mental level, we are besieged with self-doubt, diffidence, hypersensitivity, and so on. Their manifestations can be varied according to individual aspects of the person’s general mental make-up. On the physical level, the different body systems go out of kilter, resulting in any of the diseases. Medicines or surgery cannot offer a permanent cure because they tackle only symptoms, not the patient. This is like training hoses on flames seen in the sky, while the fire rages *inside* the house. The flames may *appear* to be doused temporarily, but the house still keeps burning. The real causes having been brought

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forward from earlier lives, do not come under the purview of medical science. Clearly, the defensive shell of our own creation is bringing us nothing but trouble. Our distress does not end, and we do not know where to look.

By contrast, we see some exceptional people in our midst who are ever cheerful. They never blame anyone, but readily admire everyone's good points. Now, they share the world with the very men we find insufferable, but have no problem with anyone — on the contrary, they bring cheer to everyone around. It will be seen that they enjoy good health. If ever they fall ill we do not have to hear much about it. Their entire personality and lifestyle are wholesome. Easy-mannered, they are not guarded or defensive in their demeanour. They take even occasional jibes very sportingly. We love and appreciate them. Why, then, can *we* be not like them? This is a matter worth thinking about. Let us *all* bring joy into our lives — by making it easy.

Having worn the protective shell for many lives and only *suffered* for it, it is high time we got rid of this root of all woes. The big question is: HOW? It is not like removing a shirt. It will have to be a *mental* exercise. Such a shell shows chronic fear. We have to confront and analyse this fear to its logical end. What are we scared of? Who are we afraid of? Even if our fears are real, will this *shell* protect us? If our fears are not real, is it worth bearing this needless load? Once we realize the futility of lugging the shell, it will on its own start to weaken. As we

progress in positivity, it will grow thinner and vanish.

We need to reaffirm our faith. Praying to God, asking for anything, does not indicate our faith in him — in fact just the opposite. God *knows* what is best for us and is already giving it in full measure, *without* our asking. *Asking* for anything shows dissatisfaction with what we already have. We need to ruminate over this aspect of our faith. He protects us exquisitely. We need have no fear or worry. Once convinced, *real* faith will build up without our effort.

Also, we need to check our own behaviour with others. If we start treating others with unconditional love, tolerance and understanding, we bring ourselves on a positive footing. Still, we cannot expect that they will start reciprocating our love immediately. Everyone is long used to our quarrelsome nature, and has been treating us likewise for ages. Then, there is piled-up bad karma with these people to be worked off. Building up love in our egocentric nature is in itself an exercise. The handicap is massive. But we need to tackle it. We need to make a determined start, and carry on undaunted. It will take infinite patience and unflagging tenacity. It will *not* be a cakewalk, but every bit of progress will bring in proportionate fruits.

Let us not forget: we have an unfailing Senior Partner in our endeavour, taking care of us wordlessly. Slowly, the more mature among our friends will notice the change in our attitude and start giving us good response. This will encourage us.

First, Second, and Third Person

Others will follow by and by. The quality of our love and tolerance will start improving, bringing in better results. *Some* may think of this as our new “pose”, and may be cautious in responding. Eventually they too will see the truth if we are sincere in our effort. A few could of course be utterly obtuse to our new friendliness and may continue with their animus — old karmic dues. Let us have compassion for them. Our bad karma will definitely be dealt with some day. We have the requisite tolerance and patience now. In any case, a majority of them are now our friends. We can take the few unfortunate souls in our stride.

This of course is easier said than done, but certainly not impossible. The Adepts must have gone through all this. Regular meditation is useful. Being a dispassionate observer of whatever happens, having unflinching faith in God, maintaining pure conduct, are basic. Engagement in community work is useful. Our effort and patience will be tested by the Powers, but each step forward will bring in proportionate results. Our life will be that much smoother, pleasanter. There will be “positive strokes” that will keep confirming that we are proceeding on the right lines. It will take great courage, tempered-steel resolve. “This Ātman is not obtainable by the feeble” (Mundaka Upanishad III.2.4). But the testing Powers are benign, and they are on *our* side. As they test, they also help. They know far better than us how badly the world needs enlightened people to assist them. We have nothing to fear. The prize will be rich,

certainly worth working hard for. Victory is certain. Liberation (moksha) will already have been attained. But on *reaching* liberation, we will no longer treasure it; on the contrary we will want to be *here* to help those still struggling. Today many Mahatmas have chosen to be among us, and are making our passage swifter. They want good assistants. We want to be of help to them in this noble task. This will speed up *our* passage, too. We must be steeped in Divine Love for the entire creation. Today we are recipients of this love. We want to pay back. This paying back cannot be to God or his Able Assistants — whatever love we transmit to them, they turn it back to us manyfold. This is the confirmed experience of all chelas. Milton’s beautiful lines come to mind: “God doth not need either man’s work or his own gifts; who best bear his mild yoke they serve him best.” We can pay back to God only by serving those still struggling. If we practise empathy, love and compassion with all our heart, eventually we should be able to *see* the basic Unity of all beings, that those whom we help are *ourselves*. It is not *they* and *we* — it is *all* WE.

First person, second person and third person are fine in grammar; but they are best kept there. More than speaking and writing correct language, let them not become too large a part of our thinking and feeling. Saints have felt Unity with the entire creation. Scriptures are unanimous and unequivocal about it. May it become *our experience*, too, not just a subject of pedantic discussion. ✧

Setting an Example: Our Real Work

A LEARNER

Madame H. P. Blavatsky said in *The Key to Theosophy*¹ that setting an example of our own lives was the most important of her expectations of us as members of the Theosophical Society (TS). It is probably also the most difficult because we literally have to *live* up to it. But this should not be just her expectation of us — we should expect it of ourselves. As relatively advanced human beings, we are endowed with a unique, creative consciousness which can be used to its fullest potential only if we can concentrate our power of thought, helped by the strength of our will. Thus we can effectively improve ourselves not just for selfish reasons, but for the benefit of humanity at large.

Setting an example is the best way to teach, especially when teaching the young. Very few, if any, can be really influenced by the “Do as I say, not as I do” method of instruction. But this implies that we try to set the best possible example, and this usually involves self-culture. It may be beneficial to explore what some of the wise ones have said about building character, both directly and indirectly, as their lives are worthy of emulation. Although some of their teachings may not

have been labeled theosophical as such, you may decide whether they ring true.

Rome’s great philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelius, who lived in the second century AD, witnessed the gradual crumbling of the Roman frontiers, as well as famines and plagues. He was said to have been of lofty character and turned more and more to the study of Stoic philosophy. He aspired to be a spiritual disciple and, in his *Meditations*, he reveals a mind of great humanity and humility:

Begin each day by telling yourself: Today I shall be meeting with interference, ingratitude, insolence, disloyalty, ill will, and selfishness — all of them due to the offender’s ignorance of what is good or evil. But, for my part, I have long perceived the nature of good and its nobility, of evil and its meanness, and also the nature of the culprit himself, who is my brother (not in the physical sense, but as a fellow-creature similarly endowed with reason and a share of the divine); therefore none of those things can injure me, for nobody can implicate me in what is degrading. Neither can I be angry with my brother or fall foul of him; for he and I were born

Based on a talk given to members of Adyar Lodge, Theosophical Society in India.

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to work together, like our two hands, feet, or eyelids, or like the upper and lower rows of our teeth. To obstruct each other is against Nature's law — and what is irritation or aversion but a form of obstruction?²

Try to move others by persuasion; yet act against their will if the principles of justice so direct. But if someone uses force to obstruct you, then take a different line; resign yourself without a pang, and turn the obstacle into an opportunity for the exercise of some other virtue.³

An American mystic, philosopher, and Nature lover of the early 19th century, Henry David Thoreau, was urged by an older friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, to attend Harvard University. Both of them were part of what was called the Transcendentalist Movement. Thoreau was inspired by Eastern philosophy and, in turn, his writings influenced Mahatma Gandhi, especially one of Thoreau's essays on "Civil Disobedience". He refused to pay state taxes because the US government, although a democracy, was still engaged in slavery, and this was something he did not want to support, even indirectly:

One afternoon, . . . when I went to the village to get a shoe from the cobbler's, I was seized and put into jail, because I did not pay a tax to, or recognize the authority of, the state which buys and sells men, women, and children, like cattle, at the door of its senate-house. . . . It is true, I might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run "amok"

against society; but I preferred that society should run "amok" against me, it being the desperate party. However, I was released the next day, obtained my mended shoe, and returned to the woods in season to get my dinner of huckleberries. . . . I am convinced that, if all men were to live as simply as I then did, thieving and robbery would be unknown. These take place only in communities where some have got more than is sufficient, while others have not enough.⁴

In accumulating property for ourselves or our posterity, in founding a family or a state, or acquiring fame even, we are mortal: but in dealing with Truth we are immortal, and need fear no change nor accident.⁵

The Vedas say: "All intelligences awake with the morning" To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. . . . We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor.⁶

In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 52), when Madame Blavatsky is asked whether moral elevation is the principal thing insisted upon in our Society, she replied

Setting an Example: Our Real Work

that “A true Theosophist ought ‘to deal justly and walk humbly’”, and she explained further that “the one Self has to forget itself for the [many] selves”. To her, pure altruism was the principal aim of the TS.

This also points to self-improvement, not with the aim of obtaining a selfish liberation from our own suffering, as stated earlier, but of being better prepared to help others attain *their* liberation, and teach them to help and teach *others* in turn. For us to become better examples in our daily lives, first we must be willing to recognize what it is that we need to improve in ourselves, we must realize that we have the willpower to change for the better, and then set about to making the necessary changes, that is, we have to put our creative thoughts into practice. Needless to say, this is all easier said than done, so let us try to go into it a little further.

One of the subjects in a collection of Buddhist wisdom titled *The Book of Tibetan Elders* by Sandy Johnson, a contemporary American writer, is the late Gelek Rinpoche, who studied at Drepung Monastery in Lhasa. He also aided in the teaching and research of Tibetan studies at the Jewel Heart Tibetan Cultural and Buddhist Center in Michigan, USA, from 1987 until his passing in February 2017. When interviewed about the nature of Buddha Dharma, he said:

The essence of Buddha’s teachings is to develop as much virtue as possible, avoid as much negativity as possible, and

watch your mind. He had solutions for every problem. For example, . . . Some of us get angry with our mothers and keep that anger going for years, right? But once you acknowledge that anger, then you find it lasts for shorter and shorter periods of time. Then maybe you will be able to see the anger coming before you feel it. Then you can avoid it.⁷

There is a practical and inspiring little book, *Gods in Exile* by J. J. van der Leeuw, who was General Secretary of the Dutch Section of the TS in the early 1930s. An active theosophist and prolific writer, his *The Fire of Creation* won him the Subba Row Medal in 1925. He also wrote *The Conquest of Illusion*, and was a friend and admirer of J. Krishnamurti. In the Foreword of his *Gods in Exile*, van der Leeuw says that what he wrote in this booklet was based on an awakening of Ego-consciousness that brought with it knowledge which, although it came in a single moment, took many days to realize, and many pages to describe. Some passages follow:

More suffering is caused by this undisciplined imagination than we think. All the countless occasions to be found in the lives of so many where they fail to control their passions, especially sex-desire, are the result of an undisciplined imagination, not of a weak will. A strong desire may be felt, but it is creative thought which brings about action. . . . Few people have learnt as yet that anxious or frantic resistance inspired by fear is something very different from the will.⁸

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The especial function of the will is not to do things or struggle against things, but to hold one purpose in the consciousness and exclude all else.⁹ When we use the will as it should be used . . . there can be no difficulty. . . . We must not allow extraneous influences to divert us from our line of action. Try then to realize this will within you, . . . feel that it is irresistible and has power to hold any purpose until achieved. Having once felt and realized this true power of the will, we can never again speak of the will being weak. . . . Use this power of the will then to hold in your consciousness one purpose and one purpose only: perfection for the sake of the world.¹⁰

The Sage of Arunachala, Sri Ramana Maharshi, also spoke about the function of the human will. Although he taught a great deal through silence, at times he instructed through speech. Most of the time when he *did* speak, he replied to questioners by simply saying that they should ask themselves, “Who am I?”, instead of asking about a hundred other things. He taught that self-inquiry should be “the easiest of all tasks” — but it is not so easy for many of us. In a compilation of his dialogues with disciples and visitors, *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, when asked, “What are the means for gaining willpower?”, he answered:

Your idea of willpower is success insured. Willpower should be understood to be the strength of mind which makes it capable for meeting success or failure with equanimity. It is not synonymous with certain

success. Why should one’s attempts be always attended with success? Success develops arrogance and the man’s spiritual progress is thus arrested. Failure, on the other hand, is beneficial inasmuch as it opens the eyes of the man to his limitations and prepares him to surrender himself. Self-surrender is synonymous with eternal happiness. Therefore one should try to gain the equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is willpower.¹¹

The question was then raised, “Is willpower gained by divesting oneself of thoughts?” and Sri Ramana replied: “Rather by confining oneself to a single thought. Ultimately this will also disappear, leaving Pure Consciousness behind. Concentration helps one to it.”¹²

The disciple then said: “So then willpower is gained by directing the mind and concentrating it. The personality has nothing to do with it.” And Sri Ramana declared: “Personality is the root-cause of external activities. It must sink for gaining the highest good.”¹³

Our former international President, Mrs Radha Burnier, has said that theosophy is the study of life itself, and it has been studied from many different points of view. She added that there are three aspects to life: What is inscrutable, infinite, and boundless (which some call God); the universe; and oneself; and that to examine all these three is the study of theosophy. On an earlier occasion she told a group of new members of the TS at Adyar that we can all learn to be more loving and wiser so that others may be

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helped by the way we think, talk and act.

Radhaji echoed what N. Sri Ram, also former international President of the TS, told members of the Society in New Zealand in a lecture given fifty-seven years ago — that the world will be saved only by things like genuine kindness. Following are excerpts from that talk about living the theosophical life:

I think that theosophy, for all of us, should not be merely a Theosophy of books, whatever those books may be, but it should mean, more than anything else, a way of life and action. If it is that, then we will never become tired of theosophy. . . . If we can have a different attitude, which is an attitude of creativity, then I think theosophy will not become stale, uninteresting . . . because life then will be always an adventure. . . .

The very fact that we think that a certain thing is possible and desirable shows that already there has sprung into existence a

certain impulse within you that gives you that realization. . . . We must realize that we are the trustees for this work just for the time being, and therefore we must discharge our trust in the best manner possible, and hand over to those who may come after us a Society which is full of life, full of vigour, in which each one is trying to live a different kind of life, is trying to think along lines of truth, and not merely convention and superstition. That, I feel, is the work to which we are all called.

Let us try to turn Madame Blavatsky's expectation of us, as well as our own, into a challenge, through deep introspection, so that we may bring about a truly lasting change in our *daily* lives. This would set the best example to members and non-members alike, thus helping the work of the Society in uplifting not just humanity, and all sentient beings as a result, but for the sake of our ailing Earth — as a living entity. ✧

Endnotes

1. Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna, *The Key to Theosophy*, Theosophy Co., Mumbai: 1987, p. 246.
- 2 & 3. Aurelius, Marcus, *Meditations*, Penguin Books Ltd, London: 1995, p. 1 & 43.
4. Thoreau, Henry David, *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*, Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc.: 1992, pp. 131-32 (“The Village”).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80 (“Reading”).
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2 (“Where I Lived”).

7. Johnson, Sandy, *The Book of Tibetan Elders*, New York: The Berkley Publishing Group: 1996, p. 261.
- 8–10. Van der Leeuw, Johannes Jacobus, *Gods in Exile*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar: 1987, pp. 48–50, 53, and 88–9.
11. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai: 1996, p. 390; and 12 & 13, p. 391.

Book of Interest

SOUTH OF THE ADYAR RIVER — *Theosophy-Inspired Educational Initiatives, Memories and Tributes from Alumni*, by K. V. S. Krishna & K. R. N. Menon, Kalakshetra Pubs., Chennai, India, pp. 512, Rs. 300.

H. P. Blavatsky said: “All Western, and especially English, education is instinct with the principle of emulation and strife; each boy is urged to learn more quickly, to outstrip his companions, and to surpass them in every possible way. What is mis-called ‘friendly rivalry’ is assiduously cultivated, and the same spirit is fostered and strengthened in every detail of life.” The concept of Theosophical education promoted by leaders like Dr Annie Besant, G. S. Arundale and J. Krishnamurti was directed on the basic ideas promulgated by H. P. Blavatsky. *South of the Adyar River* is a compilation of articles and memoirs and tributes from the alumni of Besant Theosophical School.

Henry Steel Olcott, the founder President of the Theosophical Society, started educational institutions for the less fortunate children of the poor in India. In their tribute to H. S. Olcott the authors recall the great work done by the founder of the Theosophical Society. HSO travelled countless miles, by bullock cart, tonga, catamaran, coastal ships, transoceanic steamers, railways, rickshaws, palanquins — no mode of transportation was omitted

from his logistics. He revived Buddhist practices, and indeed gained acceptance not only of the laity and clergy but also of the colonial administration in Ceylon, and Burma. He travelled extensively in Japan, and worked tirelessly even there to reconcile the differences between the different Buddhist schools of thought and practice — quite a feat for an American who embraced Buddhism, which perhaps was his unique attraction to his audiences.

If Madame Blavatsky was the spiritual source of the Theosophical movement, then HSO was, without doubt, the practical manager of that persuasion. The author also adds that *Old Diary Leaves* would make very good reading for those interested in the histories of the countries which had the benefit of HSO’s genuine interest in them, and their well-being. The authors say that the “Steel” in his name was verily representative of his indomitable pursuit of his plan (with his co-worker HPB) to put Theosophy on the world map, and the Eastern religions, particularly Buddhism, in its rightful place amongst the populations who were indigenous to its tenets and provenance.

When Olcott started the Panchama schools for the underprivileged classes in Chennai (formerly Madras), it was a turning point in the history of India. In the chapter “Schools Inspired by the Theosophical Movement” we can read a vivid

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account of the formation of the Olcott School. The school was visited by the then Governor General of Madras, Lord Wenlock, and he appreciated the great work done by Olcott. His Excellency thanked Olcott for giving him the opportunity of inspecting Olcott's school, which he was pleased to hear was doing such good work. He was convinced that there was no step which could be taken with more likelihood of success than that of education. His Excellency also opined that by gradual introduction of education, the disadvantaged classes could best be helped to help themselves.

Mr Sankara Menon, the first headmaster of Besant School, recalls how Dr Arundale described the beginning of Besant Memorial School, later renamed as the Besant Theosophical School. He said that shortly before her death Dr Besant uttered these memorable words:

Let happy memories of me remain with all. Specially work to keep away fear from the little ones everywhere, for the young must grow happily even though we must not allow them to do just what they want. I have worked long to help the young to be happy and unafraid. Let that work go on and let the young learn to know of me and of my love for them.

These words were taken down in his notebook, by Dr Arundale, and to him they became a last direction given by his guru. Dr Arundale started the Besant Memorial School in 1934 soon after he became the President of the Theosophical Society. Dr Besant started her public

life in India establishing, the Central Hindu College in Varanasi, which later on developed into Banaras Hindu University. During her educational work she started nearly forty schools named "National Schools" throughout the length and breadth of India. They were not ordinary schools which just taught students the three Rs, but fostered true Indian nationalism and self-respect in every Indian. She brought great educationists from all over the world like Dr Arundale and Arthur Richardson to teach the students of Central Hindu College.

The short biographies of the founders of the Theosophical Society, H. S. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky, and the former presidents such as Dr Besant, Dr Arundale, C. Jinarājadāsa, N. Sriram, John B. S. Coats and Radha Burnier are included in this book with their photographs. The rare photographs of Rukmini Devi Arundale in dancing costumes, and Dr Arundale as Commissioner of the Indian Boy Scouts Association have also been included.

The prospectus of the Besant Memorial School published in *The Theosophist*, March 1934 issue, shows the great vision of the founders of the school. It says:

In general, the first care of the School will be to ensure healthy bodies, through games and exercises, and together with careful medical supervision, will be regarded as of vital importance. The second care of the School will be to guide the healthy development of the emotional nature, so that the students may grow amidst clean

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and uplifting impulses and feelings, thus conserving and usefully directing their growing vigour. The third care of the School will be to help the student to gain useful knowledge and the ability to control and direct the powers of the mind.

The Theosophical principles of life found in every great religion was given prominence and students were helped to discover in their respective faiths both an adequate understanding of life and a happy confidence in themselves and in their future. Special stress was laid upon the importance of mutual respect among the adherents of the various religions.

Mr Menon shares his experiences in these words:

Nature has endowed man with gifts, but nurture has to help to bring them out of him. Nurture has to deal with maladjustments of various kinds. It has to clear away all the weeds suppressing the unfoldment of the beauty in man's nature. The teacher has to be the gardener. He has to remove the weeds, he has to provide the nourishment, the light and air, the environment in which the tender plant puts forth its first shoots and in full freedom, under no

compulsion except the compulsions of a perfect physical and spiritual environment, grown to the fullness of its stature.

Dr Rukmini Devi recalls how they raised funds for the school: "To raise money for the school, I took a small party of my students and musicians on a tour of South India." Great educationists like Maria Montessori stayed at Adyar and held classes for the students of the Besant Theosophical School, and also trained students for the Arundale Montessori Training Centre as per the request of Dr Arundale. Great scholars like M. G. Kanitkar and Felix Layton were the headmasters of the School. G. Sundari proudly remembers that the great music composer Papanasam Sivan taught music to the students, and she recalls him teaching them the song *Devi Vasanthe* as a tribute to Dr Besant. Their aim was "education without tears" and "education without fear".

The book contains many inspiring personal accounts of the headmasters and alumni of the school which sheds light on the work of Theosophists in the field of education.

K. DINAKARAN

We should aim at creating free men and women, free intellectually, free morally, unprejudiced in all respects, and above all things, unselfish.

H. P. Blavatsky
The Key to Theosophy

THE 142ND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Theme: *From Teachings to Insight: The Altruistic Heart*

The 142nd International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, **from 31 December 2017 to 5 January 2018**. All members of the Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates.

Non-members may send **requests** for permission to attend, together with a recommendation from an officer of the Federation or the Section, **to the Convention Officer (CO) before 25 November**.

The package rates below are from 29 Dec. 2017 to 6 Jan. 2018, inclusive:

LEADBEATER CHAMBERS (LBC)	Registration fee	Full board
Overseas delegates	US\$ 70 *	US\$ 280 *
Indian and Less Developed Countries' delegates (Includes sharing room, mosquito nets, sheets, no blankets, <u>all meals at LBC dining hall</u>). No reimbursement, if one eats at the Canteen.	Rs 200	Rs 8,500

Note: Half rates for children from 3 to 10 years.

* Or EUR or Pound Sterling equivalent.

INDIAN STYLE	Registration fee	Accommodation
Indian and Less Developed Countries' delegates (Includes mat/cot or mattress, sheets, no meals)	Rs 200	Rs 350
Canteen from dinner on 30 Dec. to lunch on 5 Jan. (includes breakfast, lunch, tea & snack, and dinner)		Canteen Rs 1,100

Note: Half rates for children from 3 to 10 years. Canteen will be run by the Karnataka Fed.

ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS

Factors considered in allocating Indian-style accommodation are active membership, health, age, priority of registration, size of family, etc. Rooms and bathrooms cannot be made available for anyone's exclusive use. Young persons should be prepared to stay in dormitories. No special facilities can be provided for members who are ill or for women with babies. No kitchens are available. Ordinary medical attention will be available for minor complaints but there will be no provision for serious illness. Since accommodation is limited, especially ground floor, availability will be subject to confirmation by the Convention Officer.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENTS

Last date for registration: **1 December 2017**.

Cancellation: Last date 15 December 2017; payment will be refunded, except the Registration fee. After 12 December there will be no refund of any amount.

Delegates from India: Send registration, accommodation and canteen charges together, along with the details as per the Registration form (available at <www.ts-adyar.org>), to the Convention Officer before 1 December 2017. Remittance by **bank drafts, duly crossed**, should be **made payable to The Treasurer, The Theosophical Society, Chennai**. For online bank transfers contact the CO.

Delegates from other countries: Make sure you take travel insurance. Send the Registration form preferably by email. For online bank transfers, and any other matters, contact the CO by email.

Contact the Convention Officer by email <tsadyarconvention@gmail.com>, or *The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India*.

Ms Marja Artamaa, *International Secretary*

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India

International Convention 2017-18

REGISTRATION & ACCOMMODATION FORM

(To be filled in Block Capitals and sent to the Convention Officer, preferably by email <tsadyarconvention@gmail.com>.

Non-members may send requests to attend, together with a recommendation from an officer of the TS, to the Convention Officer before 25 November.)

Name: Nationality: Email:

Address (in home country): Phone/Mobile:

Year of Joining: Section/Federation/Lodge: Special Request:

PACKAGE RATES:

A. LBC: Overseas delegates USD 350* Includes registration fee, meals at LBC Dining Hall, accommodation sharing, sheets and mosquito nets

B. LBC: Indian delegates Rs.8,700 Includes registration fee, meals at LBC Dining Hall, accommodation sharing, sheets & mosquito nets

C. Indian Style: Rs.1,650 Includes registration fee, meals at Canteen, accommodation - sharing/dormitory, mat/cots/mattress, sheets

** or EUR or Pound equivalent*

Note: half rate for children of 3-10 years

No.	Name (including the main applicant)	Age	Gender F/M	Member Y/N	Package A / B / C	Amount	Mode of Payment Cheque No. or Online

Date of Arrival: morning/afternoon Date of Departure: morning/afternoon

Recommended by Signature:

Signature of applicant: Date:

Overseas delegates: Please make sure you are covered under overseas travel insurance.

Last date for registration: 1 December 2017

For clarifications email to <tsadyarconvention@gmail.com>

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