

## 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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# 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.

# Address to Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit University Faculty and Students

(In Kaladi, Kerala, India, on 22 January 2019)

TIM BOYD

I AM deeply honored to be in the presence of the faculty and students of a University of this caliber. It is a wonderful thing that is happening here at your University. I am especially hopeful about the linking of our Adyar Library and Research Centre with your institution that we will undertake today.

First of all I would like to thank the Professor for his generous introduction. I think his study of the Theosophical Society's (TS) background almost exceeds my own, although I have been associated with it for a while. Everything that he said today speaks to the purpose and the way that the TS has functioned within India since its arrival on these shores.

Although for most people the TS is strongly associated with India, it was actually founded in New York City in 1875, then migrated to India in 1879. It was from this place, that the message of Universal Brotherhood radiated out into the world along with a studied appreciation for the value of *all* of the world's religions, combined with science and philosophy. Each of the world's religious

expressions has come into being at a particular time, in a particular place, and has generally focused on a particular people. While each of these expressions speaks to the one truth, it is necessarily limited because it draws on the symbols and language of a specific culture, place, and time. These are limitations which are human-created, but which can be exceeded. The type of work that you do here at the Sanskrit University is focused on those great beings who have realized truth and tried to communicate it in every way possible.

The greatest challenge for these Great Ones has been that *we* have been their students. Because of our limitations and prejudices, in generation after generation we have found ways to limit these limitless teachings that have been given. Throughout the ages this has been the human response to wisdom. It is unfortunate, but it has never deterred the Wise Ones in their attempts to elevate us. The work that you do here has enormous value, taking the teachings and example of Sankaracharya, one of the greatest teachers in human history, and trying to explore as deeply

as possible the subtleties of his message.

An additional requirement is to explore in terms of experience. This is another emphasis within the theosophical approach. The idea that the teachings from the Great Masters are things to be apprehended intellectually can only take us to a certain limit. If we are to deeply experience the power that gives a benefit to the world, a practical application of these great teachings is needed. This dual focus is what has always been at the core of the theosophical movement.

The TS is active in around 70 countries in the world today, and part of its attraction has been that it is intended to speak in terms understandable to any of us on the planet. This is something that has interest for many. There is more that I could say, but in imitation of the wisdom that was shown by the Professor in his introduction, I will stop talking before I reach the range of things that I know nothing about. I would be happy to respond to questions you may have.

**Q:** I have a simple question: Science and technology have advanced so much, whereas Vedanta and Theosophy belong to a different old age. How are the latter relevant to today's technological and scientific world?

**A:** I should say it is always simple questions that are the most challenging. As has been noted, there are many pressing issues that we are facing as a human family in the world today. The idea of escape to another planet is being put forward as some sort of hope for the devastation that *we* are creating on this one. At this

moment, here at the University, we sit in a peaceful environment, yet around the world there are around 60 different wars being fought. As we sit, our environment is very pleasant, but the planet's environment, soil, water, air, *all* of them are being polluted in ways that are going to have powerful consequences. At this point no matter how we respond, some of these consequences cannot be averted.

In terms of human knowledge we do not need a new technology or theory to address each and every one of these problems. The knowledge that we have now is sufficient. Yet the problems persist and grow. What this says to me is that knowledge in and of itself is insufficient. What is it then that is required? This is where the value of the actual experienced teachings of a Sri Sankara, of an Ageless Wisdom tradition, become increasingly valuable. They show themselves in the activities of inspired individuals. So in the absence of some deepening, we plan for escape routes from the harms that we are continually creating. But there is no escape from our own unenlightened minds.

It is an unfortunate feature of human behavior that sometimes our greatest learning takes place in the face of crises. The uncultivated mind responds in ways that create problems. The cultivated mind, whether it is of a young or older person, responds in those ways that are needful to this moment. The exposure to the Advaita teachings, philosophy, and practice, the exposure to *any* of the Ageless Wisdom tradi-

## Address to Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit University Faculty and Students

tions, is necessary now. As crises arise we necessarily reach for depths that we did not before consider were worthy of our time. Thank you for your question.

The Memorandum of Understanding that we are signing today provides for students of this institution to utilize the resources we have at the TS headquarters in our Adyar Library and Research Centre, and there are numerous palm-leaf and other manuscripts, many of which have yet to be translated. We can also provide accommodation. Our campus is in the heart of Chennai. When it was founded in 1882 it was on the southern outskirts of the city, surrounded by paddy fields. Now Chennai stretches

35 kilometers beyond the TS campus, yet still we have maintained a peaceful environment at our place.

Our campus is 260 acres in the center of a city of 7 million people, and it has a peaceful and powerful atmosphere. For those who come to study, they can do so in a way unique for today's world. Fully a half of our campus is forested land, so the benefits of the stabilizing influences of the natural world are there. Yet if you step outside of the walls you can have all the honking of horns and everything that comes with city life. These are some of the things that will be available to students and professors with the institutional linkages we are establishing today. ✧

Once we become conscious, even dimly, of the Atman [our essential nature], the Reality within us, the world takes on a very different aspect. It is no longer a court of justice, but a kind of gymnasium. Good and evil, pain and pleasure, still exist, but they seem more like the ropes and vaulting-horses and parallel bars which can be used to make our bodies strong. Maya [illusion of the physical world] is no longer an endlessly revolving wheel of pain and pleasure but a ladder which can be climbed to consciousness of the Reality.

Adi Sankaracharya  
*Crest Jewel of Discrimination*  
(*Vivekachudamani*)

# Science for Health and Consciousness

S. ABHAYA SRISRIMAL JAIN

**T**HIS talk seeks to explore the interconnectedness between various apparently different categories and levels of existence and understanding. To the layman today, the dualities of science and spirituality, the physical and the mental, man and the world, are all distinct and disconnected from each other. Both rational and emotional people would concur that their nature points to contrasting realms of operation. Any attempt to understand them on a common platform would appear to be remote.

However, there is strong evidence in the erstwhile “oriental traditions” that the universe works as a whole, wherein all elements are in harmony. The discord outside is a reflection of that within. Once the unique yet holistic nature of the world is understood, the assimilation within the inner self would be achievable as well. While scientific research has begun to prove it with reference to Nature, Indian spirituality has already established it with reference to the Self.

The attempt here then would be to trace the meeting points of science, health, and consciousness through the

prism of my life experiences in the diverse fields I have worked in. This is not so much a technical talk but an experiential one. It hopes to also touch upon some commonalities with Theosophy, whereby both become mutually meaningful. Having been taught right from childhood the pitfalls of an egoistic approach, the use of the first person is only for convenience. As a start, it becomes imperative to put forward a basic definition of the three major terms of my talk: health, consciousness, and the application of science to humankind.

## **Health**

It refers to a state of complete physical, psychological and social well-being and a resource for living a full life. It indicates the absence of disease with the ability to recover and bounce back from illness and other problems. A balanced diet, exercise, screening for diseases, and coping strategies can all enhance a person’s health. The factors for good health include the environment, relationships, education, and control of the mind and emotions, among others.

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**S. Abhaya Srisrimal Jain**, Industrialist and Social Educationist, is Chairman of Abusha Investment and Management Services LLP, Chennai, India. Theosophy-Science Lecture delivered at the TS Adyar international Convention, Varanasi, 3 January 2020.

### Consciousness

It can be defined as sentience or awareness of internal and external existence, the development of which covers the life span of an individual from childhood to adulthood. The alterations of thought leading to levels of consciousness can be due to physical, psychological, and social factors.

This morning I had a meeting in Varanasi with an enlightened person from Mumbai. When I went to meet him he asked me, "Since you are going to speak on 'consciousness', tell me where does consciousness arise from? What is the mother of consciousness?" My wife, who was with me said: "It is the mind of the soul which generates consciousness, or is the mother of consciousness." Then he explained to me that consciousness arises when the soul and matter meet. It is not the soul alone; soul is only one aspect of consciousness. He continued that when the sperm and the egg meet, both the creative energy and that which is generated are both consciousness. That is how consciousness flows in our body through neurons.

Consciousness also refers to the architecture of beliefs in keeping with a faith system. In my case, it would be the role of ethics and *ahimsa*, the Jaina tenets of non-absolutism (*anekāntavāda*) and non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*) in any study of consciousness. The Jaina system very clearly says we should have only as much as what we need. What is more than our need should be given back to society. We are not the owners of the

wealth we have, but its trustees. It is necessary to give the wealth back to the society from where it has come. This had been imbibed very strongly by my mind right from my childhood.

### Application of Science to Health and Consciousness

When trying to analyze the application of science to health and consciousness, some of the questions that arose were: What kind of research is being done into health challenges facing humankind? How do we connect researchers and the pharmaceutical and life science industry to promote inspired solutions for the same? Applying science also meant the introduction of the latest technologies from the domestic to the medical level.

### My Evolution

Hailing from a traditional Jaina family, with an academic background of engineering, my life's trajectory has been an evolution of both the scientific and the spiritual. Growing up with an insatiable curiosity for knowledge, no question seemed unanswerable, no problem unworthy of a solution! The focus was both on the cultivation of the body through physical fitness and cultivation of the mind through mental discipline. At every juncture of my growth, the foundational principles of the Jaina faith I follow have been like goalposts guiding me in the right direction. They have permeated both my personal and professional life. The fundamental tenets of non-absolutism

(*anekāntavāda*), karma, the seven fundamentals (*tattva-s*), the three jewels of right faith, knowledge, and conduct (*triratna*), the three qualities or attributes (*triguna*), Nature (*prakṛti*), detachment, non-violence (*ahimsa*), coupled with a unique form of vegetarianism and regular fasting, association (*satsanga*) with Jain realized souls (*muni-s*), and other philosophical concepts had instilled discipline and focus in every activity.

### Academic Background — Science

I have learnt some very important lessons of life from my science background and my pursuit of sports and the arts. I have been constantly guided by the special emphasis of science on the following: observation, classification, analysis, experimental verification, communication, measurement, adaptability, updation of knowledge, skills enhancement, usage of technology, and goal of human welfare. This has however been with strict adherence to ethics. The influence of chemical engineering had a bearing on my mind to the extent that we could enhance the efficiency of reactions, reduce time cycles without compromise on quality, and protect the environment through enhanced recovery and zero waste management.

When I went through some articles on Theosophy, I found quite a few similar thoughts, corroborating my own approach to life. “Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions”.<sup>1</sup> A truly scientific attitude!

### Cultivation of the Body

It gave me an opportunity to understand the five elements that make up the ecosystem and the human organism. By learning to use different media on earth (yogasanas and pranayama, cricket, horse riding, golf), water (rowing, swimming), air (flying), I was able to understand both my capacity and limitations.

Like Swami Vivekananda said — “a sound mind in a sound body” — the cultivation of mind became equally necessary. What better way to achieve that than by a pursuit of the arts. Learning to sing and play the guitar, the fine, performing, and liberal arts opened a whole new realm of artistic endeavours. The creative juices flowed into a company launched for visual effects and animation in movies, Sony Imageworks, the special effects hub in Chennai for Hollywood movies like the *Spiderman* series, *Men in Black*, and so on.

These kindled in me the aesthetic sense to recognize the symmetry and balance in the world. It helped me synchronize varied fields and professions, like a symphony conductor, bringing out the best in everyone. The symphony conductor may not be the best in every instrument of music which is being played there, but he knows how to synchronize between each player and brings the best out of them. That is what I do in my life. By fine-tuning my sensitivity to peoples’ needs, it helps me appreciate and empathize with the holistic consciousness at work in the world at large. This idea has been highlighted in a quote from

Theosophy: “Harmony in the physical and mathematical world of sense is *justice* in the spiritual one.”<sup>2</sup>

The cultivation of the mind was not limited to only learning art forms. It also implied enlarging my dimensions through reading and networking, contributing towards training young minds through coaching/mentoring as a member of educational trusts, and providing opportunities for exploring various avenues of growth. I have helped forty-five youngsters in India to start their own businesses by mentoring them and making them successful. I will not say that I am 100% successful — out of forty-seven, forty-five were successful, and two could not take it further.

A particularly special venture is the empowerment of women. The Shasun Jain College for Women was founded as a tribute to the memory of my parents, as a one-stop education provider for the bright, talented young women of today. Not content with being part of the standard academic system, centres of excellence were created to further enhance the skill sets of the students and the public. So health for me is the all-round well-being and growth of an individual, keeping pace with scientific research and technological advancement. This is guided by the individual consciousness and is in harmony with universal consciousness.

The demands of scientific rigour became necessary for building a logical, foolproof system of research into hitherto uncharted territories of medicine, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. The

entry of the Shasun Group into chemicals and pharmaceuticals marked a major milestone in this direction. Fast-changing lifestyles precipitated unknown diseases, demanding newer drugs and treatment methods. Pioneering work into stem-cell research became a necessity. I am also proud to tell you here that Shasun is the only pharma company in India to have the distinction of thirty-six new drugs in the world, of the “new chemical entities” as drugs, in collaboration with major pharma companies.

### **Application of Science — Stem Cell Research**

The goal here is the preservation of stem cells to fight and cure diseases. Though a revolution in modern health-care, it was in keeping with ancient Indian tradition which revered the umbilical cord between the infant and the mother and preserved it. The attempt was to carefully avoid all ethical issues in stem-cell research, as only cord cells are stored and used instead of embryonic stem cells. So we deal with science only where there are no ethical issues.

### **Application of Science — Green Nanotechnology**

The introduction of nanotechnology ensured keeping pace with an accelerating technological advancement. The goal of green nanotechnology is the production of nanomaterials and products without harming the environment or human health, being chemical-free. We make nanoparticles of gold and silver through

green nanotechnology without the use of any chemical or synthetic solvents. This is seen as a solution to many environmental problems. Some of its classic features include using existing principles of green chemistry and green engineering, without toxic ingredients, and at low temperatures; using less energy and renewable inputs wherever possible; and using life-cycle thinking in all design and engineering stages for being effective in treating world issues. It has turned out to be powerful, and at the same time not drug-resistant like other antibiotics in the market today. The world is now having a huge problem of drug resistance where antibiotics become ineffective.

The interconnectedness of science, health, and consciousness, explained so far from my perspective also finds an echo in many thoughts expressed in Theosophical teachings:

Right thought is a good thing, but thought alone does not count for much unless it is translated into action.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of Universal Life composed of individual atomic lives is one of the oldest teachings of esoteric philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

The only decree of Karma — an eternal and immutable decree — is absolute harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is *we*, who reward or punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through, and along with Nature, abiding by the laws on which that harmony depends, or, break them.<sup>5</sup>

We believe that everything in material life is most intimately associated with Spiritual agencies.<sup>6</sup>

Physical existence is subservient to the spiritual, and all physical improvement and progress are only the auxiliaries of spiritual progress, without which there could be no physical progress.<sup>7</sup>

### **Contribution to Society (General)**

As a philosophy my family had a very clear view that we will not enter into any meat-processing or non-vegetarian industry, any alcohol or alcohol-based industry, or leather and leather products industry, and we have maintained that.

I would like to mention an incident. We had acquired a company in Newcastle, UK, spread over forty-four acres employing three hundred people. The factory had been running for the previous twenty-five years. After due diligence and acquisition, the presence of non-vegetarian food in the canteen remained an irritant. Since this was against our philosophy, we had a discussion with the trade union and expressed our sensitivity to this issue. The trade union came back with a suggestion that if we agree to pay 100 GBP (British pounds) per employee per month, they will not serve any food in the canteen except tea and coffee. This was an eye-opener to us to understand what could be achieved by proper reasoning and clear expression about our sensitive areas.

The fundamental tenets of a deeply ingrained religious faith could not be

compromised for mere novelty and commerce. Innovation had to go hand-in-hand with ethics. The struggle was deep and tiresome, but the balance was paramount for a sustainable future, as good health and happy living are non-negotiable.

Each business venture proved to be an opportunity, not so much for profit but to provide people with possibilities for progress and prosperity. The contribution to society in general took on many fields: education, business model, philanthropy, charitable work, health initiatives, cultural inculcation, scientific research, technological upgradation, value systems, and social work. Further elaborating on the specific contribution to society with reference to social work, removing misconceptions regarding requirements, namely time, money, knowledge, energy, and recognition, was a task to be undertaken. According to Jaina philosophy the nature of charity, or *daan*, is of three types: *arthdaan*, *śramdaan*, and *vidyadaan*. Under *arthdaan* (money) forty-five entrepreneurs have been helped to set up different ventures; through *śramdaan* (effort) a decent farewell is being given to humans on their final journey by maintaining the Kannammappet Crematorium and Burial Ground in Chennai; and finally by *vidyadaan* (knowledge), help with ideation and planning is imparted to entrepreneurs. We can see the parallel in the theosophical quote: “To live to benefit mankind is the first step.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Contribution to Society (Specific)**

If the interconnectedness of science,

health, and consciousness had to make an impact on society, it had to start with creating awareness. The end user being society at large, the building blocks had to be the young minds waiting to be trained. Thus education became a prime mover in the sequence of events, bringing in its wake the Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women.

Realizing the dream of empowering women through education, there were no full stops. “Go Beyond” is the motto. All aspects physical, psychological, cultural, ethical, and technological were enhanced. While preparing young women for academic degrees is the basic purpose of a collegiate education, building their skills for the emerging job roles gained priority. The recognition, as a partner institution, from National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESCC) came after rigorous upgradation of facility and faculty.

The aim to contribute to society at the national level has now become a reality. We are encouraging a team that is being developed to compete in the Olympics of 2020. I am proud to tell you that the archer has been selected for the trials tomorrow in Pune for the Olympics squad selection from India. She has been practicing for the past thirty-five months, has scored the highest in the world, and broken the world record many times. Girls making it to the top of the world is a great phenomenon for us. Finally, digitization, the new mantra of technological application, has percolated into even routine tasks

of the college campus, resulting in efficiency and transparency.

The other most recent development in the education sector has been the purchase of land in Butati in the Nagaur district of Rajasthan state, where my grandfather was born. We have purchased twenty acres to build a school for the villagers. A centre is also being developed to supply food and provide a place for people to stay at a very nominal cost.

Again I see the corresponding vision expounded in Theosophy in the following quote: “Theosophists do not believe in giving money . . . through other people’s hands or organizations. We believe in giving to the money a thousandfold greater power and effectiveness by our personal contact and sympathy with those who need it.”<sup>9</sup>

These seemed the right steps for scientific progress and intellectual and physical health. Where was consciousness in this scheme of things? Back to basic beliefs! The Jaina doctrine, which shares so many similarities with Theosophy, came to the rescue. It reinforced the notion that all living beings are connected in this universe, explained in material terms by science, but experienced in spiritual states by evolved souls.

### **Building on Strengths**

Finally it is important to build on our strengths while correcting our weaknesses. I believe with the integrated vision acquired by balancing science and spirituality, certain positives have emerged: the “synchronization of diversity” where-

by it became possible to work with people of diverse thought systems with the one goal of the common good; the capacity of visualization or a mental road map of any given event/experience and the willingness to learn from any source. We always try to delve into unknown areas and have the capacity of visualization to learn from any sources. So I have ventured into various fields without the fear that I will not have the right source of people who can be hired with the right technology.

Understanding the fundamental principles of science helped towards their application for the welfare of humanity’s health and elevation of consciousness. Is this not similar to what the theosophist said: “Be humble, if thou wouldst attain to Wisdom. Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered.”<sup>10</sup>

These so-called parallel paths of science and spirituality coalesced in a deeper understanding of consciousness, making life both useful and harmonious. This has given me the courage and desire to share these rather personal but transformational experiences from my life, hoping to reach out to some of you here in a better and fuller way.

What brought me here, was when Tim Boyd, asked me how I was able to manage diverse interests and activities. This was my answer, that when I start a business, I always think of the exit strategy. This helps me to lessen my attachment to the business. We should put in our best, but not cling to it. Thus, I conclude with a favourite catchphrase: Put in your best effort, but practise detached attachment.

## Science for Health and Consciousness

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I, S. Harihara Raghavan, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: 29 February 2020

S. HARIHARA RAGHAVAN, *PUBLISHER*

# Theosophy and Krishnamurti — I

(P. KRISHNA in Conversation with TIM BOYD)

IN the *Bhagavadgītā* there is a moment when Arjuna poses a question to Lord Krishna. He asks “What are the signs of someone who is self-realized? How does he act?” It is a poignant question that is echoed throughout the religious traditions of the world. Like Arjuna, we try to comprehend the qualities of the great teachers who periodically appear on the world stage. Whether it is Jesus, Ramana Maharshi, or the Buddha we try to fathom their life and behavior. Because of distance in time, mostly we are forced to rely on conjecture or the pronouncements of tradition for our answers. In the case of J. Krishnamurti we have a contemporary world teacher whose life, from his earliest beginnings to his moment of death, was witnessed, recorded, and shared. Many of the people who were closest to him are still with us today. So we have the special opportunity to speak with Professor P. Krishna, someone who was both a student and co-worker of Krishnamurti.

**Tim Boyd:** When did you first meet Krishnamurti? Can you recall some of what transpired then?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** It was in Delhi in January 1958 in the house of Mr B. Shiva Rao, who was a family friend of my father. They had grown up together in the TS at Adyar in childhood when Krishnaji was also growing up there. Mr Shiva Rao had invited me to have lunch with Krishnaji and meet him. At the lunch Krishnaji said: “Sir, I have lost all my memories of childhood. I have no recollection of my brother’s face. I can barely recall the outline of Mrs [Annie] Besant’s face.” His brother died in 1925 when he was 30 years of age, so I found it very surprising, and I said: “Is it because you don’t ruminate over the past like we do, and so it doesn’t get revived?” He said, “No, it’s not that.” The other thing I remember is that he said: “I don’t know what hunger is.” I said, “What do you mean, if you don’t eat food don’t you feel hungry?” He said, “No, I just become weaker, and I eat in order to keep the body going.” So I wondered if desirelessness could go to that extent.

**TB:** What do you think?

**PK:** Well, I think that he told the truth (laughter). But I think that this business

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**Prof. P. Krishna** is Head of the Study Centre at the campus of the Krishnamurti Foundation India in Rajghat Fort, Varanasi. This conversation was part of the TS Adyar International Convention held at the Indian Section National Headquarters in Varanasi, India, on 2 January 2020.

of getting realized is like a rebirth within this life itself. So the past died out in the sense that it is still there somewhere, but it does not dominate in the consciousness. Thus the Buddha was brought up as a Hindu with all those Hindu morals, “casteism” and so on, but he walked out of it completely. Similarly, Jesus Christ was brought up as a Jew, and the Jews believed in “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. So how did he come up with the realization that you must not retaliate violence with violence?

These are all cases of people who have broken free from their past, and that is what I think Krishnamurti keeps saying when he talks about freedom from conditioning, that you have to come out of this prison of the past which is just an accident of birth. If we are too attached to that personality, then it blocks us from discovering anything new. All creative perception is beyond the known. So it requires a certain amount of freedom from the known, from our experience.

So I think something happened to him [to JK] in 1922 under that pepper tree. He went through something called “the process”, which is a great mystery. I have talked with many people who were very close to him for a long time, including Pupul Jayakar, Mary Zimbalist, Rosalind [Rajagopal], and so on, who witnessed the process at different times during Krishnaji’s life, and none of them really understood what was happening to him. So it is still a mystery; we do not know about his consciousness.

The last tape that he recorded out of

his own volition was on 7 February 1986, just ten days before his death. He said: “There is a vast intelligence which has used this body, a tremendous energy has gone through it, and you may not find another body or that energy operating in such a body for several hundred years.” You can read that in the third volume of Mary Lutyens’s biography called *Krishnamurti: The Open Door*. That was very close to what [C. W.] Leadbeater and Mrs Besant had predicted. They called it the Maitreya consciousness — that is just a name coming from Buddhism — but it is some kind of intelligence or divine energy that manifested through the person of Krishnamurti.

He said: “All creative perception is like that.” So he was not coming out of thinking, but out of insight. Insight means that you actually see beyond the known, whereas thought is confined to the area of the known. All creative perception, whether in science, art, or music, is of that Nature. But to be completely free from your past, not just in one particular field of endeavor, is what one means by “liberation”. I think he was a liberated man, and was, in a sense, reborn. When we are born in the next life, we do not have the memory of what is going on now. But if that happens within the same life, then possibly you lose your memory.

**TB:** In many religious traditions, when somebody has an initiation in that tradition, very often there is a change of name to represent a change, or supposed change of consciousness. In Krishnamurti’s case the

name stayed the same, but the consciousness became something very different.

**PK:** I think so too; but sometimes the change of name is also given before full realization or freedom. Then it is not the same thing.

**TB:** At a certain point in your relationship with Krishnamurti he asked you to come and see him for a discussion about the school in Rajghat, and at that meeting he actually asked you to take on responsibility for running the school — a meeting that many would interpret as a very unusual job interview. Could you say a little bit about that?

**PK:** Yes, sure. I am still surprised how his mind worked at that time; I had not met him for five years. I had met him in Brockwood in 1980 or '81, and after that he had stopped coming to Benares because he was getting old and wanted to cut down on his travels; and since I was at the University I had no opportunity to meet him. But when he came here for the last time, in 1985, he asked for me. I do not know how, because he met thousands of people all over the world. I had not lived or travelled or worked with him, so he did not know me very much. But I got a phone call from Rajghat saying: "Krishnaji is here; he wants you and your wife to come and have lunch with him, and he does not want you to refuse!" I said, "There's no question of refusing, I'll arrange for my classes and come", and we went for lunch.

Lunch with him lasted for an hour or so. A lot of other trustees and people had conversations going on. He was a slow

eater; ate very little. After the lunch he said: "Sir, I have something important to speak with you, will you come to my room?" I said, "Yes", and we went to his room, sat with him on the floor. He could sit cross-legged on the floor at the age of 90. I find it difficult even now; if I do, I find it difficult to get up. But he used to do yoga every day for two hours and pranayama. He never said to anybody else that they have to do yoga, or so forth. He did that because he felt that was good for his body and health.

He said: "Sir, may I come to the point directly?" I said, "Well, why not?" And he said: "I'm not going to be around very long. I happen to know when I'm going to go, but I'm not going to tell anybody. Before I go I want to put my house in order, and I want you to take charge of Rajghat." [The Krishnamurti Education Center, Rajghat, Varanasi, India] I was stunned! [Laughter] I did not even know what all there was in Rajghat, and so I said: "Sir, you hardly know me!" and he said: "No, sir, don't say that, I know you enough." But he had not seen my biodata. He never asked whether I was a vegetarian, or took alcohol, or had any addictions. Whatever I do before appointing somebody, he did not do. So it is a great mystery to me, because I think that kind of consciousness is able to see through you. He said: "You don't have to tell me, I know!" I think he had all those occult powers which Leadbeater and Besant had, but he gave no importance to it. In that first meeting in Delhi, I asked him: "Sir, I have heard that in the Esoteric Section you people sat

around a table and brought messages from dead souls, and so on. What was that? Was it all hallucination?” And he said: “No, sir, those things exist. It’s another form of power; it has nothing to do with goodness, so I’m not interested in it.”

So that was his take on occult power, that a religious mind is not interested in cultivating *any* power, because there is no desire to manipulate or dominate another, find things which you do not know, and things like that. But he had all those powers, and when he needed it, he would use them. People would ask him: “How is it that you get deceived by people when you have all these powers?” And he said: “One doesn’t use that to read a human being’s mind for the same reason you would not read his private letters!”

That was the feeling of morality he had, that one has that ability but one should not use it to look through a person. But I guess when he needed to appoint somebody or ask someone, he must have used that. I’m just guessing, I do not know, but it is a fact that he never enquired the details of my past and straight away offered me this position; he called it “Rector”. So I asked him: “What is a Rector? I know what a Director is, but in India the term ‘Rector’ is not frequently used.” So he said, “Don’t you know? Bring the dictionary, read it!” So I read and it said: “One who directs and protects.” He said: “Now you know what the difference is? The smallest living thing here must feel you are protecting it. That is the responsibility I want you to take. A religious place is not religious unless the mind there is religious now.

Not because the Buddha lived there or Christ lived there, and so on. The mind there, today, must be religious.”

Of course, by religious he meant a mind in quest of Truth. It must attract the true pilgrim and must be a sanctuary for all life. So, with that responsibility, he asked me to take charge of Rajghat, and he said: “I’m offering you a jewel on a silver platter, and I’m asking: Will you take it?” I felt very diffident. I have put all that in my book. I have written a book about it. It is called *A Jewel on a Silver Platter*. In the US it is sold by <lulu.com> and in India by Pilgrims Publishing.

**TB:** The book is about that and much more. Over the years you participated with Krishnamurti, David Bohm, and others in some very significant dialogues. They were farranging dialogues, deeply insightful. One of the things that fascinate me about your particular participation is that very often you would seem to challenge, and sometimes even disagree with the thoughts that Krishnamurti would put forward. Invariably it would move the dialogue to deeper levels. Can you talk a little bit about how that transpired?

**PK:** Yes, you see, I was brought up in a home where there was no fear. My mother was a Montessorian, my father was a Theosophist, and they did not believe in using force or punishment or threats; so I used to feel free to question my elders. Even in school I was plying my teachers with a lot of questions. So I had no fear of Krishnamurti; I had great respect, but I differentiated between

respect and inquiring or questioning. So there were a lot of things on which I did not agree with him, and I would feel free to say it to him.

I remember for instance in one of his talks he said: “A disciplined mind is a lazy mind.” I did not think so, so I went to him afterwards and said: “There is something I didn’t understand in what you said today”, and he said: “What?” I said: “You said that a disciplined mind is a lazy mind. I don’t think so. A disciplined man is a person who is energetic, who does all his work, and is punctual, and so on. So why do you say that he is lazy?” And he said: “Sir, if he is not lazy, why does he have to discipline himself?”

So he taught me about the dichotomy that what you are trying to be is the opposite of what you actually are. He said: “If I have to get up at 6 o’clock in the morning, I get up; but if it needs a lot of discipline to get up at that time, then I am lazy, isn’t it?” In the same way, when you’re trying to cultivate courage it means you are fearful; otherwise, why do you need courage? And if you are trying to be non-violent, it means you are really violent, because if you are not violent there is no need to cultivate non-violence. So I learnt about this corridor of the opposites in which the mind gets caught.

**TB:** There was one particular dialogue that comes to my mind when Krishna-

murti was talking about “the field” in which human beings operate, basically describing it as the field of illusion, and that no matter what it is you are doing within that field, nothing good will ever come out of it. You challenged that point very strongly, and persisted. Do you have any remembrance of that?

**PK:** Oh, yes. I said: “Sir, it seems to you like that but we have a lot of good things in our life. We have kindness, friendships, a lot of love, and so on, so I don’t understand why you think that we have to be completely free from the ego before you can have goodness.” And he said: “It’s chicken feed; I mean, you’re satisfied with small things, you’re saying Indira Gandhi did some good, and Nehru did some good, and Gandhi did some good, but ultimately the world is the way it is. So all that is like aspirin, it removes your headache but it doesn’t cure the disease.”

That is how I understood him: that when you are deeply interested in the transformation of consciousness, you are not satisfied with small things. I remember one of his sentences, quite early, in the 1950s, where in one of his books he said: “Why worship at a candle when you can have the sun?” So to him it seemed that we are satisfied with small achievements and he wanted one to make much bigger demands on oneself.

*(To be continued)*

# The Need for Theosophical Ethics

JON FERGUS

Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS — eternal Harmony. . . . Compassion stands here as an abstract, impersonal law whose nature, being absolute Harmony, is thrown into confusion by discord, suffering, and sin. — *The Voice of the Silence*

Harmony is the law of life, discord its shadow, whence springs suffering, the teacher, the awakener of consciousness.

— *Gems from the East*

Harmony is the essential law of the Universe. All that is, was, or will be must stand in eternal harmony. Yet this is no mechanical law, but a dynamic consciously driven harmony, capable of being thrown into confusion by our own thoughts, speech, and acts. While the Universe as a whole remains ever in balance, we may push *ourselves* out of that balance, and by doing so we activate another side of that same law: Karma. When we deviate from the inherent harmony of the Universe, we call upon forces of counterbalance, which forces will always, eventually, react upon us. We do this individually and collectively.

This, then, is the essential problem

facing humanity. As we begin to evolve *self-consciously*, through self-devised and self-induced efforts, we need to learn to progress together in dynamic harmony. But while this problem of straying from harmony, thus evoking discord and suffering, is daunting, it is capable of being solved — what we are ignorant of or unpractised in, we can learn and master. We can learn to place ourselves in harmony and maintain that harmony on all levels of our being, from one moment to the next.

Our current difficulty, however, is not as simple as this. It has been compounded by what Plato calls “the disease of the multitudes”, or double ignorance — that state in which we are not only ignorant, but ignorant of our own ignorance! We are capable of learning that which we are ignorant of, but we remove that possibility the moment we believe ourselves to be knowledgeable where we are not, for no one would attempt to investigate that which he thinks he already knows!

This is the current state of humanity. Not only are we deviating from natural harmony, we are constantly deluding ourselves into believing that such is not the

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case. Like many musicians playing in an orchestra with out-of-tune instruments, we sow discord in the music of Nature, but, each focusing solely on his own playing while ignoring the rest, each deludes himself into believing that he is playing aright. If, at times, we break our self-absorbed focus and notice for a moment the mess of sounds being played, we more often than not will point our fingers at those around us and say: “Listen, they are ruining the song! Them, they, those others; they are the problem; not I!” And so we continue to play our own out-of-tune part, waiting for those others to match *our* own playing, falsely imagining that then we shall have harmony.

It is this double ignorance that stalls all human progress and keeps us rooted in our discord. Thus, our solution to human woe comes in two parts: we must overcome our double ignorance first, then learn to harmonize not solely with each other, but with all of Nature.

The reasons of your being exalted so highly in your own opinion, I am desirous of laying before you. . . . [This] I shall now show, and shall lay your own mind open before yourself. — *Socrates to Alcibiades*

There is a wonderful story written by Plato<sup>1</sup> wherein a young man named Alcibiades embodies this human tendency of double ignorance. Alcibiades is young and intelligent, and initially widely admired by his peers, but he becomes blindly arrogant about his own knowledge and supposed greatness. He believes all the politicians of Athens to be ignorant fools, and he him-

self to be wise and in possession of the solutions to the woes of their society. As is shown in the dialogue, however, Alcibiades is suffering from that dreaded state of double ignorance. He points the finger at others and not to himself because he believes himself to be knowledgeable where he is not; he believes himself to be in possession of solutions when he is not. Alcibiades is intent upon entering politics in order to lead Athens; he is, in short, a tyrant in potential. When the wise sage Socrates comes to him, he is on the verge of taking his first real step towards manifesting that tyrannical nature.

This is the ever-continuing state of humanity. We are Alcibiades, and we are ever-manifesting the tyranny that arises out of that condition of double ignorance: tyranny towards each other; tyranny towards our younger brothers and sisters of the animal kingdom; tyranny towards our Mother Earth; and even tyranny towards our “Father who art in heaven”, our own impersonal Higher Self, as we “struggle to break the silver thread” that binds us to the Universal. It is all-important that we ourselves realize that the troubles of the world are but an outer reflection of each of our own inner condition of double ignorance.

There is good news in the story of Alcibiades as well, however. Through his dialogue with Socrates — through attending to the words of the wise Sage — he is gradually disabused of his false sense of superiority in knowledge. He is guided, little by little, out of his double ignorance and towards the wonderful Socratic state

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of “simple ignorance”, wherein one is indeed still ignorant, but has become aware of, and is willing to admit to, one’s own ignorance. This state is the prerequisite of all real learning, and therefore of all solutions to all problems.

There is another illustrative story, this time from the Upanishads,<sup>2</sup> where another character, Śvetaketu, is made the exemplar of double ignorance. He is a young Brahmin who has been instructed in the Vedas and Vedic sciences. He is admittedly very learned — he knows the Vedas by heart after 12 years of study — but he has let this knowledge go to his head and has become prideful of it. Śvetaketu’s father comes to him and, like Socrates with Alcibiades, calls out his son’s blind arrogance. He says to him: “Śvetaketu, since you are conceited, dear, vain of your learning and proud, have you asked for that instruction through which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought becomes thought, the unknown becomes known?” Śvetaketu had not, of course, sought such instruction.

His father then instructs him in deeper Vedic teachings. However, Śvetaketu is still not cured of his double ignorance. In fact, one may venture to suggest that his double ignorance is simply furthered by such continued instruction, as he then believes himself to be even more knowledgeable! Increased “head-learning” is not the cure for double ignorance.

In time Śvetaketu comes to a *rājanya* sage named Pravahana. The sage asks him if he has been instructed by his father, to which Śvetaketu replies that he has. Pra-

vahana then proceeds to ask Śvetaketu five essential questions related to the Mystery teachings, none of which he has any answer to. Then comes the most important lesson: Pravahana offers to teach Śvetaketu the Mystery teachings, but Śvetaketu refuses and instead runs back to his father. He tells his father that Pravahana had asked him five questions but that he had not known any of them, and accuses his father of not having taught him fully. His father, however, is also ignorant of the answers to the five questions, and so suggests to his son that they both go to the sage to learn the answers. But Śvetaketu again refuses! Though his father did go humbly to the sage and was taught the doctrines of the Mysteries, we, quite tellingly, do not see Śvetaketu in the Great Upanishads again.

Śvetaketu let his arrogance and double ignorance block him from finding answers to the most important questions of life. When shocked by a sage into a momentary realization of his own ignorance, he reacted by retreating back into his false learning like a turtle into its shell. Alcibiades, on the other hand, found the courage to allow himself to be guided out of that double ignorance.

These two stories represent two possible pathways humanity now faces.

Now for us poor and unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences [physical and metaphysical] is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of *moral* results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. . . . Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality,

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virtue, philanthropy, therefore can make no claim upon our help.

— “First Letter of Mahatma  
KH to A. O. Hume”

Even ignorance is better than head-learning with no Soul-Wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

— *The Voice of the Silence*

Humanity on the whole has thus far followed the same pattern as Śvetaketu. We have collectively settled into an unfounded conviction in our own “head-learning”, becoming ever more enclosed within our shell of double ignorance, and in doing so we have thrown off the wisdom of the great sages. The knowledge we have gained, scientific and technological, provides only a small part of the solution to human woes, but itself is more harmful than good if not guided by “Soul-Wisdom”, which we sorely lack, and which no amount of “head-learning” can cultivate.

What Alcibiades did, which Śvetaketu refused, is to attend seriously and humbly to the wisdom of the sage. Over the preceding centuries, there has been a great effort made by countless people to bring the wisdom of the sages once again to the forefront of human thought. H. P. Blavatsky, among others, urges us to attend to that wisdom, telling us in no uncertain terms that it is that wisdom alone that can solve the problems that vex us. One ought to give proper consideration to this proposition.

As many of us throw off our state of double ignorance and settle into simple ignorance, we realize that greater and

greater technological and scientific knowledge is not enough in and of itself. Sure, much of what we learn in those fields has the potential to aid humanity, yet the same knowledge holds equally the potential of great harm. To use such knowledge wisely requires “Soul-Wisdom”.

What, then, is that “Soul-Wisdom”?

In *The Voice of the Silence*, “Soul-Wisdom” is that which is connected with the Heart, “head-learning” with the brain. The cultivation of “Soul-Wisdom” is to “make clean thy heart”, to “remove . . . pollution from thine heart”. We are urged to “let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed”.

“The Dharma of the ‘Heart’ is the embodiment of Bodhi”, true divine Wisdom. This is not knowledge or wisdom of the usual kind, but Self-Knowledge, and “Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child”.

The worldly knowledge that humanity has so far excelled in, when devoid of Self-Knowledge, causes but an increase of our disharmony, especially between ourselves and the delicate ecosystems in which we live. To bring us into balance we need that Self-Knowledge, that “Soul-Wisdom”, to overshadow it, but this is not acquired through book-learning or scientific or technological pursuits. It is acquired by “living the life” — it is acquired through the practice of Ethics.

If we can arrive honestly at this point of realization — that a proper code of life is needed, that guidance in Ethics is needed

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— we may find ourselves asking the same type of question as we find in the following, from *The Key to Theosophy*:

ENQUIRER: Have you any ethical system that you carry out in the [Theosophical] Society?

THEOSOPHIST: The ethics are there, ready and clear enough for whomsoever would follow them. They are the essence and cream of the world's ethics, gathered from the teachings of all the world's great reformers. Therefore, you will find represented therein Confucius and Zoroaster, Laotze and the Bhagavatgītā [Krishna], the precepts of Gautama Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth, of Hillel and his school, as of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and their schools. . . .

ENQUIRER: Which system do you prefer or follow . . . ?

THEOSOPHIST: None, and all. We hold to no religion, as to no philosophy in particular: we cull the good we find in each.

This, then, becomes our great task. Step one is passed when we throw off our double ignorance; step two is passed when we understand the need for “Soul-Wisdom” through Ethics to guide our actions in the world. Next comes the study

and practice of those Ethics. To do this one must attend seriously to the systems of the great Sages, and to “cull the good we find in each”. This is a task we must each undertake, but we must also do it in concert with one another. Through self-devised and self-induced efforts, through testing and verifying, we must synthesize the ethical teachings of those great Sages into a living power within ourselves — and this is the path of Theosophical Ethics.

Whether it be the Yama and Niyama of Patañjali, the Eightfold Path and Pāramitās of the Buddha, the Four Cardinal Virtues of the Greeks, the Golden Rule of Hillel, the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus the Christ, Confucian and Taoist virtues, or the “actionless action” of Krishna, each of these is but one facet of the ethical diamond. It is the synthesized whole which is the true “Soul-Wisdom”, which is the foundation for real Self-Knowledge, and which is the key to the dynamic Harmony of our shared spiritual evolution.

Let us theosophists, then, seek out this wisdom, study and synthesize the great ethical teachings into a practical code of life, and above all, practice those ethics such that we may become shining examples of Harmony in a deeply struggling world.



### Footnotes

1. See *The First Alcibiades*, tr. Thomas Taylor, Kshetra Books, 2016.

2. See *Chhāndogya Upanishad* 6.1–16 & 5.3–10, and *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 6.2, in *The Mukhya Upanishads*, tr. Charles Johnston, Kshetra Books, 2014, pp. 381, 402, 579 et seq.

# HPB on the Gospel according to John

DANIEL H. CALDWELL, DOSS MCDAVID, AND SPENCER M. CONLIN

## Introduction

In October 1889, the members of the Blavatsky Lodge devoted at least two of their Thursday meetings to the study of the Gospel according to St John. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) took the lead in this discussion, assisted by her secretary, G. R. S. Mead, who was proficient in the Greek language. In 1893, Mead's notes summarizing the teachings by HPB were published in the February and March issues of *Lucifer* journal. This material was republished by Boris de Zirkoff in Volume XI (pp. 482–503) of *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. As a follow-up to the two Thursday meetings in which John's gospel was discussed, HPB began writing an explanatory article which was never completed. This manuscript was probably written by HPB in the latter part of October 1889 for the ongoing Blavatsky Lodge meetings. This unfinished article, transcribed below, is contained in one of eight notebooks belonging to HPB and now preserved in the Archives of the

Theosophical Society (Adyar, Chennai, India).<sup>1</sup> As far as we can tell, this article has not been previously transcribed or published.

There are several references in this manuscript that may be unfamiliar to modern readers. They all appear to come from HPB's study of J. Ralston Skinner's *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures*:<sup>2</sup>

◆ HPB refers to the Hebrew word "Dabvar". This spelling of the Hebrew word usually spelled "Dabar" appears on pages 169 and 312 of Skinner's text although he gives the Hebrew letters and number as DBR = 206. The word "Dabar" means "word", "talk", or "thing" in Hebrew.<sup>3</sup> The *Septuagint*, the oldest translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, uses the terms *rhema* and *logos* as equivalents. Both words appear in the New Testament and both are generally translated into English simply as "word".

◆ HPB refers to the relationship between the digits of pi (31415) and the

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**Mr Daniel H. Caldwell**, librarian and historical researcher, has authored several books, including *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky: Insights into the Life of a Modern Sphinx*. See: <blavatskyarchives.com>.

**Dr Doss McDavid** is Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. A member of the TS in America for over fifty years, he is president of the San Antonio TS Lodge.

**Mr Spencer M. Conlin** worked in research, digital transfer, and archival preservation. His contribution to this field of preserving the Ageless Wisdom was his passion.

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Hebrew name “Alhim”. This was discussed by J. Ralston Skinner on page 193 of *The Source of Measures* and was commented upon by HPB in *The Secret Doctrine*. An interesting letter from HPB to Skinner referring to these relationships will soon be published in the journal *Theosophical History* with a historical introduction by the editor James Santucci.<sup>4</sup>

◆ HPB refers to the relationship of John, Jonah, and the dove, discussed on page 220 of Skinner’s book. The following passage from *Isis Unveiled*<sup>5</sup> may throw a little additional light on these somewhat obscure correlations:

Jonah is swallowed by a big fish, and is cast out again three days later. This the Christians regard as a premonition of the three days’ sepulture of Jesus which preceded his resurrection . . . “Big Fish” is *Cetus*, the latinized form of *Ketos* . . . and *Ketos* is Dagon, Poseidon, the female gender of it being *Keton Atar-gatis* — the Syrian goddess, and Venus, of Askalon. The figure or bust of *Der-Ketos*, or *Astarte*, was generally represented on the prow of

the ships. Jonah (Hebrew *Yonah*, for *dove*, a bird sacred to Venus) fled to Jaffa, where the god Dagon, the man-fish, was worshipped, and dared not go to Nineveh, *where the dove was revered*. Hence, some commentators believe that when Jonah was thrown overboard and was swallowed by a fish, we must understand that he was picked up by one of these vessels, on the prow of which was the figure of *Ketos*. But the kabalists have another legend, to this effect: They say that Jonah was a runaway priest from the temple of the goddess where the dove was worshipped, and desired to abolish idolatry and institute monotheistic worship. . . . [When he was] caught near Jaffa, he was held prisoner by the devotees of Dagon in one of the prison-cells of the temple, and that it is the strange form of the cell which gave rise to the allegory. . . . Considering the extraordinary tendency of Oriental nations for puns and allegories, is it not barely possible that the “big fish” by which Jonah was swallowed was simply the cell within the belly of Dagon?

### Footnotes

1. See HPB’s *Collected Writings*, vol. I, p. 25, for a brief description of these eight notebooks in the Adyar Archives. HPB’s manuscript titled *John’s (Fourth) Gospel* can also be found on Micro-film Reel 29, Records Series 22, in the Boris de Zirkoff Papers preserved in the Theosophical Society in America Archives, Wheaton, Illinois.
2. Skinner, J. Ralston. *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures*. San Diego: Wizard’s Bookshelf, 1982 edition of 1875 text.
3. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dabar>.
4. The Christmas 1886 Letter from HPB to J. Ralston Skinner.
5. Blavatsky, H. P. *Isis Unveiled*. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1960. II.258–259.

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## Transcription

### John's (Fourth) Gospel

Reading esoterically the biblical narratives, we have to bear in mind that unless one has read them in the Hebrew and Greek texts he will find himself forthwith perplexed and lost in the English and other translations. Yet in the English translations he will find an Ariadne thread in the use of and difference in the words “God” and “Lord”, which do not denote one and the same thing. “God” is a translation of the Hebrew Elohim and the Greek Theos while “Lord” stands invariably for the Hebrew Jehovah and the Greek Kurios.

On the other hand the term Logos, or Word, which plays such a prominent part in all Cosmogonies, means esoterically the same as Śakti in Indian philosophy — creative Power. While with the Hindus the manifested gods (such as Brahma, Vishnu, and others) being all male Logoi, their Śakti is their female counterpart. In the Western scheme, the Logos has become by usage exclusively male, Jesus being one with the Father, and his Śakti has now vanished from the dogmatic exoteric plane — yet it is there in the person of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, on the terrestrial plane and in that of the Holy Ghost (female always in early and Gnostic Christianity) on the plane of pri-mordial differentiation.

Thus the Word or Logos is in truth that formative power through which the subjective primordial matter is formed and made manifest as an objective universe. This Logos is male-female — as everything differentiated is, in its essence. It is the Brahma-Vach out of which the se-

cond logos, Viraj, is emitted in the Indian cosmology. It is the Hebrew Kabalistic Dabvar, or the Word, whose male aspect is Adam Kadmon, and whose female aspect is Sephira.

Therefore the first verse of John “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”, must read esoterically: “In the beginning of the precosmic period was the potential creative power, (the divine Principle) and that Power was with the Elohim (or Theos); and the Power was the Elohim themselves”, i.e., the seven creative male/female Forces of Nature.

Now those who read the Secret Doctrine know that according to the total of the numerals giving each the corresponding values of each letter of the word Alhim (Elohim) it represents the sum of 31415 which is that of the astronomical  $\pi$ . The term “Elohim” stands for the ratio of the circumference of a circle to the diameter, or 3.1415 to unity. See *S. D.*, Vol 1, p. 91. This verse contains a reference to the first immaculate conception in Kosmos, to the Logos or Adi Buddha, Anupadaka . . . the “Parentless” as the Logos is one with the Father who is not born according to the Christians.

John is identical with Jonah and the Dove (in Hebrew the Dove is Jonah and female) and the name of Jonah is connected with the fish (the whale who swallowed him), the symbolical allegory of the last initiation — the three-days long sleep or trance (exoterically) in the womb of the Earth; esoterically in the womb of Space. The narratives of the NT [New Testament] are but another allegorical

## HPB on the Gospel according to John

form for the narratives bearing on the mysteries in the Old Testament. When you remember that in the OT [Old Testament] Joshua (whose name is phonetically the same as that of Jesus and identical with it) is the son of Nun or the Fish, you will see easily the connection. In the Gnostic system, Space, or Pleroma, the waters, the abode of fish, swallows the “Word” or the divine creative Potency, which descends into the womb of Nature and after three eons gives birth to the universe. Jesus passes three days in the realm of the dead, the womb of the earth, and when he returns to earth is resurrected, or born, that is to say, the anthropomorphized Logos is born. Jonah is swallowed by the fish and three days later is cast out etc. All these are allegories and variations of the same theme: the birth of the universe, macrocosmos, the birth of divine man, microcosmos, and the birth of terrestrial man; all of these being typified in the Mysteries

wherein were taught Cosmogony, Anthropogenesis and all other sciences, headed by that of the successive births of the Ego, on earth, in the psychic and finally, in the Spiritual Realm.

The above will explain more clearly the esoteric reading of the 1st and 2nd chapters of John, on the two past Thursdays.

Let us read now the 3rd chapter of the same. It begins by the narrative of Nicodemus who comes at night to Jesus who meets him with the Sphinx-like riddle “Verily - except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God”, which translated, reads: “Except a man receives a new birth thro[ugh] initiation, he cannot know of the mysteries of the Elohim.” And in reply to Nicodemus’ wonderment, Jesus adds — “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” (v. 5) which translated again means “except . . . [Manuscript ends here.] ✧

**So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”**

John 10:24–30

# The Light That Never Fails

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

THE essential keynote of the Theosophical Movement throughout all ages has been its *Universality*. By the very nature of its message, its objectives and its ideals, it can never be confined to any single group of people or any one department of human thought. Everything that is genuinely theosophical is unconditionally universal, in meaning and application, in theory and practice.

The mystic force behind the Movement is a living, dynamic energy pulsating in and through the spiritual atmosphere of our Earth. It flows, to a greater or lesser extent, through every selfless man or woman who is working for the spiritual advancement of humankind, and manifests itself in the world as a ceaseless *drive*, a never-ending *urge* towards higher knowledge, character achievement, spiritual illumination and inner conquest.

Every impersonal work in the cause of the Theosophical Movement — which is the cause of the “Great Orphan”, Humanity — is an integral part of a universal pattern, and has either the direct or the indirect backing of the Teachers and

Custodians of the sacred knowledge whose attention is compelled only by impersonal service and self-forgetfulness.

Disciples and agents of the Great Ones are at work everywhere and have been active in that universal cause from time immemorial. Signposts and milestones of their activity may be traced and recognized in any century and in every land. Without their help and assistance along both inner and outer lines, many of the constructive movements of past ages would have never taken place. As far back in universal history as we may go in thought, we encounter the distant and often somewhat uncertain delineaments of noble figures whose spiritual grandeur is forever recorded in human thought: Zoroaster, Krishna, Hermes, Orpheus, Quetzalcohuatl, Moses, Akhenaton, Taliesin, and many others. Closer to our time and much more definite in their outline and work, are the Mystery-schools of old. Colleges of spiritual training, centres of initiation, led by inspired teachers and guides, they shed their light upon one or another ethnic group or civilization: Cave-

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**Boris M. de Zirkoff** (1902–1981) was a Point Loma Theosophist, editor of H. P. Blavatsky’s works, and writer. In 1981 he received the Subba Row Medal for his huge contribution to theosophical literature. Talk given at the 6th, also Centennial, World Congress of the TS Adyar, held in New York City in 1975.

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Temples of India, remote hermitages of the Orient; Eleusis, Samothrace, the Orphic rites of Greece; Ecbatana and Ephesus in Media; Abu-Simbel, Thebes, Karnak, and Memphis in Egypt; Nippur and Lagash in Babylonia; Sippar in Assyria; Stonehenge in Britain; Tyre and Baalbeck in Phoenicia; Chichén-Itza, Teo-ti-huacan and Tia-huanaco in the Americas — how many others elsewhere?

From them originated streams of inspiration, technical occult teachings, and the noblest precepts of human conduct which were transmitted to others by initiated disciples who acted as messengers in the outer world, at times recognized as such, at other times unknown and working silently among men and women.

What of the Neoplatonic succession of teachers? Ammonius Saccas, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Plotinus, Proclus, and others whose noble philosophies are current even today. What of the Gnostics? Who really were Marcion, Basilides, Bardesanes, Valentinus, Menander, Saturninus of Antioch, who taught of that mystic *Gnosis* the realization of which is like a flash of incomparable light wherein all things are at once made clear to those who are not blind? What of the Kabalists and Alchemists of many different ages, and the Rosicrucians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, those little known individuals whose title and ideas have been dragged in the mud in later times by self-seeking people devoid of real knowledge?

In all ages and in every land, witnesses to the Light have been at work, sowing seeds of spiritual thought, encouraging the

aspirations of people, guiding their efforts towards a deeper knowledge. We see them standing as beacons of light through the centuries of the past. The radiance of their thought and their life is made more conspicuous by the surrounding darkness of the days they lived in. Some are well-known; some others almost unknown; some have left their written message for generations to come; others passed as bright meteors in the gloom of their epoch. Some may have been direct disciples of initiates, working under their tutelage; others may have been merely touched by the inner light, assisted from beyond the visible horizon, yet unaware of their true mission. Numerous and differing are those who carry on the work of the ages!

Many are the centuries that separate us from the work of Pythagoras and his School, from Apollonius of Tyana, Dionysius the Areopagite, Jābir's alchemical wisdom, the tragic efforts of Emperor Julian and the mystic depths of Johannes Scotus Erigena, to cite but a few of the noble beacons of light.

Ibn Gebirol of Avicbron stands as witness in the eleventh century; the twelfth century saw Joachim de Floris and Maimonides; the thirteenth went by with Meister Eckhardt, Vincent de Beauvais, Roger Bacon and Raymond Lully, sowing seeds of knowledge far and wide; the fourteenth witnessed the martyrdom of John Huss; the fifteenth had its Thomas à Kempis and Pico della Mirandola; the sixteenth was the outer scene for Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Jacob Böhme, Cornelius Agrippa, John Dee, and Conrad

## The Light That Never Fails

Gessner, among many others; the seventeenth nurtured Spinoza, Robert Fludd, Elias Ashmole; the eighteenth produced the extraordinary Grigoriy S. Skovorodá, the Russian self-made occultist.

More than one century saw the deadly struggle between the Cathars, Albigenses, and Manicheans on the one hand and the ecclesiastical tyranny on the other, a struggle between the ancient light and the power of darkness, a periodic event in the history of humankind as a whole.

The present-day theosophical movement, in all its ramifications, is but the most recent link in that ancient chain of light, the custodian of the same teachings in a somewhat different language and the crest of an ancient wave which is part of the rising tide of occult and spiritual thought. The organized movement and some of its independent agents are but witnesses to the existence and the vital momentum of that inner and universal *urge* which bridges all centuries in due time and reveals itself over and over again, as epochs of history pass from their present-day manifestation into the relative oblivion of the receding past.

In thinking of the three chief founders of the modern Theosophical Society — H. P. Blavatsky, Henry S. Olcott and William Q. Judge — it would not be out of line to look upon them and their combined work as a *wedge* thrust with both knowledge and power into the fabric of occidental materialism, an effort which resulted in the opening up of new channels for human thought, and made it possible for others to continue their work and

enlarge upon it. They themselves and those who followed in their footsteps are the witnesses of our present era; and even if their actual names may become blurred by the passage of time, their effort and message will not disappear from the memory of men.

To bridge this century and to carry its message and effort into the next one, the Theosophical Society must remain true to the original impulse of a hundred years ago and preserve inviolate the basic teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy entrusted to its care by the “outer” founders and those “inner” and far greater individuals whose agents they were. In this respect, we have a sacred duty to perform: to carry over, safe and untarnished, a treasure of mystic and occult lore, and to hand it over to a younger generation, among whom some other agents of the Brotherhood will be found to carry on the ancient work.

No one could possibly deny the rapid increase of interest among all types of people in somewhat less material and more spiritually minded ideas which may be observed today all over the world. This interest is largely overshadowed by an even greater interest in the sensational, pseudo-occult, mediumistic, and wonder-working aspect of Nature. This fact is exploited by a new crop of fakers who play upon the gullible public and use it with personal ends in view. All sorts of rishis and swamis, avatars and tulkus, self-proclaimed initiates and mahatmas advertise themselves ad nauseam and fill lecture halls with ignorant dupes. The

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prevailing ignorance of most people and their lack of discrimination between spiritual and psychic makes them an easy prey to psychic deception. The situation is not without some danger even to students of Theosophy not sufficiently grounded in the foundation-principles of our teachings and who, at times, allow themselves to wander off the path of genuine spiritual study into the morass of psychic confusion.

In these days of psychic malpractice and mediumistic visions sold to the public by a vast array of itinerant “yogis” often parading under fictitious oriental names and titles, it is indeed of paramount importance for any theosophical lodge as a group, as well as for any individual student, to be well informed on the subject of the theosophical philosophy, its teachings and postulates, so as to be in possession of a touchstone ready to be used to assay any idea that may be thrown at them from various quarters. Without this thorough grounding in our traditional teachings, the student is deprived of the discrimination that is needed in the present-day confusion of ideas.

In this respect much remains to be desired, as we observe the programmes of various lodges in different parts of the theosophical world. Some of them permit themselves to become halls for the entertainment of people with scheduled subjects which bear no relation whatever to the main purposes for which such groups have been established, namely, the study and dissemination of Theosophy, of the foundation-teachings which alone can

provide the hearers with a basic, workable, ethical background for their own lives and answer their questions as to the meaning of existence. To deal with side issues and spend hours of valuable time on astrology, numerology, biofeedbacks, church ritualism, psychic wonders, healing sessions, meditation techniques and various types of yoga practices, is to promote, no doubt, without meaning to do so, confusion and to lead the audience away from even the first steps of spiritual knowledge.

Today, more than ever before, it is of serious importance and of urgent need to provide the people through all of our established channels or through new ones to be opened up, with the basic teachings of the theosophical philosophy of life: reincarnation and karma, the duality of man, the Divine Self in man, the sevenfold structure of the universe, the cyclic operations of Nature, the difference between the psychic and the spiritual, the function of the Astral Light, the existence of perfected men beyond our own stage of evolution and our own ability to evolve to that stage, the succession of root-races and rounds in the life history of the globe, the dangers of psychism, the doctrine of hierarchies, the nature of the after-death states, and the ethical principles and precepts which are the basis of a theosophical life.

Any support given by us to the psychic confusion which is prevalent in today's world is support of the agencies which seek to promote the manipulation of psychic forces in order to affect human minds and to dominate them in subtle

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ways, both on the individual and the government level. This is plain and unadulterated “black magic”, that is, the usage of natural forces for selfish ends.

As a worldwide Movement along traditional spiritual lines, we should make every effort to be free of this contamination and to be solidly planted upon the basic ground of the age-old teachings, ready at any moment to distinguish between them and their distortion by vested interests.

To the extent to which organized theosophical groups or individual students allow themselves to dilute the ancient teachings with a welter of quasi-mystical and mostly pseudo-occult ideas promoted by all sorts of people ignorant of the genuine tenets of the Ancient Wisdom, the Theosophical Society of today runs the risk of being gradually dissolved in a veritable sea of pseudo-occultism and may not outlast the present century.

To the extent to which such groups and individuals shun any efforts on the part of others to deflect their studies from the

traditional wisdom of old, and concentrate on the promulgation of the tenets received from the original founders and from the accumulated tradition of centuries, they will sustain and strengthen the foundations of the present-day movement which will then, without a doubt, carry over into succeeding centuries the spiritual momentum behind the outward movement and the treasures of esoteric knowledge entrusted to us.

In the former case, the Theosophical Society will have no future worth recording. In the latter case, its recognition and worldwide influence will have a glorious future as a spiritual bulwark in civilizations yet unborn. The choice lies squarely before us all, and demands immediate, forceful, and sustained action.

Beacon of Light in a world of material darkness, the theosophical movement of today is the legitimate successor to all similar efforts throughout untold ages of the past, deriving its strength from the same source of inspiration, and its vitality from the fires of the sun itself. ✧

**The humanities developed coordinately, and on parallel lines with the four Elements, every new Race being physiologically adapted to meet the additional element. Our Fifth Race is rapidly approaching the Fifth Element — call it interstellar ether, if you will — which has more to do, however, with psychology than with physics.**

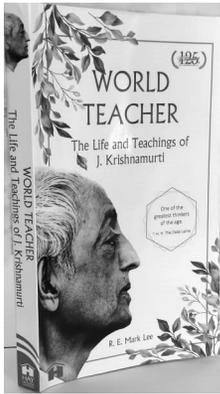
H. P. Blavatsky  
*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II

## *Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom*

In meditation there can be no thinker, which means that thought must come to an end — the thought which is urged forward by the desire to achieve a result. Meditation has nothing to do with achieving a result. It is not a matter of breathing in a particular way, or looking at your nose, or awakening the power to perform certain tricks, or any of the rest of that immature nonsense. . . . Meditation is not something apart from life. When you are driving a car or sitting in a bus, when you are chatting aimlessly, when you are walking by yourself in a wood or watching a butterfly being carried along by the wind — to be choicelessly aware of all that is part of meditation.

J. Krishnamurti  
*The Book of Life*, 1995

# Books of Interest



**WORLD TEACHER**  
— *The Life and Teachings of J. Krishnamurti* by R. E. Mark Lee, Hay House Publishers (India), New Delhi, 2020, pp. 204, Rs 350.

R. E. Mark Lee was closely associated with J. Krishnamurti for 21 years of his youth. He

served as executive director of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America for 20 years and was director of Krishnamurti Publications for 5 years. He was the chief editor of the 17 volumes of *The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti*, *The Book of Life*, and *The Little Book on Living*. From 1995 to 2010, Lee was the owner-publisher of Edwin House Publishing, which specialized in memoirs of Krishnamurti's associates. For 40 years, he has lived with his wife and daughters in Ojai, California.

The book under review brings forth in its title an astonishing truth. The name "World Teacher" was not used for several decades, but now it can no longer be denied, as Krishnamurti himself confirmed it to his close associates before his death.

This work is a beautiful account of the life and teachings of the great sage who never claimed any special treatment or

title. In the introduction there is a perfect example of how deeply revolutionary the teachings are:

I am not establishing myself as an authority to tell you what to do because I do not believe in authority in spiritual matters. All authority is evil; and all sense of authority must cease, especially if we would find out what is God, what is truth, whether there is something beyond the mere measure of the mind.

Being close to the teacher and the teachings, Mr Lee is an eyewitness able to write about events of which he was a part. The book is loaded with precious information, like the answer to a question posed to Krishnamurti, which makes clear his well-known statement, "The first step is the last step":

*Questioner:* Why is your teaching so purely psychological? There is no cosmology, no theology, no ethics, no aesthetics, no sociology, no political science, not even hygiene. Why do you concentrate only on the mind and its workings?

*Krishnamurti:* For a very simple reason, sir. If the thinker can understand himself, then the whole problem is solved. Then he is creation, he is reality; and then what he does will not be antisocial. Virtue is not an end in itself; virtue brings freedom, and there can be freedom only when the thinker, which is the mind, ceases. That

## Books of Interest

is why one has to understand the process, the mind, the “I”, the bundle of desires that create the “I”.

The connection with the Theosophical Society is described briefly, not repeating what other biographers had already said. In Chapter Three we read:

While the Society’s membership has always remained small when compared to that of organized religions and their offshoots, the reach of their messages and publications was among a very different level of society, namely the intellectuals, artists, professionals, and socially conscious classes worldwide. . . .

It was the formal, organizational aspect of the Society and of the Order of the Star in the East that particularly disturbed Krishnamurti. . . . It was the unquestioned attention and devotion to their beliefs and ceremonies that he focused on in his talks and writings, as the whole subject of the danger of religious and psychological authority became an increasingly important part of his message.

To serious questioners, who are able to look at facts without taking sides, this newly released book is a “must-read”. It is a serious exposition of the events that took place in Krishnaji’s life with additional insightful comments made by Mr Lee. The author talks about Krishnaji’s vision for the foundations and schools founded during his lifetime: “Krishnamurti wanted those around him to embrace strongly very simple qualities of

friendship, abiding goodness, lack of envy, cooperation, and affection.” The author goes on pointing out the difficulties that one faces when running such organizations and how those problems were dealt with: “The work of the foundations was the same work for each trustee, namely, ‘to flower in goodness’.”

About the schools it is mentioned that Krishnamurti emphasized that the most important curriculum is the three arts: Looking, listening, and learning. The book is a “light-read” with profound statements made by the author and quotations from Krishnamurti. The “to-the-point” writing style is certainly appealing to the young generation of Krishnamurti readers and students of life. The author says in the last page:

Our collective consciousness perhaps has reached a tipping-point where books, teachers, and authorities on atheism, agnosticism, faith, and belief all seem to have been exhausted. Reality has taken over as mankind looks at itself, deeply and with awe, at the universe within.

The bullet fire closing the book is a summary of the teachings:

Krishnamurti had made it clear that a religious mind would discover that for a serious person there is nothing to find like enlightenment or realization. There is nowhere to go like heaven or somewhere better than here. Nothingness is the beginning and the end.

CLEMICE PETER

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