

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

VOL. 142 NO. 10 JULY 2021

CONTENTS

The Practice of Inspiration – I <i>Tim Boyd</i>	5
One Life – A Musing <i>Ganesh Kumar</i>	9
World Crises: The Root Cause – III <i>P. Krishna</i>	15
Books of Interest	23
What Is Truth? <i>Margaret Bove Sturman</i>	26
Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important <i>Cary Gardner</i>	30
Prometheus – Reclaiming the Fire <i>David Grossman</i>	38
International Directory	40

Editor: *Mr Tim Boyd*

Note: Articles for publication in *The Theosophist* should be sent to: [<editorialoffice@gmail.com>](mailto:editorialoffice@gmail.com)

Cover: Sacred geometry mandala by Portuguese artist/poet Joma Sipe. Panel in silver and gold ink and crystals on black paper, 2007. Inspired by H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, Cosmogogenesis, Stanza V, 6. (See corresponding text for this image on p. 39 of this issue.)

This journal is the official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky on 1 Oct. 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this journal.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

President: Mr Tim Boyd

Vice-President: Dr Deepa Padhi

Secretary: Ms Marja Artamaa

Treasurer: Ms Nancy Secrest

Headquarters: ADYAR, CHENNAI (MADRAS) 600 020, INDIA

Vice-President: ivp.hq@ts-adyar.org

Secretary: secy.hq@ts-adyar.org

Treasurer: treasury.hq@ts-adyar.org

Adyar Library and Research Centre: alrc.hq@ts-adyar.org

Theosophical Publishing House: tphindia@gmail.com // www.adyarbooks.com

Editorial Office: editorialoffice@gmail.com, Website: <http://www.ts-adyar.org>

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.

The Practice of Inspiration — I

TIM BOYD

THERE is a familiar expression that we hear across cultures: “Practice makes perfect.” The “theory” behind it is that repetition tends to ingrain behaviors, and if we repeat something sufficiently that behavior becomes perfected. However, at least based on my personal experience, the idea is more nuanced than the simple expression implies.

Long ago, when my basketball-playing days ended, I had to switch sports and found myself playing tennis during one summer. Soon I realized that I could serve the ball very fast. So I practiced it, over and over. By the time the summer was ending my serve was getting weaker and my shoulder was hurting. Too late I discovered that my method of practice was not using proper mechanics, resulting in a damaged shoulder.

When I moved to Chicago from New York City I had the opportunity to meet some long-time, profound, spiritual students. One man in particular was renowned for his knowledge of metaphysics. There came a time in his life when he ran into some difficulties. We invited him to come and live with us in our spiritual community. We felt it would be beneficial for him as well as for us young people to be able to imbibe a lifetime of wisdom and practice.

He was almost encyclopedic in his knowledge of various texts and spiritual matters. At that time every morning we had a group meditation. Shortly we came to find out that this gentleman had no grounding in meditation. Even though all of his life he had been involved in study, his concept of meditation was nothing more than the repetition of affirmations. The whole process and practice of quieting the mind eluded him during a lifetime of practice; he was eighty years old. This opened my eyes that practice, in and of itself, does not make perfect; proper practice does.

The key for us is not the mere repetition of behaviors or ideas, but the proper choice and attention to those things. When we practice we are creating habits. It is a repetition of the body, emotions, and mind that creates a certain habit. The difference between our ordinary living and focused practice is awareness and attention. The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, we are *always* practicing.

During the course of each day we are rehearsing patterns of behavior; whether or not they are productive to our unfoldment is another issue. Often we are practicing our best methods to express our anger. Almost everyone who watches the nightly news has moments when they

The Practice of Inspiration — I

are practicing awakening feelings of fear and anxiety. All of these are repetitive behaviors that we engage in unconsciously. It is the unconscious aspect that separates it from a viable approach to unfoldment.

Habit is overcome by habit. This is what we engage in when creating new or different habits. If we are honest, *any* habit, whether we call it good or bad, ultimately limits or restricts the consciousness. This is a paradox because although habit is limiting, also it is an avenue to freedom.

For instance, anyone who has been involved in learning to play a sport, music, cooking, or learning how to drive knows that it is an exercise in intense concentration. When I was trying to teach my daughter to drive there were moments when she would be gripping the steering wheel and even perspiring from having to concentrate on so many different things at the same time.

The concentration required is greatest in the beginning, as we are learning to develop a skill. Once we have reached a point where that skill is engrained, it becomes completely unconscious. Any experienced driver can listen to the radio, have a conversation, watch the traffic, eat a sandwich, and still drive. So, concentration, the restriction of our attention, develops a capacity that leads to a greater freedom. Whenever our focus becomes the cultivation and unfoldment of consciousness this process becomes more pronounced.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) very frequent-

ly referred us to the Hermetic Axiom which says: “As above, so below; as without, so within.” We learn from observing and from the analogies of outer to inner processes.

An analogy with magnetism is familiar to most of us from science experiments in early years of school. Magnetism is a force that can be described scientifically, even though it is not completely understood. A magnet has the capacity to attract to itself “ferromagnetic” metals, which are strongly attracted by a magnetic force. This is so much so, that if a magnet were to touch a nail or an ordinary piece of iron, the nail would become magnetized and would attract metals as long as it is in contact with the magnet. Remove it from contact with the magnet, and its magnetism goes away.

This material example illustrates a process of the inner life — the process of inspiration and being inspired. To the extent that we are in contact with some magnetic or higher source, we also become similarly charged. When removed from the presence of that source, that inspiration fades. The analogy is also relevant when we consider what might be meant by a “practice of inspiration”. In those same childhood science experiments we find that not only does contact with a magnet temporarily convey magnetic properties, but that a nail, or other suitable ferromagnetic piece of metal, can become *permanently* magnetized.

If a magnet is repeatedly drawn in one direction along the length of the nail, the materials in the nail are realigned,

The Practice of Inspiration — I

making the nail a magnet in its own right. Although nothing new is added, the act of regularly exposing ourselves to “higher” forces brings the materials of our personalities into an altered alignment.

There is a foundational principle underlying this whole subject of practice. It is that consciousness is universal. All matter, at whatever level, is conscious and capable of responsiveness. According to the degree that attention is focused on this matter, currents of energy are generated that affect the structure and composition of the material object, whether it is physical, emotional, or mental matter.

Nowadays we are quite aware of this. Not so long ago people like HPB, Annie Besant, and others would make pronouncements about the effects of such things as meditation, regular exposure of the mind and emotions to higher levels of activity, saying that regularity of intelligent practice results in unfoldment of dormant capacities. The science of their day was not yet able to demonstrate these things experimentally.

In our time so many studies have been done about the effects of meditation practice. It has been studied in a variety of ways, largely through brain imaging, and has been found to have a dramatic effect on the brain. For example, over a very short period of regular meditation practice the physical structure of the brain is altered. The synapses, the web of linkages between the neurons in the brain, increase. With long-term meditators, specific areas of brain matter become denser

and more enriched, particularly those related to open thought and compassionate response.

It has also been observed that a physical structure within the brain called the amygdala shrinks as a result of long-term meditation practice. The amygdala is a structure of the ancient, “reptilian”, brain involved in the expression of conditioned fears and anxiety, and the “fight or flight” syndrome we engage in when we are fearful.

Our response to stressors is altered. All of these and more are demonstrable outcomes of meditation practice. So in many ways the practice we engage in has very definite results in terms of physical brain structure and our capacity for higher emotions and other aspects such as healing. All this has been observed.

Before considering the Practice of Inspiration we should start with asking ourselves: “What is inspiration?” The root of the word means “breathing into”. *Spiritus* is breath; it also means spirit. So inspiration is the process of being filled with a life force. Everyone has had the experience of being inspired, so it is not difficult for us to draw on our own memories and experiences. Depending on our temperament our moments of inspiration are associated with our contact with a person, an idea, or an encounter with beauty, art, or poetry.

The avenue through which this light shines into our world is what we then experience. It has a twofold aspect. In the presence, in the moment of the experience, we would describe ourselves

The Practice of Inspiration — I

as being inspired *by* something, by the poetry, by the words of the Dalai Lama, or by a variety of inputs that create this moment of inspiration. So we are inspired *by*. One of the effects of this condition of inspiration is that we are also inspired *to* express it, to transmit it, to actualize it in our own lives. So it has this sort of twofold aspect.

In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, in writing about the advance of a popular understanding of the Ageless Wisdom, it is said that “science will be our greatest ally”. Recently, in some outlying corners of the scientific community, there is work being done on the nature of inspiration from a scientific point of view. In order to describe what qualities are related to inspiration, in one particular scientific study they developed a threefold way of analyzing the practice of inspiration.

The first aspect these scientists talk

about is that the inspirational experience is “evocative”. It is not something we call down at will, or that is controlled by the one who experiences it. This is what we find is true for the times that we have actually been inspired. We can say in hindsight that “this is what occurred in the presence of that person”, or “because I was reading that poem”, but we cannot invite it at will.

At different times I have been in the presence of people of power, people with an ongoing connection to some spiritual source. It always has been fascinating to me how strange things happen in the presence of these people. For us, normal, undeveloped people, we may meet someone, greet them, say a few words, and then they walk away pretty much unchanged. But on a number of occasions I have seen things that shed light on the transmission and source point of inspiration. *(To be continued)*

The right motive for seeking self-knowledge is that which pertains to knowledge and not to self. Self-knowledge is worth seeking by virtue of its being knowledge, and not by virtue of its pertaining to self. The main requisite for acquiring self-knowledge is pure love. Seek knowledge for pure love, and self-knowledge eventually crowns the effort.

H. P. Blavatsky
Practical Occultism

One Life — A Musing

GANESH KUMAR

THERE are a few things that we cannot understand with all our knowledge, but can only experience them. One such thing is what we call “life”. We know that we are all alive and experience it, but it is impossible for us to understand what life is or define it logically. At this present period of technological and scientific development, we know so much about the external world, the constitution of even the far-off galaxies and the immense depth of the oceans, but have a very faint idea about the life within us. The dictionary definition given below also does not help us in this respect.

Wikipedia states: “Life is a characteristic that distinguishes physical entities which have biological processes, such as signalling and self-sustaining processes, from those that do not, either because such functions have ceased (they have died), or because they never had such functions and are classified as inanimate.” Another definition is: “Life is the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change preceding death.”

In spite of the tremendous advancement in technology, scientists have been unable to produce a functioning synthetic life-form so far.

Science does not define what “life” is, but gives the attributes which differentiates living things from non-living things. A handy mnemonic “MRS GREN” is a way for children to remember the seven processes that supposedly define life: **M**ovement, **R**espiration, **S**ensitivity, **G**rowth, **R**eproduction, **E**xcretion, and **N**utrition. When someone asks us how life is, mostly we talk about our work life, social life, family life, and so on. When we use the word “life”, we usually understand the word to represent some aspects of our life. Thus, generally the word “life” seems to refer to some attributes of life, but not the definition of what life is.

A quest by medical professionals regarding “life” is when they can declare a person as dead. According to medical specialists, even when the functions of the brain and the heart cease, large parts of the physical body continue to function, for example, the cells in the body and the growth of hair. Our body contains trillions

Mr Ganesh Kumar first joined the TS in Zambia, Africa, in 1980 and transferred to HPB Lodge, Auckland, New Zealand, in 1995, where he continues to take part in the Lodge and Section activities.

One Life — A Musing

of cells, each one living by itself, and the doctors / physicians would like to define / determine what constitutes the opposite of life — death. Where does “life” reside in our body? Is it in the brain, or in the heart or in the spine? Can it be found inside our bodies as a substance or an organ? Can a non-material “life” interact with and control our material bodies? The question they ask is what this “life” is that leaves our body when we die and where it resides in our body and what it is made of.

The answer might be revealed in trying to inquire into the word “life” in our theosophical statement: “There is only ONE *life*.” This article is an attempt to comprehend the incomprehensible and is purely for our questioning and our own conclusions. Two things to bear in mind: (1) The converse of the Hermetic saying, “as above, so below”, must also be true and we may be able to understand the “above” from observing the “below”. (2) Modern science may be our best ally to understand the “above”, or occult (hidden), truths.

We can understand and agree that we all share something with and depend upon other kingdoms of Nature for our existence. I can understand that the air that I breathe and the air that is breathed by plants and animals is the same. I can also accept that the deoxygenated air I breathe out is absorbed by the plants and the oxygen that the plants release makes my life possible — that half of my breathing apparatus is outside my physical body in the plants and trees. Even our physical body depends upon trillions of independent

life-forms — microbes, bacteria, and so forth for our survival, and so does the food that we eat for the nourishment of our body. Theosophy states that “there is but one life and law”. To understand that statement, that the life in all the kingdoms is one and the same, requires much deeper pondering.

Most of us consider ourselves quite fortunate to live at the present time in the known history of our Earth, with so much of technological advances which have made our lives the most comfortable in history. For example, at home and at work, electrical appliances provide so many different functions that most of us may not be able to imagine a life at present without electricity. Electricity in one appliance provides the heat that is needed to warm up a cold room and in another place it cools a hot and humid space. Using various devices electricity provides light, washes clothes or dishes, runs all mathematical calculations, and enables me to write and share my understanding with you all.

An important point to note is that the ability of each of these devices or appliances to operate at their utmost capability does not depend on the electricity supplied to them, but purely on the device or the appliance. Provided with the same electricity, each one of them operates at its utmost capability, which depends upon the design and manufacture of the appliance only. For example, a motor used in a hair dryer is completely different in its capability and performance as compared to the motor used in a clothes dryer, though both of them are electrical motors

One Life — A Musing

operating on the same principle and at the same voltage (say, 230 V AC). Some of them are more complex in their design and manufacture and are able to function at a much higher level. Thus, we see electricity as the motive force, which enables each of these appliances or devices to operate at their fullest capacity of design and manufacture.

If we interpret the word “life” to represent “life force” in the theosophical maxim, then it becomes crystal clear what is meant by the maxim. There is only “One Life Force” that pervades all kingdoms of life. Similar to the ability of electricity that we saw earlier, this life force enables the different kingdoms to exhibit different capabilities depending upon the stage of evolution of the form or vehicle that the monad has occupied.

The life force functioning in an earthworm is the same as the life force operating in me. The life force in my vehicles is able to operate at a much higher level because of the enhanced evolution of my vehicles as compared to those of the worm. It is similar to what we considered earlier, that the capability of an electrical appliance does not depend upon the electricity, but on the appliance only.

This could explain the scientist’s wonder as to the “amazing intelligence” of beings of lower order in the animal kingdom, an ant with an insignificant size of brain being capable of feats incomparable with its size and a fish or bird performing amazing feats. This also might explain the theosophical statement that the forms evolve and the life unfolds.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) states: “And so does *prāna* (*jiva*) pervade the whole living body of man; but alone, without having an atom to act upon, it would be *quiescent* — dead; that is, it would be in *laya*. . . . It is the action of *fohat* upon a compound or even a simple body that produces life.” (Unabridged Edition, vol. 1, p. 526). HPB further states: “*Prāna* is in reality the universal Life Principle.” To close the subject, *prāna* can, in sober truth, have no number, as it pervades every other principle, or the human total. Each number of the seven would thus be naturally applicable to *prāna-jiva*.

The term used by HPB to represent this life force is “*fohat*”, which is the relation between the Logos and matter, of which He builds his universe. Another name used in India is *daiiviprakṛti*, which was described by T. Subba Row as the “Light of the Logos”, the outgoing energy of the Logos. *Prāna* is also used to identify the aggregate of life forces, not only on the physical plane (usually, translated as vitality), but in all planes of manifestation. In one of the Indian systems of classification the physical *prāna* is said to have five different components, each one being responsible for controlling the following different actions of our body:

1. *prāna*: the breath, respiratory system and thought process.
2. *samāna*: controls the heat in the system — the body becomes cold and stiff in its absence.
3. *apāna*: the sensory functions of the body (even after declaration of death by

One Life — A Musing

medical doctor, there could be movement of the body).

4. *udāna*: the buoyancy of the body — a dead person seems to weigh more than a living person.

5. *vyāna*: the preservative function and decomposing process of the body.

Our whole human system is the most complex and sophisticated system of hardware and software, incorporated in each cell of our body. The software is a much larger package than the hardware, energized by the life force. These bodies are all interlinked and interpenetrate each other, because each one is more subtle (or less physical) than the previous one. Our subtle bodies are integrated and intermingled, so much so that we consider ourselves to be a single being, mostly the physical body. For example, we consider our mind and emotions as an integral part of our physical self.

To understand our multi-dimensional bodies, we might consider a crude example of the mobile phone. The modern mobile operates at different frequencies of the electromagnetic spectrum, in the range of 88 to 108 MHz for receiving the broadcast from radio stations, in the range of 900 to 1900 MHz for operation as mobile or cellular phone, 2.485 to 2.5 GHz for blue tooth signals and in the range of 2.5 to 5 GHz for operation of Wi-Fi signals, and so on. The smart phone consists of different circuitry to decipher the different range of frequencies and yet it is an integrated piece of equipment operating at different levels of frequencies.

Our human bodies, or sheaths, or vehicles can be visualized in a similar way, capable of operating at different levels of frequencies. In a smart phone, even if the SIM card is damaged, the other parts of the phone, like Wi-Fi, radio reception, and so forth will work normally. Similarly, when the physical body is rendered inactive, still other bodies work normally. Let us also remember that our multi-dimensional vehicles or bodies are not made of inert or passive elements but with sentient, living intelligence.

At the time of manifestation of the universe, that is, at the time of separation of spirit and matter (subject-object, *purusha-mulaprakṛti*) there is *that* which links these two and is known as *fohat*, or *prāna*, also known as life electricity, or cosmic electricity. It is this life force which is “*One Life*”. It is independent of the vehicles through which it operates and does not depend upon any of the properties or complexities of the vehicles; neither does it affect the vehicles, nor is it affected by the vehicles through which it operates.

An organization using hundreds of computers by its different employees may all have different programs or applications with different capabilities, but they all may be operating with one single operating system, say Windows. The “one life” is like the operating system (OS) of a computer which neither affects the programs nor is it affected by them, but without which, the computer cannot operate at all. Could this “one life” be taken as the *brahman* of the Eastern tradition?

One Life — A Musing

How this life energy operates in our vehicles is described by Annie Besant in her book, *A Study in Consciousness (SC)*. She describes the “web of life” through which the life force flows in the vehicles. When we talk about the electricity in our homes, we need the cabling to supply the electricity to the different points in the house to the devices / appliances. In a similar way, the life force is distributed through an intricate and multi-layered web to the different parts of our vehicles:

It has been said that the connection with the spiritual Triad is through *buddhic* matter. . . . It is of *buddhic* matter that is spun the marvellous web of life which supports and vivifies all our bodies. If the bodies be looked at with *buddhic* vision, they all disappear, and in their places is seen a shimmering golden web of inconceivable fineness and delicate beauty, a tracery of all their parts, in a network with minute meshes. This is formed of *buddhic* matter, and within these meshes the coarser atoms are built together.

Closer inspection shows that the whole network is formed of a single thread, which is a prolongation of the *sutrātma*. During the antenatal life of the babe, this thread grows out from the permanent physical atom and branches out in every direction, this growth continuing until the physical body is full grown; during physical life the *prāna*, the life-breath, plays ever along it, following all its branches and meshes; at death it is withdrawn, leaving the particles of the body to scatter; it may be watched, slowly disentangling itself from the dense physical matter, the life-

breath accompanying it. . . .” (*SC*, ch. IV-2, and “The Web of Life”, p. 70, TPH Adyar ed., 1980.)

The web is of *buddhic* matter and this *buddhic* web is ensheathed on each plane by a sheath composed of atoms of that plane. Thus, we have a core of *buddhic* matter encased in sheaths of mental, astral and physical atomic matter of each plane. It also clarifies as to how we exist in our astral and lower mental vehicles after the physical death — not with physical *prāna*, but “life force” flowing through the astral and lower-mental webs of *buddhic* matter.

The web has two chief functions: first the purely *buddhic* life web acts as the vehicle of *consciousness* and secondly the sheaths of the life web act as the conductors of the *life force*, or *prāna*.

From the above statements, we can derive that when I die, the “life force” is not withdrawn from my physical body, but the channel, the *buddhic* life web, through which the life force flows, has been withdrawn. In our previous example of electricity being used in the home to operate the different devices, the cabling which supplies electricity to the devices has been withdrawn, which makes the devices non-operational (dead). Thus, the life force is not specifically attributed to any being, but exists everywhere all the time and supplies the motivating energy, if a suitable medium for its passage (the *buddhic* life web) is available in that vehicle.

We might now understand the statement of people having sensations of

One Life — A Musing

itching and so on in parts of their body that have been amputated, as only the physical part of the vehicle has been cut off, but other vehicles are intact, including the *buddhic* web. This also throws light on the states of existence after suicide or accidental death, where the physical body has been disabled.

The electricity supplied to my home could be considered as “my” electricity, but is it different from the electricity that is operating the appliances in my neighbour’s home? Just as I can quantify the electricity used in my home as compared to that used by my neighbour, I can talk about “my life” and my “neighbour’s life”, but like the electricity supplied to both the houses, the life force in me and my neighbour are the same and does not belong to either of us, but only enables the operation of all our vehicles. I could talk about my life and the other’s life, but in reality the “life” does not belong to any of the vehicles through which it operates and is completely independent.

When we say there is one life, only the “life force” operating in me and my neighbour is the same, similar to the electricity in my home and my neighbour’s home. We all are *completely different* from each other — physically, emotionally, mentally, and so forth. Each

one of us is different from anyone else due to the stage of development of the vehicles which we use, though we may be identical or akin in certain or many aspects/respects.

Another point worth remembering when we talk about life is that life and consciousness are no different from each other. Annie Besant states: “. . . a definition of the terms ‘consciousness’ and ‘life’ are identical, two names for one thing as regarded from within and from without. There is no life without consciousness; there is no consciousness without life. . . . We have called consciousness turned inward by the name of life, and life turned outwards by the name of consciousness. When our attention is fixed on unity we say life; when it is fixed upon multiplicity we say consciousness.” (SC, ch. II-1, “The Meaning of the Word”)

This musing might give rise to more questions than answers as regards the One Life. The sun rising every morning in the East is a fact, but it is not the Truth. Each one of us having an individual life and individual consciousness is a fact, but it is not the Truth. There is only One Life and One Consciousness, which cannot be understood by seeking, but may be experienced by the one who desires. ✧

References:

- *A Study in Consciousness*, Annie Besant. See: <austheos.org.au/clibrary/bindex-besant.html>.
- “The Web of Life”, Annie Besant. The TPH Adyar ed., Chennai, India, p. 25, 1980. (A talk to students, elucidating some points in *A Study in Consciousness* in London, 2 July 1905.) See: <anandgholap.net/AB_Web_Of_Life.htm>.

World Crises: The Root Cause — III

P. KRISHNA

IN the first talk of this series, we looked at all the major challenges that are facing modern society today. In the second we looked at the causation, and we said there is both an external cause and a deeper inner cause which lies in our consciousness, and that most governments and organizations are dealing only with the outer cause. They can control the manifestation of these crises to some extent, but not eliminate them. This is because they really arise from a deeper causation in our consciousness. We concluded that the only way we can get over all these problems is through a transformation of the consciousness of humanity.

Today we shall consider if it is possible to have a different kind of education than what we have right now. To look at that, one must first see the limitations of education as we have it today. If you ask the president of a university or the principal of a school what their vision of education is, what they are trying to achieve, they will say: “I want my students to be hardworking, disciplined, intelligent, efficient citizens, and hopefully, leaders

of men and women in their field.” But all these qualities were present in Adolf Hitler, whom many consider to be one of the most evil men of the 20th century; the only thing he lacked was love and compassion.

What is there in our present-day education to ensure that our students will grow up with love and compassion? All the emphasis today is on acquiring knowledge and skills, and, as we pointed out last time, both knowledge and skills contribute to power. But power without wisdom is misused, goes wrong. The crises we are talking about are not the creation of the ignorant villagers in various countries of the world, but of highly educated people who graduated from the present system of education. They are very capable, knowledgeable, professional, but they do not have wisdom. Therefore, often this power is misused because they are still nationalistic, they do not have a global mind, and they have self-interest as their motivation.

The self-interest not only extends to oneself but also to all that we identify with, namely, our religion, country, and so on. So long as self-interest is working for a

Prof. P. Krishna retired as Head of the Study Centre on the campus of the Krishnamurti Foundation India, Rajghat Fort, Varanasi, and is a life member of the Theosophical Society. This article is based on a Krotona School of Theosophy webinar talk recorded in Ojai, California, on 22 February 2021.

fragment of society, it will create division in the world. As discussed in earlier articles, that division is essentially responsible for most of our problems like war, ecological catastrophes, and so on. Therefore, some people must work for the transformation of consciousness of humanity. The other work of trying to control the problems through external means is already being done by all the governments and organizations like the United Nations, and so on.

So, how to bring about this transformation of consciousness and what to transform to? Now, essentially, the conditioning of the consciousness takes place through education, not only in the classroom, the school, and college, but also the way children are brought up in society. Everything educates them — television, newspapers, the life going on around them — because they grow up accepting all the values that are prevailing in their society. This includes the narrow-minded, parochial concerns like nationalism, casteism, or religious bigotry, and things like that. These get injected into the minds of children.

It is often thought that the problems are due to a lack of education; but it is really the *kind* of education that we are imparting which is producing this lopsided development of the human mind: deeply knowledgeable in its own area of expertise and extremely ignorant about life in general and about right relationship with Nature, people, property, sexuality, ideologies, and power.

Problems of war, ecological catastrophes, and so on, are the creation of highly

educated people who become scientists, diplomats, army men, prime ministers and contribute to perpetuating the existing decisions and problems. The holocaust was perpetrated by highly educated people, and that has been perhaps one of the greatest crimes of the 20th century. This means that when we impart knowledge, we must also enable the wisdom to employ it rightly; otherwise, we are not being very responsible, as we are empowering people without giving them the understanding of how to use that power.

There is a very poignant letter written by a Spanish survivor of the holocaust to his child's teachers that reveals the problem we are facing in education: "Dear teachers, I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers, children poisoned by educated physicians, infants killed by trained nurses, women and children shot and burned by high-school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is this: help our children become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, or educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human." In short, the present-day education is no barrier to barbarity.

In education we must not use methods which promote the ego in children, because the ego is the major source of all problems. When we use reward and punishment, it promotes the ego. When we use competition, we are teaching children that

their fellow students in the class are not friends, they are rivals, and they must outdo their classmates, which goes contrary to brotherhood and friendship, and cultivates division. When you punish a child, you are also conveying to him or her that a stronger person can use force to dominate the weaker. So none of these are to be used as motivations for the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as is being done at present.

Discipline which is enforced through fear may create an outer order in behaviour, but it creates a lot of disorder in the consciousness in the form of fear. We can see in our own life that when one is afraid one does not speak one's mind. When children are afraid, they will say what we want to hear; they will not tell us what they really think. At one level it may appear as if fear and discipline are creating the right behaviour; but they are damaging the child psychologically, therefore it is necessary for education to look at the child holistically, and not damage one faculty in the child to cultivate another.

This means that what we need is a *holistic education*. I have postulated below what I consider are elements of a new vision of education in order to resolve the problems we are facing, by attempting to bring about a transformation of consciousness:

1. Create a global mind, not nationalistic. We belong to one world, one humanity. This means no propaganda for a particular religion or country, and that the wisdom of the entire world, of all the cultures of the world, is our inheritance, not only the culture of the country where we

happen to have been born and brought up. At present the mind is deliberately divided in this way through propaganda in education because the state wants the child to feel that way and be willing to kill and get killed on the international borders by joining the army, navy, air force, and so on.

A sense of interdependence, of belonging to the whole of the Earth, would mean that we look upon countries as only administrative units, just as within a country we look at the different states as administrative units, without any desire to exploit one another.

Similarly, culturally, linguistically, we need not align ourselves only with our own culture but learn about all the other cultures; they are all human cultures. Shakespeare is not only the inheritance of the British people, nor is Socrates the inheritance of only the Greeks. The entire wisdom of the world is our inheritance. Why should we not read Socrates or Shakespeare and learn from them? The mind gets very narrowed down when it gets parochial or nationalistic.

2. Emphasize human development, not economic development, which means value goodness above efficiency. At present, education is set up in the factory model, treating the child as raw material which comes into the system at the age of six, and then we fashion the mind of the children, cultivate various qualities for fifteen years, at the end of which, there come out engineers, doctors, artists, computer scientists, and so forth, who then do the work which we want done in society, for prosperity and economic development.

It is essentially a utilitarian factory-type of model that is functioning. It does not care whether that young person is happy or not, works creatively or not, enjoys doing that work or not, and there is no talk about what right living is, whether love is the same as desire and attachment, and so on. So, they have very little understanding of themselves.

3. Encourage enquiry, not conformity, and respect dissent. The greatest minds have been those which have questioned, which have walked out of their past and brought something new into the world in every field. The Buddha walked out of Hinduism, its casteism and animal sacrifices, and so on. Jesus walked out of the Jewish values of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. He came out of that and said not to retaliate violence with violence. Socrates came out of the Greek citizenship and said: “I am a global citizen; I am not a citizen of Greece.” So all these great minds — also in other fields — are those that broke away from the assumptions of the past and enquired deeply. They are the ones that brought about a change in the paradigm under which one is functioning. Therefore, it is important to respect dissent, because all these were dissenters from the prevailing culture.

4. Cultivate cooperation, not competition. Right now, competition is being encouraged because we highly value someone who can do better than others, almost to a ridiculous extent. If we look at the Olympic Games, we will find that a man who jumps half a millimeter more than all the other competitors is treated as

a hero, given a huge prize, and his ego is boosted. The emphasis in education is on individual achievement, and that is treated as success, not teamwork.

Successful individuals, as we consider today, are those who climb every ladder that is put in front of them, adjust to society, and rise above all their fellows; which means they never questioned anything. Therefore Krishnamurti says, “Success is mediocrity.” Another statement of Krishnamurti that we need to reckon with is: “To be well-adjusted to a sick society is no sign of health.” This is because society is sick. Otherwise, why is it having all these problems that we have discussed?

So, these values must be inculcated in the children, and we can only inculcate them if we live them ourselves. Therefore, we as teachers, parents, and elders need to learn, too. Otherwise, it becomes hypocritical, we talk about it, but we are not living it. And hypocrisy does not work. Children learn exactly that. They learn that when we talk, we need to talk idealistically but when we actually live, we should be self-centered, competitive, and seeking success all the time.

5. Democracy as a value, not dictatorship or domination. Various governments consider themselves to be democratic, as they have a democratic structure, which requires elections every four or five years, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, freedom of the press and so on. All these are meaningful only when we also have the right spirit of democracy.

The spirit of democracy is one of co-operation, friendship, mutual respect and humility, saying: “None of us really knows the right way to organize society, so let us get together and discuss all issues in a spirit of friendship and respect. After we have so listened to each other and educated ourselves about the issues facing all of us, we shall invite proposals for rules we should make. If there is more than one proposal we shall vote and accept what the majority thinks is the right direction to pursue. Having adopted that, everybody must help to make that happen. The so-called opposition are not rivals to be vanquished: they are friends with a difference of opinion. Having a dialogue with them helps us take the right decision. Unless this spirit of democracy is present, governments function very poorly, as we have seen all over the world.

So, can we bring the spirit of democracy into education? In every activity of life there is a method to be learned, a structure to be adopted, but also a certain spirit in which we have to function. In sports there is the sportsman spirit, in science there is the scientific spirit, in religion there is the spirit of non-violence, love, and compassion. If you have those, then the methods have significance; otherwise, they are hollow.

So, it is important in education to ensure that children not only learn the techniques and methods, but also engage in them in the right spirit. That means that they have to grow up with a learning mind and not an acquisitive mind. A learning mind is interested in learning because it

feels, “I don’t know and I want to know”, out of passion, not to achieve a position or status. Such a mind learns non-egoistically, out of love and compassion.

On the other hand, the acquisitive mind is trying to collect, to outdo others. The awakening of intelligence is more important than the cultivation of memory. At present we have laid great stress on memory. Knowledge and skills are all learned and held in memory. But we do not have the intelligence, not only intelligence in the subject or academics, but also of understanding right relationships in life, which is wisdom.

6. Create a mind that is both scientific and religious. At present we are focusing only on the scientific enquiry and abilities of the child, and we consider that as success. But as we have just shown, it is not success if you do not combine it with a religious mind which is free from the ego process and not motivated by self-interest. So, understanding the world is necessary, but even more necessary is to understand ourselves, which requires self-knowledge. It is important to be rational, but only rationality without compassion, without love, becomes hard-hearted, cruel.

We need to have respect for all life, otherwise we look upon other life as meant for our utilization, and we are cruel to all other species of life. All the ecological catastrophes we have seen are a result of that utilitarian attitude, of treating Nature as a resource for fulfilling our own desires and our greed. There is that famous statement from Gandhi: “The Earth provides enough to satisfy every

man's need but not every man's greed."

7. The art of living. At present we teach art as literature, music, painting, sculpture, and so on — separate arts. But there is also the art of living, which means learning to have the right relationships. So, when does need end and greed begin? When does a wish turn into a desire? When does love turn into attachment and possessiveness? Unless we understand that, we go from one area which is natural into another which is egoistic. So that requires a certain wisdom, which is a balance between emotion, feeling, and reason, which cannot be learned from a book or a teacher.

The spirit of art is the sense of beauty. There is great beauty in every aspect of life and education must help to reveal that to the child. Art is not something that can be learned from a book or a teacher. You can learn the techniques, but they do not create the spirit of art which is beauty, balance, or the right proportion. You must discover that for yourself. This ability to learn for oneself through watching, through experimenting with one's own life, to arrive at the right balance, is what is called self-knowledge.

Education must enable a high quality of life, but the quality of life is not measured in terms of gross national product (GNP). If the GNP of a country is higher, is the quality of life higher? We must understand what money can and cannot buy. Otherwise, we give greater importance to money than what it should have in our life. What is it that money can buy? It can buy food, travel, clothing, shelter — for all that it is

important. But it cannot buy love, respect, a sense of beauty; it does not create sensitivity or peace of mind.

The greatest things in life are those which money cannot buy. Then why has money become so important that we push every child to maximize his earnings and rise to the highest state of what we call success? It is a wrong idea of success which is behind it. The quality of life is not just the quality of our car, dress, and house, but much more the quality of our mind. That quality is not high when there is so much illusion and violence, greed, and division. Doesn't that destroy the quality of life?

The King of Bhutan gave a different measure — Gross National Happiness. With this measure, strangely they found that some of the poorest countries have the highest level of happiness, because their dependence on material things was very low. One must understand that our definition of success, which is the dominating paradigm in education today, is itself false. We are driving our children towards a false aim.

Krishnamurti pointed out that flowering in goodness is more important than achieving success. Working with joy rather than for rewards requires the perception of beauty, not the pursuit of pleasure, fame, and riches. This is a form of sensitivity, which is a far greater thing than ambition, but at present we are promoting ambition in society. Ambition is an egoistic quality because any work, even good work, when we are trying to do it ambitiously, if something comes in its way, we will violently

set it aside. So, violence comes as a by-product of ambition. This does not mean we must not do good work, but can we do good work with love and not necessarily as achievement for the self?

When we do it with love it is sensitivity, when we do it with ego it is ambition. So, it requires a holistic development of all the faculties. Right now, we are cultivating the intellectual faculty and giving a lot of importance to the intellectual, neglecting the emotional, religious, and spiritual faculties and sensitivity. We are doing overspecialization because of that model of education which wants to use the child for doing the work in society. That is a wrong way of looking at our children. We do not love our children when we do that. We do not care for them as persons, but only to use them to get work done. In a sense, society is very unkind to children when it looks at them in a utilitarian way.

Education means not only what we say in the classroom; it involves the entire atmosphere in which the child grows up. Since holistic education requires a totally different atmosphere, Krishnaji talked about residential schools, because in them children go and stay with the teachers all the time. So they can create an atmosphere in which there is no religious division, no casteism, no promotion of nationalism.

If we can create an atmosphere with all these values, in the small society of the school, it will transform the child. Can we bring in these values and *live* that way, so that when the children grow up seeing those values, they imbibe them. Children are not educated only by what we speak,

but much more by what they see going on around them.

That is also the difficulty of creating this kind of education, because we ourselves have been educated wrongly, conditioned wrongly, and we are trying to bring this about, which means the teacher and the parents have also to be learning along with the students. We may know more in the subjects, but our understanding of life is quite poor, and unless we grow also in wisdom, we cannot bring about a society in which wisdom is operating.

I am reminded of a poem by T. S. Eliot entitled “The Rock”. The last stanza in it reads:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in
knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost
in information?

The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to
the Dust.

In this one passage Eliot has summarized everything that I have just said. Two thousand years ago humanity’s main concern was coming upon wisdom. So we had the Buddha, Socrates, Lao-Tzu, the Christ. Then there came this explosion of knowledge and we got greatly enamoured — our greater knowledge in agriculture, science, art, architecture, surgery, medicine — and somewhere we lost our wisdom. Now even knowledge is disappearing, because we are going into the information age. Everything is

now by the computer ability, and all kinds of social media. So, we do not have the leisure with which Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning wrote love letters to each other. We now send an SMS, or text message, to convey love, which is just equated with desire or sex, and so on. The emotional aspect, the spirit, has disappeared, and only the expression and form are given great importance.

We need knowledge to function in society — there is nothing wrong with knowledge — but we also need wisdom, so that it is put in its right place. Self-knowledge is discovering the right place of everything in our life. No faculty of our consciousness is useless, but we need to learn its right use. For instance, imagination is a useful faculty, but it can also be used to create a lot of illusions and attachments. Learning to use every faculty in the right proportion is the art of living

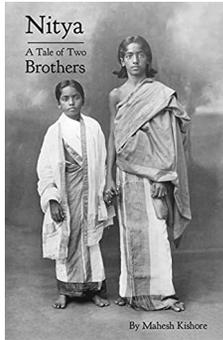
and it is needed by every human being.

In a sense, all of humanity is in a similar state psychologically. To each of us some things are very clear, but there are also blind spots of which we are not aware that create delusions. Yet we can help each other through dialogue by pointing out the blind spots to each other. Krishnamurti tried to promote this kind of dialogue, but it is extremely difficult because we get hurt when others point out our blind spots. The ego says: “I don’t have any blind spots, you have the blind spots.” So, real dialogues do not easily happen. We need to be free to have this kind of dialogue, and we are not free, we are heavily conditioned. So, we ourselves *are also* the problem for realizing such an education, but it is necessary to have a learning mind and learn together with the children if we are to transform ourselves and society. ✧

Freedom and authority cannot possibly exist together. Freedom and intelligence go together. Intelligence has its own innate, natural, easy discipline, discipline in the sense not of suppression, control, imitation and all that, but discipline which is the act of learning all the time.

Jiddu Krishnamurti
From Dialogue 16 with Allan W. Anderson
San Diego, 27 February 1974

Books of Interest



NITYA: A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS by Mahesh Kishore. (Scott H. Forbes, Ed.) SHF Publishers, 2021, 396 pp., US\$ 9.99. (Also Kindle Ed.)

The book under review is the result of ten years of research conducted by the author in the archives of the Krishnamurti Foundations in India, America, and England. As it is an account of J. Krishnamurti's and his brother Nitya's life when they were living under the umbrella of the Theosophical Society (TS), the author also had access to the archives of the Society's Headquarters in Adyar, India. As a result, the book is a rich historical account of the life of two young brothers that were destined to lead an extraordinary life that may not be easily understood or accepted by many.

Details of those early days are mostly well known to the public, but Mahesh Kishore brings a new perspective to this work. Also he raises many facts that had never been published by Krishnamurti's biographers before. It is interesting that, as mentioned in the foreword by Scott Forbes who was closely associated with Krishnamurti during the last years of his life, the manuscript of this book existed for twenty-three years before it was given

attention and deemed worthy of publication in 2019.

In the third chapter, "HPB and the Theosophical Society", the reader will find a remarkable account of the formidable woman who gave birth to the TS:

It is to the extraordinary, intense personality of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (or HPB, the initials she made famous) that the Theosophical Society owes its beginnings. She was born in South Russia [now Ukraine] between July 30 and 31, 1831, in Ekaterinoslav (in the Russian calendar, between August 11 and 12, 1831). . . .

From the many accounts of her early life, Helena emerges as a headstrong, self-willed iconoclast who challenged the contemporary wisdom of her time, whether it was in the field of religion, science, or philosophy. Though often given to trenchant criticism of conventional thought, for which she suffered a predictable backlash from various powerful authorities, she possessed many wonderful and extraordinary personal capacities, not the least of which was a generosity of spirit as well as a genuine sympathy and compassion for others. She had great affection, for instance, for the peasants on the land, and discovered that their mysticism responded to her psychic gifts.

The author also gives an important

Books of Interest

account of the nature of the teachings on which HPB laid the cornerstone of the TS. Further, in the same chapter he states:

For long periods between 1850 and 1873, Helena remained in the Himalayan regions, studying in monasteries in which, it is said, are preserved the teachings of some of the world's most learned and spiritual teachers of bygone times. During this period, she studied the life and laws of the inner world, and the rules which must be obeyed to gain access thereto. As witness to this stage of her occult education, she left an interesting collection of spiritual axioms in her last book, *The Voice of the Silence*, which is perhaps her best book. Though small in volume, it is beautiful.

The well-researched and beautifully written story of the Society's beginning, where the two brothers were brought up and is also the background of the Tale, is of great importance to appreciate the work presented in this remarkable book.

In an attempt to shed light on a challenging topic, on chapter IV, "The Perfect Men", the author presents a serious research of the various traditions of what has been called in the TS, a Master of the Wisdom:

It is impossible to speak of the Masters with any uniformity because they represent various impulses of spiritual knowledge and they vary from culture to culture. The occult centers have always been more prominent in the East than in the West, although at the turn of the century Theosophy was an exception, as

was Anthroposophy and Rosicrucianism.

Because the knowledge and training in occult centers is usually highly secret, it cannot be known to what extent they still flourish as "active" systems today. Much would depend upon whether genuine Masters are still practicing within these centers and whether the disciples are sufficiently well-trained to carry on in the event of a Master's death.

. . . The learning is said to be written on the heart, not in books. Many may study with a Master, but few become Masters themselves. The guru or Master is said to find the chela (pupil) when he is ready, and only when readiness reaches a certain level are the teachings imparted, and then, too, only in a measure befitting the disciple's progress.

. . . In an important sense, the most outstanding Masters in human history were those who went beyond what was "known" in the field of spiritual enquiry at a particular moment in evolution, and each made a unique contribution to human progress in terms of religious and psychological insights.

These selections attempt to show the seriousness with which the author treated the subject. Some are still under the impression that Krishnamurti denied the existence of perfect beings. Reading this book one will easily understand what has given this impression. It will also become clear that Krishnamurti had deep reverence and devotion that did not allow room for desecration of that which cannot be described.

Books of Interest

. . . It is not what the Perfected Man teaches that matters, so much as what he is, or rather that he is, for his being is a guarantee of what we seek. And because he is himself the truth, because that truth lies hidden in our hearts, it is in our hearts that he speaks, and eventually in our hearts that he dwells.

The author brings to light details of the life of the brothers in Europe and America: the attempt made by Krishnamurti to join Oxford leading to the disappointment in the exams, and also Nitya's dreams for independence and the life in Ojai, California. It is important to note that Nitya never had the opportunity to listen to the teachings that Krishnamurti presented to the world, as Nitya died in 1925 and the teachings reached maturity from 1929 onwards. However, it was he who gave a name to Krishnamurti's mysterious "Process". The quote below is an extract of a letter written by Nitya to Annie Besant who adopted the brothers, and C. W. Leadbeater (CWL) who found them on the Adyar beach.

Krishna himself, properly speaking, should relate the sequence of events, for all of us were mere spectators, willing to help when necessary; but he does not remember all the details, as he was out of his body a great part of the time and everything remains clear in our memory, for we watched him with great care the whole time with a feeling that his body was entrusted partly to us. Mr Warrington is not in perfect health, and I am not yet allowed to move about much, so it was Rosalind's good fortune to look after

Krishna, and I think she has already received her reward.

Krishnamurti's Process was a mystery that could not be understood by CWL or Besant. Nitya writes every detail of what is going on with Krishnamurti during the Process, but CWL does not recognize any of the descriptions and is doubtful about what is going on, as he expressed in a letter to Besant:

You will by this time have received copies of the accounts written by Krishna and Nitya of the wonderful experience which came to the former. It was indeed marvellous and beautiful, though I wish that it had not been accompanied by so much physical sickness and suffering. I should like very much to hear your comment upon all this. We have ourselves passed through very similar experiences, except that, in my own case at least, there has never been any of these terrible physical symptoms, the body being usually left peacefully resting in a trance condition, or else fully awake and taking part in what was passing, but without any pain or sickness.

The book is a priceless work done by a serious researcher, someone who had met Krishnamurti, and was the last Secretary of the KFI (Krishnamurti Foundation India) appointed by him. History may not please everyone, but it is by knowing facts that one can learn and understand what has happened and, if one is able to look at facts with impartial eyes, maybe one can benefit and free oneself from many delusions. ✧

What Is Truth?

MARGARET BOVE STURMAN

VERY simple! Truth is when we find our inner self, our golden core, our open heart of compassion, our deep silence, our serenity of days and nights, our wonder of wonders, the root without roots, our joy and bliss, all that is good, true, and beautiful.

We *are* Truth, being facsimiles of the Divine. So banish fear, be calm, eliminate worry and *smile*. The soldiers during the First World War, when confronting danger and possible death, sang a song together: “Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile. . . . What is the use of worrying?” So why worry about the coronavirus or any other virus. We are immortal divine beings and cannot go into oblivion. The so-called “death” does not exist. It is only a change of consciousness.

The fear of death was created in ancient Atlantean times by non-positive influences and must be avoided at all levels. A Nazi hierarch said: “Put fear into people and they will do everything you want.” Instead, emphasis should be on Life. Evolution is an initiatory process leading from one living experience to another. So let us replace fear with courage and the knowledge that our true self never changes or

dies. When we go to the other side there is a period of rest and then we return to Mother Earth to continue our pilgrimage of learning, often in the company of our loved ones and friends. The same groups frequently incarnate together because similar lessons need to be learnt and we help each other, either creating obstacles or giving sympathy and understanding when needed. The obstacles are necessary in order to learn, grow, and make progress. Often difficult people or critical circumstances are our greatest teachers and oblige us to reflect deeply.

The coronavirus is democratic and a wise teacher; it demonstrates the need of sharing (Aquarian Age); it inspires us to care for others altruistically and an example can be taken from the bees working in self-sacrifice for the good of the whole. The hum of the bee has been likened to the hum of the Universe (the music of the Spheres), the mystical word of the Divine, which the sacred sound “OM” replicates.

The virus emphasizes the great abyss between immense wealth and the weak, poor, and destitute. We are in this game together, we all need each other; there are no favourites, and the virus freely affects

Margaret Bove Sturman, member of the TS since 1986, practises alternative medicine in Naples, Italy.

What Is Truth?

all humanity, regardless of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. It simply follows the laws of Nature — all that is applicable to the one is applicable to the many. Quoting from a poem by John Donne: “For whom the bell tolls? It tolls for thee [ego]. . . . No man is an island.” The suffering involved in coronavirus is an opportunity to unite all humanity — the Muslim to care for the Hindu, the Hindu for the Sikh, the Shiites to be in harmony with the Sunnites, the Iranians with the Palestinians and the Syrians, the Arabs with the Jews. Mother Nature has perhaps lovingly decided for her children that the impact of the virus can lead to World Peace, Liberty, and True Brotherhood, so that a new collective consciousness arises.

The physical body we have in this lifetime is only temporary and is necessary for the particular lessons we need to learn. In our next incarnations we will have another body, then another, then another. Our true self *never* dies and nothing can finish or destroy our immortal spirit. Everything evolves from OMTATSAT. Even so-called God evolves and goes from one spiral of evolution to another, again and again, across indescribable eons of time.

Eventually, through test and trial, we arrive at an evolutionary stage when we can choose whether to return to Earth to help humanity as a Bodhisattva, go to another solar system, or remain in a perpetual state of Bliss showering Light on the World (Dhyāni Buddhas). Within us we have a living Spark of Joy. We can be in the midst of a terrible fire which will consume our physical body and all our

possessions, but our Divine Spark will shine its Light brighter than the fire and return to the Ain Soph Source, the divine force of life and love at the pole of being, to continue its evolutionary journey in a new physical form.

We may ask how long the journey will take to reach the Truth. Quoting and translating from Angelus Silesius (1624–77):

“How far from here to Heaven?
Not far, not far, my friend:
A single inward step
Will all your journeys end.”

The monastic disciples of Amma (Māta Amritānandamayī), who embraces the world, wear a paper bracelet around the wrist, where it is written: “Children, God is deep within us. He dwells there as pure and innocent love.”

As one enters the temple of Delphi in Greece, famous for its oracles, written on the ancient pillars are the words: “Man, know thyself.”

When Jesus says to his disciples, I am with you until the end of time”, he is indicating his Christ consciousness and innate divinity, which is within us all but needs to be released and revealed.

In the “Gāyatri” mantra, one of the oldest invocations known to humanity, we ask the sustenance of the Universe to unveil to us the face of the True Spiritual Being in the Sun, hidden by a disc of golden Light, that we may know the TRUTH, and so on.

It has been said we can only approach the Truth. When in deep meditation in a void of silence, a silence that we would

What Is Truth?

wish to last for ever, we are indeed approaching the Truth, but our state of polarity prevents us from reaching the goal. The drop has not yet slipped into the Ocean; the subject has still to be absorbed into the object.

During our evolutionary journey we will eventually and necessarily all arrive at the Truth, that is, enlightenment, and will verily *know*. The great Sanat Kumara, the Ascended Lady Master Kwan Yin, Tara and Avalokiteśvara, our loving Guardians and True Friends, with immense sacrifice and dedication, have decided to remain within the precincts of planet Earth until “every blade of grass” has received enlightenment, in other words, has attained to the Truth.

So let us eliminate fear and tread the path towards the Truth by recognizing our weaknesses, reflecting on our inner thoughts and becoming vessels of Light in the perfumed vineyard of the Masters. The more purified we are, the nearer we are to Truth. At the beginning of our evolutionary cycle, when we begin our gradual descent into matter, we are pure transparent Truth. Quoting the hermetic axiom, “As above, so below”, the aura of a newborn babe glitters with Light before becoming involved in worldly affairs.

This life is only transitory. Do we have the courage to accept this fact? No. Our ego clings on to our physical form and is reluctant to let it go. But where will it go? It will go into joy, into comforting peace and protection. We will be taken into the arms of the Divine and comforted with indescribably deep com-

passion. We will be cherished and rocked like little children, because we *are* children of the Divine, and when we depart from our earthly plane we are merely returning home. So why worry? — our destiny is merely being fulfilled and we can leave behind all doubt and fear.

Clara Codd, a well-known English theosophist of the last century, when visiting friends and patients in hospices, was always very positive in her attitude towards bedridden patients. When the patient said, “I am dying”, she replied “How wonderful!”

Alice Bailey wrote a book called *Death — The Great Adventure* and indeed going to the other side is a “great adventure”. Just imagine meeting our loved ones who have preceded us and the peaceful circumstances of bliss we will find. Any misunderstandings during our incarnations on planet Earth are completely forgotten and we finally realize that we are *all* one and true soulmates.

When we leave the physical body it is said that we become all-knowing. Sometimes glimpses of the afterlife can occur during near-death experiences, but it is rare that this knowledge is divulged before disintegration of the physical body. H. P. Blavatsky was in perfect agreement that the secrets of Nature can only be revealed to the pure of heart and that a true occultist is a purely beneficial force of Nature. As a great lama said, “One can be trusted when one is harmless.” True harmlessness is extremely profound and involves understanding and having compassion even for the murderer of our

What Is Truth?

own children. It involves having empathy with the ISIS assassins which is extremely difficult for the majority.

We must realize, seeing the misery, poverty, and ignorance in the world, how privileged and fortunate we are by knowing that our inner self is eternal and we are shining radiant sparks that derive from the great divine flame — the Flame that does not burn. It is for this reason that it is so important to freely divulge the

knowledge of Theosophy, giving great hope and comfort to all beings. Whenever the occasion arises we can insert Theosophy into our conversation with emphasis, especially in these difficult times, on reincarnation.

Let us, with humility and dedication, on every possible occasion, aid the Great Ones to nurture the “blades of grass”, facilitating the evolutionary process, so that Truth and Peace can prevail on Earth. ✧

Truth is within ourselves, it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in ourselves
Where truth abides in fullness, and to know
Rather consists in finding out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than by effecting entrance for a light
Supposed to be without.

Robert Browning

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

CARY GARDNER

It is astonishing what force, purity, and wisdom it requires
for a human being to keep clear of falsehoods.

— Margaret Fuller

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost;
that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them.

— Henry David Thoreau

Freeing the Mind

There is a wonderful scene in *The Matrix* film when Morpheus, a teacher of secrets, is taking Neo out for one of his first training programs after being painfully liberated from the illusion of the “Matrix”. They have entered the “Jump Program” and find themselves standing on top of a high-rise building. Morpheus turns to Neo and poses this challenge, “Free your mind”, and then proceeds to leap impossibly several hundred yards to the nearest building, suggesting that Neo follow behind. Neo’s response: “Whoa.”

Philosophy rightly understood is about freeing the mind. It is about the “clarification of ideas and the removal of muddles”. Before we can grasp how we can free the mind, it is imperative to first understand how the mind is manacled in the first place. We are, all too often, strangely unaware of what ideas are col-

oring our perceptions. Like a set of colored glasses, our perceptions are all tinged with blue or red or green, depending upon the lens. These ideas we hold to be true are often adopted without inspection or evaluation.

What religion we come from, what society has nurtured us, what core life assumptions came from our education, what values our family has imparted, all form a kind of lens through which we view the world, life, and ourselves. Our inability, and often unwillingness to break away from these established lenses, even momentarily for the sake of evaluation, form a kind of prison cell of perception. Like Neo in *The Matrix*, we have an unsettling feeling that there is a larger perspective, a broader view, a more comprehensive understanding that evades our current range of understanding.

These traps are easy to recognize in

Mr Cary Gardner started studying Theosophy in 1974. Since then he has been participating and speaking at several ULT and TS Lodges, and guiding theosophical study sessions from his California home.

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

the political dialog of today. People gravitate to one camp or another and view all events, all debates, and all positions from the standpoint of whether or not it furthers the cause of their camp. To approach a social problem from outside of the camp, to look at it independently, is extremely difficult. Religious and cultural biases are equally easy to recognize in contemporary society.

Many ideas passed on to us through our culture simply live on in our minds unchallenged. For example, there was a time in Europe, not that very long ago, when the idea of the Earth being flat was a common belief. It went unquestioned for centuries. Similarly modern Western culture assumes we only live once. Few doubt it. For a great deal of recorded history slavery was deemed acceptable and many cultures considered women inferior. Some religions view dark skin as a disapproving sign of God. These assumptions go unchallenged by the passive mind.

Philosophy is intended to be an adventure of the mind — an invitation to step outside of the prison cell of our current state of consciousness and explore new fields, new dimensions, new perspectives. Those who remain inside the prison cell, no matter how large, are, in the words of Beckett in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*: "living and partly living". Thoreau considered a life devoid of such exploration as a life of "quiet desperation". And this epitomizes Ralph Waldo Emerson's sentiment: "The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all

sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end."

What is philosophy?

We know the word "philosophy" was coined by Pythagoras in pre-Socratic days in Greece — *philo* = "love" and *sophia* = "wisdom". But the idea of philosophy is extremely ancient and has been referred to with other words and conceptions in various cultures throughout human history, which theosophically stretches back at least 18 million years. What all these ancient conceptions have in common is the notion that the human mind has immense hidden power and vast untapped potentiality.

According to ancient philosophers, this is due to the connection the human mind has to the Whole, Oversoul, or the Divine, however conceived. Modern philosophy in its normal academic setting has often crippled the notion of philosophy and relegated it to mere logic and semantics. In modern times it has lost the luster of its arcane roots. In ancient Greece, for example, man was the "microcosm of the macrocosm". There is nothing in contemporary thought that approaches this Olympian vantage point and therefore the depth and breadth of the mind are significantly "cabined, cribbed, confined", as Macbeth says in Shakespeare's play.

Many philosophy courses in college or high school take a tour through a laundry list of significant thinkers, usually in the Western tradition. Descartes, Hegel, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Nietzsche, and sometimes ancients like Plato and

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

Aristotle usually get touched upon in these classes, just to name a few. It is good training to try to understand these thinkers, but the main point is missed. As parents may ask their young adult children: “What are the enduring questions?” Why are they important to YOU?

Once you have raised the big questions — Who am I? What does it mean to be human? What is justice? What is real? What is my role in life? What is life for? What happens after death? and so on — it might then interest you to find out what other people think as well. But until these are burning questions for you, academic philosophy will remain nothing more than intellectual gymnastics and the point will be missed. Philosophy is not about a survey of what other people think; it is an investigation into what is true and important to us. In the end each one of us must make choices as to HOW we are going to live.

There are many fundamental differences between ancient philosophy and its modern shadow. Consider this: according to Buddhist thought the difference between an enlightened human being and a normal person is equivalent to the difference between a normal person and a black beetle. Plato speaks of an elaborate fifty-year educational process necessary in developing “philosopher kings” worthy of advising society from the standpoint of universal principles, seeing where justice lies and translating universal principles into contemporary policy.

What is overlooked and often misunderstood is that the very notion of wisdom in the ancient world (the Greeks,

for example, and certainly in the minds of great souls like Plato, Plotinus, and Pythagoras) means far, far more than the quaint conventional idea of wisdom found in contemporary times. For us Westerners the word “wisdom” in common usage has to do with truisms and perhaps axioms that help us navigate through life more gracefully.

But for the ancients of Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, and many indigenous peoples of the world like the Hopi and Navajo in North America or the Australian aboriginals, wisdom has a much more profound meaning. It represents the liberated mind, the enlightened mind, or direct spiritual perception, “the ability to see into the hidden source and pattern of things, to witness causal spiritual dimensions”. In other words, wisdom was measured in degrees of enlightenment.

Wisdom is not something we have; it is something we become. In most ancient cultures, and sorely missing in our modern one, people revered wise men, sages, and seers because they understood how life works and what life is about in significantly more profound ways. The wise know that every little thing is more important than we think it is, and simultaneously know that nothing is as important as we think it is.

Another limiting factor that ancient philosophers like the Buddha, Krishna, or Lao Tzu addressed is the illusion that what is real is what can be experienced through the five senses. All that seems real to us is what we can see, hear, touch, smell, or taste. But we know the senses are severely limited in their perceptive

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

powers. We know that the human eye can only recognize a very small band of the electromagnetic scale. An eagle can see distances more acutely than the human eye. A dog's sense of smell is much stronger than ours. And with instruments like a telescope or a microscope we can extend the range of human sight. So it is clear that the five senses have their perceptive limits. Hence the perceptive range of the senses also creates a prison cell of awareness in its own right.

According to the ancients, the mind works like a laser when focused in particular ways, enabling broad-ranging perceptive power. But for most people the mind is like a monkey jumping from branch to branch, attraction to attraction, desire to desire, and rarely stays focused for any length of time. If a person took the trouble to simply observe the activity of their mind for just five minutes one would discover how inconstant the mind is and how it resists focus. This is precisely why calming the mind and bringing it into focus is a prerequisite of philosophy and contemplation in the ancient traditions. Practices to remedy this condition can be found in Platonic thought, Vedic teachings, Patanjali's sutras and Buddhist philosophy, for example. They can be found in the *mystical traditions* of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism as well.

In other words, philosophy is important because it has to do with seeing things as they are and not as we want them to be, or as they appear to our limited senses or the range of our social concerns or our personality or prejudices.

The goal of true philosophy is to perceive the Truth. It is to gain a universal perspective and to become liberated from private, personal, partial, and parochial ones. (It is best to assume that almost all of us labor under these limitations in differing degrees all the way along the path until some level of transcendent enlightenment is achieved. And even with enlightenment, like a black belt in karate, there are additional levels of refinement available, we are told by Great Teachers.)

The aim of philosophy is to grasp the whole and to transcend the parts, no small task. The ideal of the Renaissance Man is to see universal patterns in all fields. The heart of the philosopher is to discover sympathies with all of his fellow men.

What is a universal perspective?

There is a wonderful Indian story that sheds light on this idea. There was a group of blind men who approached a large sleeping elephant outside the village they inhabited. They bumped into the elephant all at once and together asked, "What is it?" One of the blind men grabbed the elephant's tail and exclaimed, "It is a rope!" The second blind man could feel the elephant's leg and proclaimed, "It is a tree trunk." A third blind man was touching the elephant's trunk and mistook it for a snake. Yet another thought it a wall, for he had run into the massive flank of the elephant. The last blind man touched the elephant's ear and thought it was a large fan. Down the road came a man with unimpaired vision and told them that each one of them was partially right but what they encountered was actually

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

an elephant. A universal perspective is the ability to look at something from all angles and points of view, thereby determining the truth of the matter. To look at things from multiple perspectives is one of the disciplines of philosophy. It requires flexibility of mind, agility of perspective, tireless mobility of thought.

Philosophy is important because it begs the big questions. Why was I born, what happens after I die? Why am I in the conditions and circumstances I find myself in? What am I supposed to do (duty)? What is truly valuable? What is real and what is illusory? And last but not least WHO AM I?

Philosophy invites us to do and develop that aspect of the human constitution that is one of the most essential: thinking. The word “man” itself comes from the Sanskrit *manas*, meaning mind. Human beings are mental beings, and in the broadest sense mind includes “heart”. Philosophy is love of wisdom, which by definition unites the heart and mind. Without love there is no motor power, no energy or will to move, therefore mind without heart becomes proud, heart without intelligence can be misdirected.

The philosophical process at its most rudimentary level involves the *art* of asking good questions. At its highest level it is what Plato called “*dianoia*”, or thinking things through to their logical conclusions. It is seeing things clearly without tinted glasses — looking at things both from the highest and lowest, from the universal to the particulars, from the theoretical to the practical. This movement back and forth is known as the

“dialectic”, and for the ancient philosopher it was an art form and a master craft. The dialectic is founded on a simple assumption, “as above, so below”. The above is universal and abstract, what is below is particular and concrete. For the ancient philosopher the most useful tool was the power of analogy and correspondence.

Plato is often considered one of the West’s most profound philosophers. He used the character of Socrates in his *Dialogues* to describe the problem of double ignorance. When some young students went to the Oracle of Delphi near Athens and inquired who the wisest man in Athens was, the Oracle replied unhesitatingly, “Socrates”. When this was reported to Socrates himself he was puzzled because his life-long effort to “think things through” brought him to a place where he had sorted out endless misconceptions and partial understandings that were blocking the truth and came to the conclusion that on all the most pertinent philosophical questions of the day he really *did not have any final answers*.

So as the story goes, Socrates set out to discover why the Oracle would proclaim him this honored position in Athens, when he was certain about nothing. Socrates proceeded to engage the most “knowledgeable” men of his society on subjects like the immortality of the soul, justice, beauty, and love. What he discovered and proved through questions and answers was that these Sophists (the college professors of Greek times) really did not know what they were talking

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

about. These courtyard debates provided hilarity and amusement to the youth of Athens who enjoyed witnessing the pretentious and the proud brought down a few notches in the public square. These Sophists were doubly ignorant, mired in the thoughts of others, parroting their observations and without a single original thought of their own. They thought they knew the answers to big questions when in fact they were unaware of their ignorance. To quote the *Tao Te Ching*: “False learning is pursued through daily addition; Tao is practiced through daily subtraction.”

Not surprisingly, since they were enamored of their half-baked “knowledge”, they had stopped searching for the truth, unlike Socrates, who saw the search for truth as an endless quest. So even though he felt he knew nothing for sure, he was the wisest man in Athens because he was not mired in double ignorance. He was aware that the acquisition of wisdom was a never-ending process.

Socrates found that to get closer to the truth he must first clear away the rubble of falsely held ideas before he could reveal the truth. This process was called “un-learning”. If you have a hitch in your golf stroke, for example, you must unlearn the habit to establish a new and more reliable swing. If you believe you have reached the truth there is no incentive to march ahead. Philosophy is about the adventure and discovery and not about final destinations. This process is short-circuited by any adherence to blind belief.

Philosophy is important because ultimately it is all about the search for truth.

The search for truth requires objectivity, the ability to look at things from outside our current circumstances and customary outlook. But it also requires imagination, the ability to draw a clear picture in the mind like a good playwright or songwriter. Einstein said the most powerful tool at the disposal of the scientist is imagination. This is equally true of philosophy. How can we examine a proposition if we cannot imagine, at least for a moment, that it is true? We have to imagine the implications of an idea, imagine the logical outcome of an idea, imagine how an idea would play out like a good playwright. This forms the basis of becoming adept at the art of making good choices in the course of a lifetime.

One simple form this takes is the ability to see things through the eyes of others. When we go to the movies and identify with a given character in a story we are using our imagination to see life as they see it. Philosophers train themselves to see any question or issue from multiple points of view and to draw a conclusion only after a thorough examination. Knowledge and wisdom do not come cheaply. It requires tenacity combined with a strong, vigorous effort. Wisdom cannot be had by the weak-willed, closed-minded, or hard-hearted.

Philosophy has played a role in all of the major religious systems of the world at one point or another and it lies at the heart of the scientific method. Freedom of thought and the quest for truth lie at the very heart of the human experience. Philosophy is a quest to become an individual who chooses wisely the ideas

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

to live their lives by. Philosophy is an attempt to wrestle free from the patterns of ingrained habits and cultural conventionality and regain the noble position of captain of one's fate, or as the poem "Invictus" says, "the Captain of my Soul".

To free the mind requires a correlative level of commitment and focus as found

in great musicians or athletes. If the mind needs to be trained, who is the trainer and what the trainee? So yet again we come back to the central question of philosophy: "Who am I?" And what could be more important than to better understand this central conundrum? "Neo, free your mind." ✧

ADDENDA

A. Primary Skills of the Philosophical Mind:

1. The art of asking good questions. Questions that reveal what is missing and point towards additional light. A good question should lead to additional and more fundamental questions.

2. The art of introspection: The ability to discover one's own assumptions and preconceptions. This leads to impartiality and impersonality, essential qualities to discover the truth of any proposition.

3. The ability to look at an idea from multiple points of view. (It is a very good exercise to argue a position that one does not in fact hold to. This plays a big role in the training of Tibetan Buddhist monks, for example.)

4. The ability to trace a problem to the core questions, and to see what is essential.

5. The courage and capacity to honestly enjoy saying, "I don't know". This requires us to clear away the clutter of what we think we know and what is blocking real knowledge.

B. First Principles:

"Every man should expend his chief thought and attention on the consideration of his first principles; are they or are they

not rightly laid down? And when he has sifted them, all the rest will follow."

— Plato's *Cratylus*

C. The Importance of Plato:

Alfred North Whitehead was a widely influential twentieth-century philosopher and mathematician. He is responsible for coining the following celebrated quote about Plato's enduring influence: "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." (*Process and Reality*, Free Press, 1979, p. 39) *Apology* is Plato's great dialog, capturing the spirit of philosophy. It is short and sweet and poignant because it has to do with Socrates's life-and-death situation.

D. Top Ten Philosophical Questions:

1. Who am I?
2. What is the nature of Truth?
3. What is Reality?
4. What, Where, Who is God?
5. How should I live?
6. What is the significance of death?
7. What is the scope of human nature?
8. What is Justice?
9. What is Nature?
10. Is there Evolution, and how does it work?

Freeing the Mind: Why Philosophy Is Important

E. Eight Philosophical Propositions

◆ You cannot know the truth until you establish objectivity and exercise subjectivity.

◆ The imagination is the creative tool of the mind in the furtherance of an ideal.

◆ You cannot claim to have lived a full life unless you have grappled with life's big questions.

◆ Ideas rule the world; examine them well.

◆ You cannot understand the manifest without understanding the unmanifest, matter without mind, or the particular without the universal.

◆ "I don't know" marks the beginning of the philosophical quest. To arrive at this point one must see through all that one previously believes to be true.

◆ Behind any mental picture of what is real or true is a larger one, a grander one, a more universal one, and another one and another one without end.

◆ The ultimate philosophical question is "Who am I?"

F. Important Philosophical Resources:

1. Eastern religions are in general really

more about philosophy than a set of belief systems, as seen in the Western monotheistic religions.

2. *Tao Te Ching*: Book of ancient Chinese philosophy, paradoxical and challenging to conventional notions.

3. *Dhammapada*: Core teachings in Buddhism. The Twin Verses are really good.

4. *The Bhagavadgītā*: Contains the core philosophical notions of India (detachment, self-realization, renunciation of the fruit of action, and so on.)

5. *The Gospel According to Thomas*: (Core philosophical teachings of Jesus before being altered by the Church; they were uncovered from the Dead Sea Scrolls). This will also protect against the charge of fundamentalists and dogmatists that Christianity is being ignored. (See the Council of Constantinople.)

6. Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Oversoul", "The American Scholar" and "Self-Reliance" are all about philosophy in the best sense. He is America's preeminent philosopher.

7. "*Sophie's World*" by Jostein Gaarder — a Norwegian novelist — Good for young adults.

And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.

T. S. Eliot
From "Burnt Norton"

Prometheus — Reclaiming the Fire

DAVID GROSSMAN

HOW ironic that in New York City, arguably the capital of modern culture and sophistication, in the middle of the Rockefeller Center, prime symbol of material power and wealth, stands a shining golden sculpture of a mythic figure, actually a god carrying a flame, a burst of fire, in his right hand. He is surrounded by the heavens, a ring representing the astrological constellations.

One gets the sense that he is moving swiftly, flying down from the peak of a mountain (the sculpture's base), hurrying to his destination before the flame is extinguished. Most people are not exactly sure who he is, missing the inscription on the marble retaining wall behind him, and certainly missing the irony that he is a god of compassion and sacrifice, not the patron saint of opulence and power in spite of being painted in gold. The inscription reads: "PROMETHEUS, TEACHER IN EVERY ART, BROUGHT THE FIRE THAT HATH PROVED TO MORTALS A MEANS TO MIGHTY ENDS (AESCHYLUS)."

Prometheus, divine Titan, a kind of rebel angel, who, out of compassion for poor, obtuse humanity, brought them the divine fire, taught them the arts and sciences,

but paid a heavy price for tricking Zeus and disobeying the chief god. His act was a sacrifice; for he foresaw the consequences of his action. Humanity also paid for its awakening of consciousness. Hesiod, the Greek poet, relates that "Zeus created the woman Pandora and sent her down to Epimetheus ('hindsight'), who although warned by his brother Prometheus ('foresight'), married her anyway. Pandora took the lid off the jar she carried, and evils, hard work, and disease flew out to wander" among humankind.

On one level, Prometheus and Epimetheus together represent the dual aspect of *manas*, or mind, the former portraying the free, spontaneous expression of the spiritual, intuitive mind, and the latter, the logical, analyzing lower mind, ideally the instrument of the higher. On a more macrocosmic level H. P. Blavatsky points out in her master work, *The Secret Doctrine*, that the Promethean sacrifice represents a great evolutionary crossroad when the evolving human form was prepared for the involving spiritual consciousness of more spiritual beings (*mānasaputras*), who incarnated into flesh and provided the bridge, or spark, for the expression

Mr David Grossman has been a student of Theosophy since the mid-70s and is Treasurer of ITC, the International Theosophical Conferences, Inc. He resides in Brooklyn, NY, and is a photo journalist.

Prometheus — Reclaiming the Fire

of spiritual consciousness through the human form (vol. II).

The biblical myth of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as well as the story of Lucifer, the fallen angel (whose name incidentally has for its root, *lux*, or light), also represent this evolutionary juncture where self-conscious human evolution began, strapped with responsibility, free will, and the real possibility of a conscious spiritual life on Earth. And here we find ourselves countless generations later still seemingly under the curse of Zeus. Let us remember Prometheus and the possibilities he brought; let us remember our spiritual heritage and reclaim the fire. ✧



Prometheus, 1934 gilded sculpture by Paul Manship
(Source: <wikipedia.org>)

***The Lipikas circumscribe the triangle, the first one, the cube, the second one, and the pentacle within the egg. It is the ring called “Pass Not” for those who descend and ascend. Also for those who during the Kalpa are progressing towards the great day “Be with us.” Thus were formed the Arupa and the Rupa (the Formless World and the World of Forms): from one light seven lights; from each of the seven, seven times seven lights. The wheels watch the ring.**

Helena P. Blavatsky
The Secret Doctrine, vol. I, Cosmogogenesis, Stanza V, 6.

*This text also relates to Mr Joma Sipe’s image on the cover of this issue and the cover caption on p. 3.

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY

Date	Section	General Secretary, etc.	Address	Magazine	Email address
1947	Africa, East and Central	... Mr Narendra M. Shah	... PO Box 14525. 00800, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya	... <i>The Theosophical Light</i>	narendrashahi999@gmail.com
1909	Africa, South	... Mr Desmond Chapman	... 31 Streatley Ave, cnr.Lothbury Ave, Auckland Park, Johannesburg PO Box 91523	... <i>The South African Theosophist</i>	tsinsa.depgensec@telkomsa.net
1956	Africa, West	... Dr K. A. Tutu	... PO Box 720, Accra, Ghana	... <i>The West African Theosophist</i>	katutu@gmail.com
1929	America, Central *	... Mrs Beatriz Elisena Martinez Pozas	... Colonia Universitaria Norte, Calle Julio Mejia, Poligono, E-7 Mejicanos, San Salvador, EL SALVADOR		bemapo03@hotmail.com
1920	Argentina	... Mr Esteban Langlois	... Pje. Florencio Balcarce 71, Buenos Aires (1405)	... <i>Teosofía en Argentina</i>	secretaria@sociedadteosofica.org.ar
1990	Asia, East and Southeast †	... Mr Chong Sanne	... 540 Sims Avenue, No. 03-04 Sims Avenue Centre, Singapore 387 603	... <i>Newsletter</i>	sanne@theosophyasia.net
1895	Australia	... Mr Stephen Mcdonald	... Level 2, 162 Goulburn St., Surry Hills, NSW 2010	... <i>Theosophy in Australia</i>	tshq@theosophicalsociety.org.au
1912	Austria *	... Mr Albert Schichl	... Oberbaumgarten 25, 4204 Haibach im Mühlkreis	... <i>Theosofie Adyar</i>	theosophie.austria@aon.at
2013	Bangladesh †	... Mr B. L. Bhattacharya	... B/4-3, Iswarchandra Nibas, 68/1, Bagmari Road, Kolkata 700 054		blbtos_2005@yahoo.com
1911	Belgium	... Mrs Sabine Van Osta	... Place des Gueux 8, B1000 Brussels	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	info@ts-belgium.be
1965	Bolivia	... Mrs Sonia Montecinos Rojas	... Pasaje Jauregui No. 2255, La Paz		bolivia.ts7@gmail.com
1920	Brazil	... Mr Sergio Carvalho de Moraes, Jr	... SGAS Quadra 603, N. 20, CEP 70200-630 Brasília (DF)	... <i>Sophia</i>	secretaria@sociedadteosofica.org.br
1924	Canada *	... Mrs Maryse DeCoste	... # 12-1475 Deep Cove Rd. North Vancouver, BC	... <i>The Light Bearer</i>	modecoste@hotmail.com
1920	Chile *	... Mr Victor Aguayo	... Casilla 11 Sucursal Paseo Estacion, Estacion Central, Santiago	... <i>Revista Teosófica Chilena</i>	sociedadteosoficachile@gmail.com
1937	Colombia †	... Mr Armando Motta Zapata	... Carrera 6, # 56-40, Bogotá (Chapinero Alto)	... <i>Selección Teosófica</i>	stsgamoz@gmail.com
1997	Costa Rica †	... Mrs Ligia Montiel	... Calle 38, Aves. 12-14, S.E. San José		limolo08@gmail.com
2007	Croatia ▲	... Mr Darko Majstorovic	... Siget 11, 10000 Zagreb, Republic of Croatia	... <i>Teozofija</i>	teozofija@teozofija.net
1905	Cuba	... Mr Carlos V. Fernández Pérez	... Apartado de Correos 6365, La Habana 10600		teosocuba.1@gmail.com
1987	Dominican Rep. †	... Mrs Magaly Polanco	... Calle Santa Agueda 1652 Les Chalet Col San Juan Puerto Rico Apartado 23 00926		polancomagaly@yahoo.com
1888	England	... Mrs Jenny Baker	... 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA	... <i>Esoterica</i>	president@theosoc.org.uk
1907	Finland	... Mr Janne Vuononvirta	... Teosofinen Seura, Vironkatu 7 C 2, Fin 00170, Helsinki	... <i>Teosofi</i>	info@teosofinenseura.fi
1899	France	... Mrs Jeannine (Nano) Leguay	... 4 Square Rapp, 75007 Paris	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	tsfr.office@gmail.com
1902	Germany	... Mrs Manuela Kaulich	... Hauptstr. 39, 93138 Lappersdorf	... <i>Adyar</i>	theosophie-adyar@gmx.de
1928	Greece	... Dr Alexandros Bousoulengas	... 25 Voukourestiou St., 106 71-Athens	... <i>Ilisos</i>	info@theosophicalsociety.gr
1907	Hungary †	... Mr Janos Szabari	... H-1085 Budapest, Horánszky u. 27. fsz. 10	... <i>Teozófia</i>	info@teozofia.hu
1921	Iceland	... Mr Jón Ellert Benediktsson	... PO Box 1257 Ingólfsstraeti 22, 121 Reykjavik	... <i>Gangleri</i>	iceland.ts@gmail.com
1891	India	... Mr Pradeep H. Gohil	... The Theosophical Society, Kamachha, Varanasi 221 010	... <i>The Indian Theosophist</i>	theosophyvns@gmail.com
1912	Indonesia	... Mr Widyatmoko	... Dsn. Parelegi no. 21, RT 02/ RW 09, Desa Purwodadi, Kecamatan Purwodadi, 67163 Pasuruan, Jawa Timur	... <i>Theosofi</i>	indonesia.teosofi@gmail.com
1919	Ireland *	... Mrs Marie Harkness	... 97 Mountsandel Road, Coleraine, UK BT52 1TA		marieharkness@yahoo.co.uk

1954	Israel ▲	... Mrs Bracha Elro	... PO Box 9114, Ramat-Gan, Israel 5219002	... <i>Or</i>	elronb1@gmail.com
1902	Italy	... Mr Antonio Girardi	... Viale Quintino Sella, 83/E, 36100 Vicenza	... <i>Rivista Italiana di Teosofia</i>	sti@teosofica.org
1997	Ivory Coast *	... Mr Pierre-Magloire Kouahoh	... Yopougon, 23 Rue Princesse B. P. 3924, Abidjan 23	... <i>Sophia</i>	pm_kouahoh@hotmail.com
1919	Mexico	... Mrs Juana Leonor Maldonado Ruíz	... Ignacio Mariscal 126, Col. Tabacalera Mexicana, Mexico, D.F. 06030		teosofiaenmexico@gmail.com info@sociedadteosofica.mx
1897	Netherlands, The	... Mr Wim Leys	... Tolsraat 154, 1074 VM Amsterdam	... <i>Theosophia</i>	info@teosofie.nl
1896	New Zealand	... Mr John Vorstermans	... 18, Belvedere Street, Epsom, Auckland 1051	... <i>TheoSophia</i>	np@theosophy.org.nz
1913	Norway *	... Mr Jan Helge Francesco Olsen	... Skjaervaveien 53 C, 1466 Strommen		os@teosofisksamfunn.no
1935	Orlando ▲	... Mr Carl Metzger	... 1606 New York Ave. Orlando, Florida, 32803-1838, USA		TheosophicalSocietyCF@gmail.com
1948	Pakistan † Jamshed Memorial Hall, M. A. Jinnah Road, opp. Radio Pakistan, Karachi 74200	... <i>The Karachi Theosophist</i>	bhagwanbharvani@hotmail.com
1925	Paraguay ▲	... Sr. Blas Osvaldo Añazco López	... Eligio Ayala Nro. 1.833 e/ Mayor Fleitas y Gral. Aguino Asunción		ramafaternidadSTparaguay@hotmail.com
1924	Peru †	... Mr Julio Pomar Calderón	... Av Republica de Portugal 152, Breña, Lima 5	... <i>Búsqueda</i>	sede-central@sociedadteosoficaenperu.pe
1933	Philippines, The	... Mr Charlton Romero	... Corner P. Florentino and Iba Streets, Quezon City, Manila	... <i>The Philippine Theosophist</i>	philtheos@gmail.com
1921	Portugal	... Mr Carlos Guerra	... Sociedade Teosófica de Portugal, Rua José Estêvão, 10 B, 1150-202 Lisboa	... <i>Osiris</i>	geral@sociedadteosoficadeportugal.pt
1925	Puerto Rico †	... Mrs Magaly Polanco	... Apartado 36-1766 Correo General. San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936-1766	... <i>Heraldo Teosófico</i>	polancomagaly@yahoo.com
2012	Qatar ▲	... Mr Lijo Joseph	... Crewing Officer, Teyseer Services Company P.O. Box 2431, Doha		qatarblavatskyldodge@yahoo.com
2013	Russia †	... Mr Alexey Besputin	... 159-52, Novomytischinsky prospekt, Mytishi, Moscow region, 141018	... <i>Teosoficheskoe Obozrenie</i> (The Theosophical Review)	pr@ts-russia.org
1910	Scotland *	... Mr Gary Kidgell	... Christine Gear 32 Newmains Road Kirkliston Edinburgh EH29 9AL	... <i>Circles</i>	garykidgell@hotmail.com
1992	Slovenia *	... Mrs Irena Primc	... Kajuhova UI 9, 3000 Celje	... <i>Teozofska Misel</i>	irenaprinc3@gmail.com
1921	Spain	... Mrs Angels Torra Buron	... Av. Vall d'or, 85-87 08197 - Valldoreix(Spain)	... <i>Sophia</i>	presidencia@sociedadteosofica.es
1926	Sri Lanka †	... Mr D. A. L. Wanigasekera	... 146 Anderson Rd, Dehiwala,	... <i>The Sri Lanka Theosophist</i>	dumindawanigasekera@gmail.com
1895	Sweden	... Mrs Birgitta Skarbo	... Karla Plan 5 B, 11460 Stockholm	... <i>Tidlös Visdom</i>	teosofiska.samfundet.adyar@telia.com
1910	Switzerland †	... Mr Andrea Biasca-Caroni	... Via Collina 19, 6612 Ascona, CH-6612	... <i>The Lotus</i>	info@teosofia.ch
1997	Togo *	... Mr Kouma Dakey	... S.O., A.R.T.T., BP 76, Adeta		
2013	Ukraine	... Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko	... Office 3, 7-A Zhylianska St., Kiev 01033	... <i>Svitoch</i>	org@theosophy.in.ua
1886	USA	... Dr Barbara B. Hebert	... PO Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60187-0270	... <i>The Quest</i>	org@theosophical.org
1925	Uruguay *	... Mrs Ema Ma. de Souza Leal	... Javier Barrios Amorín 1085, Casilla de Correos 1553, Montevideo		st.uruguay@gmail.com
1925	Venezuela †	... Mrs Nelly Nouel	... Romualda a Socarrás, Edif. de Oro Piso 12, Apto. 122 – Caracas		nellynouel5@gmail.com
1922	Wales *	... Mrs Julie Cunningham	... Bryn Adda, Brynsiencyn, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey, LL61 6NX UK		theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk

Date refers to the date of formation

* *Regional Association*

† *Presidential Agency*

▲ *Lodge attached to Adyar*

The Council of the European Federation of National Societies: *Chairperson*: Miss Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, 67 Rue des Pommiers, F-45000 Orleans, France. Email: **frankimdiu@msn.com**

Inter-American Theosophical Federation: *President*: Mrs Isis M. B. Resende, SGAS 603 conj. E s/n. Brasília-DF, CEP 70200-630 – Brazil. Email: **imbresende@gmail.com**

Indo-Pacific Theosophical Federation: *President*: Mr Gerard Brennan, 42 Melbourne Street, Concord, 2137, Sydney, Australia. Email: **president@ipf-ts.org**

Pan-African Theosophical Federation: *Chairman*: Mr Tom Davis, 9 Ronean, 38 Princess Avenue, Windsor E 2194, South Africa. Email: **thosgdavis@icon.co.za**

SUBSCRIPTIONS: US \$ AND RUPEE (₹) RATES

(Effective from 1 September 2013)

COUNTRY	THE THEOSOPHIST				ADYAR NEWSLETTER			
	ANNUAL		5 YEARS		ANNUAL		5 YEARS	
	Surface Mail	Air Mail	Surface Mail	Air Mail	Surface Mail	Air Mail	Surface Mail	Air Mail
India	₹ 100	-	₹ 450	-	₹ 25	-	₹ 100	-
North America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, European Union and other Non-Eastern European countries; the Middle East, and Pacific Islands.	-	\$ 35	-	\$ 170	-	\$ 10	-	\$ 45
All other Asian countries and Africa.	-	\$ 15	-	\$ 70	-	\$ 5	-	\$ 20
Russia, Poland, Eastern Europe, and CIS (former USSR States), Central and South America.	-	\$ 25	-	\$ 115	-	\$ 5	-	\$ 20

For Subscription contact: **E-mail: tphindia@gmail.com; Tel: (91-44) 2446-6613; Cell: (91) 8610365836**

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE, ADYAR, CHENNAI 600 020, INDIA

Some issues of *The Theosophist* are now available online and can be read and/or downloaded from:

<ts-adyar.org/magazines.html>

Edited by Mr Tim Boyd, 'Olcott Bungalow', The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai (TS),

Published by Mr S. Harihara Raghavan, 'Arundale House', TS, and Printed by Mr V. Gopalan, 'Chit Sabha', TS, at the Vasanta Press, TS, Besant Garden, Besant Avenue, Adyar, Chennai (Madras) 600 020, India, on behalf of the President, The Theosophical Society.

RECENT REPRINTS

MAN'S SUPERSENSORY AND SPIRITUAL POWERS

Geoffrey Hodson

Man undoubtedly possesses certain supersensory powers whose unfoldment can be hastened. This book is a guide to managing human life and developing the character needed for such unfoldment. However, it is not the development of psychic powers that is man's supreme goal, but Self-realization. Psychic powers are only by-products in the spiritual process of seeking Realization and are not ends in themselves.

O HIDDEN LIFE

Joy Mills

In 1923, Dr Annie Besant, then President of the Theosophical Society, penned some lines that have since become familiar to members throughout the world as the "Universal Prayer", and become part of every theosophist's vocabulary. Few gatherings of the Society are held without the opening recitation of these words. Simple in the extreme, the words possess the magical power of a mantram.

REINCARNATION AND ISLAM

Nader Baig Mirza

It is a general notion that Islam and other Semitic religions do not allow the Doctrine of Reincarnation. The author's insightful and scholarly examination of the Holy Quran and other Islamic teachings shows Reincarnation is implied in them. He suggests that explicit teaching about Reincarnation might have been inappropriate for the times, in order to prevent people from postponing moral reformation to a conveniently later date.

BE A LAMP UNTO YOURSELF

K. Satchidananda Murthy

The author, an eminent philosopher, stresses the importance of each person being their own support and guide. He quotes from the Buddhist, Jaina, and Hindu teachings, the three main traditions of classical Indian culture, to substantiate this thesis.

For catalogue, enquiries, and orders, write to:

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

1, Besant Avenue, Adyar, Chennai - 600 020, India

Tel: (+91-44) 2446-6613; Book Shop: (+91-44) 2446-3442

Twitter: twitter.com/tphindia // E-mail: tphindia@gmail.com

Websites: ts-adyar.org & adyarbooks.com

Online Bookstore: [amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in): Seller - TPH Adyar

Facebook: [facebook.com/tphadyar](https://www.facebook.com/tphadyar) // WhatsApp: (+91) 86103-65836



Posted on 7th to 9th July 2021
Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under No. 1165 / 1957
REGISTERED TN/CC(S)DN/245/21-23
Licensed to post without prepayment under WPP No. TN/PMG(CCR)/WPP-586/2021-2023
Date of Publication: 7th or 8th of every month
Posted at Egmore RMS/1 (Patrika Channel)

The Theosophical Society,
formed in New York, 17 November 1875, and
incorporated in Chennai (Madras), 3 April 1905,
has three declared Objects:

- ❖ To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.
- ❖ To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science.
- ❖ To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in humankind.

* * *

Considering its three declared Objects above,
the Theosophical Society's Mission Statement
was approved by its General Council
on 2 July 2018, as follows:

*"To serve humanity by cultivating
an ever-deepening understanding
and realization of the Ageless Wisdom,
spiritual self-transformation,
and the unity of all life."*

RNI 1165 / 1957
ISSN 0972-1851