

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: The Sufi love tale of Majnun and Layla symbolizes the spiritual path of devotion – the experience of the soul in search of God. Majnun means “absorption into a thought” and Layla means “the night of obscurity”. (This image relates to the article on p. 12 of this issue.)

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

The Unending Path

TIM BOYD

IN her short article titled “Practical Occultism” H. P. Blavatsky (HPB), co-founder of the TS in 1875 and author of *The Secret Doctrine*, makes a statement that is worthy of some consideration: “It is easy to become a Theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the metaphysical” can become a Theosophist. She then goes on to elaborate other qualities of the Theosophist: Those “of pure, unselfish life, who find more joy in helping their neighbors than in receiving help themselves, who are ever ready to sacrifice their own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who love Truth, Goodness, and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer — that person is a Theosophist.”

The only part I might take issue with is the idea that it is easy to be “that person”. It is interesting that her list of qualifications did not include membership in an organization. Practical occultism, on the other hand, was something of a very different nature; so much so that she states that even in the TS, there are few genuine practical occultists.

It is not unusual for people to become associated with the TS and wonder where they should begin. What is it that they

can and should study? In my situation I travel the world interacting with theosophical members and groups. Sometimes it is surprising the areas on which theosophists choose to focus their attention for study. The choice is so broad that for some the study focuses solely on service to others, for some it is limited to the teachings of HPB, for others the cultivation of the psychic realm seems paramount. It is important to choose wisely, especially in the beginning, because with one small step in the wrong direction, it does not take long to find ourselves far away from the direction we had initially intended, and somehow lost.

So we ask ourselves, what is the purpose of our study? I would say that it is to elevate the mind, elevation for the purpose of seeing clearly. An example might be the experience of going up to a mountain peak. There are many paths that go to the peak of the mountain, but at the top we find before us a vision of the patterns and the appearance of the Earth, impossible to see at ground level. We have a very clear vision of what is below.

Whatever peak experience we have, whether it is standing on a physical mountain, or the elevation that occasionally occurs spontaneously or in meditation,

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eventually we have to come back to earth. When we do, we find ourselves again engaged in our normal activities, living closely with the personality that we have cultivated over time. In the midst of our peak experience the binding force of the personality is temporarily forgotten, but without fail it returns. So, we have the experience of having seen, but now live our lives based on the memory of what we have seen.

Jack Kornfield, a widely known meditation teacher, made the statement: “After the ecstasy comes the dishes.” After this peak experience we are back washing dishes, taking children to school, going to the workplace, all of the very mundane things that compose a life, but somehow we do it differently; we are changed. In our theosophical approach this elevation is cultivated in the process of study, meditation, and service. From our perspective it would be good to have a complete teaching that develops us as holistically as possible.

In HPB’s writings she refers to many of the Tibetan teachings. One of them is the *Lam Rim*, a body of wisdom teachings typical to Tibetan Buddhism. It is also spoken of as the “Graded Path to Enlightenment”. It is thought of as a complete teaching because there is a step on this ladder of teachings suited to whatever our level of unfoldment may be. From the Mahayana Buddhist perspective there are three levels, “Three Scopes” — the small, medium, and great scopes.

The small scope is for people who are simply looking to find happiness. They

want to find happiness within this ever-repeating wheel of birth, life, and death, or *samsāra*. They want a teaching that can give them happiness now, and an improved rebirth in a future life.

The medium scope would be those practitioners who have seen the folly of the repetitive cycle of suffering that we all are engaged in. They seek liberation from it. This is the path of the Pratyeka Buddhas, those who achieve personal liberation from *samsāra*.

Then there is the great scope, the Bodhisatva path, for those whose intention is to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is the Bodhisatva vow and corresponds to the theosophical approach to the Wisdom Path.

In the theosophical teachings as well there are profound teachings given by wise beings suited to the many levels at which we find ourselves. Many of the books tend to be short, much like sutra teachings: compact, simple, one line perhaps. All the expositions are written to be expanded upon.

Even with the *Lam Rim* there is the large body of teachings, approximately 1,000 pages, followed by an abbreviated version of about 200 pages. Then they have something they would call the extremely abbreviated version, maybe two pages in length. But each one of these texts connects with the whole body of specific wisdom teachings.

A little book like *At the Feet of the Master*, examines four qualifications leading to an actual entry into the path of

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discipleship. Another small book, HPB's *The Voice of the Silence*, which she dedicated "to the few", focuses on a more extended level of unfoldment, that of the Boddhisatva. A third theosophical jewel is *Light on the Path*, written by Mabel Collins, with its various admonitions. These are complete teachings that can guide us along this way, if we can make the connections from the short and abbreviated versions, to their sources.

When I was much younger I was fortunate to have a wise teacher. Often he would say things about the spiritual life which, at the time, seemed peculiar. One thing he said was that genuine wisdom teachings are safe from people who are not ready for them. He would give an example of someone taking a handful of diamonds and spreading them on the floor. He would say that someone coming into the room who could not recognize a diamond, would see them and say: "Your

house is very dirty; there is glass scattered all over the floor." But someone who knew their value, would perceive that the floor was covered with precious stones.

In the *Bhagavadgitā* Lord Krishna makes the statement: "By whatever path someone approaches me, on that same path do I meet them." The wisdom teachings are similar. We are nourished according to our level of unfoldment and need. The important thing for us is to remember that they are without limit.

So while it might be easy to become satisfied with the crumbs we are able to digest at this moment, our role is to elevate, to always reach and look further, to try to deepen our experience. What we find is that invariably, as something opens within us, those exact same teachings will speak to us in a very different way. That is the beauty of it. It is an unending path on which we are continually supported at *every* stage. ✧

**The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious.
It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle
of true art and true science.**

Albert Einstein

The Sun — A Beating Heart!

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

THE Sun is the vital focus of the Solar System. From it issue all the streams of energy and power which keep its entire kingdom alive and provide the forces necessary for its evolution.

In the present year (1980), we are experiencing a maximum of the 11–12-year-cycle of sunspot activity and some of the ancient occult teachings connected with the nature of the Sun suggest themselves for careful consideration. Astronomers of today have discovered much that was mere speculation a few years ago, but are still unable to throw aside limited materialistic ideas involved in their studies and enter boldly into the sphere of occult thought.

Sunspots are channels through which some of the powerful solar forces issue forth from time to time as a phase of the vital circulation of the solar *plasma* which reaches out to the very confines of the system and eventually returns to the Sun. It cleanses, purifies, vitalizes everything that lives and evolves within that system, gathering impurities which are later worked over within the structure of the solar chain and the many levels of its

spiritual hierarchy. The Sun contracts like the human heart every eleven years more or less, according to its own rhythm, and relaxes between its contractions. As a matter of fact, according to the teachings of the Occult Tradition:

The Sun is the heart of the Solar World [System] and its brain is hidden behind the [visible] Sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve-centre of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence [plasma] flow into every artery and vein. . . . The planets are its limbs and pulses. . . . (*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 541, where this passage is quoted by H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) from an occult *Commentary*.)

The presently current scientific idea of solar plasma, the nature of which is ionic and electronic, is a very close approach to the occult tradition, especially as it touches upon currents and forces of a different vibratory rate than those recognized by the outworn materialism, showing a gradual recognition of subtler forms of matter.

The Theosophical Movement — using

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this term in its widest application — is a universal force rooted in the occult life of the planet. It is incomparably greater than any theosophical organization which may arise from time to time and recede again into the gathering shadows of bygone history. Fed by the ever-living fountains of Solar energy and life, pulsing with the rhythm of Universal Being, pregnant with worlds yet unborn, the Movement manifests itself in myriads of temporary forms and carries in its cyclic tides all the promise of a nobler future, all the visions of never-ending attainment, all the richness of spiritual fulfillment, harmony, and peace.

The historical manifestations of this overall Movement are of course intimately connected with the idea of periodic incarnations of some of the earlier workers and teachers who have already taken part in previous aspects of occult work, and come back from time to time to resume their interrupted task and reassert the teachings in new languages and forms which human evolution brings about, as the ages of history develop in one or another portion of the overall human evolutionary stage.

It seems credible to assume that the present manifestation of the Movement, as initiated by HPB and her coworkers, is intimately connected with both Gnosticism and Neoplatonism, their teachings, disciplines, and spiritual efforts. One wonders sometimes where certain individuals of those bygone days are. What about Basilides, Bardaisan, Valentinus, Simon Magus, Saturnilus and Marcion?

Have they been with us already, or are they still to come in one or another part of the world, as our work develops and widens its scope into other aspects of human life? Where are Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyry and Proclus? Have we met them casually and did not recognize them? Will some of them turn up as time rolls by, and the present occult work gathers momentum in a regenerated humanity?

Some of the former workers in the Movement we have most likely met and known as friends and co-workers. The most likely among these are individuals who experienced the terrible days of the Cathars, Albigenses and Waldensians — men and women who have today a vivid recollection of those days and whose knowledge of the teachings is obviously a vivid reminiscence of a former life. The question can still be asked: where is Johannes Scotus Erigena, Meister Eckhart, Arnald de Villanova, Pico della Mirandola, Raymond Lully or John Dee? Have they looked us over yet? The “climate” of the present Movement would of course be much easier on them and help to unfold their latent powers and knowledge.

It would be well for us to dwell occasionally upon this line of thought.

The higher members of the Brotherhood of Light deal primarily with Ideas, a conception which has nothing to do with ordinary thinking. Ideas are from a certain standpoint the *stoicheias* of ancient Greek mystics, the incorporeal principles of the planetary world, individualized abstractions which are somewhat similar to

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the Gnostic Aeons. It is with them that the most advanced members of the Hierarchy are intimately connected.

The jet streams of the *Atma-Buddhic* level of global consciousness carry their spiritual currents to any part of the global structure, inner and outer. These currents have to be reduced in their vibratory rates before they can be perceived or attuned to by even the highest portions of humankind. Lesser members of the Brotherhood can do so, as they serve as transformers of the highest energies into somewhat lower levels. Their activity is rooted in the use of *Kriyāśakti*, the mysterious power of thought which enables it to produce external, perceptible, phenomenal results by its own inherent energy.

The Brotherhood of Adepts has agents everywhere in the world. No country is to be excepted, as their work is universal and includes humanity as a family. (An excellent example of this fact is the School of Occult Teachings among the Berbers of Northern Africa. Some of their precepts have been translated by P. G. Bowen from a manuscript in the Isinzu language, under the guidance of one of their Teachers, named Mehlo Moya, and published by Rider & Co., London, 1935, under the title, *The Sayings of the Ancient One*. The precepts are practically identical with what we find in *Light on the Path*.)

Some of these agents are themselves high Initiates working with their own disciples, others are only advanced *Chelas* of various degrees of attainment in know-

ledge, others yet are aspiring and devoted students whose lives are dedicated to the highest ideals. Some of the agents are in constant personal contact with the Teachers; others only at times; others yet may not be consciously aware of being agents, but are open channels of one kind or another which the Teachers can use at times to channel ideas and ideals of spiritual benefit to the human race. (An excellent example of this is the case of De Robigne Mortimer Bennett (1812–82), the famous American Freethinker, pertinent information about whom may be found in Vol. IV, pp. 625–33, of HPB's *Collected Writings*. Jua Khool, transmitting in January 1882, a message from Master KH to A. P. Sinnett, says that he "is one of our agents (unknown to himself) to carry out a scheme for the enfranchisement of Western thoughts from superstitious creeds".)

The work of the Brotherhood concerns itself with spiritual and intellectual pursuits, the sowing of seeds in progressive and promising minds. It is never political or sectarian, although this does not mean that seeds of spiritual thought have not been sown upon occasion in the mind of intuitive statesmen and great leaders of men whose voice could be heard above the unthinking crowd or whose pronouncements might last and be repeated by succeeding generations of men. Whatever may be an open channel may be used at any time by Those whose only purpose and motive is the elevation of humankind from inertia into action and from darkness into light.

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We are all aware more or less of the great expectation within the organized Theosophical Movement of today of the appearance of another direct Messenger from the Brotherhood of Adepts, similar to H. P. Blavatsky. This has never been a promise on her part or on the part of her own Teachers. The possibility exists, but the probability of it is rather doubtful. The ideas connected with this trend of thought are sometimes very peculiar to say the least. Is he or she expected to be of Anglo-Saxon or Slavonian lineage? Why should he be that? India, Africa, and China constitute today the great majority of humankind in incarnation. Is it not conceivable that an individual of that type might appear and work among totally different ethnic groups from our own, and remain unknown to us? The overwhelming majority of the present theosophical literature is in English. Another era of occult development may experience a total shift in this situation, and the new installment of teachings may be couched in languages with which we are totally unfamiliar.

Brothers and friends! *Sursum corda* — lift up your hearts! Observe the world around you, but do not be dismayed! Life is a manifestation of Law. There is constant guidance behind the outer veil of illusions. The civilization of which we are an integral part is not about to be broken up into smithereens; it is not to disappear into a sea of total oblivion and negation. We are witnessing a worldwide revolu-

tion of thought, a basic change of conceptions and ideals. Outworn traditions must be swept aside, to make room for new conceptions, new mutual relations among all people, and these new conceptions will in due course of time reflect at least to some small extent very ancient ideals whose time for a new manifestation has now arrived in the cyclic rotation of the ages.

The Theosophical Movement to which we have dedicated our life and work is but an aspect of the Solar Force at work. It has existed for ages past, and will continue to exist in many forms and modifications into the distant future. If any of its manifestations become dogmatic or lose their vital strength, a new generation of students will lead a rebellion against calcified tradition, and give expression to the ancient principles of thought in other than the hackneyed phrases which may have lost their effective power. The only permanent power in the universe is the power of change; let us never forget this!

The Theosophical Movement is a movement of Youth. This has nothing to do with the age of the body. Youth is a condition of mind, a resiliency of thought, a dynamism of the vital streams, a readiness for spiritual adventure, a search for greater realities, an undying hope and trust in the unshakeable foundations of Truth. Let us therefore dream of a nobler and greater world; let us work on its behalf, never losing sight of the dream itself — the Dream that Never Dies! ✧

Alchemy of the Heart: The Sufi Path to Enlightenment — II

WAYNE GATFIELD

LIKE the Bhakti followers in Hinduism, the Sufis believe it is hard to develop love for an abstraction, therefore they visualize the Divine as a Being, but they are also aware this is just a temporary device and they will pass through this stage. Also their concept of God in any sense is much deeper and more metaphysical than the Western one. There is no sense of anthropomorphizing God — it is a deeply spiritual conception. Rumi talks of two kinds of intelligence, which are the same as the Head and Heart knowledge in *The Voice of the Silence*:

Two Kinds of Intelligence

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says, collecting information from the traditional sciences as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world.

You get ranked ahead or behind others in regard to your competence in retaining information. You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one already completed and preserved inside you.

A spring overflowing its spring box.

A freshness in the centre of the chest. This other intelligence

does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid,

and it doesn't move from outside to inside through conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead from within you, moving out.

The emphasis on Love is the main focus of Sufism. There are tales that symbolize this love as there are in other devotional systems as mentioned earlier. One of the main tales in Sufism is that of Majnun and Layla. Inayat Khan writes:

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Alchemy of the Heart: The Sufi Path to Enlightenment — II

Layla and Majnun have been characters for Sufi poets, as Krishna was for the poets of India. Majnun means absorption into a thought and Layla means the night of obscurity. The story is from beginning to end a teaching on the path of devotion, the experience of the soul in search of God.

The name Majnun has also been translated as “possessed” or indicating a certain type of madness. His original name was Qays. Layla has also been translated as “ecstasy”; so the meanings are ambiguous.

Majnun falls in love with Layla at the age of ten and it is later reciprocated, but her parents think him unsuitable and refuse to let him see her. As the years pass by he becomes mad with the pain of love, but this pain transforms him into a poet. If we look at the lives of many poets, musicians, and painters often their art comes through pain and suffering. As I said earlier, most of the Sufi poets write of the pain that one must endure to realize true love. If these poets, painters, and musicians did not suffer, they would not have had the desire to go beyond to find a safe haven on a higher level, nor would they have produced the special art they did. Rumi states:

A true Lover doesn't follow any one
religion,
be sure of that.
Since in the religion of Love,
there is no irreverence or faith.
When in Love,
body, mind, heart and soul don't even
exist.

Become this,
fall in Love,
and you will not be separated again.

So although they are physically separated, Layla is in his heart “24/7”, as they say, and this unrequited love brings forth beautiful poetry; nothing else in the world matters, not even physical appearance or mental state. He has gone beyond all that, though people see only the outer manifestations and most think him mad. This gives me yet another chance to mention Plato's saying: “Heaven-sent madness is preferable to man-made sanity.” Layla loved him just as much as he did her, and eventually she heard his poems recited by others, because in those days poetry was mainly spoken, as it was in China and Japan in ancient times. People had heard Majnun's poems and copied them by travelling about reciting them as he did.

Layla replied to these poems by writing her own out and casting them to the wind — many times a passer-by would pick them up and pass them on to Majnun. So they had a sort of very loose communication. Eventually she is given in marriage to another but refuses to consummate the marriage, as her heart is with Majnun. He learns of the marriage and her faithfulness to him, and that gives him hope. He is now living in the wilderness and even the wild animals love and protect him.

Eventually an old man, Zayd, arranges a clandestine meeting between the two, but she is not allowed to approach closer

than ten paces. Majnun spontaneously recites his most beautiful love poetry to her, reinforcing their love.

Layla's husband eventually dies and, shortly after, she also dies of a broken heart because of her love for Majnun. When he hears of her death, he repeatedly visits her grave until he too dies of grief and is buried beside her. This is all very "Romeo and Juliet", and one wonders if Shakespeare took his inspiration from such tales.

You may think this story has a tragic ending, but now I will quote a few paragraphs from the end of an article on the story by J. T. Coker from the June/July 2000 edition of *Sunrise* magazine:

"In a dream, Zayd, who tends their joint grave, has a vision of them in paradise, where an ancient soul tells him:

These two friends are one, eternal companions. He is Majnun, the king of the world in right action. And she is Layla, the moon among idols in compassion. In the world, like unpierced rubies, they treasured their fidelity affectionately, but found no rest and could not attain their heart's desire. Here they suffer grief no more. So it will be until eternity. Whoever endures suffering and forebears in that world, will be joyous and exalted in this world.

"On waking Zayd realized that

Whoever would find a place in that world must tread on the lusts of this world. This world is dust and is perishable. That world

is pure and eternal. . . . Commit yourself to love's sanctuary and at once find freedom from your ego. Fly in love as an arrow towards its target. Love loosens the knots of being, love is liberation from the vortex of egotism. In love, every cup of sorrow which bites into the soul gives it new life. Many a draft bitter as poison has become in love delicious. . . . However agonizing the experience, if it is for love it is well.

"So ends Nizami's poetic narrative of the story of Layla and Majnun, but to really appreciate and understand this work, it needs to be read, and savoured, in full. Is their story a medieval soap opera of epic proportions? It is, if that's what your heart hears. Is it a cautionary tale inculcating acceptance of earthly injustice and suffering in the Islamic faithful, who will be rewarded in the great by-and-by? It will surely serve, if that's your concern. Is Majnun "Man" and Layla "Soul", suffering because denied union while bounded by flesh? Yes, if your concern, your *love*, leads you to hear it that way. Is it an allegorical Sufi text, instructing seekers in practical means for awakening to the supernal reality of their true, spiritual nature? Only our hearts know for sure — Nizami bids us follow them."

On the surface it sounds as if Zayd found them both in a kind of Devachan, a god-like state, where they had reached the fulfilment of earthly desires that they could not consummate. The poet Nizami, who first wrote the story, probably based upon still older tales, leaves it open to in-

terpretation. Does it on a deeper level refer, as some of the fairy tales are said to do, to the trials of the aspirant on the way to enlightenment? The Sufi tell us to die before we die, in other words, to die to earthly concerns before we go through what we refer to as our physical death. Majnun's torments purified him and made him a poet respected and admired all over the land. But for his suffering he probably would not have achieved that. It was the physical that was preventing their union, material concerns and constraints; once they put off their physical bodies those constraints were gone.

Similarly, once we learn to overcome our own material restraints we will achieve freedom. A mystic is devoted totally to the object of his devotion, although of course they are really one. Theosophy teaches that the area occupied by the heart is the seat of the Higher Mind, it is where the transformation occurs and where Head learning, or intellectuality, becomes Heart learning. So it is the site of the alchemical transformation, the cauldron, if you like. The process is to become more heart-centred because as *The Voice of the Silence* tells us:

But even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

That is a strong statement that even ignorance is preferable to intellectual knowledge. Why is this? Because mere head learning does not transform, it just adds to the storehouse of facts in the brain, and more often as not swells the

pride of the students. They think that because they have garnered some information and can speak confidently on spiritual matters, that this somehow makes them an adept or great teacher. Again, *The Voice of the Silence* says:

False learning is rejected by the wise, and scattered to the winds by the Good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The "Doctrine of the Eye" is for the crowd, the "Doctrine of the Heart", for the elect. The first repeat in pride: "Behold, I know", the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, "Thus have I heard".

This is because until we gain direct experience of Spirituality, which is the only thing that counts in the end, we actually know nothing; we are just repeating what we have heard from others, and the humble ones realize that.

So Sufism, like Zen, is a teaching based on cultivating direct experience. The difference between the two is that Sufism believes in a personal relationship with the Divine, whereas Zen is impersonal. This latter is more in tune with theosophical teaching in many ways, though both are equally as valid in their own right and are designed for different human natures.

We can see in the Tale of Majnun and Layla how love transformed and broke down barriers through pain. Often suffering makes us look deeper, shatters our complacency — we never want it but we do need it at times. It is like a snake shedding its skin or a butterfly emerging

from a chrysalis. It often comes as a result of change, which is another thing not many of us like. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) writes in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 2, p. 475:

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death?

But she also says in *The Key to Theosophy*:

For pure divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity.

Therefore it is up the stairway of this love that the Sufi ascends — from the pure love between mortals, up to a merging into the Universal Love.

Rumi says: “Only from the heart can you touch the sky.” This means that only by the alchemy of the heart can we experience the Love at the heart of the universe. If a person is more head-centred they need to develop the heart to be able to continue on the journey. It is true that the world needs more love and tenderness at this particular time. The mighty ocean of thought needs to be sweetened by the beauty of Love in its true sense. This Love needs to be disentangled from lust and sentimentality, which are predominant in modern so-

ciety. Tales like the “Conference of the birds” and “Majnun and Layla” have a resonance in our souls and open doorways to wider vistas of understanding.

Without love and compassion, humanity becomes less than human, giving itself to the control of soulless machines and becoming in time a soulless machine itself. Like the wandering Majnun, we seek our lost Love, seemingly always out of the reach of our reasoning mind; we have to focus on something that transcends the reason to find this Love and to allow it to become our guiding star through all the complexities and dangers of earthly life. In the depths of our being it tells us there is no death or change for the real Self, only the promise of an eternal life and a pilgrimage to the very heart of Love itself. We need to gather in ourselves the ingredients that will initiate the alchemical process and bring about the transformation, or remove all the barriers we have placed between ourselves and Love.

In *The Voice of the Silence* there are some very profound words:

Alas, alas, that all men should possess Alaya, be one with the great Soul, and that possessing it, Alaya should so little avail them!

We live so short of what we truly are; we move around in a mist of misunderstanding and doubt that the world conspires to drown us in a sea of oblivion, “the great dire heresy of separateness that weans [us] from the rest”, to quote *The Voice of the Silence* again. But deep

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inside we know what we are. To use another of my favourite quotes from Plato, “all learning is merely recollection”, all true learning anyway. We need to awaken and remember the love that binds all things together as one, the beating heart of a humanity that cries out for understanding, for compassion. Theosophy describes meditation as the “inexpressible yearning of the inner human being to go out toward the infinite”. We all have this longing and try to fill it with material goods and transitory feelings.

One day that mist will start to disperse and we will discern the sun becoming clearer and clearer — the sun that shines in our hearts and souls, giving birth to the

light that never shone on land or sea but is an eternal radiance within each one of us. The poetry in our souls will open our eyes to the beauty of the world that we were blind to before, and the wonder of each of us behind the masks we wear. We will then feel the presence of a Golden Age that never went away, but was hidden by our mistaken view of what we truly are in Essence.

I end with a quote from Sri Chinmoy:

Love is not a thing to understand.
Love is not a thing to feel.
Love is not a thing to give and receive.
Love is a thing only to become
And eternally be. ✧

**My Beloved! The beauty of the flowers fades away,
And the brightness of the moon becomes dim,
The colour of the face of the fair ones pales,
When I behold the beauty of Thy Countenance.**

**The cares of life are forgotten,
The fear of death is felt no more,
Each moment brings to me new hope, new life, new joy,
When my heart reflects Thy Divine Light.**

**The riches of the earth cannot allure,
Nor can the power of the world enslave me, my King!
With Thy riches am I enriched, in Thy Strength I am strong,
In Thy thought, my eternal Beloved, I live,
and shall live evermore.**

Inayat Khan
“To the Beloved”
from *The Way of Illumination*

The Hidden Meaning of Christmas

CATALINA ISAZA CANTOR

Introduction

Let us share something about the hidden, esoteric meaning of Christmas. Although this celebration has become primarily a reason for consumption and advertising, it is good to remember that its origin has to do with the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Christ. From the esoteric point of view, it goes much further than that: it constitutes a symbol of the spiritual awakening of which all of us will take part at some point in our journey towards the divine.

Christmas, within the Christian vision, is composed of three moments. The first one, **Advent** (arrival), marks the four-week stage of preparation previous to the birth of the child Jesus. In the biblical account, this corresponds to the departure from Israel in difficult conditions. The **Nativity** (birth) is the moment when Jesus comes to life in a manger in Bethlehem. Finally, the **Epiphany** (appearance) refers to the arrival of the Three Wise Men to the manger and the presents they offer to the newborn child.

Scriptures such as the Bible for Christians often use symbolic language to express profound truths, mysteries. The

value of this practice is that the symbols do not change, because they contain universal truths that can be interpreted by anyone who has enough wisdom and intuition to do so, despite the passage of time.

The life of Jesus, which we read in the biblical gospels, is a compendium of mysteries that reveal to us that the Christ Consciousness has to be born inside each one of us. The authors of the gospels, disciples of Jesus, were enlightened men, and in their gospels they recorded eternal truths using allegories and symbols in order to lead those intuitively awake readers to occult knowledge. Geoffrey Hodson reminds us:

This story of the life of Jesus is a record of the experiences of the spirit in matter, of the Monad in man, and of the ascent of the spirit from the mortal clutches of matter toward the reconquest of that freedom that constitutes the natural state of the spirit and of the Monad in the world of Divine Reality. (*The Christ Life from Nativity to Ascension*)

Let us remember that we are multidimensional beings in continual evolution. The constitution of man and the uni-

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verse, as indicated by theosophical literature, is septenary: there are seven planes of manifestation through which the divine spirit (the Monad) descends in order to gain experiences that lead it to reunite again with the divine, completely transformed and reinvigorated with the realization of the spiritual. Like Adam and Eve, or the prodigal son, we must leave Paradise, we must abandon the Father's house and live the experiences of the world and taste the fruit of knowledge, to be able to go back to Him. Our divine essence, coming from the Monad, is covered by the veils of matter and it is necessary to gradually remove them until we reach the development of the divine nature that we potentially have.

It is clear that in our present evolutionary state we do not have vehicles to act consciously on all planes and we are primarily dominated by the vehicles of denser matter such as the physical, the emotional and the lower mental. Therefore, limiting the celebration of Christmas to the purely commercial and consumerist approach, is to limit it to the densest and most material parts, and leaving aside what it contains from the point of view of our spiritual realization.

A double birth

Our nature is both divine and human: "Jesus answered them: 'Is it not written in your Law, "I have said, you are gods"?"' (John 10:34). "Do you not know that you are God's sanctuary and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). We must awaken that divine and immortal

aspect in ourselves. That means the aspects of the higher triad: The Father, or Will; the Son, or Wisdom-Love; and the Holy Spirit, or Creative Intelligence. One of these aspects, the Son, the Wisdom-Love, manifested himself in Palestine. Christ came united with the nature of the Father to bring peace and love to men, and although he disappeared from the eyes of men, he is in intimate contact with humanity all the time, as a dynamic and always active Christ. Within us is that spark waiting to be born. The birth of Christ represents the birth of this spiritual being.

The Christos state is therefore not something that is restricted solely to Jesus. That is why he is only called the Christ after his baptism. We are all potential Christs; the Christos state is a state of initiation, of illumination of the self. When the spark of the Christ is born in man, it is called the twice-born (the anointed one, dedicated to the divine), because he had a physical and a spiritual birth. Jesus and Christ are therefore not interchangeable; Jesus is not the only Christ who has lived. Angelus Silesius, a Franciscan and German mystic of the 17th century, tells us that even if Christ is born a thousand times in Bethlehem, if he is not born in our hearts, we will remain sad. Jesus says to Nicodemus: "He who is not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God . . . you must be born again." (John 3: 5-7). In order to reach that double birth we must develop the higher qualities through the higher mind and use intuition.

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Understanding the allegory to remove the veils

To access the hidden meaning of this birth, let us examine the symbols and go beyond the literal interpretation. All the characters of Christmas represent something that is inside us.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that the angel Gabriel presents himself to Mary, a young woman who was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of King David, and announces that she will conceive a son by the grace of the Holy Spirit:

You are going to get pregnant and have a son who you will name Jesus. This child will become very important, God will make him king, and his reign will never end. . . . The Holy Spirit will draw near to you; the most high God will cover you with his power. That is why the child will live completely dedicated to God, and will be called "Son of God" (Lk. 1: 31–35).

The annunciation is a profound change that occurs within each being. It represents the interaction of the spirit, the angel Gabriel, with matter, Mary. The Virgin Mary is the vehicle through which spiritual intelligence is to be manifested. The conception is immaculate because it is not a physical birth but one of the spirit. Mary, the soul of man, the higher mind, must develop in order to be able to tread firmly the path back to the Father's house. Only when the soul is united with the life-giving force of the Holy Spirit (Creative Intelligence), can the Son be born, the Wisdom-Love that resides in each one of us. What we designate in Theosophy as

concrete mind cannot, by itself, lead the individual to realize the union with his higher nature. Joseph represents that specific mind and, therefore, can only be the putative, or apparent, father, because the Son is only born when the soul is united with the spirit: the true father is God, the divine nature.

It is clear that the intellect plays a role in the fulfilment of the individual. That is why it must be an eager intellect, as the Gospel of Matthew shows us:

While Mary was betrothed to Joseph, it was found that she had conceived of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, wanted to leave her secretly. And thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said to him: Joseph, do not be afraid to receive Mary your wife, because what is begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (1: 18–23).

Although there is a first impulse to flee because the mind also resists giving way to the gifts of the spirit, when it (Joseph) is ready to understand the need for that birth, it hears the voice of intuition (in dreams comes the angel) and gives way to the higher. An eager intellect is fit enough to turn away from the tendencies of the material world. For this reason, Joseph protects his family from Herod, who represents our lower nature, who wants to kill the child (the spiritual) because it constitutes a hindrance to give free rein to the pleasures and impulses of the senses.

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Once Jesus is born, Joseph takes his family to Egypt to stay safe from Herod. The East is known as the source of wisdom, it represents the lessons from the knowledge of the world, essential for the development of the soul. Only when the aspirant is firmly grounded not to fear Herod, can he return to Israel in peace: the lower nature no longer has power over that being.

Isis Unveiled mentions the miraculous conception and compares it to the legend of Perictione (Plato's mother) who had immaculately conceived her child. All religions drink from each other. For example, in the tradition of India there is also the twice-born (the anointed one) *āchārya*, Shankaracharya, who consolidated the Vedanta doctrine, in which it is mentioned that at the beginning of the Kali Yuga a virgin would be born who will conceive the son of God. This evidences universal symbolism and the truth that we must all prepare for the second birth, the birth of the Christ in us.

As for the birth of Jesus, it took place in difficult and very humble circumstances. The intention is to show that spiritual enlightenment is equally possible for all men regardless of their material circumstances. He is born in a manger surrounded by shepherds, sheep, and animals. In *Isis Unveiled*, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) speaks of the birth of Jesus in a cave; it is the cave of the heart where our Christic principle has to be born: the manger is the etheric cave of the heart.

In the manger, the child is the centre;

next to him are Mary, the soul that mediates between the divine and the worldly, and his father, the mind that has been subjugated by the commands of the spirit. The shepherds are the first called, they were in the field shepherding, and the angels, the energies of heaven, manifested to them to inform the birth of the son of God.

The shepherds represent those beings that are one step ahead of the mass of humanity on the path to spiritual realization, and they are delighted each time a Christ is born. They take care of the sheep, the men and women who wander through life from one place to another without yet knowing the true purpose of the walk.

The Wise Men represent the wisdom and their gifts symbolize the three forces in us that are capable of transforming everything: will, wisdom, and holiness. Let us remember that Herod asks them for information about the child but they are imprecise in order to protect him, because those qualities safeguard the true spiritual nature.

The Wise Men personify the ministers of the Solar Logos. In all religions, the East is the side from which divine gifts come to men: gold, the true spiritual wisdom whose value is unalterable; frankincense, the soft fragrance of aspiration to higher levels that burns, thanks to the will represented by fire; and myrrh, the natural aroma of holiness (Gerald Tranter, *Wisdom and Christianity*).

These are all qualities of the spiritual nature, of the soul after that second birth. Once the Wise Men offer the gifts

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to the child, they have committed themselves to the higher and so they return by a different path in order to avoid Herod: they have left the empire of the lower nature.

Victory of light over darkness

On 25 December of each year the Christian world celebrates the birth of the child Jesus. It is, as we see, a celebration of the utmost importance once it is understood from the point of view of the internal development of all human beings. Undoubtedly, it is also a historical fact of which the exact date is not known. Most likely, the date on which Christmas is celebrated does not coincide with the actual date of the birth of the historical Jesus the Christ. However, the choice of this particular date also has a meaning that is worth highlighting, since it goes back even to pre-Christian times.

On 25 December pagans celebrated the day of the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, the birthday of the Invincible Sun. The pre-Christian feast was one of rebirth, the cosmic event that enlivens Nature with its light and warmth. After a cold autumn in the northern hemisphere, winter arrives, the moment when Nature hides itself and then produces the birth of its entrails in a splendid spring (*Esoteric Christianity*). The winter solstice is the time of the year when the day begins to gain ground over the night: after experiencing the shortest day of the year, the sun begins to shine more light on the world; there is more clarity and more light.

According to *The Secret Doctrine*,

vol. 1, on 25 December the ancient Egyptians celebrated the birth of several of their most important divinities, especially Osiris (son of Seb and Neith) and later the birth of his son Horus, who is the “Christos”, symbol of the sun. In her *Collected Writings* HPB quotes the London Egyptologist Gerald Massey, who talks about the historical Jesus and the mystical Christ. What he says is that the Messiah corresponds to the Horus of the Egyptians. In addition, it shows that in the Egyptian tradition the child born is represented in what corresponds to the hieroglyph of the birth of the sun. In other cultures, this festival used to be related to the birth of solar gods (Apollo or Helios, among others). The universality of symbols is evident.

So we see that, from the mythical point of view, this legend of Christ was found thousands of years before the Christian era. It was only in 325 AD, with the Council of Nicea, when the Church decided that on 25 December the birth of Jesus would be celebrated. This is also because at the beginning of the winter solstice there is also a greater intensity of the vibratory presence of the Cosmic Christ, a fact that in Christianity has been applied to Jesus, corresponding to what has been called the Spirit of Christmas. It is an energy that comes from the centre of our star system year after year to distribute more than material things, that which human beings cannot do without: peace, love, harmony, and joy. In our life it is the symbol that Christ is reborn in us: it is an interior renewal.

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Conclusion

What is relevant on this date is not whether it is a proven historical fact or not, whether the conception was immaculate or not in physical terms. What really matters, once we unveil the hidden teachings behind this celebration, is the recognition that every human being has an inherent Christ nature that must be awakened: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)

The figure of the Christ is there to show us what is to come in terms of our spiritual journey. There are beings who are ahead of us, one of these beings is Jesus and every year we celebrate his birth. True Christianity must therefore be creative, transformative. Once we understand the hidden teachings, it is our duty to become architects of our own destiny and rebuild our lives.

We are called to be vehicles of resistance against the trivialization of the spiritual and to give Christmas the true dimension that it has; to resist the consumerism in which it has become entangled, and, instead of turning to the external, as advertising suggests, look within to begin the path of the Christ in our hearts.

It is also about living the Christmas spirit from sharing and bringing a true sense of community in which solidarity, camaraderie, and fraternal union become possible from the real celebration of love. So let us invite the true Christ who is love, compassion, service, and transformation to take part in our Christmas celebrations from now on. A merry Christmas to all and may the essence of Christ be born and quickened in the hearts of all humanity. ✧

If unity among the religions could be gained, all proselytism would cease; no man would try to convert another to his own faith, but would rather try to learn what that other might have to teach him. For we can learn from each other, Hindu from Christian, and Christian from Hindu; Zoroastrian from Buddhist, and Buddhist from Zoroastrian. Every religion is but one coloured ray of the light of God, and in the union of all the religions the true white light will be seen. As long as we separate ourselves we are coloured by a particular ray. . . .

All these religions come from one source. Their followers should live as brothers and not as enemies. Hatred is evil, in whatever religion it may be found.

Annie Besant, “Christianity”, *Seven Great Religions*

The “Earth Astronomer” and Other Works — II

JOHN O’ROURKE

THE sculpture, “Earth Astronomer” (Image 5) has a spiritual theme, and the title is in reference to an indwelling God, in other words, mysticism. In Patrick Harpur’s book, *Mercurius: The Marriage of Heaven and Earth*, he writes:

The earth’s gold is like a great shattered mirror whose every fragment reflects the sun. Thus, the Philosophers are known as Earth’s astronomers because they gaze into the unknown terrestrial regions, the infernal sulphurous depths, the abysmal mines where chemical Treasure blazes like a cold star in the blackness, waiting to be raised up into warm sunlight.¹

He is obviously not writing about coal mines and, if anything, alludes to gold mining as a means of indicating a higher purpose. His subject is alchemical transmutation. The exterior of the “Earth Astronomer” resembles the aforementioned “Miner” design and incorporates much of its exoteric symbolism, but without the semicircle of houses. The head is skull-like in reference to the loss of an industry and its often desperately poverty-ridden but close-knit com-

munities. George Orwell’s *Road to Wigan Pier*, 1937, and Emile Zola’s *Germinal*, 1885, shed a clear light on the mining industry, Orwell in Sheffield and Lancashire, England, of the 1930s and Zola in 19th century Northern France.



Image 5: “Earth Astronomer”, oak, studio shot — work in progress, 183 cm high (so far)

The sculpture in its current stage is unfinished. When complete, it will be exhibited in a group show, AiR, (Artists

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The “Earth Astronomer” and Other Works — II

in Recovery)² at The Word, England’s National Centre for the Written Word, in South Shields. The Covid-19 epidemic has made it difficult to get an exact date, because of scheduled exhibitions being postponed, but it will be late in 2022. About 15 years ago I had an idea to make a film of the interconnected interiors of one of my sculptures, without revealing any of the most important secrets — including secret chambers. The idea was to use an endoscopic camera. However, I am not great with digital technology, editing, and so on, so kept putting it off.

My friend Jed Carr is to make the film for the interiors of this work. Another good friend, Polish musician Szymon Orchowski is composing music for the film and poems by another close Polish friend Adam Siemienczyk will feature in some of the rooms. My own images and forms will also be inside these rooms, the only evidence of them being in the film. The following is from a document that I emailed to Adam, Szymon, and Jed. It provides a good idea of where the work is going and its philosophical basis:

Notes for the “Earth Astronomer”: Beginning with winding house, up to body, and then descending to the shaft. Where I have given more than one name for components (some of which I invented), they are separated by a slash.

1: Winding House/ Wheel House / Athanor: Its form alludes to a Double Pelican. The Winding House, or Wheelhouse, from an esoteric point of view, is the place with a motor that powers the turning of the wheel with the purpose of

lowering a cage down the shaft or lifting it back out again. Esoterically, it is the athanor, which generates heat for the alchemical process. It resembles a double pelican, one of the glass vessels used in alchemy’s processes, for example, as part of distillation, which symbolises a process whereby we ensure that we are no longer under the control of the ego. It is an ability to see the higher collective self, which is achieved through purification of the spirit.

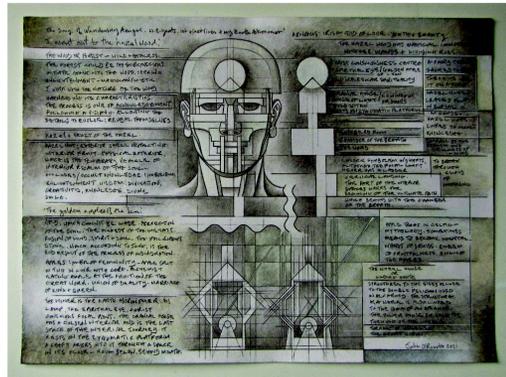


Image 6: Annotated sheet, pencil, and acrylic wash, H: 29.7 cm, W: 42 cm, 2021

2: Cranial Vault: Arched crown of head with interior space. In addition to being a generator, the mind is also a receiver. The cranial vault contains the House of Light within as well as being an integral vehicle of the Spiritual Eye.

3: Christ Consciousness Centre / The Sun: Male solar principle — lamp on forehead of miner. The Sun is a symbol of solar spirituality, which is traditionally identified as being masculine. Focus upon this centre brings forth an experience of light: “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy

body shall be full of light.” (Matthew 6:22)

4: House of Light / Cranial House:

It has a gold-leafed interior. Within the cranium, it rests on the Zygomatic Platform.

5: Hidden Room of the Breath:

Interior chamber, behind the mouth with shaft leading up to the Cranial House, Christ Consciousness Centre, and another down to the Cervical Landing.

6: Cervical Landing:

Small internal area with a shaft leading down into lower areas and another ascending to the Room of the Breath. This small chamber is visible through an off-centre space in the back of the neck.

7: Headstock:

It is the wheel as a whole and the Moon is the central hub, the 7 spokes alluding to the 7 Stages of Alchemy. The process is like a wheel turning and the stages alluded to are:

Calcination: *Practical:* Burning substance until there is nothing but ashes. *Spiritual:* The ego being broken down along with worldly ambitions / attachments.

Dissolution: *Practical:* Taking the ashes and dissolving them in water. *Spiritual:* Descent into the unconscious realm, letting go of control and finding aspects of ourselves which were hidden.

Separation: *Practical:* Filtering and separating the substances of dissolution. *Spiritual:* Retaining and integrating those aspects of our unconscious psyche that we want and discarding those which are unhealthy or harmful.

Conjunction: *Practical:* Using the aspects of the substance we choose to keep, a new substance is created. *Spiritual:* A true self emerges; a union of dualities; fusing

conscious and unconscious into one.

Fermentation: *Practical:* Add bacteria and/or other microorganisms to the substance, which breaks down the chemicals. *Spiritual:* Grapes must rot to make wine. Suffering and loss of our sense of personal identity, breaking down of the old as a prerequisite to spiritual awakening. **Distillation:** *Practical:* Boiling and condensing; enhancing purity. *Spiritual:* Ego no longer in control, purification of spirit, and ability to comprehend and appreciate beauty of the collective Self.

Coagulation: *Practical:* Boiled and condensed substance is made into a solid form. *Spiritual:* Matter and spirit are unified in the sense that we see everything as consciousness; a world without dualities.

My concise breakdown of the alchemical stages listed here in section 7 is influenced / informed by a part of the Labyrinthos website.³

8: Centralising Guiding Wheel: Aligns cable with the cage.

9: Cage, which has three floors representing Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, associated with the head; thinking, imagination and the spiritual activity of art, that is, image-making. Fred Gettings described grains of salt in the likeness of stars, like “little specks of light which have fallen to earth”. He also explained that “Alchemists visualised the lower part of man as the seat of the will, in which all the undisciplined, animalistic forces and selfish urges are gathered, burning in a sea of flame. This part of man is almost a volcano.” He goes on to say that this can erupt into the conscious realm

prompting us to do things we would not normally do, things we regret. This part of man is Dark Fire, Sulphur. Mercury is a kind of intermediary, a balancing force, reconciling the two extremes of Salt and Sulphur. Mercury is associated with the lungs; man breathing into himself the outer oxygen. Gettings says:

When the thinking process forces its way too deeply into the feeling sphere, Salt is produced, for that gives rise to human tears, which taste of salt. When the willing process bursts into the feeling sphere, we have a sort of hysterical laughter, which the ancients associated with the untamed nature god, Pan. In the perfectly balanced man the three parts of Salt, Mercury, and Sulphur work harmoniously within their own spheres.⁴

10: Stairways: Three flights leading to the cage. Spiritual ascension, as symbolised in Jacob’s dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder.

11: Shaft: Going down into the earth; subconscious realm, chaos. It represents one of the two extremes; the male Sun (consciousness) descends into earth / female Moon (unconscious) and then back; the constant turning of the wheel in alchemy. “Dissolve and coagulate” (*solve et coagula*) — the motto of alchemy.

Important: There are also many interconnected interior chambers throughout the sculpture, some already made, others to be added. They all lead up to the three spaces outlined in sections 4, 5, and 6.

Summary: Titus Burckhardt said that the many and varied symbolic texts of alchemy, with their double meanings, were there⁵ “to teach the wise and mislead the foolish”. Basically, a person motivated by a love of wealth could spend years trying to change base metals into gold and would never succeed, whereas a spiritually motivated person will recognize the mystical instructions, realizing the real transmutation as something that occurs within the alchemist’s soul. I keep returning to Burckhardt because his writings on this subject are, from my perspective, so accurate. He wrote:

The marriage of Sulphur and Quicksilver, Sun and Moon, King and Queen, is the central symbol of Alchemy. . . . The regaining of the integral nature of man (which alchemy expresses by the symbol of the masculine-feminine androgyne) is the prerequisite — or, from another point of view, the fruit — of union with God.⁶

Finally, it must be said that Carl Jung has been a very important person in terms of recognition of alchemy as a legitimate science. His interpretations of the above merging of Sun and Moon were very influential. His general hypothesis was that the processes of alchemy were the same as those in developing a fully integrated psyche — which he called “individuation”. However, he also recognized that a great deal more research was needed in this very obscure subject, which does not yield to the unaided intellect.⁷ ✧

(See next page for Endnotes)

The “Earth Astronomer” and Other Works — II

Endnotes

1. Patrick Harpur, *Mercurius: The Marriage of Heaven and Earth*, 1999, The Squeeze Press ed., 2008, p. 10.
2. Mark Anderson is founder and Director of AiR (Artists in Recovery) from addictions.
3. <labyrinthos.co> website’s “The Seven Stages of Alchemical Transformation”.
4. Fred Gettings, *Visions of the Occult*, 1987, Guild Publishing, London, pp. 63–64.
5. Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*, p. 30.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
7. C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, Routledge, 2nd ed., reprinted 2010, pp. 482–483.

I am an Alchemist of Energy.
When I laugh, I send sparkles of light
throughout the whole universe.
When I speak my truth, I cause others to connect
to their inner voice on a deeper level.
And when I cry, oh when I cry, I transform all that
pent-up lower energy into pure LOVE.

Anonymous

Speaking of Peace

ANANYA SRI RAM RAJAN

DID you know that according to <visionofhumanity.org>, violence costs the world 14 trillion US dollars annually? It is difficult to comprehend such a sum of money except to know that it is large and that it could benefit a number of poor people around the world. Such funds could create schools, build sustainable infrastructure, enhance healthcare, and provide countries with the wealth needed for disaster relief.

In reality, when looking at the world's problems with regard to violence, it is not the world that is the problem — it is the people. Among the various populations around the world, there is not one group that is the culprit, it is all of us. Violence lives in every one of us. Even Gandhi admitted that he had little patience for his illiterate wife whom it has been said he abused. Being aware that we are violent, truly aware, can create a change in us, as J. Krishnamurti states. The question is can we accept that we are violent?

Violence can be subtle. While it is defined as a force that causes or is intended to cause harm — physically, psychologically, emotionally, or verbally — it



Photo Jason Leung: <unsplash.com>

can also be passive. Often, we can be violent without even thinking that the action we do is such. A simple example is when we make a judgment about another person, or when we impose our opinion on another, or when we refuse to follow a law because it inconveniences us, such as speeding because we are late.

While many organizations state that they promote peace, the language used can sometimes be viewed as violent and judgmental. We may not interpret it as such because we have become immune to it. For example, the word “evil” is often used in peace work (and, granted, there have been and are actions by governments and

Mrs Ananya Sri Ram Rajan is a long-term member of the Theosophical Society in America and editor of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) in America publications.

Speaking of Peace

people that warrant such a word). The question arises whether there can be peace when we view something as evil. If an action is considered evil, the people doing the action are often considered evil as well. We tend to lump together the action and the people.

Peace in its true form is unifying. We cannot state that we are working to promote peace while vilifying those who vilify. Such action only creates more disharmony and a lack of understanding. When we see another as different from ourselves, unity is lost. This is true for everyone. Our judgment about the person, object, or cause interferes with our ability to view anything objectively or to even work from a place of peace and compassion.

In an interview with the late Representative John Lewis, the civil rights leader Fr John Dear asked:

As you know so well, part of the challenge of nonviolence is to respond nonviolently to personal assault, but to keep on insisting on the truth of justice and peace. Jesus epitomized this and Gandhi taught us this. How did you respond personally to these police who were beating you and all the people who threatened you during those years in the struggle? How did you respond? What was it like for you yourself to deal with this violence nonviolently?

And Rep. Lewis responded:

Well, I believe in the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. I accepted it not simply as a technique or as a tactic, but as a way of life, a way of living. You have to arrive at the point as believers in the

Christian faith that in every human being there is a spark of divinity. Every human personality is something sacred, something special. We don't have a right as another person, or as a nation, to destroy that spark of divinity, that spark of humanity, that is made and created in the image of God.

I saw Sheriff Clark in Selma, or Bull Connor in Birmingham, or George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, as victims of the system. We were not out to destroy these men. We were out to destroy a vicious and evil system. So, our attack had to be directed against customs, traditions, unjust laws — but not against these individuals. (<johndear.org>)

Rep. Lewis was a Christian who lived his faith. But his words could have easily come from a student of Theosophy, as the message is the same: “We don't have the right as another person, or as a nation, to destroy that spark of divinity.” This is one place we can start with our work in non-violence and peace. His words are similar to Annie Besant's invocation “O Hidden Life”: “May those who feel themselves as one with Thee, know they are therefore one with every other.”

As Rep. Lewis points out, non-violence is a way of living. It is a daily discipline of watching our thoughts, the words we use, the way we express ourselves, and the actions that we take. It is seeing that everyone we encounter, pleasant or not, has something to teach us about ourselves. As he says: “Every human personality is something sacred, something special.” ✧

The Spirit of Youth

BRANDON GOH

WHAT is the spirit of youth? In trying to understand it, it is helpful to examine its expression in different ages. “Zeitgeist” means the defining spirit or mood of a generation or a period of time — the prominent ideas and beliefs of the time. It is the invisible agent or force dominating the characteristics of a given epoch and this force seems to express itself differently in every age. The “spirit of youth” is what underlies zeitgeist and its varying manifestations. It is this creative force that gives birth to the respective zeitgeists, revealing different modes of awareness and expression.

One such period-specific cultural pattern in America is the free love and hippie movement of the 1960s. Other examples are modernism and post-modernism. These constitute only a few puzzle pieces of the whole picture, as they are but external and imperfect manifestations of a deeper energy, an essential force. Theosophists may also see its expression in the spiritual enlightenment at the end of every century and the impulse given to propel civilization into the next age. As Theosophists we would focus on the spiritual aspect more than the worldly side of things, but we cannot afford to ignore the latter, for it shows us where our

work lies and how to go about doing it.

When we look at the zeitgeist of the 21st century, many of us see decadence and moral degradation everywhere, perhaps far more evidently than the spiritualizing impulses. We will not explore this aspect today, but let us try to pierce through appearances. Seen in a higher light, today’s decadence is but the lower expression of the spirit of youth, and the more we can understand its higher aspect, the true force that drives, the more we will know what needs to be done to help the world transmute its lower expressions. In other words, this discord is but part of a larger harmony that we could try to perceive.

So, what is the spirit of youth? Are we touched by its grace? I think we can all agree that, as a whole, we are not fired up by the spirit of youth; otherwise our membership would have snowballed in this digital era and we would have thousands of youths in the Theosophical Society (TS); it is inevitable. When we look at the TS in its heyday, we had thousands of youths who were interested in the Ageless Wisdom, not in all sorts of peripheral or unrelated activities. A reason for this could be that Theosophy was new back then and it has since permeated many movements in its diluted

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The Spirit of Youth

form, reaching the masses indirectly. But the fact remains that the torch of youth is not aflame in the TS.

For years I have pondered, planned, and tried to find and embody this spirit, but I have not found the answer. Just like many of us, I am still seeking. And it is not an intellectual or practical answer that I seek — it is an answer of the spirit, an answer that shall fire up and transfigure our society. I have no doubt that its inner side is still very much alive, but the outer must be harmonized with the inner.

However, I am not going to leave us hanging with this unanswered question. While we are still seeking the spirit of youth, there are some things we can start doing. It is just like treading a foggy path — we cannot see ahead if we stay put, but once we start walking, the fog seems to recede and the path appears. So in which direction should we start walking if we will to revitalize the TS?

First of all, let us explore some qualities of the spirit of youth, of this creative fire, and our path ahead may become clearer. The spirit of youth is ACTIVE. Let us not gloss over this word and the living spirit it represents. We may think: Well, are we not active? That is a valid question, as we are active in so many areas. But in our activities, are we doing the same thing over and over without change or innovation? Are we doing things with the same old spirit, the same attitude, reactions and methods? That is passivity, the force of inertia running in its old grooves, masquerading as an active driving force.

Let us ponder on this: In our activities

and methods, are we only changing due to necessity, because the tide of change has swelled so high that we have no choice but to change our ways? That is not an active spirit. It is a passive one, born of conditioning and the old order, even as we try to engage people on Zoom during the pandemic, for instance. What if we had done that earlier? What else can we do now, which is lacking in our Zoom programmes? Can we avail ourselves of other affordances of technology? Can our lectures spur people to think for themselves and lead them to truth rather than simply telling them what the Ageless Wisdom is all about?

There must be many and varied ways to present even the same truths, which make the Ageless Wisdom shine like the resplendent diamond that it truly is, such as thought experiments, riddles, quizzes, puzzles, drawings, games, role play, hands-on and meditative exercises, all these could be facilitated by multimedia and the pedagogical tools and platforms teachers are using in the modern classroom. Of course, the old format still has its place, but should we not innovate? In fact, we need not innovate, because pedagogy and educational methods in many countries have already gone far ahead, and we only need to imitate, unfortunately for us, since Theosophy is supposed to spur us to be on the leading edge, if not in science then at least in presenting the timeless truths of life.

Due to paucity of time, I shall not elaborate on other qualities of this spirit of youth, but simply list them. It is a trinity of Activeness, Enthusiasm, and

The Spirit of Youth

Creativity. You will notice that these qualities in which the spirit of youth expresses itself can be seen in every new generation, in every new age — it is the life that spurs change and growth. Without it, civilization would stagnate.

Here are three qualities of the zeitgeist of the 21st century:

1. Spirit of universality — the idea of one world, internationalism, global outlook and cooperation.
2. Group consciousness and endeavour — group work, group spirit and group objectives in the service of humanity will assume greater importance.
3. Synthesis and union — the harmonization and integration of different departments of life and the tendency toward union and fusion. The latter has led to extremes in the field of sexuality and an inclination to sexual expression in many directions. As mentioned earlier, this is the lower expression and also the reason why the whole idea of sex is currently so absorbing to people. One thing is for sure — we cannot pave the way for transmutation with the strictures of old.

So far we have been thinking in terms of qualities. Let us imagine that the TS is transformed by the spirit of youth. What are some possible changes we might see? I am only suggesting some possibilities:

1. A revolution in our activities. Lectures will still be our staple means of engagement, of course, but there will be much more engagement than a one-way sharing. I do not mean just discussion, but new ways of engagement, which might go much further than even using tools like

Mentimeter and Padlet. Are we using multimedia? Just look at modern churches and you will see how even music alone drives not just emotions but the most sublime thoughts and sentiments. Our workshops may involve two-way learning in various ways, perhaps even through games. We have no idea how much can be experientially learnt using a well-designed card game based on particular themes in the Ageless Wisdom. Also, we seem to be unaware of how new technological tools and platforms have equipped us with the means for lasting impact that sits well with digital natives.

2. A revolution in the way we study the Ageless Wisdom together. It hands the responsibility of truth-seeking and meaning-making back to the participants, engaging all members in the pursuit of truth. In all these possible changes common sense must take precedence and we must strike a balance. We cannot possibly ask new students to interpret Theosophy as they will. The new ways we study the Ageless Wisdom necessarily dovetails with the use of technological tools, and not technology per se, as new things can in fact be used in old ways which lull and dull the human spirit. It is this staleness and deadness that keeps us back or attracts those in whom there is very little of that self-regenerating life.

3. More group work, meditation, and service. One thing we can readily see about this age is the growth and advancement of all kinds of group activity and activism. Group awareness and consciousness has been forming in various directions and this can be seen in the sheer number of groups and organizations that have sprung

The Spirit of Youth

up over the past few decades. Just count how many WhatsApp groups you have — technology has enabled us to form and join an unlimited number of groups, or rather, we could say that it is our growing group consciousness that has spurred technology to provide us with ever-greater means for interconnection and communication.

While we may feel that we now have too much to keep up with, it is evident that we are moving towards a deeper social awareness and group consciousness that should be even clearer in the arena of spirituality in which the TS should be spearheading change. Group service, both spiritual and physical, is yet another manifestation of this zeitgeist. For instance, group worship has been taken to unprecedented heights by modern churches because they touch the human heart in ways other religions or methods do not, notwithstanding the ramifications. Intergroup cooperation is another discernible phenomenon. What does it all mean to us? Developments in spiritual movements and religions demonstrate that today's youth find the divine through the will to act more than the will to know.

Theosophical literature provides many hints on the direction that humanity is progressing, and one of them is that an increasing number of people are aware of and working with another kingdom of Nature — the angelic hosts. Such is the spirit of the new age — humanity is knit closer not only within itself, but also with other evolutionary streams.

These are just my musings, and I am sure many of us have brilliant ideas which

may differ radically from mine. But therein lies the beauty of Theosophy, of our Society, for there is unity in mutually-enhancing diversity.

There must be many and varied possibilities. But in implementing these ideas, it seems as though we are constantly coming back to square one. The current means of engagement are most suitable for our present demographic, yet may not attract people with the spirit of youth aflame in them. We need such people to propel fresh ways of doing things and we simply do not have enough of them in our Lodges to spark a transformation. To have more youths and the young at heart, we first need enough youths and the young at heart. What a conundrum!

Let us pause and think about it. If we do not have youths, then we need more members who are young at heart. So what should we do? The answer seems to be to raise ourselves into that divine consciousness from which the spirit of youth springs. When the tipping point is reached, when enough of us allow the spirit of youth to dwell in our hearts, then the purpose of the TS shall be fulfilled. I believe that Theosophy is as fascinating to the young as it is to the seniors. Thus I conclude with this quote from *Light of the Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*:

The real answer is to make all the presentations of Theosophy so interesting and convincing that no one really wants anything else.

May we all open our hearts to the spirit of youth! ❖

146TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Theme: *Living in the Now: Challenges of the Inner Life*

27–30 December 2021



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Life is undivided and fully present everywhere. Yet our experience is fragmented — joyful/sad, here/there, before/after, outer/inner. Is there a line separating these opposing twins? Whether we come to it through self-devised efforts, or through crises which strip away all that is unnecessary, there is a

balancing still point in the timeless, ever-present moment of Now.

Tim Boyd

The convention will be **ONLINE** via Zoom. Register early at
<tsconvention.com/register>

UTC/GMT refers to Universal/Greenwich time

CONVENTION PROGRAMME

Day 1 — Monday, 27 December

UTC/GMT

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| 4.00 | OPENING OF THE CONVENTION |
| 5.15 | PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
Tim Boyd, <i>International President, TS Adyar</i> |
| 8.00 | YOUTH FORUM, <i>Indo-Pacific</i>
“What are our challenges?” |
| 10.00 | MEDITATION
Arni Narendran, <i>India</i> |
| 11.00 | INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION I
“Look Beyond Yourself”
Inaugural Address, Tim Boyd, <i>International President, TS Adyar</i>
“State of the Indian Section” Address
Pradeep H. Gohil, <i>President, Indian Section</i> |

Convention Programme

Day 2 — Tuesday, 28 December

UTC/GMT

- 5.00 LECTURES, MEDITATION, AND VIDEO ON CHINA PROJECT (Indo-Pacific)
“Searching for Harmony”, Richard Sell, *New Zealand*
Meditation by Kristin Lim, *Singapore*
“Love And Unity in a time of Individualism?”
Simon O’Rourke, *Australia*
Video: “Promoting Theosophy in China”
- 9.00 TALKS (Europe and Africa)
Moderator: Gary Kidgell, *Scotland*
“Moving with the Timeless”
Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, *France*,
Chairperson of the European Federation of the TS
“Replace the Fleeting with the Everlasting”
Erica Georgiades, *Greece*, *Director of the School of the Wisdom*, *Adyar*
“Perseverance”, Talk in French, Paul Martin Lukusa, *DR Congo*
- 10.10 THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE (Europe and Africa)
- 10.40 INTERVIEW (Europe and Africa)
“Challenge of the Inner Life”
Jenny Baker, *England*, interviewed by Els Rijncker, *the Netherlands*
- 11.00 PANEL DISCUSSION (Europe and Africa)
“Living in the Now: Challenges of the Inner Life”
Moderator: Angels Torra-Burón, *Spain*
Marie Harkness, *Ireland*; Manuela Kaulich, *Germany*; and
Jón Ellert Benediktsson, *Iceland*
- 14.00 YOUTH FORUM (Europe and Africa)
“Living in the Now”
- 17.00 LECTURE (the Americas)
“Seek Out the Way: Experiential Reflections on the Inner Life”
Juliana Cesano, *USA*
- 18.00 SHORT LECTURES IN SPANISH (the Americas)
“H. P. Blavatsky sobre las Escalas de la Conciencia”, Pablo Sender, *USA*
“Que esta reencarnación valga la pena”, Ariel Tarazaga, *Argentina*
- 19.00 MEDITATION IN ENGLISH (the Americas)
Maryse de Coste, *Canada*

Convention Programme

- 23.00 THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE INTERVIEW
“What does it mean to be human?”
Interview of David Lorimer, *Program Director, Scientific and Medical Network*
by Ravi Ravindra, *Prof. Emeritus, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada*

Day — 3 Wednesday, 29 December

UTC/GMT

- 2.00 TALKS, DANCE, THEOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS (Indo-Pacific)
Dance interpretation of Mahakali Manglacharan, Suhani Mohapatra, *India*
“The Voice of Peace: Women and the Arduous Times”, Rashmi Misra, *India*
“Finding Courage in Unlocking Inner Doors”
Michelle Simtoco, *the Philippines*
“TV, Social Media, and Drama in Relationships: Modern Day Impediments
to a Rich Inner Life”, Renuka Balasubramaniam, *Malaysia*
“The Pilgrimage Home”, Renee Sell, *New Zealand*
Presentation: Theosophical Schools (*ATA and GLS*)
Dance interpretation of John Lennon’s “Imagine”, Suhani Mohapatra, *India*
- 9.00 BESANT LECTURE
Mr Antonio A. Oposa,
President, The Law of Nature Foundation, the Philippines
- 16.00 SYMPOSIUM (Europe and Africa)
Moderator: Adrienne Nagyiday, *Hungary*; “Happiness through Mastering
our Mind”, Svyatoslav Lipsky, *Russia*; “The Power of Thought”,
Nathan Chola, *Zambia*; “In Search of the Truth”, Irena Primc, *Slovenia*
Videos of headquarters in Europe-Africa
- 16.45 MEDITATION (Europe and Africa)
Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, *France*
- 17.10 PANEL DISCUSSION (Europe and Africa)
Moderator: Sabine van Osta, *Belgium*
Vipinchandra Shah, *Kenya*; Patrizia M. Calvi, *Italy*;
Maria Joao Figueira, *Portugal*; Diana van Vloten, *Spain*
- 18.00 INTERVIEW ABOUT A THEOSOPHICAL BOOK (Europe and Africa)
Sabine van Osta, *Belgium* speaks with Antonio Girardi, *Italy*
- 19.00 YOUTH FORUM (the Americas)
“Embracing the Inner Life”

Convention Programme

- 23.00 LECTURE IN ENGLISH (the Americas)
“Theosophical Resilience and the Mind of a Master”, Kurt Leland, *USA*
- 23.50 SHORT LECTURES IN SPANISH (the Americas)
“El hombre celestial”, Teresa Ayala, *Mexico*
“Madame Blavatsky: La fervorosa Madre Maestra de la Teosofia”
Eneida Carbonell, *USA*

Day 4 — Thursday, 30 December

UTC/GMT

- 00.50 THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE (The Americas)
- 3.00 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
Moderator: Manuela Kaulich, *General Secretary, German Section*
Tim Boyd, *international President of the TS*
Deepa Padhi, *international Vice-President of the TS*
Charlton “Chally” J. Romero, *General Secretary, TS in the Philippines*
- 4.30 ADYAR ARCHIVES — ONE HUNDRED PRECIOUS YEARS
Surendra Naryan Archives celebrates its centenary in 2022.
- 8.00 INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION II
“Look Beyond Yourself”
Moderator: Brother Narendra M. Shah, *Kenya, President of the East and Central Africa Section of the TS*
“The Fruit of Love is Service”, Aditi Maitreya
“Mankind is One”, Ajeesh Kumar
“Selflessness and Divine Life”, Arunima Baruah
“Look Beyond Yourself and the First Object of the Theosophical Society”,
Shreeyashi Ojha
“Centre Everywhere, Circumference Nowhere”, Vibha Saksena
- 11.30 THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE (International)
“The Inner Side of Service”
Sofia Gimenez, *Argentina*; George Wester, *Australia*;
Nancy Secrest, *Adyar, TOS International Secretary*
- 14.00 PUBLIC LECTURE
“A Life within a Life”
Tim Boyd, *international President, TS Adyar*
- 15.30 CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION

Theosophical Work around the World

Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA) Annual Report (1.10.20 to 31.9.21)

ATA's third academic year was one of upgrading techniques. It continued online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and ushered in its third year on 24 June with 130 students from Nursery to Grade 4. This was celebrated online with the international President of the Theosophical Society (TS), Tim Boyd, as the chief guest. Nearly a year into the new virtual platform of teaching, it has now grown familiar to students and educators alike.

At the crux of the ATA student/teacher interaction is transformative learning. A typical day begins with "circle time" when children bring to the table whatever they would like to share and build on organic conversations. Arts and crafts in myriad grade-appropriate forms continue to be explored, be it form drawing or mandala art. Over this last one year the school has successfully helped link children with Nature and its wonders from the comfort of their home through the regular practice of Nature journaling. Language acquisition in Tamil and Hindi over the online platform has been growing steadily, thanks to allied tools such as games, stories, and music. Students' tryst with theatre culminated in a fantastic play, while instilling in them a working experience of good communication, coordination, and uniting for a cause.

Nurturing an atmosphere conducive to questions is at the heart of ATA's

approach to education, launching the Science Hub. Students actively engaged in experimenting, designing, and querying. Regular storytelling helps them understand the wider world around them. Conversations on nutrition and practical sessions of fireless-cooking empowered them to take initiative with their health. The virtual platform could not restrict the gusto with which students and educators came together for festivities.

October started with a long line of festivals and celebrations that go well into January. The year closed with students singing Christmas carols with much fervour and creating a corner with relevant arts and crafts. "Poetry — The Song of the Heart" had students creating poems and setting them to tune. "Science Day" featured their observation of experiments of their choice. The year ended with a "Self-Transformation" workshop by Vic Hao Chin, Jr., from the Phillipines.

Inter-American Federation

On 30.10.21 the Inter-American Theosophical Federation elected a new President, Dr Enrique Reig, Mexico, who succeeded Mrs Isis M. B. Resende, Brazil.

Bangladesh

Mr Subrata Chowdhury, from Dhaka, was appointed Presidential Representative in Bangladesh, in the place of Mr Birendra L. Bhattacharyya, from India, for the purposes of conducting the business and administration of the TS in that country, effective 1.11.21. ✧

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