

The Path of Wisdom

RADHA BURNIER

THE International Centre of Theosophical Studies was formerly known by the simple name 'School of the Wisdom', which suggests what is the real purpose of such a Centre. It is to gather together for study, enquiry and discussion people who are seriously interested in finding wisdom. The Theosophical Society is an open Society and one finds people with varied ideals, occasionally and unfortunately sometimes people with no ideals, becoming members of the Society. But within the Theosophical Society there are those who are concerned with how human beings should live. They want to find out the real destiny of man and the meaning of life, man being part of the universal life. What is knowledge and what is truth? These are all questions which are of importance to a thoughtful person, to every serious student within the Society. And this Centre is intended to provide opportunities for small gatherings of those who are seriously trying to understand and resolve these questions which are of basic importance. To discover the answers to these questions is, of course, to find wisdom.

It is not necessary to meet together in

order to obtain knowledge. It may be useful for young people and children to go to a school in order to obtain knowledge, because their minds are still untrained. They may be undisciplined little creatures and they have to learn to give attention, to quieten themselves and so on. But for older people, especially for those who have received education, or who have educated themselves, it is unnecessary to go to classes in order to find knowledge. Anyone with a reasonable amount of intelligence can study by himself and obtain knowledge.

It is much more difficult to tread the path of wisdom and we need help from many sources in order to gain wisdom. We need the aid of silence as well as of discussions. We need the aid of Nature as well as of man. We need the aid of books, up to a point, and the words of those who have already found wisdom, the Wise Ones.

Aid can be obtained in many different ways, and it is very important, as our late Brother Dr Taimni frequently pointed out, that an aid on the way to wisdom should not be mistaken for the aim itself. Very often the means become more important and the end is ignored. The books we

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study may be helpful, but studying books is not an end in itself. Similarly, the discussions which take place here and the classes which are held, the ideas which are propounded by others, are all forms of stimulation for each student to undertake that kind of enquiry, that way of life which will bring him wisdom and make the light which is within him reveal itself. We should not forget that these classes are not meant to be prosaic in the sense of providing mere information. Every student has to exert himself to reveal from within what he really knows in his innermost being.

The path of wisdom has been very clearly indicated in those well-known Upanishadic words with which Theosophists are familiar, because they have been printed in *At the Feet of the Master*: 'Lead me from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality.' We shall not discuss just now what is meant by the words, 'Lead me'. Who is to lead? That would be a subject in itself. But the sentences indicate the direction which has to be followed in the progress towards wisdom.

Everyone who is seeking wisdom has to use his discernment assiduously, not casually, to find out what is real and what is unreal. This is something which has been reiterated for ages, but it is nonetheless profoundly valid and we can never afford to be forgetful of it. People place so much importance on the incidents which happen in life. There are countless incidents and situations within the life of every single individual. There are

innumerable happenings, ups and downs, with the pleasures, unhappiness and fears which arise from the way in which the individual meets the trials, the conditions and the environment in which he lives. And one tends to give great importance to each little incident which arises, and there is a reaction either of pleasure or of disappointment, of hope or of fear, of irritation or of a sense of repose. But possibly none of these incidents is of importance. We do not examine the question whether all that agitates us and impels us in daily life, the situations which arise out of our relationships with fellow human beings, with nature, with animals, with the society in which we live, whether all these incidents have a significance in themselves, or whether they exist in order to awaken in us an awareness, a perception of what is Truth; in other words, whether they exist so that wisdom can blossom from within. Perhaps the incidents have no importance in themselves, they have importance only in awakening wisdom, only in teaching us how to meet what happens in daily life.

We place very great importance on this physical existence with all that is implied in that, but to find wisdom one has to question every preconception and, as we said, not merely occasionally, but consistently, diligently, assiduously, so that finding out what is real and unreal becomes our very life. Unless the student gives his heart to the question of finding wisdom, it will not come. One cannot ask for wisdom in casual terms and hope that it will give us of its beneficence. One

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has really to sacrifice all else, live a life of renunciation in order to receive wisdom.

So it requires a certain type of life to be a student of the wisdom. What we study, the lectures we hear, the discussions we have, are of little value if they do not help us to move on continually from the unreal to the real. The unreal, as has often been pointed out, is of a temporal nature. Whatever is temporal is only relatively real. The Buddha said that one of the great truths that every human being has to understand is the truth of impermanence. The mind of man attaches itself to that which is impermanent, it values the security which appears to come from things of impermanence. A state of ignorance alone can in fact make a person think that what is fleeting can give security. If we use our intellect, we see clearly that a person who clings to what is temporal is like a person who is drowning in the sea and trying to save himself by holding on to a straw floating upon the water. Yet we all do it, because we do not give our minds and hearts to the task of examining how we live and what values we consider to be worthwhile.

In ordinary experience we can notice that what is purely transitory does not give a sense of fulfilment or of completion. If an individual experiences only momentary happiness, he would agree that it is rather unreal and that a happiness which can endure is more true and real. But we forget that the fleeting is unreal when that temporal thing has become somewhat stretched, perhaps through the length of one's physical incarnation. Out of

attachment to the temporal comes the materialistic attitude. We may claim to be theosophical; there are others who claim to be religious or philosophical. But, mixed with longings for something more elevated, there is always materialism, the materialism which does not want to let go of what is of little value because it is of passing importance.

In what is material itself, there is nothing wrong. It is in the value we attach to the material and to the temporal that the blindness lies. Matter is part of the one existence. The wind is not different from its movement. The movement of the wind is the wind, and the appearances in the world of matter are part of a greater existence. Out of that outer appearance there do not arise our sorrow, our problems, our tensions, our ill will, or the lack of peace which we create for ourselves. It is our attitude to what exists that generates problems. It is our unwisdom, our ignorance which makes humanity live so chaotically. Through learning what is unreal and rejecting it in daily life, and seeing that clinging to temporal things is the cause of the misery of individual man as well as of humanity, there comes wisdom. Theosophy gives a grand outline of universal processes. It conveys some idea of the constitution of man. We study all that only in order to understand how one should live; what is one's destiny; what is the relationship of the individual to the whole.

The other sentence which we mentioned, 'From Darkness lead me to Light', is also of profound import. The mind has been described in theosophical

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as well as other literature as the slayer of the real. It is blind in its perception because it does not penetrate into the core, into the essence, it does not have insight, because of its selfishness. The selfishness of man creates immense gloom for him. Only as we find out for ourselves what is the fallacy out of which selfishness arises can we move from darkness to light. The teaching of the Buddha pointed not only to the need to find out the truth about impermanency, but also the truth about the notion of the self. In the *Yoga-sutra-s* also, *avidyā* and *asmitā* are both mentioned as obstacles to realization.

What is the nature of I-consciousness? What is death and what is the nature of immortality? Death has been defined as the perception of diversity. Where there is a sense of separateness, of manyness, and the ignoring of oneness, there is death. These questions cannot be examined in a brief time. But it is important that we should not dissipate energy in the consideration of non-essentials. The way in which we consider questions should bring us nearer to the wisdom, and not leave us satisfied

with mere knowledge and information. The more we study and discuss, the more energy it should evoke for finding out that which is deeper, of more profound value. If these sessions have that quality, they will be of great benefit not only to the Theosophical Society as a whole, but perhaps even to a wider extent. The Society itself would be a wonderful body if it consisted of seekers for the Truth, not people with superficial aims. And Truth includes within itself everything else which is of eternal value: goodness, beauty, profound peace and so on. All that is of the nature of goodness is in Truth. If we are real seekers for the Truth, then everything else will come of its own. There is the beautiful saying in the Bible, 'Seek ye the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.' If you seek the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Truth, then all else will be added unto you. If there is an arduous yearning, which in the East has been called *mumukshutva*, a fiery aspiration for that which is immortal and not that which is mortal, it brings all the gifts that are worth having. ✧

Strive, towards the Light, all of you brave warriors for the Truth, but do not let selfishness penetrate into your ranks, for it is unselfishness alone that throws open all the doors and windows of the inner Tabernacle and leaves them unshut.

KH

The Vision

GEOFFREY A. FARTHING

IN 1875 the Theosophical Society was born. This was a time when gross materialism, particularly in the West, religious ignorance and superstition were rife. There was some interest in spiritualism which many people were seeing as evidence of survival after death.

We have a statement from members of an Eastern Occult Hierarchy indicating that the time might be ripe for the dissemination of some of their knowledge of the inner worlds and the idea of universal brotherhood. Two Brothers of the Hierarchy became responsible for making the attempt. They sought out a suitable person to help them and eventually found H. P. Blavatsky. In spite of some personal deficiencies she was the only one suitable and available at the time. She was to be their amanuensis in giving their message to the world through the vast literature she produced during the remainder of her life. Its teachings were based on their knowledge of the occult sciences.

After the founding of the Theosophical Society and after HPB and Col. Olcott had gone to India and established the Headquarters in Adyar, the two Masters started a correspondence with A. P.

Sinnett, a journalist in India, by miraculously precipitated letters containing a wealth of teaching. In these letters they repeatedly stated that the whole purpose of the newly formed Society was to form a universal brotherhood of humanity. An oft quoted passage, among many others, from those letters reads as follows:

The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity', a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds. . . . (*ML*, chron. ed., p. 39)

The objects of the Society were first to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood. This was a significant statement. The Masters obviously saw that the setting up of a worldwide brotherhood under the conditions then ruling was perhaps not possible but it was perfectly feasible to create a Society of well-meaning persons who would get together and form a nucleus of such a brotherhood. Two other objects were, briefly, to encourage study of comparative religion, philosophy and science, and to investigate the powers latent in man.

Mr Geoffrey A. Farthing was a member of the English Section and the author of several books.

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Further, in the letters there is reference to the fact that the Brotherhood of which the two Masters who founded the Society were members was already operating with ramifications worldwide. The members of that Brotherhood were Adept Initiates, with remarkable knowledge and powers, which however, for the safety of humanity at large, they kept to themselves. Such knowledge and powers could only be acquired by much effort and sacrifice over many lives.

There was no reason, however, why the idea of a Universal Brotherhood should not be widely promulgated to engender feelings of friendliness and cooperation between peoples in place of all too common competition and strife.

In the now famous Mahachohan's 'letter' (1881), the report of an interview conveyed through KH to Sinnett, there is a statement on the deplorable state of the world in the eyes of the Mahachohan and his suggestions for its remedy. This message and passages from other letters indicate that the Masters KH and M. understood very well the position and its cause: material selfishness and self-interest. They also saw the segregating effects of denominational, sectarian religion which divided humanity so disastrously into antagonistic groups, each believing in its exclusive and bigoted way that it was specially under divine patronage. The Masters saw clearly that there could be no possibility of a harmonious relationship between peoples as long as these religious differences remained. They referred to them as

superstitious beliefs in false gods, which beliefs had to be destroyed.

The Masters' analysis of the state of the world applies equally today. It is even more materialistic than it was at the end of the nineteenth century. Religious strife and dissension have reached disastrous proportions, some individuals even being prepared to sacrifice their lives, in the name of God, to kill people of a different faith. Religious riots and even wars are all too common symptoms of the times.

The Masters not only created the Theosophical Society to be a nucleus of the brotherhood of man, but propounded a non-sectarian religio-philosophical teaching to replace current superstitious dogmas and ideas. They gave out and published through HPB the loftiest possible spiritual ideas, ideals and guidelines for training. Their teaching embraces all that has gone before and much else. Moreover, they were at great pains to ensure that all this was preserved in writing. HPB's massive work during her lifetime involved recording these teachings in book form, demanding enormous labour and sacrifice on her part. She persevered in this work, latterly through serious illness, right up to her death.

These writings comprise many volumes, amongst them the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled*. These, according to Col. Olcott, were the result of assistance given to HPB directly by several Masters, even to the extent at times of their taking over HPB's body. *Isis Unveiled* was the first general exposition of the mass of subject matter later to be elaborated in articles and

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books. *Isis* was published in 1878. At that time the book would have been a means of liberating its readers from entrenched ideas then common in conventional thinking. It also provided a glimpse into the inner invisible realms behind objective existence and their significance.

Slowly, in a mass of other writings HPB began more definitely to expound her message. This process culminated in the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*, followed soon afterwards by *The Key to Theosophy*. Then came *The Voice of the Silence*, of inestimable value to the mystically minded student.

These works were supplemented by notes taken of the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge in London where HPB gave many verbal explanations on difficulties members were experiencing in understanding some of the more abstruse ideas of Theosophy. Finally, she formed an Inner Group of six men and six women, all sworn to secrecy, to whom she gave much teaching that at that time could not be made public, but which marvellously supplemented what she had previously given in *The Secret Doctrine*.

The purpose of all this dissemination of ideas, some of it strange and of a difficult nature, was to indicate that the Cosmos or Nature worked according to Universal Law. It itself is comprised of life operating at various levels and in various modes, to each of which there are corresponding states of consciousness. Man reflects in himself the whole nature of the Cosmos in a living way, each life form being at a stage on the vast

evolutionary journey. The teaching makes it clear that in certain circumstances, with the right effort and training, man can come to know his divine nature for himself, and beyond that there is nothing else to know. In effect he is his own God, the only God he can ever know. This great concept was further amplified by what might be called the doctrine of Unity, extensive, all-embracing, of great depth and insight. When its full meaning is apprehended, it becomes a perfect justification for the great idea that man is his own and only Deity.

All the rest of HPB's vast literature is a justification in terms of detailed explanations of widely diverse aspects of Nature's working, for example, that of universal Law, all of which culminates in these lofty, even sacred ideas which really epitomize the grand message of the Masters.

Such was the vision of the real founders of the Theosophical Society. It is a vision of Universal Brotherhood and all that that means to an 'orphan' humanity, as the Masters called it. It is also a vision of one of the principal means by which that Brotherhood can be attained, the establishment of religion based on the Truths of Nature, the real facts of existence, a true knowledge of Deity rather than belief systems based on superstition imposed by salaried priests promoting the ideas of their several institutions.

The vision was, however, of even more significance as a historical event. There have been a number of world teachers such as the Buddha, Kṛṣhna, Jesus

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and Muhammad. All these teachers have given the world a religious message suitable for their time and circumstances. However, they themselves never wrote down their message. The teachings were conveyed to posterity by their disciples and followers who recorded the teachings as they understood and remembered them. It is known that these teachers had an inner group of students to whom they gave some 'occult' instruction to justify or amplify their public pronouncements. Their occult teaching was never made public but it is known from what HPB had to say that such a teaching constituted a common thread running through them all. She gave as an example Subba Row, who was an initiated Brahmin but who could not make some aspects of his knowledge public.

Nevertheless, these teachers were the founders of great religions. If the Theosophical teachings are to be believed, they were all members of a Hierarchy, very much involved behind the scenes in the overall 'government' of the affairs of humanity. The significant point is that these founders themselves never wrote anything.

With the advent of Theosophy it was different. Members of the Hierarchy went to great pains to ensure that their message was put into writing. The booklet called *A Trilogy* gives some of the history of the writing of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. It indicates the extent to which the Masters involved themselves in the writing of those two books and how, in the case of *The Secret Doctrine*, they had

to keep HPB alive for a few more years in order that she might complete the work. This was the first time in recorded history that the hierarchical message had been directly committed to writing.

Now it is the great responsibility of the membership of the TS 'to let it be known that such a thing as Theosophy exists and to help men to ascend towards it by studying its Eternal Verities'. That commitment is in *The Key to Theosophy*. Further, we have in the letters from the Masters themselves, published by Jinarājadāsa, the statement by the Mahachohan himself (i.e. the Master of our Masters) that 'the Theosophical Society was chosen as the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity', and this was supplemented by the statement: 'for our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to popularize a knowledge of Theosophy'; further, they said, 'it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually, enforcing its theories, unimpeachable facts for those who know, with direct inferences deduced from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern exact science'.

Then there is the 1900 letter generally accepted as genuine from the Master KH to Annie Besant wherein the Master concludes: 'the TS was meant to be the cornerstone of the future religions of humanity. . . .To accomplish this object those who lead must leave aside their weak predilections for the forms and ceremonies of any particular creed and

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show themselves to be true theosophists both in inner thought and outward observance’.

For accuracy it must be remembered that the so-called Mahachohan’s letter was a report by KH of an interview with the Mahachohan in 1881. It is said of the Mahachohan that to his insight ‘the future lies like an open page’.

Ought we not therefore to take note of what these Masters say? They did not appear in the world to deliver their message in person but *we do have their message* in writing. It is not subject to the vagaries of translation or interpretation or personal opinion as were all the other

‘scriptures’ written by followers, disciples and others, after the Master’s death.

The intention was that the TS should disseminate this knowledge. It is our responsibility as members to do so. Further, as it was intended that the TS should be the foundation of the future religions of humanity, should we not regard that trust seriously and as far as we can, faithfully endeavour to fulfil it? As a body heir to these great teachings the Theosophical Society becomes the means of disseminating their message throughout the world. It is also significant that the message was given in the most common Western language. ✧

**When we let the soul speak we put true colour into our life.
When we let the soul speak we change direction — to the soul’s direction.
When we let the soul speak we live with purpose — the soul’s purpose.
When we let the soul speak, we start to really live.
The soul already knows that which the
mind is desperately seeking to understand.
The soul already knows that which we
have not remembered in this lifetime.
The soul already knows, and can, if allowed, remind us.
Let the soul speak.**

H. P. Blavatsky

A Woman Who Changed the World of Women

ELINA JUUSOLA-HALONEN

The Spirit has no race, no nationality, no religion. It is outside all identifications. He [or she] who is spiritual feels free to look at things from any point of view and is committed to nothing partial or exclusive.

N. Sri Ram¹

A few years ago in America a book was published called *365 Women who Made a Difference*, but no matter how hard one looks for it, one name remains absent: that of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. This is the case also if one looks into the modern feminist movement, researching its roots in the suffragette movement of the late nineteenth century. The same pattern continues in other academic disciplines within the general system, Helena Blavatsky being considered too 'unscientific' to discuss within the mainstream of the academy. An occasional theosophist will mention her as if trying to prepare the ground but generally she is taboo, along with all the other 'spiritual stuff' not considered scientific enough for discussion. Yet she

remains a worthy subject of study in any context of the transformation of modern consciousness within a scientific discipline. She contributed to the changes of our world more than most of the mainstream scientists or investigative reporters care to admit.

What is required of one who is to change the world? According to the theosophical and psychological view, a change of consciousness is required. Consciousness is linked to our thoughts and the words we use. In turn thoughts, words and deeds change our consciousness and the world within and without. The underlying aim of the Theosophical movement is to bring about a transformation within the human psyche, both male and female aspects. If this is so, then it is logical to assume that evidence of what is needed to fulfil this aim should be found in the books and other writings of Helena Blavatsky. It can also be quite logically concluded that she herself should be a worthy subject of study as a woman in a world created by men. Moreover, the study of Blavatsky should provide helpful

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material with which to reflect on the structure and the philosophy of the Theosophical Society when compared to any religious or other organization where both men and women are permitted to enter.

A review of the modern feminist research that has been conducted since the 1960's reveals ample evidence that, as far as consciousness is concerned, and within the human psyche as a whole, males and females are as far apart as can be imagined. A glance into Jungian and other schools of psychology and linguistics shows a large number of female theorists, 'spiritually free' enough to separate the male and the female consciousness and study them as separate disciplines in order to gain an understanding of the whole. Since the theorizing of the different stages of female consciousness, as distinct from the different stages of male consciousness, is now in the arena of scientific academic discussion, we can assume that somewhere the seeds were sown for the flowering of the freedom to explore consciousness in this way. Since we cannot find the catalyst for this development in Jung himself (he being too young) or Freud or some famous female historical theorists, we must assume that the source is somewhere else. In this article it is argued that a source can be found in Helena Blavatsky: that it is she who made possible the transformation of the female consciousness, along with the transformation of the male consciousness, thus acting as a catalyst for the transformation of the human consciousness. It is also

argued here that, after one hundred and twenty-five years of the Theosophical movement's existence, we can find some patterns in this transformation if we look for them. Furthermore, it is argued that the teachers who taught Blavatsky did not reveal the real, deep significance of the gender of the 'most psychic body in two centuries' (*The Mahatma Letters*) as a means of bringing forth the transformation of the human consciousness as a whole. As Adepts they may have done so, but as males they were the products of their own conditioning.

How did Helena Blavatsky sow the seeds which grew into this transformation? First we must look into the life of Helena Blavatsky as a representative of her own sex while also being a catalyst in the transformation process. What was her female heritage? Sylvia Cranston in her book *The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky* traces the females in Helena's upbringing. Her grandmother, Helena Pavlovna (Elena Fadeeva, 1784–1860),² was a Russian princess, but more importantly a botanist and archeologist. As a scientist and scholar she is still considered 'a name' in the Russian scientific world. Helena's mother, Helena Andreyevna von Hahn, (1814–42), was a writer. In Russia, she was considered a champion of women's rights and of the poor. She was compared to George Sand, a contemporary French women's rights activist. Her sister, Vera Petrovna (Vera Zhelikhovskaya, 1835–96), also a writer, has been compared to Alcott as an author of children's literature.

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She translated much of Blavatsky's works into Russian. The mother and grandmother were responsible for Helena's schooling and were very concerned to ensure that both Helena and her sister received education.

Some of Helena Blavatsky's actions are typical of those women of her time who struggled to be recognized as on an equal footing with the men in the world, which had a strict code of behaviour for females. As a young woman she dressed³ as a man, as did George Sand — the novelist Mary Ann Evans — to make it easier for her to be admitted equally while travelling the world and studying spiritual sciences. She smoked cigarettes, a habit she probably picked up from the women of the French aristocracy, who did it to place themselves in a special category distinct from other women at a time when women who smoked were considered abnormal. She was recognized as an exceptional horsewoman and went into battle in Mentana (Italy, 1867) along with the men and was severely injured. She was also a talented musician and a businesswoman. In order to start the Theosophical movement she had to overcome three prejudices: having the wrong gender, being of a non-English-speaking background in a world ruled by 'proper English' and suffering from a lack of formal education. A comment made by KH⁴ in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* about the plight of women illustrates the hardship Helena had to overcome: 'Verily woman — is a dreadful calamity in this fifth race' (117/93). In his

Occult World Sinnett wrote: 'After all, she is a woman — meaning Helena Blavatsky. . . — and *this* has, perhaps, barred her from the highest degrees in occultism that she might *otherwise* have attained'⁵ (my emphasis). Despite all this, she managed to progress.

Secondly, in order to see how Helena Blavatsky sowed the seeds of the transformation that was to occur, we can look into some of the central concepts of female consciousness discussed today within the feminist movement which Helena Blavatsky first described in her initial publication *Isis Unveiled* (1877). We can note the effect this introduction had on female consciousness as compared to the reaction of the male of the time.

Helena Blavatsky wrote:

Is it enough for man to know that he exists? Is it enough to be formed a human being to enable him to deserve the appellation of MAN? It is our decided impression and conviction, that to become a *genuine spiritual entity*, which that designation implies, man must first *create* himself anew, so to speak — *i.e.* thoroughly eliminate from his mind and spirit, not only the dominating influence of selfishness and other impurity, but also the infection of superstition and prejudice.⁶
[My emphasis]

In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky uses the English language in the way it was then used, but very often after using the general term 'man' to mean a human being, she goes on to explain that it actually refers to both men and women. So for her, both

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males and females have the potential for 'a genuine spiritual entity'. When she speaks of woman as gender, she writes 'woman' and goes right on explaining that 'womanhood' is a condition, even when explaining Plato's theories.⁷ After her introduction of a 'woman' as a condition, 'woman's condition' was firmly established in feminist discussion.

Another extremely central discussion within the feminist movement has been the concept of matriarchy in its different definitions. In 1861 Jacob Bachofen (1815–87) in his book *Das Mutterrecht*, introduced the term matriarchy, 'mother right', the counterpart of patriarchy, 'father right'. His aim was to show that in accordance with Darwin's theory, mother rule, which for him was a reality and according to him reigned in the world of the Amazons, was of a lower order. From that would follow that father rule was of a higher order and that women should be kept in their 'rightful' place. His book was clearly a reaction against the early suffragette movement. His warning was for men. He said that it was hard for them, whatever the time and under whatever religion, to free themselves from the matter of Nature and reach their highest goal, namely 'heavenly fatherhood'.⁸ Engels also implied along the same lines that the division of labour between men and women was based on the natural order. Blavatsky turned the tables on them both and discussed Nature as a cyclical process. The only way to find out the truth was to unveil Isis, the female principle. She wrote to her sister Vera:

Well, Vera, believe it or not, some enchantment is upon me. You can hardly imagine in what a charmed world of pictures and visions I live. I am writing *Isis*; not writing, rather copying out and drawing that which *She personally* is showing me.⁹

The very manner of her discussion of Isis, to her the symbol of Nature, is always feminine, as is Space, the great matrix which holds and nourishes all by creating forms that serve to express consciousness. She influenced women like Matilda Joslyn Gage,¹⁰ who took Blavatsky at face value and wrote in her book *Women, Church and State* (1893) that there never was a more righteous or more civilized time than during the Matriarchy, the time when the female principle reigned.¹¹

The discussion on this subject has continued for over one hundred and forty years. The consensus is that there never was Matriarchy as opposed to Patriarchy as such, but despite this, that concept has been one of the central psychological tools in the process of transforming the female aspect of consciousness.

Next Blavatsky explained what was behind the idea of the Immaculate Conception. She discussed the Christian idea and traced it to its ancient symbolical origins. What she found was the Serpent or the Dragon power:

Virgin-Persephoneia, you found no escape
from marriage
But you were wived in a Dragon's
hymeneals,
When Zeus very coiled, his countenance
being changed,

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The Dragon-bridegroom circled in love-
inspiring fold,
Proceeded to the sanctum of the dark Virgin
Agitating his rough beard . . . Through the
Aethereal Dracontean nuptials
The womb of Persephone was agitated by a
fruitful young,
Bearing Zagreus the horned Child.

Here is the secret of the Orphite worship, and the origin of the Christian later-revised fable of the immaculate conception.¹²

Her poetic allegories along with her comments in *The Theosophist*¹³ inspired many female authors like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who took both the idea of Matriarchy and the Immaculate Conception and combined the two in her book *Herland*, published first as a serial in 1915 in *The Forerunner* and finally in book form in 1979. This is the story of a secluded women's world visited by two men.

One of the most important contributions to Theosophical iconography was Blavatsky's discussion of the spiral form and its association with the creation of the World. *Isis Unveiled* introduces such concepts as the Spiritual Egg, which the winds impregnate, the Divine Idea 'brooding over the Chaos' and Astral Light. She stated:

This 'spiral form' is a figure to express the vibratory motion of the Astral Light, with which the ancient priests were perfectly well acquainted, though they may have differed with modern scientists in their views of ether; for in the Aether they placed the Eternal Idea pervading

the Universe, or the *Will* which becomes *Force*, and creates or organizes *matter*.¹⁴

As the concepts are traced through the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled*, we come to associate the spiral form with fundamentally female motion, particularly after Blavatsky equates the Astral Light with the Christian concept of the Holy Ghost and declares this to be female.¹⁵ After this the spiral form became one of the central concepts of female emancipation and during the two decades of feminist discussion between 1970 and 1990 it was carried to its extreme by such authors as Mary Daly.¹⁶ The concept has also been noted as a particularly feminist image in women's literature, Monique Wittig's novel, *Les Guerilles* (1969) being a prime modern example of this style of writing. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* is another prime example: The chapters of her book are written in a continuous circular form, they follow each other, repeating the same basic concepts over and over again and introducing new ones at intervals, deepening the discussion from the general to the particular.¹⁷

The concept of time as not necessarily depending on the Christian tradition is also taken up by Blavatsky. With this she validated the Ancient Wisdom as an important continuous process. She stated:

For, though in the opinion of most of our contemporaries there has been but one day of learning, in whose twilight stood the older philosophers, and whose noontide brightness is all our own; and though the testimony of scores of ancient and

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medieval thinkers has proved valueless to modern experimenters, as though the world dated from AD 1, and all knowledge were of recent growth, we will not lose hope or courage.¹⁸

Feminist researchers have used the same validation to point out that the Christian-based dating of time as before and after AD 1 is a convenient construct which is really an illusion.¹⁹

In October 1879, the first issue of *The Theosophist* was published and in it there is a curious story entitled *A World without a Woman*, about a secluded valley where a king has put a group of boys to live without the influence of women. The story is rather like William Golding's novel *The Lord of the Flies* but it ends with one of the boys escaping and coming back to explain about women:

‘And has woman none of the faults of man; is she alone perfect?’

‘How should she be perfect’, answered Saron, ‘since she is but a female man?’

‘But she is superior to him?’

‘No, neither superior nor inferior, but different. Her faults are not his, neither are her qualities. She cannot boast his courage, nor he her gentleness. She has not his power of diligent application, and he lacks her quick intuition. He leans to the material side of life, she has a deeper feeling for its poetry and aspirations. She relies on his strong arm and strong will, and he turns to her as the tranquil light that illuminates his heart and his home.

Rivalry between the sexes is worse than useless, for their interests are identical, and nature designed them to form but the two halves of one harmonious whole.²⁰

This shows that Blavatsky as an editor was not exclusive but aware of the stage upon which she was acting.

In 1881, the concept ‘Brotherhood’ was added to the platform of the Theosophical Society by stating the First Object: ‘To form a nucleus of the Brotherhood of Humanity’. By 1886 this concept had been awakened into its conditioning by specifying ‘without distinction of race, creed and colour’. In 1888, the whole First Object states as it does today: ‘To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.’

By 1889 Blavatsky used the concepts Brotherhood and Sisterhood as synonyms. In *The Key to Theosophy*, she wrote:

In society, as in all branches of true science, the law of universal causation holds good. But this causation necessarily implies, as its logical outcome, that human solidarity on which Theosophy so strongly insists. If the action of one reacts on the lives of all, and this is the true scientific idea, then it is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters, and by all practising in their daily lives true brotherhood and true sisterhood, that the real human solidarity, which lies at the root of elevation of the race, can ever be attained. It is this action and interaction, this true brotherhood and

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sisterhood, in which each shall live for all and all for each, which is one of the fundamental Theosophical principles that every Theosophist should be bound, not only to teach, but to carry out in his or her individual life.²¹

Finally, in 1890 Helena Blavatsky formed the inner group of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society she had founded earlier by choosing as disciples six women and six men from among her most trusted co-workers.²² Mirrored against a few thousand years of the history of segregated discipleship — or just plain male dominance in spiritual discipleship — this single act becomes the most powerful in the series of actions taken by her in order to bring about a change in the consciousness of humanity.

If we look at the notion that her writings would be discussed seriously only during the following centuries, we can clearly see that there is much more to discuss than may be seen on the surface. Even if we research the resources cited by the early members of the women's movement we find that most of them, from Mathilda Joslyn Gage to Virginia Woolf,²³ acknowledged *Isis Unveiled* in their bibliographies. Many formerly active feminists, like Annie Besant and Clara M. Codd, became renowned Theosophists. The men in their turn reacted by complaining. They argued that Blavatsky had no rational structure to her arguments; they said she was chaotic; they checked her credentials. After the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, Olcott himself wrote to

Blavatsky's aunt, Nadya, asking about her education. The critics said that she made many errors and in the end they accused her of being a 'priestess of Isis'.²⁴ Helena Blavatsky, of course, admitted to mistakes and kept correcting them, but she also said that all that could be revealed was in *Isis Unveiled*; it might be veiled, but it was there.

If we look at the Theosophical Society, compared to some contemporary religious or philosophical entities, we find that women and men operate more freely in different positions on the structural ladder. It is not expected that only men should hold the leading positions in the Society and there is a track record to show for it. Is this, we might ask, because Helena Blavatsky set the stage for the realization of a new working method for the spiritual path and became an example of how it could be done? This article suggests that she did so on the basis that, equally, men and women could make the changes that would transform humanity. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is vitally necessary and important to recognize Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's role as a catalyst for the transformation of the female consciousness along with the transformation of the male consciousness and as a woman who changed the world.

In the Theosophical context we are taught one simple truth: 'the Universe works by analogy'. It is therefore important for the inquiring mind to recognize the simple clichés like 'in the higher consciousness there is no gender' for what they are: clichés. With regard to Helena

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Blavatsky, trusting that her writings will be accorded serious consideration at least in the coming centuries, we should dare to take up such a challenge as, for example, the interpretation of her comments on the deeper meaning of the expression, 'the Eminent Occultist'.²⁵ This was written as a footnote to Eliphas Levi's *Paradoxes of the Highest Science*:

. . . Woman must not be looked upon as only an appanage of man, since she was not made for his mere benefit or pleasure any more than he for hers; but the two must be realized as equal powers though unlike individualities.

Woman's mission is to become the mother of future occultists — of those who will be born without sin. On the elevation of woman

the world's redemption and salvation hinge. And not till woman bursts the bonds of her sexual slavery, to which she has ever been subjected, will the world obtain an inkling of what she really is and of her proper place in the economy of nature.²⁶

It is the goal of Theosophy to bring about the transformation of the consciousness of the whole of humanity. Serious attempts should be made to balance the scales between the transformation of the male and the female aspects of consciousness and the approach should be holistic rather than gendered. The time has come to take up the challenge and find further answers, which are 'committed to nothing partial or exclusive' (N. Sri Ram) in order to realize this transformation. ✧

Notes

1. N. Sri Ram, *Thoughts for Aspirants*, Quest Books, 1984, p. 116.
2. The references to the women in Blavatsky's family can be found in *The Dictionary of Russian Women Writers* (1994).
3. It is very much the trend now in the research of modern feminism to uncover all those women of former centuries who had to dress as a man in order to achieve their goals. Many of these women were only found out when they died or gave birth in public situations.
4. KH were the initials of a Kashmiri Brahman, Mahatma Koot Hoomi, one of Helena Blavatsky's teachers and the Founders of the Theosophical Society.
5. A. P. Sinnett, *Occult World*, TPH, 1984.
6. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, TPH, 1972, I.39.
7. *ibid.*, I.27.
8. Georgoudi Stella, 'Creating a Myth of Matriarchy', eds. Duby and Perrot. Ed Schmitt Panel. *A History of Women: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 455.
9. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, introductory, I.21.
10. According to Sylvia Cranston (*The Extraordinary Life of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, p. 482), Matilda Joslyn Gage became a member of the TS in March 1885. She served as a president of the National Women's Suffrage Association. Besides her book *Women, Church and State*, 1893, she collaborated with Elisabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in writing *The History of*

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Woman Suffrage. On her part she influenced her son-in-law, L. Frank Baum, the author of *The Wizard of Oz*, in his theosophical path.

11. Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Women, Church and State*, Pantheon Books, p. 9.

12. Blavatsky, *IU*, II.505.

13. In *The Theosophist* in August 1884, Helena Blavatsky commented on the Immaculate Conception under the title of 'The Future Occultist'.

14. Blavatsky, *IU*, I.56-7.

15. First association *ibid.*, I.130 and androgyne in II.229 fn.

16. Mary Daly's discussion started with her book *Gyn/egology* and continued with *Pure Lust*. More modern examples are the French female linguists.

17. Morya, Blavatsky's teacher, stresses in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 118, the concept of 'synthetic method' arguing from general to the particular as a valid method for the introduction of the Theosophical doctrine. It can be argued that Blavatsky's way of writing *Isis Unveiled* can be a feminine interpretation of that mode.

18. Blavatsky, *IU*, I. 38.

19. In her book, *When God was a Woman*, Merlin Stone took up the discussion of the validity of time again in the same manner as Blavatsky had done before.

20. J. Bates, 'A World Without a Woman', in *The Theosophist*, October 1879 issue.

21. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 234.

22. H. P. Blavatskyn opetukset sisäiselle ryhmälle, p. 14.

23. Virginia Woolf was a member of a theosophical study group and wrote a theosophy influenced book called *Orlando* of which the theme is reincarnation.

24. Juusola-Halonen, *An Introduction to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: A Preliminary Study on Her Ideas of Nature*, Umea Universitet, 1984, p. 14.

25. This 'Eminent Occultist' is said to be KH.

26. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, TPH, VI.259.

There is a road steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the universe. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer. There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win, onwards there is a reward past all telling — the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.

H. P. Blavatsky

Our President-Founder's Outstanding Qualities

DUSAN ZAGAR

HENRY STEEL OLCOTT was a great servant of humanity with many good qualities. I shall refer only to his devotion and unselfishness and his qualities as a pioneer.

Devotion

He was absolutely devoted to his work for the Society. Annie Besant wrote:

One day I said to him:

Henry, I believe you would cut off your right hand for the Society.

Cut off my right hand!, he cried. I'd cut myself into little pieces if it would do the Society any good.

And so, verily, would he have done.

Such devotion is rare and therefore the Mahatmas trusted him completely.

KH said: 'Him we can trust under all circumstances and his faithful service is pledged to us, come well, come ill.'

He was often misunderstood and slandered, but he was ready to sacrifice everything, even his life, for the promotion of Theosophy.

Unselfishness

The Mahatma M. says:

A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our chela.

Here the Mahatma refers to the utter unselfishness needed for discipleship. Prof. Agarwal in his book *The Buddhist and Theosophical Movements* tells us that he generously gave all he had: his time, services and money, not to mention his unselfish work for the revival of Buddhism in Ceylon! He wrote *The Buddhist Catechism* and founded many schools. Jealousy, intrigue and ingratitude did not stop his noble efforts, indicating how tenacious and fearless he was in his work for others. He was able to completely forget himself. In his message, the President of the Senate in Ceylon, Hon. A. Ratnayaka said:

It is a blessing to mankind that there appear from time to time men who dedicate themselves completely and unselfishly to the service of all humanity, transcending consideration of race, religion

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and colour. One such man was Col. H. S. Olcott. It was Ceylon's destiny that brought him all the way from the United States of America in 1880. His arrival in Ceylon resulted in the resurgence of a nation that had been suppressed by foreign domination. The Buddhist revival received an impetus unprecedented in the annals of Ceylon. He inspired men like Anagarika Dharmapala and a host of other leaders who led the freedom movement and thus adorned the pages of Lanka's history. Colonel Olcott's ambition was to deliver the message of the Buddha to all men throughout the world — the message of universal love and compassion, and thus raise all men to the level of Divinity.

How many Olcotts we would need today in a world that is full of greed, mutual competition and ever greater selfishness!

He had also all the qualities of a pioneer, as Walt Whitman describes them:

1. Continuous movement — he was not attached to pleasantness and safety, but he walked to unknown and distant places, ready for anything. He intuitively followed the direction outlined by the Masters.

2. He was mindful and devoted, ready for everything.

3. He was adaptable — he changed everything that could be changed and accepted what it was not possible to change.

4. He was not attached to the past. He looked forward, and did not grieve over

loss or the good old days. He left his home and his family. He was ready to sacrifice even his life.

5. He was brave, took risks, and overcame obstacles. He put all his strength and effort into his endeavour towards righteous aims and tasks.

6. His life was simple and humble. He was not very particular what he ate and he slept anywhere. He did not look for wealth, but was contented with little and a simple way of life.

7. He accepted with responsibility every task and its consequences.

8. He was ready for self-sacrifice, renouncing his own interests in favour of the interests of others.

9. He always acted in a brotherly manner and tirelessly strove for the formation of a nucleus of universal Brotherhood, for unity and the brotherhood of religions.

All these are the qualities of a pioneer.

To be a pioneer means to be a man of great courage. We cannot be courageous if there is no love for humanity in our heart. Courage without love is not real courage, it is only self-confirmation. We should uphold our first President as a great ideal. We should ask ourselves if we have much compassion for those of our brothers who live in ignorance, blinded with the great illusion of separation, because of which ever greater competition and greed rule the world. Today we have much more access to Theosophical literature than in the period of our two founders, technology having developed, and to

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talk about Theosophy is much easier than it was in their time. However, we know that neither books nor the internet nor other technologies can bring about brotherhood and better human relations. We must actually live Theosophy in everyday life. We have heard this sentence so many times that it has become commonplace and thus we may not heed it any more. However, this is the only way for the upliftment of humanity. Brotherhood is not something lifeless, which can be printed in newspapers or published on the Web, but a *living* relation of goodwill

towards human beings and all other creatures. To forget ourselves and to live for others — this is the motto of a real Theosophist, a true servant of humanity.

Such a true servant was our President-Founder, who put the work of the Society and therefore humanity above everything else in his life. I am convinced that he would do this again, if he again came into this physical world. He was, and remains, one of the brightest stars in the Theosophical firmament.

As the words on his Memorial statue in Adyar state: *May he return soon.* ✧

What is it then, which makes me say what in deepest seriousness and a full knowledge of its truth I have said? What is it that makes me not only content but proud to stand for the brief moment as the mouthpiece and figurehead of this movement, risking abuse, misrepresentation, and every vile assault? It is the fact that in my soul I feel that behind us, behind our little band, behind our feeble, newborn organization, there gathers a MIGHTY POWER that nothing can withstand — the power of TRUTH! Because I feel that we are only the advance-guard, holding the pass until the main body shall come up. Because I feel that we are enlisted in a holy cause, and that truth, now as always, is mighty and will prevail. . . .

For, if I understand the spirit of this Society, it consecrates itself to the intrepid and conscientious study of truth, and binds itself, individually as collectively, to suffer *nothing* to stand in the way. As for me — poor, weak man, honoured far beyond my deserts in my election to this place of honour and of danger — I can only say that, come well, come ill, my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength are pledged to this cause, and I shall stand fast while I have a breath of life in me, though all others shall retire and leave me to stand alone.

Henry Steel Olcott
President's Inaugural Address, 17 November 1875

The Mind Beyond the Brain

SAMPOORAN SINGH

Modes of Perception

The culminating insight of three hundred years of persistent and consistent scientific research by many eminent physicists — including Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrödinger, Arthur Eddington, Alan W. Watts — is that dualistic knowledge is inadequate and there is another mode of perception [knowing] called ‘the understanding of life directly, instead of in the abstract linear terms of representational thinking’.¹ Eddington wrote, ‘The intimate knowledge will not submit to codification and analysis; or rather when we attempt to analyse it, the *intimacy is lost and it is replaced by symbolism*’.² We have available to us two basic modes of perception; the first is called symbolic, map, inferential, or dualistic knowledge, while the other has been called intimate, direct, non-dual or intuitive knowledge or insight. David Bohm, an eminent physicist, wrote:

The ultimate perception does not originate in the brain or any material structure, although a material structure is necessary to manifest it. The subtle mechanism of

knowing the truth does not originate in the brain.³

This implies that the ultimate perception happens in the trans-sensual dimension, which is timeless [beyond the brain]. All knowledge is structured in consciousness; so ultimate perception happens when Universal Consciousness bathes the brain cells. Perception bestows the wholeness of life, which flowers in intuition, spontaneity and right action. Direct perception is a benediction of Nature.

Seeing is direct, hearing is direct, touching is direct, observing and understanding are direct, but thinking is indirect. Everything which is direct gives the perception of wholeness, but anything indirect is fragmentary. An indirect process leads to violence, strife, fear and to an abyss.

The dimensions of nature are homogenous, undifferentiated and non-dimensional; it is immeasurable and infinite; so it is always holistic. There is no limit to learning, so political-economic-social learning is ‘Creative or innovative learning’. Anything involving *direct* perception is creative learning.

Dr Sampooran Singh, a scientist from Chandigarh, India, has numerous papers to his credit on the integration of spirituality and science.

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Albert Einstein said that we need ‘objective observing and understanding’.⁴ Observation is perception without psychological involvement, without any kind of reaction. Reaction implies evaluation, judgement, condemnation, comparison. Observation is non-evaluatory perception; it is without the pseudo-observer; it is the state of wholeness of perception and wholeness of responses. We have to learn to observe scientifically the totality of the known — the psychic world, the intellectual world, the subjective and objective world. This results in a quantum jump from a symbolic-dualistic frame to a non-dual frame of reference of Mind Continuum, from intellect to intelligence. In the non-dual frame all psychological imbalances are transcended.

Understanding expresses itself in the non-dual and non-conceptual frame of reference of the Mind Continuum.⁵ *Understanding is a movement in non-duality, a movement of the whole being.* Understanding comes only when the mind is very quiet, tranquil, silenced. Perception has nothing to do with knowledge [information]. *Perceptions are born of non-duality and responses are born of spontaneity.* They arise out of observing, self-knowing and compassion; they awaken awareness, intelligence.

Wilder Penfield, a Canadian neurosurgeon, recorded that ‘in some striking cases of brain surgery when the patient was asked not to move the arm when the corresponding area of the cerebral cortex was electrically stimulated, the patient

invariably responded by using the other arm to hold it down. What the electrode did to one arm, the patient’s *will* did to the other’.⁶ Penfield concluded, ‘our minds and our brains are not at all the same. . . . it is the mind which experiences and it is the brain which records the experience’.⁷ He wrote, ‘To suppose that the consciousness of the mind has location is a failure to understand neuro-physiology’.⁸ Fred Alan Wolf wrote, ‘We are beginning a new age of awareness, the age of quantum consciousness, the age of the conscious atom. By looking within ourselves, we may be able to solve the problems facing us on the final frontier — the frontier of the human spirit.’⁹

The Objective of Human Life

Albert Einstein wrote prophetically:

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe’, a part limited in time and space. . . . Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison [time, space and causation] by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.¹⁰

What is truly valuable in the bustle of life is not the nation, but the creative and impressionable individuality, the personality — he who produces the noble and sublime while the common herd remains dull in thought and insensible in feeling.¹¹

Globalization: Vimala Thakar wrote, ‘The more globalized the structure, the more curtailed and limited becomes the freedom of the individual. . . . If the economy is globalized the survival of

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nations as sovereign states becomes impossible — it is a contradiction. Sovereignty of the nation in political matters and globalization in economic matters — it cannot be so. The contradiction of globalized economics and nationalized politics has to be resolved.¹² All problems will get resolved if mankind attains higher awareness.

Human Values: Recently many eminent scientists — Werner Heisenberg, Edwin Hubble, Max Planck, G. F. Chew, Bertrand Russell, Lincoln Barnett, Max Born and so on — have concluded that we cannot impart value education at the level of reason or intellect.¹³

All ethical values are essentially spiritual values; they proceed from the trans-sensual dimension of human personality, the Life Field, the Reality, the Wholeness of Life. These are eternal and immutable, and shared by mankind. Their laws are shared by a non-dual and non-conceptual frame of reference of the Mind Continuum.

In the psychological mode of mind, atoms with consciousness are seeing atoms with consciousness; it is basically the particle-nature of thought, the explicate order of thought. When this limitation is realized at the deepest level of mind, then the subject [recalled-memory] is transcended and attentiveness takes over as the subject. Attention is a higher quantum energy potential of consciousness, so there is a flow of energy from attention to the object. Attention now sees the wave-aspect of thought, the subjective nature of thought, the implicate

order of thought, the true nature of thought, which are the values. The wave aspect of thought is at a higher quantum energy potential than the particle aspect of thought. The wave aspect bestows the human values, the ethical values.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

Relations between Nature and the Human Mind

In 1975, Jack Sarfatti, a physicist, postulated that faster-than-light connections exist in nature; it is called the superluminal transfer of negentropy without signals [Negentropy is another term for *order*].¹⁷

If the intuitive mode of mind is sustained for a long time chronologically, there is a transfer of energy from Universal Consciousness to the object in the outer field, and it moves to the inner field as pure Consciousness. The subject of Cognizance (pure Consciousness) in the inner field sees itself in the inner field. Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers wrote, 'It is physics that presupposes an observer situated within the observed world. Our dialogue with nature will be successful only if carried on from within nature.'¹⁸ This in principle is called '*subjective science*'; it is apparent that the human mind continuum obeys the immutable laws of Nature.

Concluding Comment

The man-made social cosmos is at the lowest quantum-energy potential and is invariably dualistic and constructs pain, misery and travails. It is leading man to self-destruction, self-annihilation.

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Nature, in its benediction, has embedded a higher awareness in man's system; it is a non-dual and non-conceptual frame of reference of the mind continuum; it bestows intuition or insight, which leads mankind to harmony and order. Nature has secretly embedded a higher potential of awareness in man which can be energized.

The basic existence of the spiritual life has to do with attention, sensitivity, mindfulness, intuition and insight — the very qualities that make us truly human and truly free. But these are not the qualities that are automatically acquired in the human system; they all require sincere hard work, patience, education and the pursuit of the spiritual path, or a dynamic interplay of science and spirituality. They require an enormous struggle with the world forces within oneself that are fuelled by fear, ambition and egocentricity.

Man is a miniaturized being, a microcosm; Nature is a macrocosm. Both obey the immutable law of superluminal transfer of energy, so both are identical. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm, and the macrocosm to the microcosm. Physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world and the internal world must have its verification outside.¹⁹ It is the level of the ultimate quantum energy potential of consciousness, where there is perception of the Oneness or Wholeness of the cosmos. We have to jettison the limited role of '*objective science*' and embrace '*subjective science*'.

One aspires for freedom — not for oneself but from oneself. The word 'oneself', means all psychological imbalances. Man has to transform or mutate himself for he not only performs a natural function in the cosmos, but also has the possibility of fulfilling a spiritual purpose, and the basis for achieving this — a higher potential of consciousness, or attention. Awareness, or aware human beings in their own higher and real nature, thus usher in a new age of Universal Brotherhood and deep awareness of true values. This would lead to spiritually inspired politics, economics and society — a new way of living.

A human being is a laboratory, an experiment to create a 'New Man' — a human being who lives in harmony with the inner and outer, with himself and his environment, and who is free from all ideologies and conditioning that now divide humanity. A human being lives in the Wholeness or Oneness of Life. The cosmos is alive, intelligent and sentient rather than lifeless and randomly driven. The cosmos is reason elevated to supersensuous Wisdom.

Mind is independent of brain; and it is indestructible; it is always *now*. It is shared by the whole of mankind. Man must grow from knowledge to understanding, from intellect to Intelligence, from successive consciousness to Simultaneous Consciousness. He must learn to understand the truth at every moment. The Great Buddha said, '*Be a light unto yourself*'.

The perception of Truth ends all pain, misery and travails; and one revels in

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freedom, order, non-violence and peace. excellence of mankind along with all the
This is the key to the survival and fauna and flora of the earth.²⁰ ✧

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**We seek, inquire, reject nothing without cause, accept nothing without proof:
we are students, not teachers.**

H. S. Olcott

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

DO YOU feel in your heart that the missionary work of Theosophy is thoroughly attractive? Are you prepared to eat with me the plainest food, to expect neither luxury nor even comfort, to have your private character traduced, your motives pictured as base and sordid, to endure extremes of climate, the fatigue of hard journeys in all sorts of conveyances by land and sea, to know of the existence of the *Masters* yet be denied the privilege to go to them, until by years of toil you have purged your innermost nature of its selfishness and accumulated moral filth, and by working unselfishly for the enlightenment of mankind you shall have fitted yourself for the holy companionship? Think of all this. . . . The philanthropist's lot is a hard one; few covet its crown of thorns, fewer still are able to wear it. . . .

If you are liable to soon tire of my constant movement and sigh for rest and inertia at home, then do *not* come. For I tell you I am so dead in earnest that I would be ready to die any day for my Society.

H. S. Olcott
'A Letter to W. T. Brown',
from *Reminiscences of Colonel H. S. Olcott*

Beyond Language

ALI RITSEMA

WHEN we want to go 'beyond' something, first of all we must find out what we want to go 'beyond'. In this case, it is 'language'. *The Oxford Dictionary* gives explanations, such as 'language is a vocabulary and way of using it in one or more countries'; it is a 'method of expression'; it is 'words and their use; faculty of speech'.

Speech

According to *The Secret Doctrine* (SD, II.198), it is the Fourth Race that developed Speech. The First Race, the Sons of Yoga ('Self-born') was in our sense speechless, as it was devoid of mind on our plane. The Second had a 'Sound Language', chant-like sounds composed of vowels alone. The Third Race developed in the beginning a kind of language, which was only a slight improvement on the various sounds in Nature. Later on in the second half of the Third Race, after having been androgynous beings, the separation of the sexes took place, reproduction became sexual, and speech was developed. But even then it was no better than a tentative effort. The

whole human race was at that time 'of one language and of one lip'.

Speech then developed in the Fourth Race and, according to occult teaching, in the following order:

* The speech of the first approximately fully developed human beings at the close of the Third Root-Race, after their separation into sexes and the full awakening of their minds, was monosyllabic.

* This developed into simple words, combined without change of form, to express compound ideas, spoken by some of the Atlantean races. This language died out, after having gone through its cyclic evolution of childhood, purity, growth, fall into matter, mixture with other languages, maturity and decay.

* Then speech so evolved that the endings of the words vary and there is modulation of the voice; this is called inflectional speech and is said to be the root of Sanskrit (the mother of Greek) and, according to the SD, was the first language; now, according to the SD, the mystery tongue of the Initiates of the Fifth Race (II.200).

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Thought-transference

Before speech developed, which means before the Fourth Race, there was communication through 'thought-transference'. For thought-transference one needs 'thought' but 'thought' was very little developed in nascent physical humans at a low terrestrial level. Although their physical bodies belonged to the earth they were almost totally unaware of their physical surroundings, their monads remaining on a higher plane altogether.

This is with the exception, however, of the Race called the 'Sons of Will and Yoga', the first in whom the 'Sons of Wisdom', also called the *mānasaputra-s*, had incarnated or had entered into their forms. In their case, the whole of the essence of *manas* was immediately infused into the nascent human being. They became the Arhat-s and are called the 'nursery for the future human adepts on this earth and during the present cycle'.

Manas

The *mānasaputra-s* are the sons of the divine mind; they have *manas* fully developed. 'Mānasa' means the efflux of the *divine* mind or Mahat the divine mind, and 'putra' means 'son'.

The average class of humanity was not able to respond to this infusion to a great or full extent, only a spark of *manas* being projected, and was in general only able to display the attributes of the lower mind on this earthly plane. But, to quote the *SD*, those who succeed in their evolutionary

efforts, will be ready for the full incarnation of the *mānasaputra-s* in the Fifth Round. At that point man will be able to use all the capabilities of the mind.

The point is made in the *SD* (I.199 fn) that without *manas* there is no reasoning faculty and without the reasoning faculty there is no language or development of language.

This is exactly what the Master KH was faced with when he tried to explain to Mr Sinnett and Mr Hume about parts of the world of esotericism (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, ML*, No. 111):

You may misunderstand us, are more than likely to do so, for our language must always be more or less that of parable and suggestion, when treading upon forbidden ground; we have our own peculiar modes of expression and what lies behind the fence of words is even more important than what you read. But still — TRY.

Besides, KH points out that They cannot speak openly about certain subjects — 'treading upon forbidden ground'. One reason for this is that there is knowledge that relates to powers, which could be and would be destructive in the hands of unworthy people, people who have not yet made the leap from egoism to altruism. KH explains it as follows: 'The mysteries never were, never can be, put within the reach of the general public, not, at least, until that longed for day when our religious philosophy becomes universal' (*ML*, No. 2).

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Esoteric Language

In *SD* (I.310): The world of esotericism can only be expressed in esoteric language, which is universal. It is also called the 'Mystery' language and in that mystery language is contained the great archaic system known from prehistoric ages as the sacred Wisdom-Science. This Wisdom-Science can be traced in every old as well as in every new religion. Its universal language is the language of the Hierophants. This language has seven 'dialects', so to speak, each dialect referring to and being especially appropriated to one of the seven mysteries of Nature. Each has its own symbolism. Nature could thus be either read in its fullness or viewed from one of its special aspects.

All the ancient records were written in this universal language. All the words of this universal language signified the same thing to each man of whatever nationality, but, according to the *SD* are now intelligible only to the few.

Interpreting these dialects or allegorical writings is extremely difficult. In order to understand the allegories or symbolism, one needs to find and turn the keys to it, and there are seven keys. These seven keys to the mystery tongue, however, have always been in the keeping of the highest among the initiated Hierophants of antiquity.

Seven Keys

The seven keys (*SD*, I.325) open the mysteries, past and future, of the seven great Root-Races, as of the seven Kalpa-s. No scripture at present possesses

the archaic teaching in its entirety, for even the Veda-s are not complete. Every old religion is but a chapter or two of the entire volume of archaic primeval mysteries — Eastern Occultism alone being able to boast that it is in possession of the full secret, with its *seven* keys. To understand the Wisdom-Science you must learn the mystery language.

The symbolical universal language has numerical and geometrical keys. The most archaic symbols in Eastern Esotericism are a circle, a point, a triangle, a plane, a cube, a pentagon, a hexagon, and plane figures with various sides and angles.

Senzar

The name for the secret/sacred sacerdotal language or the 'Mystery speech' of the Adepts all over the world is 'Senzar', which, we are told, is still preserved in some Fraternities. Senzar has an alphabet of its own but it can be rendered in several modes of writing in cipher characters which are more like ideographs (characters symbolizing an idea, like Chinese characters) than like syllables plus the use of numbers and colours.

In an article on Symbolism and Ideographs (*SD*, I.307) it is stated:

Yet even a parable is a spoken symbol: a fiction or a fable, as some think; an allegorical representation, we say, of life-realities, events, and facts. And, as a moral was ever drawn from a parable, that moral being an actual truth and fact in human life, so an historical, real event was deduced — by those versed in the hieratic sciences — from certain emblems and symbols

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recorded in the ancient archives of the temples. The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because *the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in*, by the modern 'sages'.

The Potency of Spoken Words

Collected Writings (CW, XII.534-5): Esoteric Science teaches that every sound in the visible world [which means also all spoken words!] awakens its corresponding sound in the invisible realms, and arouses to action some force or other on the occult side of nature. Moreover, every sound corresponds to a colour and a number (a potency spiritual, psychic or physical) and to a sensation on some plane. All these find an echo in every one of the so far developed elements and even on the terrestrial plane, in the Lives that swarm in the terrene atmosphere, thus prompting them to action.

Sound and rhythm are vibrations in the air and awaken corresponding powers; union with these powers produce good or bad results, as the case may be. No student was ever allowed to recite historical, religious, or any real events in so many unmistakable words, lest the powers connected with the event should be once more attracted. Such events were narrated only during Initiation, and every student had to record them in corresponding

symbols, drawn out of his own mind and examined later by his master, before they were finally accepted.

Vibrations

The occult importance of the potency of sound and rhythm, of vibrations, is also mentioned in an article called 'My final word' in *CW* (VI. 89-90) where HPB speaks about the mutual relation between *the sacred sound* and *the ether of space*. She gives the example of 'a Brāhmana who would recite certain *mantra-s* (incantations, conjurations) for a scorpion or snake bite, and who would *sing* them according to the method and intonation prescribed in the *Yajur-veda*', and it is stated that this 'would certainly heal his patient — a fact', says HPB, 'witnessed by us many times'.

Now as every atom in every object of nature, animate or inanimate, sings its own keynote and produces its own sound and has its own colour and number, so every man, flower, tree, and every celestial body, is a play and interplay of sounds both loud and faint, interblending in a marvellous symphony. . . . Both sound and colour are vibrational frequencies. Any living organ produces harmonies of sound when the emotions, thoughts, and feelings are on a high plane, and horrible discord when they are characterized by hatred and other low passions.

In an article on Occult Vibrations (*CW*, X.265-6) W. Q. Judge asks HPB about the difference of vibrations between ordinary people and an adept.

HPB: Human beings in general are like

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so many keys on the piano, each having its own sound, and the combination of which produces other sounds in endless variety. . . .

Q: So far this applies generally to nature. Does it explain the difference between the adept and ordinary people?

HPB: Yes. This difference is that an adept may be compared to that one key which contains all the keys in the great harmony of nature. [In today's terms he has the master key.] He has the synthesis of all keys in his thoughts, whereas ordinary man has the same key as a basis, but only acts and thinks on one or a few changes of this great key, producing with his brain only a few chords out of the whole great possible harmony.

Q: Has this something to do with the fact that a disciple may hear the voice of his master through the astral spaces, while another man cannot hear or communicate with the adepts?

HPB: This is because the brain of a chela is attuned by training to the brain of the Master. His vibrations synchronize with those of the Adept, and the untrained brain is not so attuned. So the chela's brain is abnormal, looking at it from the standpoint of ordinary life, while that of the ordinary man is normal for worldly purposes.

Q: Has the adept, then, raised his vibrations so as to have them the same as those of nature as a whole?

HPB: Yes; the highest adepts. But there

are other adepts who, while vastly in advance of all men, are still unable to vibrate to such a degree.

An example of such synchronization of vibrations can be found in one of the Mahatma Letters (No. 139) where HPB explains how miserable her English was but that it made for 'Master' no difference whether her English was good or bad because, 'he does not speak it but understands every word I say out of my head; and I am made to understand Him — *how* I could never tell or explain if I were killed *but I do*'.

And she continues:

I took to him a few sentences I was studying in Senzar in his sister's room and asked him to tell me if I translated them correctly — and gave him a slip of paper with these sentences written in English. He took and read them, and correcting the interpretation read them over and said: 'Now your English is becoming better — *try to pick out of my head even the little I know of it.*' And he put his hand on my forehead in the region of memory and squeezed his fingers on it (and I felt even the same trifling pain in it, as then, and the cold shiver I had experienced) and since that day He did so with my head daily, for about two months.

Visions

HPB explains that the whole system of evolution, the laws of being, the mysteries of life and death, the workings of karma and all else that she knew, was taught to her in visions, in pictures presented to the

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inner eye. She says:

Not a word was spoken to me in the ordinary way except, perhaps, by way of confirmation of what was thus given to me — nothing was taught in writing. And knowledge, she says, so obtained is so clear, so convincing, so indelible in the impression it makes upon the mind, that all sources of information, all other methods of teaching with which we are familiar dwindle into insignificance in comparison with this.

As quoted in the beginning, ‘language is not always adequate to express *spiritual* thoughts’. In the examples just given we are dealing with a way of receiving knowledge that is ‘beyond language’. Yet it is all about vibrations, sound, words.

We are taught that it is the ‘Word’, sound, by which all things are made or as the Pistis Sophia puts it (*CW*, XIII.53): the Sound of the Voice gave all things Form.

Sound

Sound is said to be the characteristic of Ākāśa (*SD* I, Stanza VI.205); it is said to be the substratum of universal Ākāśa, the one attribute of Ākāśa. Ākāśa is called the subtle, supersensuous, spiritual essence, which pervades all space; the primordial substance (*Theosophical Glossary*).

Any sound has its due effect throughout the universe. To quote HPB: ‘Sound can have no end’ and when she tapped with a pencil on a table she remarked: ‘By this time it has affected the whole Universe.’ But it is not only the tap with a pencil that

affects the whole Universe. All sounds, all spoken words, everything we say has its effect on the whole Universe, producing good or bad results! Ākāśa, pervading all space, is at the root of the manifestation of all sounds.

If we relate this to what HPB said about obtaining knowledge, what does that mean for us? How can we obtain that knowledge which comes in visions presented to the inner eye and which, thus obtained, is so clear, so convincing, so indelible that all sources of information, all other methods of teaching dwindle into insignificance?

Ākāśa and Our Brain

In *Inner Group Teachings* it is said that during life there are seven empty cavities in our brain, which are filled with Ākāśa, and that it is in these cavities that visions must be reflected if they are to remain in the memory; each cavity with its own colour, according to the state of consciousness in which we are. So how can we get the visions in the seven cavities, filled with Ākāśa, reflected so that they can remain in our memory?

The *Voice of the Silence* helps us, as it speaks about the mystic sounds of Ākāśic heights (81), heard by the yogi or ascetic at the beginning of his cycle of meditation:

Before we can set our foot upon the upper rung of the ladder of the mystic sounds, we have to hear the voice of our *inner* God, the voice of the Higher Self, in seven manners. Six of those seven manners relate to the six principles but the seventh (Ātmā) swallows all the other

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sounds. They die and then are heard no more. According to the *Glossary*, this means that the personality is destroyed and the inner individuality is merged into and lost in the Seventh or Spirit. 'The pupil is merged into the ONE, becomes that ONE and lives therein.'

Dhāranā

However, there is another approach to our subject which is interesting and is related to the very first advice given in *The Voice of the Silence* (2):

He who would hear the voice of *nāda*, the soundless Sound, and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of *Dhāranā*.

'Nāda, the "Soundless Voice" or the "Voice of the Silence", being the equivalent word in Sanskrit for the Senzar term would literally (perhaps) read 'Voice in the *Spiritual Sound*' (*Theosophical Glossary*).

Since sound is the expression of thought, it is clear that 'spiritual sound' is related to spiritual thought and since we have seen that language is not able to express spiritual thoughts, we have to go 'beyond language' and find out more about the 'Voice in the *Spiritual Sound*'.

Dhāranā is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe or the world of the senses. It is explained as follows: When the disciple is able to keep his mind free from all external objects, then he is in Dhāranā. But however perfect and intense the concentration, it is not enough because

before the soul can comprehend and remember — in my view comprehending and remembering the reflected visions in the cavities of our brain — 'The soul must unto the Silent Speaker be united' and the example is given 'just as the form to which the clay is modelled, is first united with the potter's mind'.

If we indeed want to comprehend and remember, we have to discover more. Dhāranā is in the occult system the sixth stage of development but not yet the Seventh, the most spiritual.

Dhyāna

The last stage before the final *on this earth*, unless one becomes a full Mahatma, is called Dhyāna, literally meaning 'contemplation'; it is one of the six *pāramitā-s* of perfection (*V of S*, note 41). It is explained that in the state of Dhyāna there is, spiritually, consciousness of Self and of the working of the higher principles and that Dhyāna is the precursor of Samādhi. What then is meant by Samādhi?

Samādhi

Samādhi is the state of faultless vision: Here our vision is no longer distorted. According to the *Theosophical Glossary* Samādhi stands for 'self-possession'. He who possesses this power is able to exercise absolute control over all his faculties, physical and mental. 'Consciousness of every individuality including his own is lost. The ascetic becomes — the ALL.' (*V of S*, note 42) The pupil has ceased to hear the many, has surpassed

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the mystic sounds of Ākāśic heights, has acquired the faultless vision: the inner sound has killed the outer.

The Voice of the Silence, p. 98-9:

. . . now, rest 'neath the Bodhi tree, which is perfection of all knowledge, for, know, thou art the Master of Samādhi — the state of faultless vision. Behold! thou hast

become the sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art Thyself the object of thy search: the VOICE unbroken, that resounds through eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one.

That Voice is the VOICE OF THE SILENCE (beyond all languages). ✧

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent, and not only seeking, but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable in a world of which the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change; and always, just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

Again the idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption; the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical, but mental and intellectual.

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives, the trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen — it is always the one thing we cannot possibly bear. If we look at it from a wider view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescences, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows; not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg, but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime; every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

HPB, *World Theosophy*, 1931, vol. I, 1-6, p. 12