

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

VOL. 141 NO. 1 OCTOBER 2019

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

Cover: Annie Besant (1.10.1847 – 20.9.1933), an Anglo-Irish orator, writer, and social rights activist, was the second international President of the Theosophical Society based in Adyar from 1907 to 1933.
– Photograph colorized by Mr Dan Doolin

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

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 Essence of Annie Besant

(Talk given at the TS Adyar, Chennai, on 1 October 2018)

TIM BOYD

IT has been 171 years today since Annie Besant was born, and it is significant that a person's memory continues in the way that Besant's has. Most of us try to live a good life, treat each other well, and make an impact on this world in the ways which we can. But for most of us, once our children and grandchildren have moved on, our name fades away. The works that we have done during our time here on Earth, although they have their impact, are mostly forgotten. It is the characteristic of great people that their lives matter in ways that extend far beyond the time that they have lived among us. Such is the case with Annie Besant.

Although we know she has had an impact that has spread quite far, because today we are speaking in India, we tend to focus on the great benefit that she was to this nation. In fact, the great benefit that she was in making it possible for there to even *be* such a thing as the nation of India is undisputed. But her time in India only began in the second half of her life.

The woman that we came to know as the great Annie Besant had her beginnings as "little Annie", the daughter of Irish parents, born in England. One of

the factors that contributed to her greatness was the fact that she had the opportunity to experience life from its very bottom to its very heights. She was not a person who had the advantage of wealth or power simply by virtue of the household into which she was born. Her greatness became established because of the way she was able to meet and transcend many losses in her life.

We think of her as a champion of many causes. At her memorial service that was held at Adyar when she died in 1933, the person who became the next President of the Theosophical Society, George Arundale, had an opportunity to speak about her. He had worked closely with her for 30 years, had even been interned with her when she was detained in a hill house due to her agitation for India's independence. The characteristic of Annie Besant that he dwelt on in his eulogy was her nature as a "warrior". She was without a doubt someone who fought, but what did she fight for?

In terms of the history, as we read it in India particularly, she fought for an independent Indian nation. She was an organizer at heart. In England she

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organized people to strike for the protection of children against the abuse of their rights as workers, and the freedom of speech to publish books that expand people's minds but others would try to censor. She fought and suffered for these rights, but she also thrived in her efforts to secure them for all. So in India we think of her as a warrior for a new nation. But how did she wage that war? How was that battle conducted? How was it won?

We are fortunate in today's program because some of the outcomes of Annie Besant's vision are included in our program, honoring her life. One strong element of her vision was that women in India required a voice. That the conditions of women in India must be not only appreciated, but must be heard from the mouths of those very women and solved with the participation of women. So where there was a condition where that was not the case, what did she do? She got together with other prominent women in India and formed the Women's Indian Association (WIA) to advocate for women's empowerment. One of our speakers today will be the current President of the WIA, formed 101 years ago, and still alive and strong.

Another speaker today is the result of Annie Besant's organizing strategies in fighting the battle for truth in India: the Young Men's Indian Association (YMIA). Annie Besant founded and donated property to the YMIA as a place intended to train and develop the leaders for the independent Indian nation which at that time was yet to come, but which in

Besant's vision was already fully formed. She believed that the people who came to lead the new India had to be people of character, whose thought had been developed, who were willing to act and serve on behalf of this new forming nation. So she organized, planned, and provided a place for this training to take root.

Knowing that institutions outlive individuals, she founded many — the Boy Scouts, educational institutions at all levels across India — not just for male education, but women's schools and colleges. In recent American history there was another great warrior for human rights, from a similar mold to Annie Besant — a gentleman by the name of Martin Luther King. He made many profound statements during his too brief life. One of them that applies to the life of Annie Besant was: "The ultimate measure of a person is not where they stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy."

Annie Besant's record speaks for itself, she was a person who did not just put her ideas out into the public for consideration, but she put herself, her body in harm's way for the causes she believed in. All of it was given, and especially in time of challenge and controversy. During her lifetime she had many people who became dear and devoted friends, also those who became bitter enemies. Her enemies may have questioned her opinions, they may have differed with her in terms of her ideas, but in terms of the person, the Truth, of the integrity of her character, nowhere will you hear or read about anyone who ever

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doubted them. Having lived a life of 85 years, that is remarkable. She fought with many, but never on a personal basis, always in the name of something higher, the Truth.

Annie Besant died in 1933, and so in the world today there is not a person left who had a meaningful relationship with her. I consider myself very fortunate that along the way I have had the opportunity to meet and talk with some people who, though young at the time, actually spoke with her and worked with her. All of their reports were consistent with the written histories.

Someone I considered as a good friend was a former President of the Theosophical Society in America, Dora Kunz. She died in her 90s in 1999. Her husband had been the personal secretary to Annie Besant and Dora herself had numerous occasions to not just be in her presence but to dialogue and work with her. So from time to time some impressions of Annie Besant would come out from Dora. One of the things that she said is worth mentioning.

Dora said that Besant was continually engaged on many different levels with projects and people around the world. She was a constant focus for the attention, energies, plans, and movements of others. But Dora said the impression that she would come away with, having been around Besant through all these different experiences, was that always when one was in her presence there was the sense of a profound stillness. In the midst of this intensive activity, all the battles going on, the primary thing one came away with

was a sense of a profound stillness that she carried in the midst of battle.

Besant described herself as “a daughter of India”. She was very clear that India was her motherland: her work and her ashes are here. But at this point of stillness, from which she was able to do the work and to project these ideas and movement into the world, she was not a child of any particular nation. Her repeatedly affirmed view was that humanity is one: not divided, not separated, but one. The fact that she found herself in India meant that her work was done to promote the Oneness within the context of India.

She felt that India should be the model, because here as in no other place was there a diversity of so many religions, all in one nation. It also had diversity of people, and if India could realize a measure of mutual respect and understanding, it would be a model that could spread into the world. But her vision was and always had been universal. It is this vision that allowed her to pen a beautiful prayer, the Invocation to Unity, or Universal Prayer.

This prayer is most expressive of her inner state. It is not a meditation, but it is subject for a meditation. The words and meaning that come from and lead to that point of stillness are worth considering. If we are seeking to find the essence of this great woman, there are many places we can find it. We will see traces of it in her political life, in her social activity, in her embrace of religion. But the place in which we will see the true essence, and experience it most deeply, is in her

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Universal Prayer. In many ways it is a distillation of her life, work, thought, and more so, her stillness.

“O hidden Life, vibrant in every atom.” Every *atom*, and we do not even have to talk about every person, is inhabited by an ever-present life to which we have somehow managed to blind ourselves, an all-embracing hidden life.

“O hidden Light, shining in every creature.” Light, by its very nature, diffuses itself, it is necessarily *everywhere*. There is a light to which we are blinded by the separations that we embrace of religion, race, nationality, gender, and so on. The list is unfortunately very long. Each of the identities to which we attach

ourselves forms a barrier to the shining of the hidden Light.

“O hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness.” This is the root, that behind the Life, behind the Light, is a Love that embraces all things in Oneness. Our closest understanding of the meaning of Oneness comes to us in those moments of genuine love we experience for another, for a nation, for those great ones who model and teach the power of love, for humanity as a whole.

“May each who feels themselves as one with Thee”, one with the Life, the Light, the Love, may they “Know they are therefore one with every other”. This is the essence of Annie Besant. ✧

In 1889 I had a book given to me to review, written by H. P. Blavatsky, and known as *The Secret Doctrine*. I was given it to review, as a book the reviewers of the paper did not care to tackle, and it was thought I might do something with it, as I was considered more or less mad on the subjects of which it treated. I accepted the task, I read the book, and I knew that I had found the clue that I had been seeking. I then asked for an introduction to the writer of that book, feeling that the one who had written it would be able to show me something at least of a path along which I might travel with some hope of finding out more than I knew of life and mind. I met her for the first time in that year. Before very long I placed myself under her tuition, and there is nothing in the whole of my life for which I am one tithe so grateful as the apparent accident that threw her book into my hands, and the resolution taken by myself that I would know the writer of that book.

Annie Besant
“1875–1891: A Fragment of Autobiography”
Adyar Pamphlets No. 84

Are You Not Saying What the Buddha Said? — II

J. KRISHNAMURTI

(In dialogue with Buddhist scholars Walpola Rahula and Irmgard Schloegl, with Professor David Bohm and Giddu Narayan)

Krishnamurti: Now, how is a man or woman, a human being, to break this pattern [of psychological progress or evolution] without bringing in time? You understand my question?

Walpola Rahula: Yes, it is only by seeing.

K: No, I can't see if I am caught in this blasted ugliness of progress. You say it is only by seeing, and I say I can't see.

WR: Then you can't.

K: No, but I want to inquire into it, sir. That is, why have we given "progress", in quotes, such psychological importance?

Irmgard Schloegl: I am not a scholar but a practitioner. For me personally as a Westerner, as a one-time scientist, I have found the most satisfactory answer in the Buddhist teaching that I blind myself, I am my own obstacle. As long as I, with all my bundle of conditioning, am here, I cannot see and act. There seems to be a possibility . . .

K: That doesn't help me. You are saying that you have learned that.

IS: I have learned it, but I have done so in the same way as one learns to play the piano, rather than in the way of studying a subject.

K: Again, playing the piano, which means practice. So what are we talking about at the end of all this?

Giddu Narayan: There seems to be a difficulty here. Knowledge has a certain fascination, a certain power, one accumulates knowledge, whether it is Buddhist or scientific, and it gives you a peculiar sense of freedom, though it is not freedom — it is more in the realm of conventional freedom. And after years of study one finds it very difficult to get out of this, because for twenty or so years you arrive at this point and value it, but it hasn't got the quality of what you might call truth. The difficulty with all practice seems to be that when you practise you

J. Krishnamurti (1895-1986) was one of the great spiritual teachers of the 20th century. From e-book: *Can Humanity Change?* — *J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists*, ed. David Skitt, 2003. Reprinted by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc., Boulder, CO, USA. <www.shambhala.com>.

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achieve something; and the achievement is of the conventional-reality type — it has got a certain power, a certain fascination, capacity, maybe a certain clarity.

WR: Because of that you get attached to it.

GN: Yes, and to break away from it is much more difficult than for a beginner who has not got these things, who may see something more directly than a man who has a great deal of acquired wisdom.

WR: That depends on the individual; you can't generalize.

K: If I may point out, one can generalize as a principle. But let us come back to where we were. We are all caught in this idea of progress, of attainment, right?

WR: We had just come to an agreement on that point, that humanity accepts the fact that progress is a gradual evolution. As you said, they accept it as true biologically and can prove it there; so they apply the same theory to the psychological area. We agreed that that is the human position.

K: Is that position the truth? I have accepted that there is progress in the sense of biological evolution and have then gradually transferred that to psychological existence. Now, is that the truth?

WR: Now I see what you are questioning. I don't think it is the truth.

K: Therefore I abandon the whole idea of discipline.

WR: I should have said there is no question of abandoning it. If you abandon it consciously . . .

K: No, sir, just a minute. I see what human

beings have done, which is to move from the biological to the psychological, and there they have invented this idea that eventually you will come to the godhead or enlightenment, reach Brahman or whatever, nirvana or paradise, or hell. If you see the falseness of that, *actually*, not theoretically, then it is finished.

WR: Absolutely, that is what I have been saying all the time.

K: Why should I then acquire knowledge of scriptures, of this or that, psychologically?

WR: There is no reason.

K: Then why do I read the Buddha?

WR: As I have said, we are all conditioned.

David Bohm: Could I ask a question: Do you accept that we are all conditioned?

K: Dr Bohm asks: Do we all accept that we are conditioned?

WR: I don't know whether you accept it or not, I accept it. To be in time is to be conditioned.

DB: Well, what I mean to say is this: I think that Krishnaji has said, at least in some of our discussions, that he was not deeply conditioned in the beginning, and therefore had a certain insight that would not be common. Is that fair?

K: Please, don't refer to me — I may be a biological freak, so leave me out of it. What we are trying to discuss, sir, is this: Can we admit the truth that psychologically there is no movement forward — the truth of it, not the idea of it? You understand?

WR: I understand.

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K: The truth of it, not “I accept the idea of it”, the idea is not the truth. So do we as human beings see the truth or falseness of what we have done?

WR: You mean, human beings generally?

K: The whole world.

WR: No, they don't see it.

K: Therefore when you tell them, “Get more knowledge, read this, read that, scriptures, what the Buddha said, what Christ said”, if he existed at all, and so on, they are full of this accumulative instinct that will help them to jump or propel themselves into heaven.

DB: When we say we are all conditioned, how do we know that we are all conditioned? That is really what I wanted to say.

K: Yes, his point is, sir, are all human beings conditioned?

WR: That is a very complicated question. As far as our society is concerned, all are conditioned. There can't be anybody who is not conditioned, because he is within time. But what we are talking about is the realization of truth, which has no time, which is unconditioned.

DB: What I wanted to emphasize is that if we say we are all conditioned, there could be two ways of responding to that. One way could be to accumulate knowledge about our conditioning, to say we observe the common human experience, we can look at people and see that they are generally conditioned. The other way would be to say, “Do we see in a more direct way that we are all conditioned?” That's what I was trying to get at.

WR: Of course, I should say that there are people who see that.

K: But does that help in this matter? I mean there may or there may not be.

DB: The only point I am trying to make is that if we say that we are all conditioned, then I think there is nothing else to do but some kind of disciplined or gradual approach. That is, you begin with your conditioning.

K: Not necessarily. I don't see that.

DB: Well, let's try to pursue this. That's the way I take the implication of Dr Rahula's question that if we all begin conditioned . . .

K: Which we are.

DB: Then what can we do for the next step?

WR: There is nothing called “the next step”.

DB: How can we be free of the conditioning as we do whatever we do?

WR: The freedom from conditioning is to see.

DB: Well, the same question: How do we see?

WR: Of course many people have tried various ways.

K: No, there are not various ways. The moment you say “a way”, you have already conditioned it.

WR: That is what I say. And you are also conditioning by your talks, they are also conditioning. Trying to uncondition the mind is also conditioning it.

K: No, I question that statement, whether what K. is talking about conditions the mind — the mind being the brain, thoughts, feelings, the whole human psy-

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chological existence. I doubt it, question it. If I may suggest, we are going off from the central issue.

WR: The question is how to see — is that it?

K: No, sir, no. Not “how”, there is no “how”. First let us see this simple fact: Do I, as a human being, see that I am representative of all humanity? — I am a human being, and therefore I represent all humanity. Right?

IS: In an individual way.

K: No, as a human being, I represent you, the whole world, because I suffer, I go through agony and so on, so does every human being. So do I, as a human being, see the false step human beings have taken by moving from the biological to the psychological with the same mentality? There, biologically, there is progress, from the little to the big and so on, from the wheel to the jet. As a human being, do I see the mischief that human beings have created by moving from there to this? Do I see it, as I see this table? Or do I say, “Yes, I accept the theory of it, the idea of it”, and then we are lost. And the theory, the idea, is therefore knowledge.

IS: If I see it as I see this table, then it is no longer a theory.

K: It is then a fact. But the moment you move away from the fact, it becomes idea, knowledge, and the pursuit of that. You move further away from the fact. I don’t know if I am making myself clear.

WR: Yes, I guess that is so.

K: What is so? Human beings moving away?

WR: Human beings are caught in this.

K: Yes, it is a fact, isn’t it, that there is biological progress, from a little tree to a gigantic tree, from baby to boyhood and to adolescence. Now have we moved with that mentality, with that idea, with that fact, into the psychological field, and assumed as a fact that we progress there, which is a false movement? I wonder if I am making myself clear.

DB: Are you saying that this is part of the conditioning?

K: No, leave the conditioning aside for the moment. I don’t want to enter into that. But why have we applied the fact of biological growth to the psychological field? It is a fact that we have, but why have we done this?

IS: I want to become something.

K: Which is, you want satisfaction, safety, certainty, a sense of achievement.

IS: And it is in the wanting.

K: So why doesn’t a human being see what he has done — actually, not theoretically?

IS: An ordinary human being.

K: You, I, X, Y.

IS: I do not like to see it, I fear it.

K: Therefore you are living in an illusion.

IS: Naturally.

K: Why?

IS: I want to be something that I fear at the same time not to see. That is why.

K: No, madam, when you see what you have done, there is no fear.

IS: But the fact is that I usually do not see it.

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K: Why don't you see it?

IS: I suspect because of fear. I don't know why.

K: You are entering into quite a different field when you talk of fear. I would just like to inquire why human beings have done this, played this game for millennia. Why this living in this false structure, and then people come along and say be unselfish, be this and all the rest of it —why?

IS: All of us have a very strong irrational side in us.

K: I am questioning all this, because we are living not with facts but with ideas and knowledge.

WR: Certainly.

K: The fact is that biologically there is evolution, and psychologically there is not. And so we give importance to knowledge, ideas, theories, philosophy, and all the rest of it.

WR: You don't see at all that there can be a certain development, an evolution, even psychologically?

K: No.

WR: But take a man with a bad criminal record who lies, steals, and so on — you can explain to him certain very fundamental, elementary things, and he changes, in the conventional sense, into a better man, no longer stealing, no longer telling lies or wanting to kill others.

K: A terrorist, for example.

WR: A man like that can change.

K: Are you saying, sir, a man who is evil, "evil" in quotes, like the terrorists around

the world, what is their future? Are you asking that?

WR: Don't you agree that you can explain to a criminal like that the wrongness of his behavior? Because he understands what you have said, either because of his own thinking or because of your personal influence or whatever, he transforms himself, he changes.

K: I am not sure, sir, whether you can talk to a criminal, in the orthodox sense of that word, at all.

WR: That I don't know.

K: You can pacify him, you know, give him a reward and this and that, but an actual criminally minded man, will he ever listen to any sanity? The terrorist — will he listen to you, to your sanity? Of course not.

WR: That you can't say. I don't know, I am not at all positive about it. But until I have more proof, I can't say that.

K: I have no proof either, but you can see what is happening.

WR: What is happening is that there are terrorists, and we don't know whether any of them have transformed themselves into good men. We have no proof.

K: You see, that is my whole point — the bad man evolving into the good man.

WR: In the popular and the conventional sense, that certainly happens, one can't deny that.

K: Yes, we know that, we have dozens of examples.

WR: Don't we accept that at all?

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K: No, wait a minute, sir. A bad man who tells lies, is cruel and so on, probably one day he realizes it is an ugly business and says, “I’ll change and become good”, but that is not goodness. Goodness is not born out of badness.

WR: Certainly not.

K: Therefore the “bad man”, in quotes, can never become the good man, non-quotes. Goodness is not the opposite of the bad.

WR: At that level it is.

K: At any level.

WR: I don’t agree.

GN: We might put it this way. At the conventional level the bad man becomes the good man. I think we would call that “psychological progress”. That’s something we do, the human mind does.

K: Of course, you are wearing yellow and I am wearing brown, we have the opposites of night and day, man and woman, and so on. But is there an opposite of fear? Is there an opposite of goodness? Is love the opposite of hate? The opposite, which means duality.

(To be continued)

More is the treasure of the Law than gems;
Sweeter than comb its sweetness; its delights
Delightful past compare. Thereby to live
Hear the Five Rules aright:

Kill not — for Pity's sake — and lest ye slay
The meanest thing upon its upward way.

Give freely and receive, but take from none
By greed, or force or fraud, what is his own.

Bear not false witness, slander not, nor lie;
Truth is the speech of inward purity.

Shun drugs and drinks which work the wit abuse;
Clear minds, clean bodies, need no Soma juice.

Touch not thy neighbor's wife, neither commit
Sins of the flesh unlawful and unfit.

Sir Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*

Gandhi on Theosophy and the Global Civilization of Tomorrow — I

JAMES TEPFER

Invocation

Common be your prayer;
Common be your goal;
Common be your purpose;
Common be your deliberation.

Common be your wishes,
Your hearts in concord,
Your intentions in concord,
Perfect be the union amongst you.

*Rig Veda*¹

Dedication

Let me begin by honoring the ancient and noble practice of saluting those who have made this talk possible. I have drawn inspiration for Gandhi's connection with Theosophy principally from Gandhi's own writings and from Louis Fischer's sparkling and insightful biography, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*. I have also immensely benefited from the brilliant and profound elucidation of Gandhian thought by Raghavan Iyer in his book, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*.

Lastly, I have drawn from a variety of contemporary sources for meaningful

pointers toward the emerging global civilization of the future. However, the richer, wider prospects and possibilities of the dawning Aquarian Age have been nurtured by many seminal articles penned by H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) as well as by that most insightful of all books on the prospects of a "universal civilization", *Parapolitics: Toward the City of Man*, also by Iyer.

Before turning to the substance of my talk, I would like to add that it is especially a privilege to present this talk on the sacred soil of *Aryavarta*, on the very site which was consecrated by the dynamic presence of HPB, that great and compassionate initiate. It was HPB, as we know, who made Adyar holy, as she dedicated it to the global Work of the spiritually wise and magnanimous Brotherhood of Bodhisattvas.

To its immense credit, the Theosophical Society (TS), Adyar, has nobly weathered all the trials and tribulations of its past and might yet fulfill the prophetic declaration from "The Great Master's [Mahachohan's] Letter" that the TS is to be the cornerstone

Dr James E. Tepfer is an associate of the United Lodge of Theosophists in Santa Barbara, California, USA. Public Lecture given at the International Convention of the TS, Adyar, Chennai, India, on 2 January 2019. See: <theosophytrust.org/1105-gandhi-on-theosophy-and-the-global-civilization-of-tomorrow>.

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of the religions of the future. Considering these profound facts, what more auspicious place to discuss Gandhi, Theosophy, and global civilization than here in Adyar, at this gathering of students of *Theosophia* from across the globe?

About Gandhi

Mohandas K. Gandhi was the most eminent social revolutionary of the twentieth century and perhaps one of the many paradigms of the Aquarian man or woman of the coming centuries. No doubt, Albert Einstein spoke for peoples across the globe when he said: “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this, ever, in flesh and blood, walked upon this Earth.”²

Gandhi’s benign influence has been global, spanning geography and generations alike. He was the forerunner and inspiration to a Nelson Mandela in South Africa, a Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King in America, a Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia and, of course, the intrepid Malala of Pakistan. Each of these exemplary individuals has, in turn, become an inspirational prototype in our own time and will undoubtedly continue to affect generations to come.

As a thinker and a committed social reformer, Gandhi held that truth, non-violence and creative suffering are equally vital to universal human uplift. Truth, to Gandhi, is at the core of our being and of all existence. Truth involves the whole person and encompasses thought, word, and deed. Truth, to be truth, is also relevant to every sphere of human life,

public as well as private. Finally, and most significantly for man, Truth is embodied in the world as the Law of Interdependence. This is the scientific basis of morality, sacred and secular.

Non-violence is action free of the urge or impulse to do harm, to act out of malice. It is rooted in the mind and heart of the actor. It is the deliberate negation of self-assertion, of pushiness, of arrogance, and of the desire to exploit others. Non-violence ultimately releases some degree of unconditional love towards one’s friends and one’s enemies alike. It involves the conscious ability to reduce one’s ego to a zero. It is, as one contemporary thinker put it, the science of “un-selfing the mind”.

From a theosophical perspective, we might say that non-violence is the conscious negation of the demonic will, of atavistic Atlantean pride, and of the willful misuse of higher creative powers. If this is so, then non-violent, egoless action is that moral conduct that honors perceived truths by negating the personalizing will and releasing the latent, Gangetic waters of pure love.

Intrinsic to Gandhi’s theory and practice of non-violence is that of “creative suffering”. Voluntary suffering is a necessary ingredient of all non-violent truth-acts and especially so when it comes to dealing with seemingly intractable social and institutional injustices. Self-suffering is really the alchemical hyphen that connects truth and non-violence. Suffering ignites the moral chemistry that releases the light within truth and the energy within unconditional love. This is intrinsic to the life of the un-

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daunted and benevolent social reformer.

Gandhi, as we know, was an unusual individual with many admirable qualities. As an earnest thinker, he was principled, lucid, and insightful. As a *karma-yogin*, his actions were purposeful and discriminating. As a *bhakti-yogin*, he was a lover of God and man and, most especially, a lover of God-in-man. He was also honest to a fault, full of love for friends and strangers alike and was blessed with abundant good humor. With respect to the latter quality, Gandhi was once asked by a British journalist if he had not felt scantily dressed when meeting King George at Buckingham Palace. After all, persisted the journalist, Gandhi had only worn a *dhoti* and a shawl to the occasion. Gandhi smiled and retorted that he did not feel awkward at all since his majesty had on enough clothes for both of them.

Gandhi could also take a joke at his own expense. Louis Fischer, his best biographer, visited Gandhi in 1942 and again in 1946. On his second visit, Gandhi humorously remarked that Fischer must find him as unhandsome now as he had four years ago. Fischer, with a twinkle in his eye, immediately said that he would never dare to disagree with a great man. Gandhi laughed loudly and walked arm in arm with Fischer to his simple dwelling in the ashram.

Beyond all his admirable traits there was a deeper more profound quality in Gandhi that is often overlooked — his desire to heal. Gandhi's fervent wish as a young man was not to be a lawyer or a social reformer or a national leader. His heart's wish was to be a doctor — a healer. How-

ever, he was not allowed to study medicine because of the practice of vivisection. Nonetheless, his compassionate, healing impulse still found moments of spontaneous expression throughout his life.

This healing impulse also motivated him to enter into forbidden areas of plague on at least two occasions in order to tend to the desperate and the dying. He also voluntarily took into his home lepers and people with various maladies. He formed an ambulance corps during two wars in South Africa and together with his ambulance crew risked his life to relieve the miseries of wounded soldiers on both sides of the battle. All in all, Gandhi's supple mind was obedient to his compassionate, oceanic heart. The latter was, in fact, the source of his moral genius.

Gandhi and Theosophy

There was a golden current of theosophical influence that continually sustained the spiritual arc of Gandhi's life. That fertile current entered his life in November of 1889 at the age of twenty in London and continued as a vibrant, tempering influence until the very day of his assassination in 1948. The seminal "theosophical moment" that occurred in London was when Gandhi met two theosophists who introduced him to the *Bhagavadgītā* and, most significantly, took him to a meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge. There he met HPB and Annie Besant. (He had, by the way, read Annie Besant's book on why she became a theosophist and he was very impressed by the reasons she gave for her conversion.)

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As a result of Gandhi's personal encounter with HPB as well as the encouragement of theosophical friends, he studied *The Key to Theosophy*. Among other things, Gandhi's study of *The Key* made him keenly aware of the philosophical richness and spiritual potency of Hinduism. It helped him to see through the many criticisms of Christian missionaries and eventually led him to declare that philosophical Hinduism was the religion that spoke to him the most deeply.

We are told more about young Gandhi and his first encounter with Theosophy in London from P. Nayyar, Gandhi's personal secretary in his later years. Nayyar tells us in his biography on Gandhi that: "He [Gandhi] read Mme Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, and on March 26, 1891, was enrolled as an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge."³ The cumulative effect of Gandhi's fortuitous encounter with HPB and his subsequent study of theosophical teachings is that it helped him to spiritually self-ignite; it kindled and fed what became an all-consuming fire of spiritual aspiration, an ardent search to experience God-consciousness.

Later, in South Africa, Gandhi continued his study of the *Gītā* and of selected theosophical writings. In his private library in Durban could be found the works of HPB, Leo Tolstoy, and other eminent writers on spiritual ideas. Gandhi also had a deep interest in Esoteric Christianity as well as in Raja Yoga. In addition, he contributed to the activities of the TS in Southern Africa, Johannesburg Lodge. While he apparently never became an

official member of the Johannesburg Lodge, he did give a series of talks there on the major religions of India.

Gandhi's personal association with theosophists continued in India from 1915 until his death in 1948. He interacted frequently with theosophists in the pursuit of Indian independence and often collaborated with B. P. Wadia, an eminent theosophist, an original coworker of Annie Besant, and the founder of the first Labor Union in India.

Gandhi freely acknowledged the historical fact that one of the cofounders of the Indian National Congress was a theosophist. He later repeated his recognition of Theosophy's seminal contribution to the Indian independence movement: "In the beginning, the top Indian National Congress leaders were theosophists."⁴

In a wider sense, we might say that Gandhi implicitly embraced the "Three Objects" of the theosophical movement (but with reservations about the Third Object). As we know, the First Object of the theosophical movement is to form the nucleus of a universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color. Gandhi's whole adult life could be seen as an attempt to embody the living spirit of this aim. It was the root inspiration of his fertile spiritual life and of his numerous "experiments with truth". Brotherhood was the universal constant in his solution to the complex algebra of the religious, communal issues that plagued India, which the British government so cleverly exploited.

As Indian independence neared in the

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late 1940s, and violent disagreements intensified between Muslim and Hindu Congressmen, Gandhi saw his hopes for a politically unified India wane. In an interview in June of 1946 with Louis Fischer, Gandhi lamented the patent smugness of many Hindus toward Muslim members of the Indian National Congress. He equally lamented the devolution of the Muslim belief in the brotherhood of man into the brotherhood of Muslims only. In light of this sad, dual realization, Gandhi made the following unequivocal declaration to Fischer: “Theosophy is the teaching of Madame Blavatsky . . . Theosophy is the brotherhood of man.”⁵

Gandhi was, in effect, making it clear that HPB was the true teacher of Theosophy and that its essential message of brotherhood was what both Hindu and Muslim proponents were sorely lacking in practice. In the end, the lack of brotherhood in the Indian National Congress led to the devastating division of a unified *Aryavarta*, or ancient India, into the separate nation states of Pakistan and India.

The Second Object of the theosophical movement is to encourage the comparative study of ancient religions, philosophies, and sciences. Gandhi was a Hindu — initially by birth, but ultimately by choice. He was also an ardent student of the world’s major religions. Since he came to recognize that each religious tradition embodies a profound set of spiritual truths, he declared that “Truth alone is God”. This statement parallels the Theosophical motto taken from the Maharaja of Benares: “There is no religion higher than Truth.” It is not

surprising then that since Truth alone is God, Gandhi believed fundamentally in the following:

[I believe in] the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one’s very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within, and which continually purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself.⁶

This notion of an inborn “transcendent-religion” — rooted in Nature and man — was dialectically compatible with, and supportive of, a diversity of religious teachings. Like the full moon simultaneously mirrored in many different lakes, each authentic religious teaching reflects some portion of Absolute Truth. This calls for more than mere tolerance. It calls for an abiding reverence for the world’s multiple religious teachings and a willingness to search for underlying truths beneath constricting dogmas and rituals.

It is not surprising then, that Gandhi admired the universal and universalizing spirit of Theosophy. This appreciation was aptly and simply expressed in his “Foreword” to the book, *The Brotherhood of Religions*, penned by the Theosophist Sophia Wadia. He says: “An understanding of and respect for the great faiths of the world is the (very) foundation of true Theosophy.”⁷ In this respect, Gandhi also noted that true religion not only transcends all formal religions — including Hinduism — but also unifies them without destroying their fundamental, discrete integrity.

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This dialectical outlook is compatible with true *Theosophia*, is it not?

The Third Object of the modern Theosophical Movement is to investigate the hidden laws of Nature and the creative powers latent in man. Gandhi recognized these subtler dimensions of Nature and humanity. To quote from his autobiography: “[W]e are children of one and the same Creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite.”⁸

Gandhi also deeply believed in karma and reincarnation. Furthermore, he recognized that the moral law was impersonal, subtle, and many-layered. In the human kingdom, this meant that karma works principally through the agency of the mind. To Gandhi, the highest creative faculty in man was pure thought, and that faculty was regulated by the impersonal, subtle, and multi-layered law of karma.

His belief in the karma-generating power of thought sometimes created peculiar problems for him. Take, for example, his reaction to the Bihar earthquake of 1934; after the earthquake, Gandhi publicly commented that, in his view, the earthquake was caused by the sin of untouchability practiced by most caste Hindus. Well, as you might expect, many rationalists, scientists, and friends were thunderstruck and dismayed by this statement. So was Gandhi’s close friend, Rabindranath Tagore. In fact, Tagore publicly chastised Gandhi and stated: “Physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combinations of physical facts.”⁹ Gandhi’s retort to Tagore and his critics alike was: “To me, the earthquake was no caprice

of God nor a result of the meeting of mere blind forces. We do not know all the laws of God (*karma*) nor their workings.”¹⁰

While Gandhi recognized the reality of occult powers, he felt that it was often an unhealthy diversion for mystics, Hindus, and theosophists to focus on hidden and as yet undeveloped psychic powers. Like Saint Paul, Gandhi believed that boundless charity was a far greater possession than the development of psychic powers. Gandhi’s concern, as we know, echoes a serious point made in “The Great Master’s Letter” in which the aim of universal brotherhood is fervently upheld and the fascination with occult powers strongly criticized. As the Great Master unequivocally states: “. . . perish rather the TS with both its hapless Founders, than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of Occultism!”¹¹

In the last issue of Gandhi’s journal, *Harijan*, ironically published on the very day of his assassination on 30 January 1948, Gandhi wrote the following:

There are many admirable works in theosophical literature which one may read with the greatest profit; but it appears to me that too much stress has been laid upon . . . intellectual studies, upon the development of occult powers, and that the central idea of Theosophy — the brotherhood of man and the moral growth of man — has been lost sight of.¹²

In the final analysis, Gandhi believed that the identity of all life with God and the derivative principle of brotherhood

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were the keys to the fullest possible life for all. This is certainly compatible with the presiding and moving spirit of *Theosophia*, Divine Wisdom.

But, a final word before turning to the global civilization of tomorrow. What about Gandhi's "inner voice"? Like the Greek philosopher and revolutionary, Socrates, Gandhi seems to have had an "inner voice" which guided him at certain critical points in his life. Unlike Socrates, whose inner voice *prevented* him from doing a particular thing, Gandhi's inner voice *commanded* him to do a particular thing. Gandhi claimed to have always followed the positive guidance he received. Take, for instance, Gandhi's meeting with a select group of eminent dons at Oxford in 1931. The friendly gathering soon became an intense intellectual interrogation of Gandhi's views on independence. Professor Johnson, who attended the meeting, describes "the battle of wits" in the following way:

For three hours he (Gandhi) was sifted and cross-examined. . . . It was a reasonably exacting ordeal, yet not for a moment was he rattled or at a loss. The conviction came to me, that not since Socrates has the world seen his equal for absolute self-control and composure; and once or twice, putting myself in the place of men who had to confront that invincible calm and imperturbability, I thought I understood why the Athenians made the "martyr-sophist" drink hemlock. Like Socrates, he has a "daemon". And when the "daemon" has spoken, he is as unmoved by argument as by danger.¹³

Now, how do we look at Gandhi's "daemon" or inner voice? What framework of understanding do we adopt here? I think that it is perfectly reasonable to regard Gandhi's inner voice as a higher bodhisattvic influence. If so, that further places him within the vast, nourishing current of the theosophical movement, of the Army of the Voice.

(To be continued)

Endnotes

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4. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, Harper and Row, paperback edition, 1983, p. 437.
5. Ibid.
6. "Young India", 5 December 1920, p. 2.
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9. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (ed.), *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates between Gandhi and Tagore, 1915–1941*, National Book Trust, 1st ed., 1997; see review by Venu Govindu at website "India Together", May 2003. See <indiatgether.org>.
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The Providential Higher Spiritual Path

WILLIAM WILSON QUINN

Introduction

The English word “providence”, and its adjectival form “providential”, both stem from the verb “to provide”. While this noun and adjective are used in multiple ways in literature of the English-speaking world, in theological discourse “Providence” has a special meaning. In particular, Providence or one of its synonyms appears regularly in religions that do *not* have a developed doctrine based on the principle which in Sanskrit is rendered Karma. In those religions, especially the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, providence is generally understood as the preordained plan of the one God, or through this plan what God *provides* to everyone — to all humankind. Under this doctrine, whatever benign or malign occurrence befalls an individual is due to or the result of this preordained plan — the outcome of Providence.

For many devout adherents of exoteric religions, the cosmic scheme of divine Providence is essentially one of intellectual security or comfort. This is because it allows all phenomena and

events on our terrestrial plane — however unfair or random they may seem — to be fully explained and rationalized simply as God’s will. But for those wayfarers who tread the rigorous higher spiritual path of probation and chelaship under an Adept, or who hope to, the relevance of providence is more immediate and profound.

“Divine Providence” of organized religions may be viewed as a construct, a theological apotropaic to ward off uncertainty and angst. But providence for wayfarers on the higher spiritual path is actual and real, and often manifests as opportunities and protections provided to chelas by their Gurus. The difference between these two forms of providence, and the precise operation of that providence of Adept to chela, is the subject we shall explore.

Within the exoteric framework of the Abrahamic religions, Providence is both a central belief and one that applies to all — to everyone — pursuant to their shared theological notions that all of humankind are children of the one God who, as their Father, is protector and

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provider. Moses Mendelssohn, among the greatest Jewish thinkers of the Enlightenment, wrote that “Essentially, the religion of the Israelites encompasses only three central principles: God, Providence, and legislation.”¹ In Christianity, while the term “Providence” is not found in the scriptures per se, thus allowing a conclusion that it is more a dogmatic than a strictly theological precept, Providence is nonetheless thoroughly infused in the New Testament and its pastoral exegesis. The meaning of Matthew 10:29–30 is clear: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” And in Islam, the idea of Providence (*kismet*) is so central to its doctrine that it occurs in a universal and frequent expression of conversational speech as *inshā’Allāh*, being Arabic for “God willing” and predicated upon preordination and the belief that nothing happens unless God has willed it.

In what may at first appear as a contradistinction to the Providence of the Abrahamic religions stand the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, whose views of the provision of all things are based in the law of Karma. In these Eastern religions, adherents accept that whatever benign or malign occurrence befalls an individual is the result of his or her past actions (karma) in this or in previous lives, and not due to the automation of a preordained deific plan. Omitting momentarily the Adept-to-chela

analysis that will be discussed shortly, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) conveyed dual perspectives of Providence in her writings — unfavorable and favorable. However, her perspective on the Karmic doctrine was constant, and her insightful contrasts and comparison of Karma to Providence helps resolve their apparent contradistinction.

Abrahamic Providence

HPB was usually unequivocal in her distaste for the reliance of those of the Abrahamic religions — Christian clerics mostly being the subject of her disfavor — on the concept of Providence as God’s preordained plan. Speaking of Christian clergymen generally, she wrote that “The clergy, by teaching the helplessness of man, his utter dependence on Providence, and the doctrine of atonement, have crushed in their faithful followers every atom of self-reliance and self-respect.”² While this statement speaks of some *results* of mindless reliance on divine Providence, through several specific complaints HPB explained what she believed ultimately generated this errant concept of Providence leading to such reliance, or “dependence”, to use her term.

The first such complaint regarding reliance on the notion of Providence was that it is too easy an excuse — or worse, a sacerdotal prohibition — for avoiding any meaningful inquiry into the universal laws of Nature and the powers latent in human beings. With few exceptions, HPB believed that virtually all of Nature and the universe could be comprehended and

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understood by human beings as they progressed spiritually, were introduced to *theosophia*, and began to access sacred intelligence. She complained that:

What and wherefore the “intelligence” then? — God being intelligence itself, and the soul his agent likewise intelligent. Whence the imperfection, the evil, the failures of Nature? Who is responsible for all this? Or shall we be answered by Christian occultists as we have hitherto been by their orthodox brethren: “the ways of Providence are mysterious and it is a sin to question them”?³

Another of HPB’s complaints about the dependence on Providence by the devout was that it is often generated by “sentimentality” and “human conceit”, the latter being a reference to an intellectual conceit that believes humans capable of constructing a cogent thesis that both ignores and conflicts with a core law of the universe — the law of compensation. In addressing one of her correspondents who invoked divine Providence to explain such “miraculous” events as apparent inexplicable survivals in mass tragedies, she bluntly asks:

. . . why is it, that to every such *one* case of *miraculous* escape, there are 10,000 cases where human beings are left to perish brutally and stupidly without any seeming fault on their part, their death being often the starting point of the most disastrous subsequent results, and this with no providence, no spirit interfering to stop the merciless hand of blind fate?

She answers her own question: “It is pure sentimentality alone, with selfish pride and human conceit to help it, that can evolve such theories to account for every exceptional occurrence.”⁴ HPB forcefully adds: “Karma, and our inner, unconscious (so far as our physical senses go) prevision can alone explain such cases of unexpected escapes.”

Further, she objected to the metaphysical error of divine Providence as an explanation or reason for various phenomena, and the hypocrisy it instigated when used by clergymen. She cited published objections by clerics to railroads because God did not intend for human beings to travel at such speeds; to the advent of telegraphs as the “tempting of Providence”; and to the introduction of anesthetics for women in childbirth. This last objection sorely irritated her, given one theologian’s stated rationale that it was “an impious attempt to escape from the curse denounced against all women in *Genesis*, 3:16.” She immediately added:

. . . those same Bishops do not hesitate to meddle with the work of Providence when the “heathen” are concerned. Surely if Providence hath so decreed that women should be left to suffer for the sin of Eve, then it must have also willed that a man, born a heathen should be left one as — preordained.⁵

Providence and Karma

There was, however, another side of HPB’s utilization of the term “providence” that might be called favorable, and

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it contained both neutral and positive usage of the term. She would occasionally abandon her disfavor of the term and use it in a neutral sense, as in the following:

You will observe that, in this is contained the transition from the Infinite to the Finite . . . the proceeding of Heterogeneity from Homogeneity or Multifariousness from Unity — of matter or form from pure Intelligence or Principle without form — the operation of pure intelligence upon matter, and this in spite of the infinite *gulf* between them — the relationship of Creator to Creature or Creations, so as to be able to exercise supervision on what we call Providence or law, or Order.⁶

In this “neutral” usage above, HPB comes close to making providence synonymous with the “law or order” of Karma. In this regard, we find that she occasionally ventured from her unfavorable usage of the word “providence” by affirmatively aligning it — favorably — with the Greek goddess Nemesis. This alignment is significant because it can be described as HPB’s positive usage of the term providence, at least when *combined* with the powers of Nemesis.

The daughter of Nyx and Erebus (sometimes Oceanus), Nemesis was the mythic goddess of divine retribution, alternately referred to as the goddess of proportion, and poetically described as the “daughter of Justice”. Her name derives from the Greek *némein*, meaning “to give what is due”. HPB wrote: “In short, while Nemesis is a mythological, exoteric goddess, or

Power, personified and anthropomorphized in its various aspects, Karma is a highly philosophical truth, a most divine noble expression of the primitive intuition of man concerning Deity.”⁷ But notwithstanding these differences of retributive “power” and “truth”, HPB nonetheless aligns Nemesis here with karma. This alignment is brought to crystal clarity in another express statement by her on Nemesis and karma:

Karma-Nemesis is the synonym of PROVIDENCE, minus *design*, goodness, and every other *finite* attribute and qualification, so unphilosophically attributed to the latter. An Occultist or a philosopher will not speak of the goodness or cruelty of Providence; but, identifying it with Karma-Nemesis, he will teach that nevertheless it guards the good and watches over them in this, as in future lives; and that it punishes the evildoer — aye, even to his seventh rebirth . . . For the only decree of Karma — an eternal and immutable decree — is absolute Harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit.⁸

With this grudging allowance of providence, as personified by Nemesis and synonymized with karma, we are finally able to discern HPB’s dichotomous and somewhat complicated perception of the term. There is, however, little evidence in their writings that HPB’s teachers, the Adepts, shared the same antipathy for the term “providence”, or even had ambivalent views of the term, which we can glean from the infrequent — compared to her — appearance the

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term has in their writings. The Adept Koot Hoomi (KH), for example, wrote that “If you ask a learned Buddhist priest, what is Karma? — he will tell you that Karma is what a Christian might call Providence (in a certain sense only) and a Mahomedan *Kismet*, fate, or destiny (again in one sense).”⁹

The same matter-of-fact use of providence is also found in a letter from the Adept Serapis Bey to Henry Olcott, in which this Adept refers to HPB — in pointed though unintended irony — as herself a “providence”. He tells Olcott that

Her [HPB’s] letter to thee and thy own knowledge of human heart must inspire thee, O Brother, with the words best adapted for this plan. . . . how dangerous for her will be the achievement of her duty and how likely to expect for both of you to lose a sister and a — Providence on earth.¹⁰

Those who truly appreciate the extraordinary work HPB did for humanity, and the awful sacrifices she endured to do so, can also fully appreciate what the Adept declared — that HPB was *herself* a providence, providing to us in clear modern English outstanding restatements of the immemorial truths of the *philosophia perennis*.

Providence for Chelas of Adepts

“For the Occultist,” wrote HPB, “this enigma of the unequal favor of Karma or Providence is unriddled by the Secret Doctrine.”¹¹ This terse quote observes a profound truth that is meaningful on several levels, with which HPB intro-

duces a principle that KH explains in greater detail. Regarding the providential nature of their work, KH asks, and answers, in his first letter to A. O. Hume:

How could your world collect proofs of the doings of men [Adepts] who have sedulously kept closed every possible door of approach by which the inquisitive could spy upon them? . . . What they have done they know; all those outside their circle could perceive was results, the causes of which were masked from view. To account for these results, men have in different ages invented theories of the interposition of “Gods”, special providences, fates, and the benign or hostile influences of the stars. There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our [Adept] predecessors were not moulding events and “making history”, the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by “historians” to suit contemporary prejudices.¹²

It is clear from this statement that within the global realm of providence, the Adepts play a larger, more universal role than most realize. However, our purpose here is not to explore this universal role of providence or oversight of humanity that the Adepts undertake, but rather what specific oversight, or providence, the Adepts employ for the benefit of their chelas.

Before any chela can benefit from the instruction or providence of an Adept as his or her guru, that chela must effectively “leave home”. This ancient principle, found in both Buddhism and Hinduism,

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has both a gradual and immediate application. In Buddhism, a “home-leaver” is similar to a “stream-enterer”: one who abandons the mundane world and enters the stream that flows to release from the wheel of death and rebirth (*nirvāna*).

Among the best paradigms of a home-leaver is found in the *Shōbōgenzō*, the massive work of the 13th century Zen master Dogen, who devoted an entire chapter to *Shukke* (“On Leaving Home Life Behind”). In Hinduism, a corresponding principle is found in *sannyāsa*, the fourth of the “*āśramas*”, from the *Āśrama Upanishad*. In this stage of life, the *sannyāsi* sets out alone with alms bowl in hand, without any belongings, with no home or family, to seek final truth and possibly the attainment of liberation.

For the traditional Buddhist or Hindu devotee, these are choices that rely *entirely* on the dictates of Karma-Nemesis (providence). It is to leap into freefall. Virtually the same can be said for the wayfarer who seeks to become a probationer or a chela under an Adept of the Order of which Morya, KH, and others belong. In that endeavor, karma is always the overriding context within which their providence occurs. KH asserted:

Since every one of us is the *creator* and producer of the *causes* that lead to such or some other *results*, we have to reap but what we have sown. *Our chelas are helped but when they are innocent of the causes that lead them into trouble*; when such causes are generated by foreign, outside influences.¹³

This type of help would normally apply to senior chelas like Djual Khool, and to junior ones like Damodar Mavalankar, both of whom were “accepted” and had in fact “left home” in the physical or immediate sense¹⁴ and came to live in the Himalayas under the direct tutelage of the Adepts. However, this type of help would not normally apply to probationers, given KH’s statement that “until a chela has passed that period [probation], we leave him to fight out his battles as best he may; and have to do so occasionally with higher and *initiated* chelas such as HPB, once they are allowed to work in the world, that all of us more or less avoid.”¹⁵

Authentic wayfarers on the higher spiritual path are typically in the process of leaving home. This often begins as an incremental dissociation from those practices and associations that bind them — as attachments — to their mundane lives, and so hinder their spiritual progress. Once they arrive at the precincts of chela-ship, these are they for whom KH wrote: “You will always get what you need as you shall deserve them [instructions], but no more than you deserve or are able to assimilate.”¹⁶ Such instructions, which are also a manifestation of providence, are accessible to wayfarers whose 6th principle (*buddhi*) has acquired the necessary resonance to apprehend them.

“Abandon All and Come to Us”

“Let those who really desire to learn *abandon all* and come to us, instead of asking or expecting us to go to them.”¹⁷

The Providential Higher Spiritual Path

So wrote KH, consistent with the venerable principle of the need for wayfarers on the higher spiritual path to leave home — to choose to abandon all, to labor full time for the spiritual enlightenment of humanity, and to have faith in both the operation of Karma-Nemesis and the Adepts that they will be provided for upon making this choice. This decision usually consists of personal and painful sacrifices, whether the leaving is incremental or all at once.

The choice to abandon all and leave home, most often a departure from that which is familiar and comprises one's comfort zone, is unsettling and frightening — a volitional dive into the unknown pertaining to the basics of emotional and even physical survival. But the guiding star is that this choice ultimately inures

to the benefit of humanity, *especially* so in times of pandemic fear and despair, when the need for willing soldiers is so dire in the escalating global struggle between darkness and Light.

KH advises all considering this choice to believe that “You will not be unwatched and uncared for, but you have to attract, not to repel us and our chelas.”¹⁸ Within the context of chelaship, attracting the attention of the Adepts is achieved only by being resolutely strong and fearless, and steadily living a life of intuition, selflessness, purity, and compassion. And after that attraction is successful, being “watched and cared for” becomes the special providence of Adept to chela, alive in the words of Serapis Bey: “We keep watch over our faithful soldiers.”¹⁹ ✧

Endnotes

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3. _____, *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. VI, Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), 1954, p. 180.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
5. _____, Vol. IV, p. 501.
6. _____, Vol. VI, p. 320–321.
7. Blavatsky H. P. *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, Facsimile Ed., Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, p. 305, fn.
8. _____, Vol. I, p. 643.
9. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (chron.), Arranged & ed. by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., Quezon City, Philippines: TPH, 1993, p. 198.
10. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, II, 4th

Reprint, Compiled by C. Jinarājadāsa, Adyar: TPH, 2002, p. 35.

11. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XIV, p. 396.
12. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 473.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
14. Djual Khool's nickname was “the disinherited” because he was disinherited by his family when he became a chela of KH. Damodar suffered a similar familial fate, for a similar reason.
15. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 299.
16. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, I, 7th Ed., Compiled by C. Jinarājadā, Adyar: TPH, 2011, p. 75.
17. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 73.
18. *Mrs. Holloway and the Mahatmas*, Compiled and ed. by Daniel H. Caldwell, Blavatsky Study Center, 2012, p. 123.
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Animals Are Spiritual Beings

Animal Rights: A Scientific and Spiritual View — I

MICHIEL HAAS

Introduction

Over three articles I intend to provide an overview of how we treat animals and how things could be done differently. In our society animals are used as an efficient production tool, in a way that is no longer in line with the latest scientific view that animals are conscious to varying degrees, have feelings, and can suffer pain.

Should we use animals?

Who gives us the right to use animals as a production tool and often not treat them as living beings with feelings? Is that a biblical right? God said: “Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:28). But does it give us a licence to treat animals badly? No, definitely not. God even gave the Israelites laws for the welfare of animals. They had to get plenty of rest and food, to be assisted when in need, and to be protected from injury (Exodus 23:4–5; Deuteronomy 22:10; 25:4).

The Qur’an is also clear about this. “It is He who has made you successors upon the Earth.” (Qur’an 35:39). But still, He is clear that this responsibility is not unconditional. For those who fail to meet the conditions that limit this responsibility, the following applies: “Then we return him to the lowest of the low.” (Qur’an 95:5). In short, although the sacred books make man ruler of the animals on Earth, those books are equally clear that such responsibility comes with duties. It certainly looks like today’s society disregards those duties.

Do animals have feelings?

Today, most scientists agree that all vertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish, are aware to varying degrees, have feelings, and can suffer pain. Until recently, they thought differently. “Those who cannot speak, feel no pain” — for a long time, this was the consensus in the scientific world. Until the 1980s, doctors operated on babies who could not speak without using anesthesia!

Mr Michiel Haas, a long-term member of the TS Adyar and an architect, switched to consulting for decades and then to professor of sustainable architecture with emphasis on climate change at TU-Delft. Then, he became interested in animal rights and a holistic view of Nature. He is active in the Adyar renovation project.

Fortunately, we now know better. Animals do not talk, but they *do* suffer just as much. Animal suffering is affecting us more and more. Yet the awareness of the way in which animals suffer, because of us, is sadly very limited.

The vast majority of animal species have neural warning mechanisms that are known by the general term “nociception” (pain sensing). This ensures that they are sensitive to what can damage or kill them. When they are scared, the heartbeat of vertebrates increases. They have brain structures that resemble our limbic system, the areas that control emotions. Their behaviour and their brain structure are proof that animals have consciousness. This means they feel pain. According to current scientific knowledge, two groups of animals meet these criteria: vertebrates and squids.

The fact that animals *can* grieve and therefore also have emotions is known about elephants. Monkeys, whales, killer whales, giraffes, ducks and a whole host of other species, from farm animals to pets, also show mourning behaviour. In the summer of 2018, the grief of a killer whale, that kept her baby on the surface for seventeen days and made a 1,500-mile journey with her dead offspring, became widely known. Then she let go and began to hunt for food again with the group in which she lived.

Do animals have personalities?

For people with pets it is a well-known fact: cats, dogs, and horses have their own personality, while they do have the same

breed characteristics. For science this was still a difficult point to acknowledge. Biologists have long ignored such individual variation in behaviour. In their eyes, behaviour was flexible and the differences between individuals were accidental deviations. The now retired behavioural physiologist from Groningen, the Netherlands, Jaap Koolhaas, was one of the first to oppose this. He studied social behaviour in mice and rats and noticed that there were major differences between individuals. “Some animals always behave more aggressively, are more curious and braver than their counterparts,” he recalls.

Jaap’s colleague, Ton Groothuis, chairman of the Behavioural Biology department at the University of Groningen, mostly studied great tits, which are passerine birds, and he thinks that knowledge of the hormonal and brain activity that drives behaviour is not sufficient to explain it. But what would they call those individual differences in their publications? Social styles? Behavioural syndromes? Or just “personality”? They settled for the latter. “Everyone immediately understands what that means”, Groothuis explains. “Moreover, the choice was also strategic: ‘individual differences’ does not appeal to the imagination, but ‘personality’ does.”

In his inaugural address in February 2019, as extraordinary professor of Animal Personality at Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands, Prof. Kees van Oers outlined how we can treat animals better if we know their personality. The personality of people largely determines

their happiness, health, and success. And because personality is so essential in humans, the legitimate question arises: why should that not apply to animals?

Piek Stor, a Dutch medium who communicates with animals via telepathy, from ants and ticks to elephants and cows, knows well the many different personalities among animals, and says we can learn a lot from animals. There are very wise animals amongst them, wisdom that is also valuable to us humans. An example of the wisdom of a parrot:

Animals have a range of feelings. People often deal with it so bluntly. The world needs to know about this form of communication. Tell people about us. . . . We want to be heard. Listen to animals! People do not have the exclusive right to speak.

(Piek Stor, *In the Silence You Hear Everything*)

Do animals have a soul?

In Judaism, people believe that animals have souls. However, many Christians do not believe this. Yet there are clear indications in the Bible that animals have a soul.

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind. And it was so.” (Genesis 1:24).

Unfortunately, the idea that animals do not have a soul has often led to many forms of animal abuse. The soul is seen in Judaism as a secret of God and reveals the

deeper layer of life. A soul knows joy of life and happiness, but also fear and pain.

The American Stephen H. Webb, former professor of religious sciences, said that heaven is a “restored paradise” where, like Adam and Eve, humans and animals live in harmony with each other. Webb, author of *On God and Dogs: a Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals*, invoked statements from Old Testament prophets such as Amos, Ezekiel, and Micah. According to the theologian, every good relationship between humans and pets is a reflection of the situation in the afterlife. “All animals go to God.”

Hinduism and Buddhism regard the animal world, from the big four-legged friend to the tiny insect, as their “younger brothers”. H. P. Blavatsky writes in her article “Have Animals Souls?” (*The Theosophist*, January 1886):

Verily when the world feels convinced — and it cannot avoid coming one day to such a conviction — that animals are creatures as eternal as we ourselves, vivisection and other permanent tortures, daily inflicted on the poor brutes, will, after calling forth an outburst of maledictions and threats from society generally, force all Governments to put an end to those barbarous and shameful practices.

According to Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the Anthroposophical Society, there is an important difference between humans and animals. Man has an individual ego, while this does not apply to animals. Members of a (non-human) animal species

all share the same collective ego. In that sense there is therefore no soul for each animal individually, because an animal has no self of its own. However, both an animal and a human have an astral body.

Animal communicator Piek Stor, mentioned earlier, fully supports the theosophical vision in a very nuanced way. In her conversations with the animals, the latter usually indicate that they are part of a group and that there is a spokesperson that represents the group soul. But that does not apply to all animals, there are absolutely real individuals present, for example when she talks to a lion or a bison or an elephant, but also the cat and the dog are often true individuals, who are only connected to the group soul by a long line. She also sees a big distinction between species. Ants are busy and very aware. A tick is hardly aware and only wants to suck and then drop down, and then wait and start over again — so, a very low level of consciousness.

Can animals reincarnate?

Radha Burnier, international President of the Theosophical Society for 33 years, was very concerned about animal welfare, but she had no trouble killing a mosquito. “They reincarnate quickly”, was her explanation.

The Tibetans were in the habit of sifting the ground before a temple was built so that no living creature, not even a worm, would be harmed. The Tibetans believed that souls can reincarnate in any living form and that a worm in a previous life could have been one’s mo-

ther. A modern Tibetan Buddhist would probably say that one’s mother is unlikely to reincarnate as a worm. These Tibetan actions are symbolic to illustrate how we should feel compassion for all living things and treat them like our beloved family. It also questions whether our souls climb an evolutionary ladder across many species.

Craig Hamilton-Parker is a well-known British psychic medium. He shows clairvoyance on television in England and the United States, and is the author of many books about paranormal and dream interpretation. In his article “What Happens to Animals When They Die?” he writes the following:

My spirit guide has told us about what happens to animals when they die. They say that animals do not all survive as individual identities after death. Some merge to what he calls a “group consciousness”. Their spirits return to a collective awareness for that particular species and from this pool of awareness different animal souls are born. It is only when an animal becomes self-aware that its soul continues after death and starts the long process of climbing the evolutionary ladder towards human and angelic consciousness.

This image is confirmed by many other mediums.

Because there is hardly any scientific research into reincarnation in animals, we have to get our information mainly from mediums. A wonderful story about a dog’s reincarnation comes from the book *Pets Have Souls Too* by Jenny Smedley,

an English reincarnation therapist. In the book she tells the story of Teacup, a small and ugly mutt with a naughty character. The dog was part of the family; she sat at the table in her own chair and had a very bad habit. She loved custard-cream cookies and would do anything to get one. So, she would sneak up from behind the chair and whip the cookie out of your hand at the speed of a thieving seagull and eat it.

But one day Teacup died, leaving a big gap in her owners' hearts. They did not want to get another dog because it felt like they would be betraying her. A few years later the couple went on holiday to a deserted area in the Lake District, where they had been going on holiday for years. One day they heard a scratching at the door and found a beautiful fur ball outside the door, wanting to go inside. The woman opened the door and the dog ran inside and jumped on a chair at the table and sat down opposite the man who was still sitting at the table for breakfast as if she had always done that.

The owners asked around the neighbourhood if anyone knew this dog, but no one had lost a dog, so they took him

home after the holiday. And here comes the moment where we could almost speak of evidence of reincarnation. The man made a cup of tea for his wife in the afternoon and came out of the kitchen with the cup and two custard-cream cookies. Like a bolt of lightning, the dog shot off the seat next to her, clutching the cookies in his mouth, and disappeared behind the couch to enjoy it.

Conclusion

A large number of scientists have come to the conclusion that all vertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, are conscious to varying degrees, have feelings, and can suffer pain. From a spiritual perspective there appears to be a strong suggestion that animals have a soul, often a group soul, but there are certainly animals that have already been individualised. And there are clear indications of reincarnation of animals, as appears from conversations with these animals by animal communicators. All this knowledge should have consequences in our dealings with animals.

(To be continued)

Life is as precious to us as it is for an animal. An animal is as loving, caring, and kind to her children as we are. She might not be able to tell us but she can express it through her eyes and expressions. She feels joy and happiness. She is helpless in our cruel hands and vulnerable to our vicious greed. Let us be kind to animals. Let us learn to feel their pain.

Dr Debasish Mridha, Physician
Michigan Advanced Neurology Center, USA

William Quan Judge

ENEIDA CARBONELL

THE entity called William Quan Judge became cofounder of the Theosophical Society (TS) along with Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott on 17 November 1875, the day chosen to form this Society with 14 other persons who did not remain firm in this endeavor like the first three.

This is the reason why Olcott clarifies in his book, *Old Diary Leaves: History of the Theosophical Society*, that 17 November was merely the date of formation of the TS, because its founding could only be realized on a stable foundation, the result of several years of work and abnegation. The TS, which actually has an enormous scope, could only be formed initially as a Society for occult investigations animated by a Mr George Felt, who was presenting a series of lectures on Egyptology.

The great purpose was not glimpsed with clarity, but its internal founders *did* know what was the scope of this founding. They needed egos sufficiently evolved for this delicate task who could withstand the blows of a world which was, at that time, completely superstitious, low-ranking materialistic or spiritualistic,

refusing to assimilate glimpses of the truth that these founders proposed to introduce.

HPB was the elected entity of the White Brotherhood (“white” implying purity, not color), or Himalayan Brotherhood, for the transmission of the Ageless Wisdom teachings. All her life unfolded in such a way that the necessary requisites toward this end could be achieved, but this would require a firm and legitimate support for the work. So They chose a courageous North American, Col H. S. Olcott. The encounter was carefully prepared and took place at the Eddy Farm, located in the city of Chittenden, in Vermont, United States. This encounter, which began with ordinary situations of life, would seal a true friendship, accompanied by an unwavering purpose for them both.

It was also indispensable to have an advanced disciple who could understand, realize, and disseminate the offered teachings, and the first person who presented himself in the scene with these magnificent qualities was known as William Quan Judge. According to his biography, he was of Irish origin, born in Dublin on 13 April 1851, but it is well known that at

Mrs Eneida Carbonell, originally from Cuba, is a long-standing member of España Lodge, American Section of the TS. Translated from her book, *Reflexiones Teosóficas*, 2012.

William Quan Judge

the age of seven, when he was declared as having no vital signs, suddenly, to the astonishment of all present, he came back to life with a personality completely different from his usual one, to which all his relatives had to adapt themselves.

From that moment onward Judge displayed knowledge that he had never been taught, and would inquire into topics completely foreign to his previous personality: now he was a tireless reader, revealing a fondness for books dealing with mesmerism, phrenology, religion, magic, Rosicrucianism, the Book of Revelation, and so on. This is perhaps why, when HPB met him, she may have recognized in him the entity that lived in Judge during meetings that were held in Tibet while she was living there.

If we observe the development of the life of this entity in the body of Judge, we see that it was directed toward a tremendous spiritual strengthening. This was because, in the first place, his physical body never fully recovered since the day that it was declared lifeless, showing a very fragile constitution. At an early age he lost the support of his mother, who transitioned, and when he was an adolescent, Judge's father disincarnated. Later he got married, and at a young age his only daughter also lost her life, which was followed by the collapse of his marriage.

When he joined the theosophical ranks, it was his duty to defend the cause of Theosophy in America for a long time, completely by himself, and this was during the period in which HPB was defamed by the

Coulombs couple. But, faced with such adversity, he showed his internal strength, tirelessly working, writing theosophical articles for his journal, *The Path*, and valuable books such as *The Ocean of Theosophy*, *Letters that Have Helped Me*, and others. All this he did in the short free time allowed by his profession as attorney, given that since 1872, when he finished his legal studies, he had always been active in his commercial law career.

As mentioned earlier, Judge was disseminating Theosophy in America completely alone, since his two principal cofounders relocated to India in December 1878. The process of attracting other people to join him in the theosophical work was very slow, as theosophical activity was almost nil. But he persevered in maintaining a close link with HPB by correspondence and some or other trip abroad that he took in order to meet her.

When he finally succeeded in establishing a theosophical center in New York City, and the work there increased considerably, he abandoned his profession and dedicated himself entirely to Theosophy, travelling to different states in North America, disseminating these teachings. In this work many helpers joined him, who became his fans and followers. He also travelled to South America, where he contracted an illness which further debilitated his already fragile condition.

In July 1894 Judge traveled to London to have a private meeting with several theosophists who doubted the authenticity of a letter that he said he

William Quan Judge

had received from the Masters of the Wisdom. In that meeting, those present concluded that the letter in question easily seemed *not* to have originated from the Masters, but they agreed to keep the matter among themselves. Yet the next day one of those who attended the private meeting published in the *Westminster Gazette* a satirical series of articles referring to the conclusion reached at that meeting, making public what had been agreed to be kept private.

This development affected Judge, but, as he had sufficient internal strength, he did *not* react negatively. However, his sympathizers *did* react, provoking the first division between theosophists, in which Judge did *not* participate. Soon his physical health collapsed, and on 21 March 1896 he abandoned the physical plane at the age of forty-five, leaving behind an immense theosophical work in America and many admirers to this day. ✧

The ancients celebrated four holy seasons: the winter solstice, the spring equinox, the summer solstice, and the autumnal equinox. First comes the Great Birth, the winter — the birth of the sun when he first begins to reassume his powers of light, when his journey to the South is over, and he begins to retrace his journey back to the North.

And then comes Adolescence at the spring equinox, when the laws of life and light begin magically to work on the Earth. Trees burgeon, flowers spring forth, Nature begins to sing with the new elements of life coursing through her veins.

And in the summertime comes the Great Temptation, or the great trial which a man always undergoes in maturity and full power of his strength, determining whether he goes up or down; for in the summertime likewise the fruits are ready for the harvest. Grain has been cut and stored. Nature is rich and powerful, overflowing with her exuberance of vitality.

And then comes the fourth sacred season, that of the autumn equinox, when the sun, as it were, seems to take leave of the northern regions and pursues his journey southward. The days shorten, the nights lengthen, chills come upon the Earth, the leaves fall, the sap retreats from twig, leaf, branch, and stock, into the roots. Rest comes and peace. And this was called the season of the Great Passing.

G. de Purucker
Studies in Occult Philosophy

Theosophical Work around the World

USA — Online School of Theosophy

Modern society imposes an extremely hectic life and long working hours on a vast number of people, so many countries are steadily witnessing falling rates of volunteerism and engagement with community organizations.¹ The Theosophical Society (TS) is of course not immune to this trend, which poses a challenge to finding new and appropriate ways of bringing theosophical teachings to an increasingly busy population. When looking at how educational organizations are responding to the current conditions, we see that the main strategy is the development of online learning, also known as “e-learning”. This new modality is booming, and is currently considered to be the future of education by those in market research.²

Therefore, the **Theosophical Society in America** and the **Krotona Institute of Theosophy (KIT)**, with the generous support of the Kern Foundation, are collaborating to develop a new Online School of Theosophy (OST) under the direction of Dr Pablo Sender, residing at KIT. The OST is a learning portal that offers theosophical courses on “Moodle” — a sleek online platform designed to enhance the learning experience, which

is used for education in business, non-profit, government, and communities around the world.

The OST presents, in a systematic way, the wealth of theosophical teachings available. The courses are built on multimedia resources (videos, audios, texts, and more) that TS members and sympathizers are able to enjoy in the comfort of their home at any time.

A typical course is composed of a series of “units”, consisting of the following elements:

1) A video recording by an esteemed theosophical teacher.

2) A reading assignment (an article or chapter from a book), to supplement the information shared in the video.

3) A series of quizzes (True/False, Multiple Choice, Fill in the Blank, Drag and Drop activities, and more) where students are able to self-evaluate their understanding.

4) A proposed exercise of meditative inquiry.

5) Additional resources in the form of articles, audios, and videos, to help deepen the exploration of the subject.

Since the OST is hosted online, it can offer courses by teachers from all over the world, allowing students to take ad-

¹ <philanthropy.com/article/Americans-Engagement-With/152055>.

² <forbes.com/sites/tjmccue/2018/07/31/e-learning-climbing-to-325-billion-by-2025-uf-canvas-absorb-schoology-moodle/>.

Theosophical Work around the World

vantage of the best resources that the TS has to offer internationally, regardless of where they live. Additionally, the material provided in these courses can become an important resource to aid the work of theosophical groups.

The development of content is underway. At present, an 8-unit beginners' course, "Introduction to Theosophy", and four 4-unit courses for intermediate students are available.

On <schooloftheosophy.org> you will find a list of available courses. Instructions to register and participate in them can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page.

Theosophical Centres

The TS has twelve Theosophical retreat centres and camps around the world. They are in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Finland, India, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and USA. They are listed in the Adyar website under menu Visit>Retreat Centres in the World, with links to the Centres' webpages. The newest centre is in Pavlynka village, south Ukraine. It is called Cultural Centre H. P. Blavatsky. Pavlynka is where the former farm estate of the Fadeyevs, grandparents of HPB, is located. It is a serene place with vegetarian food, ideal for theosophical study courses, workshops, retreats, and meditations.

The International Theosophical Centre (ITC), Naarden, in the Netherlands, founded in 1925, is one of the major Theosophical centres in the world, along with the TS international headquarters centre

in Adyar (Chennai, India, 1882), The Manor (Sydney, Australia, 1911), and the Krotona Institute of Theosophy (Ojai, California, 1924), each representing different aspects of the work.

In 1988 a formal relationship with Adyar was created between the Naarden Centre and the President of the TS, who also became President of the Centre, strengthening its role as the European home of the TS. Further, the General Council of the TS decided to organize its annual strategic planning sessions at the Naarden Centre. Today the Centre welcomes activities of a range of spiritual organizations, which strengthens and enriches its role. The draft mission statement reads: To serve humanity as a spiritual study and retreat centre, inviting many to explore personal transformation.

<Theosophy.world>

This site has frequent updates, with contents in English, Spanish, and French. The Theosophical Encyclopedia was also transferred to the site, with an excellent search option.

Theosophy-Science Publications

Mr Jacques Mahnich, from France, has created <theoscience.org>, a website in English, and launched a quarterly electronic magazine, also in English: *Researches Relevant to Theosophy*. The Australian Section has a *Theosophy-Science Group Newsletter* published on its website. And the TS in Ukraine has a Theosophy-Science group, publishing a magazine in the Ukrainian language.

Theosophical Work around the World

Convention-related Announcements

The announcements below from the international Secretary, Ms Marja Artamaa, may be of interest to those planning to attend the upcoming 144th International Convention to be held this time at the Headquarters of the Indian Section in Varanasi, *not Adyar*, from 31 December 2019 to 5 January 2020:

The last date for registering to attend the Convention in Varanasi **is 30 November 2019**. Those attending will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore the spiritual capital of India, Varanasi (formerly Benares, or Kasi), on the banks of the river Ganga (Ganges) by attending an excursion preceding the International Convention, on either 29 or 30 December 2019. These are identical full-day excursions to sacred places at and near Varanasi. You may register for either one of those two days for Rs. 2,500, which does not include food during the excursion, nor is it included in the Convention package. **Payments**

need to be sent, like registrations, **no later than 1 December 2019**.

Another choice available is to attend a **retreat at the Krishnamurti Foundation Centre** in Rajghat, Varanasi, from 24 to 30 December, about which you may ask for details when you submit the Convention registration form.

Note that the **International Youth Convention** (ages 18–45) takes place at Adyar, the TS International Headquarters, from 27 to 29 December 2019. **Last day to register is 15 December 2019**. In summary, the list of events is as follows:

- ◆ 24–30.12.2019 = International Retreat at KFI, Rajghat, Varanasi.
- ◆ 27–29.12.2019 = International Youth Convention at Adyar.
- ◆ 29.12.2019 = Excursion to sacred places in Varanasi.
- ◆ 30.12.2019 = Excursion to sacred places in Varanasi.
- ◆ 31.12.2019–5.1.2020 = International Convention in Varanasi. ✧

A good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offsprings of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions, a current which reacts upon any sensitive and/or nervous organisation which comes in contact with it in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls this his “skandha,” the Hindu gives it the name of “karma”; the Adept evolves these shapes consciously, other men throw them off unconsciously.

KH to A. O. Hume
1 Nov. 1880

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

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