

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: A sacred mandala “illuminated” painting with light computer effects on black card, with gold ink pen and crystals, inspired by H. P. Blavatsky’s (HPB) *Isis Unveiled*. Portuguese artist / poet Joma Sipe: See the passage from *Isis* related with this symbolic and visionary art work on p. 41 of this issue and <jomasipe.com/joma-sipe-isis-unveiled-2013>

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

Spiritual Evolution

TIM BOYD

IN the theosophical tradition there are certain core ideas. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB), the principle founder of the Theosophical Society, talks about three Fundamental Propositions which we are encouraged to, at least partially, grasp and then attempt to live. These Propositions address the ideas of the Absolute, the universality of Cycles, and the necessary pilgrimage of the Soul.

There are also other core concepts with which we need to be familiar. Among those are the ideas of the Unity of all life, the multi-dimensional nature of the universe and ourselves, the idea that we are each responsible for our choices and for the direction of our consciousness. These are all integral to the Ageless Wisdom tradition.

There is also the idea of evolution, spiritual evolution, as distinct from the Darwinian idea. Very early in J. Krishnamurti's little book, *At the Feet of the Master*, the young author makes the distinction that "in all of the world there are only two types of people". He does not look at it in terms of nationalities, genders, or the many things we tend to regard as important. The two types of people he identifies are those

who know and those who do not. The importance of this comment lies in the nature of the knowledge that distinguishes these groups. He describes it as the knowledge of "evolution", that we are evolving, and that there is the possibility to participate consciously in this process of unfoldment.

Krishnamurti was not talking about the evolution of forms. Natural selection is the engine that drives the evolution of forms; only those which are the most fit are selected by the processes of Nature to survive, and only the fittest among them go on to advance the species. It is a form-driven process, unrelated to the unfoldment of consciousness. It is neutral in the sense that it has no specific goal or direction.

For those who find value in the Ageless Wisdom tradition the evolution of forms is undeniable, but the focus is on the evolution of consciousness. "Evolution" is a fitting word for the process we undergo. Its root comes from the Latin, meaning "to unfold" or "unroll". In the days when texts were written on scrolls, only as they were unrolled would one be able to read the text which was fully present, but previously hidden.

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From this point of view evolution is the unfoldment, or unrolling, of an already-existing, hidden pattern. It is much like a seed, where the tree, the flower, and the fruit are contained in that little speck of matter, but we cannot see it, because a process is involved in revealing it. In contrast to the evolution of forms, spiritual evolution does have a direction. It is a movement in consciousness from fragmentation toward unity; from the isolated particle, or individual self, to that which is united with a universal and overarching consciousness.

What is the root of this sense of fragmentation? Like a stone is a piece of a mountain, a fragment is a piece of something else, possessed of all of the qualities of its source, but in limitation. We have the condition of being fragmented into personal selves. Our single-pointed focus on the personality is the factor that blinds us to a deeper process. As some understanding of this grows, we find that our work is in this area of the personality, of the isolating tendency of its wants, desires, and thoughts. If we are to unfold the spiritual or consciousness aspect, it becomes our responsibility to introduce something to move the process in another direction.

In the fragmented state it is said that one cannot see the forest for the trees. This is because we are so locked in on the one tree of the self. So what is it that holds our attention so firmly that we are unable to see something more profound, that is ever-present, but somehow invisible to our normal way of seeing?

During this past week, I had a fascinating conversation with someone who is very active in the field of a cutting-edge digital form of technology, the thing that is driving society at this very moment — the combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and imaging capacities. It was a fascinating conversation because one aspect of our discussion was the idea of the evolving consciousness.

His focus was on our technological capacity to enhance, or augment our normal reality. Just as we see things through our eyes, now there is the capacity to see more, to augment “reality” by digital means. So we can add information, add visual content, add even tactile elements to what we experience as our normal reality. One of the things that neuroscience has pointed out is the fact that our habitual way of seeing the world is a conditioned response. There is a certain coding and pattern of electrical connections within the brain. Visual images are experienced as electrical impulses sent to the brain, and then translated into colors and objects. At a certain point we come to a shared consensus of what it is we are all looking at: green is not red, a car is not a lake, or a horse, and so on. It becomes what we accept as reality and we live accordingly.

The simple fact is that when we are born, the way the eye itself functions, all of the images that we see are reversed, the way the light passes through the pupil and strikes on the retina. Basically, at first the world is seen upside down. The brain corrects that, and we learn to

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see as we see now. But it is a correction, an alteration, an augmentation of reality made by the brain. Not too very long ago, before I fully committed to wearing glasses all the time, I was trying to wear contact lenses, but there was a problem, because one eye was seeing a little bit differently from the other. So when the same strength lens was put in both eyes, I could see well at a distance, but I could not read, or vice versa. The solution: they put a lens of one strength in one eye and a lens of a different strength in the other.

When we are looking far away the brain compensates and relies on one eye's way of seeing the world. When we are reading, it compensates and moves toward the reading eye's view. Thus we see both far and near perfectly even though we are looking through very different lenses. The brain itself is an interpreter of what we come to describe as reality. Along the way we come to agree upon certain things, and anyone who steps too far outside of that agreement has a problem. This has been the issue with the mystics and saints of the world. They see and describe a different reality that is not shared by everyone, so throughout history many of them have been crucified, burned at the stake, or marginalized, because we will not abide any alteration in our shared conviction of what is real.

The argument that was being made in this conversation was that digital augmentation of reality is not so very different from what already occurs un-

consciously with our brains, and it was his opinion that the massive amount of information and data that can be added to our experience is in effect an evolutionary advance.

From my side, drawing on the perspective of the Ageless Wisdom, I say, "Yes, it is an advance", in the same way that a telescope, a microscope, or a computer is an advance — we can see and do things that we never could before. But it is horizontal; it just broadens our view of the same level where we are currently functioning. It does not alter character, or the dominance of the personality, nor does it have the potential for that. It provides more information to process, to participate in, and, very often, to get lost inside of.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, HPB talks about three halls of consciousness that the disciple, or aspirant, will pass through. The first one is the Hall of Ignorance. She says that is the hall in which we first see "the light" of a deeper possibility, but it is also where we will live and die. We get a glimpse of something more, but as long we are bound by our personal thoughts and desires, it is where we return, life after life.

The second is the Hall of Learning. In it we are told the "Soul finds the blossoms of life", but that beneath every one of these flowers there is "a serpent coiled". As enthralling as the place may be, it is a mistake to linger inhaling the stupefying fragrance of these flowers that trap our senses and intelligence. The lesson to be learned here is that there is

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an inherently unsatisfactory nature to anything within this “Hall” of form and the personal nature, but it is a space through which we must pass and absorb all that it has to teach. There is nothing evil or bad about the things that attract the senses or fascinate the mind. Exposure to all of it is the need of the unfolding soul. But having reached a point where one can see that such experience is incapable of satisfying the deeper longing, to remain enthralled is the act of a foolish person.

Augmented reality will be the normal experience of our children and our children’s children. That is the world that awaits us. On the surface it seems dramatically different, but is it really? For

someone who finds value in the cultivation of consciousness, or spirit, the issues are the same. How to lessen the obscuring influence of the senses, desires, and thought processes? How to approach them as tools in self-transformation rather than as goals within themselves? The world ahead is the exact same world, only digitized. Human nature or potential is not altered by the conditions of the world, except as they become springboards to deeper possibilities.

In *The Voice of the Silence* HPB makes the statement that the Wise Ones do not look for the guru in this Hall of Learning, enlightenment is not the result of anything to be found there. They learn its lessons, and they move on. ✧

Progress, according to the vast perspective presented by the esoteric philosophy, is far from what the majority of people mean now by that word. They regard it from an entirely materialistic point of view or, at best, equate it with intellectual development. New inventions and the sophisticated comfort of modern life so glamorize the minds of enthusiasts that they believe that future hope lies in new skills such as genetic engineering, information technology, or surgical wizardry. It is sheer naivety to think that the information revolution will transform the world. Just as the industrial revolution did, it may transform the outer face of our society without liberating humanity from its psychological woes, and moral and spiritual dilemmas. All tools are only as useful and beneficial as the users make of them. Lack of wisdom in those who employ powerful tools could result in a serious reversal of the evolutionary direction for a time.

Radha Burnier, “On the Watch-Tower: Evolution or Selfishness”,
The Theosophist, Sep. 1996

Science: How Far Can We Go?

MANU JAISWAL

OUR daily lives are soaked in materialism commonly attributed to scientific revolutions — automobiles, electronic gadgets, and the internet. Scientific research has served as a potent weapon against disease, hunger, and disasters. To the serious student, Science offers a peep into the intricate workings of the machinery of the universe at every conceivable energy, length, and time scale. Are there any inherent limits to what Science can offer us? Are the grand heights of Truth all set to be scaled by Science, or are we missing the wood for the trees?

The Methodology of Science

Science marches with empirical data on the one hand and logic on the other. Facts are revealed by performing experiments in a reproducible manner. Scientists take great care to describe the conditions under which the empirical data have been obtained so that the same data can be verified by anyone else. Occasionally some experiments are hard to replicate, and such data of ephemeral nature find it hard to gain acceptance by the scientific community. The second

pillar of science is theory which is grounded in logic. Theory tries to organize empirical facts and relations into simplified conceptual structures.

The relationship between theory and experiment is iterative. Theory attempts to explain experimental observations and provides a generalization based on that data. The test of a successful theory lies in its ability to make new predictions that can be tested with newly designed experiments. In the method of science, empirical data is accorded pre-eminence. If theory and experiment contradict each other, it is the theory that needs to be modified. If the contradiction persists, the theory is eventually rejected and replaced by an alternative theory.

Thus, the scientific approach to understanding the universe is an open inquiry into the nature of things and a continually evolving process. H. H. the 14th Dalai Lama, has provided comparative science studies with other philosophical traditions. Among the approaches adopted by different religions, Buddhism comes close to the approach of science in certain contexts. Buddhism emphasizes empiricism,

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albeit based on inner contemplation rather than using investigating tools characteristic of science.

The Big Bang Theory: an illustrative example

Was the universe created, or has it existed from all times? A *Rg-Vedic* creation hymn states the difficulty, in these words: “He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it. Whose eye controls this world in the highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.” Scientific work on this subject began with Edwin Hubble in 1929. Hubble observed that galaxies further away from the Earth receded faster, implying that the universe was expanding.

Subsequently, two competing theories emerged: The Steady-state model from Bondi, Gold, and Hoyle, and the Big Bang model from Hubble and George Gamow. Interestingly, the intuitive idea about the Steady-state model came from a horror movie the proponents watched together in 1945, with the concluding scene being the same as the opening one. The Steady-state model held that the universe had been the same for all times and at all places in space. If the universe was expanding, then it required the creation of more matter such that the density of matter remained constant.

On the other hand, the Big Bang considered the creation of the universe to happen over a short time scale, followed by expansion. The Big Bang involves the expansion of space rather than the expansion of matter into space; therefore,

it is not like a massive explosion. These two competing theories made varying predictions. The Steady-state theory predicted uniformly distributed radio sources in the sky.

However, the Big Bang theory predicted remnant cosmic microwave background radiation, which originated when the universe started to cool after its creation. In the 1960s, new experimental data proved that radio sources were distant objects, not uniformly distributed. Cosmic microwave background signals were also observed, which sounded the death knell of the Steady-state theory and the Big Bang theory gained wide acceptance.

The story of the universe does not end there. The James Webb Space Telescope and the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) are technological marvels peeping farther into space and time. Looking at farther distances in space is the same as looking deeper in time, for light travels at a finite speed. The universe’s structure, closer to the time of its supposed birth, can thus be revealed. These experiments can further validate the Big Bang theory or help to refine it. However, should any future results contradict the predictions of the Big Bang theory, the latter would have to be dispensed with. Such openness in inquiry is the fundamental basis of the scientific approach.

Fundamental limitations to our understanding

Quantum mechanics was born out of one such open inquiry at the beginning of the 20th century. The previous classical

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theory of matter and radiation gradually evolved from the scientific works originating from the Renaissance period. The classical theory could explain many experimental facts, such as “why the sky is blue”. However, it made one startling prediction that contradicted our daily experience: a heated stove should emit so much ultraviolet radiation that it would make us all blind. The failure to explain this one empirical observation shook the very foundations of classical theory. This laid the basis for a completely radical approach in the form of quantum mechanics. Today, the classical theory is seen only as a simplification of the quantum theory.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, it has been held that Nature “can be described”. One insight from quantum theory pertains to fundamental limitations to our understanding of Nature. These limitations are an inherent property and are not related to the means adopted to probe. The size of a single particle, an electron, or a proton, is unmeasurably small. These “point-like” objects enter into relations with each other and create matter that occupies space and possesses different properties. A particle of dust, a laptop, or a human being is composed of the same elementary particles, yet each emerges with diverse physical appearances, shapes, and properties. According to Ulrich Mohrhoff, the inherent uncertainty in quantum mechanics is what “fluffs our matter”.

These elementary particles can mysteriously pass through arbitrarily wide or

high barriers, by a process known as “quantum tunneling”. Can macroscopic objects, like human beings, also tunnel? Then a prisoner walking to and fro in a cell can disappear from one side of the cell and reappear on the other, with the walls remaining completely intact! Except that the calculations provide the timescale for this to happen to be far more than the universe’s life. Hence, we do not see this magic happening in our experiential world. But individual quantum particles can tunnel on time-scales that are observable with instruments, and radioactivity is one example of the same.

Quantum mechanics does not tell us “how” the particles manage to do this in a language we could relate to our experiential world. The trajectories of such particles cannot be known. All that one can correctly arrive at is the probability of the particle disappearing from one side of a barrier and reappearing on the other. The double-slit experiment was popularized by the theoretical physicist, Richard Feynman. A single electron that confronts two slits on its path, apparently passes through both of them, while reappearing as a single entity on the other side. This forms an interference pattern similar to ripples from surface waves on water. Thus, matter exists as particle and wave, and depending on the experiment, the corresponding property is revealed.

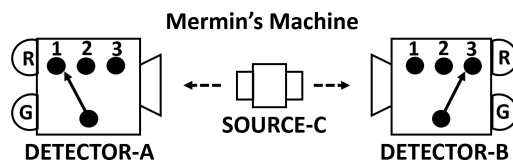
In Bell’s theorem lies the most profound mystery of all. Einstein remarked: “No reasonable definition of reality

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could be expected to permit this.” A popular article by David Mermin is metaphorically titled “Is the Moon There When Nobody Looks?”. A source C produces pairs of particles fired in two different directions, and detectors A and B detect these particles (see figure). The detectors are remotely located with no known connections between them. These two particles possess “color” as a property. Each particle has attributes such as “one-color”, “two-color”, and “three-color”. For each of these three particle attributes, the detectors can report the outcome to be either red or green. Both detectors have three dial settings labeled 1, 2, and 3. The experimenter at each end can set the dial to one of these three possible positions as per their choice.

If detector A had dial at position 2, the measurement outcome would be a two-color property of the particle, either red or green. In these experiments, whenever the two dials were set to identical positions, the detector light flashed the same color for the two particles. Thus, the particles detected at the two remote detectors were seen to possess the same color property. But taken across all runs with random dial positions at both detectors A and B, half the outcomes were red and the other half green. In other words, the outcomes were completely random. These two observations considered together pointed to the fact that the particles “could not have possessed their properties before they were measured”. It is well known and fairly intuitive that the act of mea-

surement can disturb the property of the attribute being measured. But what was very shocking was the conclusion that measurement “created” the property of the particles.



Furthermore, the measurement outcome in one detector could instantly decide the outcome in the other detector, which was located far away in space. This has been termed “spooky actions at a distance”. Max Born remarked that the spatial separation of remotely located objects is less convincing than one would think. Even though the particles were detected at remote positions in space, these two particles had a common origin C; therefore, the particles were not independent. The philosophical ramifications are also about the connections between the observer and the observed. It has been said that anybody not bothered by Bell’s theorem “has to have rocks in their head”.

The Emergence of Life in Matter

Emergence is a qualitatively new property seen in systems with increasing particles and complexity. One example is temperature, that can be defined only for a system with many atoms. Consider two playing cards, an ace, and a king, with the former placed on top of the other. We can call this an ordered set of cards. Shuffling the two cards once places

the king above the ace, but shuffling a second time restores the original configuration. Even after shuffling a very large, even number of times, the original configuration continues to be realized. Now consider a pack of 52 playing cards ordered in a neat sequence: ace, king, queen, jack, and so on.

Shuffling these cards would produce a random arrangement, and no reasonable amount of shuffling can restore the originally ordered arrangement. Thus, a qualitatively new behavior emerges when the number of cards is large: the tendency to become disordered upon shuffling. This new behavior can neither be attributed to performing a single shuffle, nor to any property of the individual card. This is the way of Nature: it likes disorder, or in technical terms, the entropy increases.

Life is often stated as an emergent property of Matter. Life forms are composed of billions of particles. How does Life behave differently? One fundamental property of Life that distinguishes it from sterile matter is its ability to “maintain order” under continuously varying dynamic external conditions. The natural tendency of all material things in the universe is to head towards a disorderly state. However, a common attribute of Life is maintaining order by taking energy from the environment. Precision biological clocks are one example of this order. Erwin Schrödinger argued that just a few atomic particles could not have produced Life. For sizes smaller than viruses and bacteria, the

errors blow up, and there cannot be definite laws describing the system.

From Life to Mind

Do bacteria possess memory? We do not have direct access to any consciousness other than our own. A colony of bacteria when exposed to light releases potassium ions. Over time, potassium levels also fluctuate naturally. Recent work has shown that bacterial colonies can collectively retain the memory of their exposure to light by periodically returning to their light-exposed state.

It has been stated that Consciousness or Mind is an emergent property of Life. But such statements should be taken with a pinch of salt. The emergence of temperature or entropy described above is on solid mathematical footing. The idea of the emergence of Consciousness from Life is merely an analogy at a qualitative level. Researchers have pointed out the dangers of extending the thermodynamic definition of emergence beyond the realm of physics. Importantly, if one states that Consciousness is an emergent property of Life, the startling conclusion is that “we are only approximately alive and operationally conscious”!

The idea of emergence is fundamentally a bottom-up approach. An alternative description is a top-down scheme of “Manifestation”. The Mind is capable of ideating but does not know the source of its ideas; Life is capable of executing ideas but cannot ideate; Matter is the sterile physical world ultimately composed of formless elementary par-

ticles which are not even capable of executing ideas. A key argument proposed by Ulrich Mohrhoff in support of the top-down manifestation scheme is the incomplete spatiotemporal differentiation of matter.

Why has the Mind or Consciousness been so difficult to probe with scientific tools? One reason is that Consciousness is a highly private, subjective experience whereas, Science is a third-person, objective account. Another is the preponderance of ephemeral data related to personal experiences. This data does not gain acceptance by the scientific community, which insists on reproducible experiments.

Schrödinger gave the analogy with “All Saints”, a Renaissance painting by Dürer. The Holy Trinity is depicted in the sky while blessed people are shown seated next below. In the lowest row are kings and nobility. Within this last group, he also painted an ordinary man who looked quite out of place. This, Schrödinger said, is the painter himself. The analogy is striking. Like the painter, Our Mind has created this world image and somewhere in that world image, it has also created itself but is so insignificant that one almost does not notice it.

According to Schrödinger, “The reason why our sentient, percipient, and thinking ego is met nowhere within our scientific world-picture can be indicated in ‘seven words’, and these seven words are: ‘because it is itself that world picture’.” He pointed out that there is a

hermetic separation between our spheres of consciousnesses. Even as we are spatially apart, with my consciousness being with me and your consciousness with you, we agree on things about the natural world. Why do we agree? One hypothesis is that there is an external world, and then there is us, and further, there is a predetermined “harmony in our minds”.

However, Schrödinger, who was also inspired by the philosophy of the Upanishads, believed in the alternative hypothesis: there is no external world and another world reflected in our minds. The world is given only once. The reason we agree is that there is a unification of minds. The multiplicity of Consciousness that we see around us is only apparent. In truth, there is only “The One”. Looking at any parts of “The One” will not reveal the whole.

Our search for Consciousness is akin to the blind men seeking to describe the elephant. Lines from the poetry of John Saxe read, “And so these men of Indostan disputed loud and long, each in his own opinion exceeding stiff and strong, though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!” Alfred North Whitehead observed, “Nature gets credit which in truth should be reserved for ourselves: the rose for its scent, the nightingale for his song, the Sun for his radiance. The poets are entirely mistaken. Without us, there is none of this.”

The Visual Mind

Humans can see a small part of the electromagnetic spectrum called the

visible region. The wavelengths of red, yellow, and green are 750, 580, and 550 nanometers. Combining red and green results in yellow, a fact well-known to artists. But in the physics of light waves, the addition of wavelengths of red and green does not result in the wavelength of yellow. Thus, the sensation of yellowness is purely a mental experience and has no parallel to the theory of electromagnetism, which describes the properties of light waves. Dogs cannot perceive the red end of the spectrum. Thus, a red flower to humans may appear gray-green to dogs. This again illustrates that visual color sensations are highly subjective even as the wavelength of the light is objectively defined.

In binocular vision, the images captured by the left and right eyes are simultaneously processed by the brain into a single mental impression. This ability is important for depth perception. Exposing the left and right eyes to a horizontal and vertical line grid does not produce a square grid image. Instead, a time-varying pattern is seen with horizontal and vertical grid portions and a square mesh. It appears as if the left and right eyes are jostling over the mental impression to be created. This is binocular rivalry. If the left and right eyes are exposed to different colors, say red and green, then the color perceived with binocular vision alternates between red and green. Tibetan Buddhist monks practicing meditation can control the rate at which the images flicker.

We owe much of our understanding

of neural systems to the neurophysicist and Nobel Laureate Sir Charles Sherrington. When light is incident on the retina, there are 137 million seeing elements in our eyes which conduct voltages to the primary visual cortex region of the brain. One mystery is how mere voltages transform into the sensation of seeing, complete with color and depth. Sherrington performed experiments that involved a train of light flashes, incident on each eye, with a separator in between. In the synchronous presentation, both the light trains flashed simultaneously to both eyes.

The light signals appeared discrete at small flash rates of one flash per second. At a higher frequency of 45 flashes per second, the eyes began to miss the discreteness. At 60 flashes per second, the beam appeared distinctly continuous. Sherrington considered two more situations: one with 30 flashes per second synchronously, and another with 30 flashes per second but with a phase difference. This latter was the asynchronous presentation so that when one eye received the light flash, the other did not, and vice versa. Both eyes considered together, they did receive 60 flashes per second in the asynchronous presentation.

However, the image seen by the observer was still discrete. For them to see a distinctly continuous light beam, it required 60 flashes per second on each eye in the asynchronous presentation. If the optic nerves emanating from the left and right eye are reported to a common

physiological center in the brain, switching one or the other should have led to the same effect as switching both on. This is akin to an electrical circuit with two switches in parallel: turning on any one or both of the switches completes the circuit, lighting up a bulb.

The fact that this does not happen indicates that there is no such common physiological center. In the words of Sherrington, it is “as though the right eye and the left eye images are seen by two different observers and the minds of these two observers were combined into a single mind,” and “the right eye and the left eye perceptions exist independently and are elaborated separately, but they are combined not physiologically but psychically”. Binocular vision is, therefore, a psychic experience, with the synthesis being a mental one.

Sherrington argued that the brain is like a complex telephone exchange where scientific tools probe the physiology and the complex neural networks. “Where are the subscribers, with their thoughts, desires, anticipations, motives, anxieties, rejoicings — in short, where is the mind?”

Birth, Death, and Evolution

Evolution is an emergent phenomenon and can be described by mechanistic dynamics of elementary “particles”

or individuals of a large population that can simulate adaptive diversification. Starting with one kind of phenotype, time evolution can lead to many different kinds of phenotypes. The four key ingredients of evolution are birth, death, mutation, and inheritance. The birth and death of individuals are essential steps in the material evolution process.

Can the mind survive bodily death? According to Kant, space and time are among the many experiences of the mind, and it may be possible for the mind to transcend death. These lines from Rumi, are discussed in *The Riddle of Life* by Annie Besant: “I died out of the stone, and I became a plant; I died out of the plant and I became an animal; I died out of the animal and I became a man. Why should I fear to die? When did I grow less by dying? I shall die out of the man and shall become an angel.”

Sri Aurobindo stated that “birth and death are rather intermediate stages in an occult procession of life”, and further: “Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride, the soul must take to cross from birth to birth, a grey defeat pregnant with victory, a whip to lash us towards our deathless state.” Birth and death are necessary for the spiritual evolution of the self, just as they are necessary for the material evolution of the body in Darwin’s scientific theory. ✧

The Gospel According to St John — II

RAGHAVAN N. IYER

WAS Jesus exempt from this? He wanted no exception. He had taken the cross. He had become one with other men, constantly taking on their limitations, exchanging his finer life-atoms for their gross life-atoms — the concealed thoughts, the unconscious hostilities, the chaotic feelings, the ambivalences, the ambiguities, the limitations of all. He once said, “My virtue has gone out of me”, when the hem of his garment was touched by a woman seeking help, but does this mean that he was exposed only when he physically encountered other human beings? The Gospel according to John makes it crisply clear, since it is the most mystical and today the most meaningful of the four gospels, that this was taking place all the time. It not only applies to Jesus. It takes place all the time for every person, often unknown to oneself. But when it is fully self-conscious, the pain is greater, such as when a magnanimous Adept makes a direct descent from his true divine estate, leaving behind his finest elements, like Surya the sun in the myth who cuts off

his lustre for the sake of entering into a marriage with Sanjna, coming into the world, and taking on the limitations of all. The Initiator needs the three days in the tomb, but these three days are metaphorical. They refer to what is known in the East as a necessary gestation state when the transformation could be made more smoothly from the discarded vehicle which had been crucified.

People tend to fasten upon the wounds and the blood, even though, as Titian’s painting portrays clearly, the tragedy of Jesus was not in the bleeding wounds but in the ignorance and self-limitation of the disciples. He had promised redemption to anyone and everyone who was true to him, which meant, he said, to love each other. He had washed the feet of the disciples, drawn them together, given them every opportunity so that they would do the same for each other. He told them that they need only follow this one commandment. We know how difficult it is for most people today to love one another, to work together, to pull together, to cooperate and not compete,

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to add and not subtract, to multiply and serve, not divide and rule. This seems very difficult, especially in a hypocritical society filled with deceit and lies. What are children to say when their parents ask them to tell the truth and they find themselves surrounded by so many lies? In the current cycle the challenge is most pointed and poignant. More honesty is needed, more courage, more toughness — this time for the sake of all mankind. One cannot leave it to a future moment for some pundits in theological apologetics and theosophical hermeneutics to say this cycle was only for some chosen people. Every single part of the world has to be included and involved.

The teaching of Jesus was a hallowed communication of insights, a series of sacred glimpses, rather than a codification of doctrine. He presented not a *summa theologica* or *ethica*, but the seminal basis from which an endless series of *summae* could be conceived. He initiated a spiritual current of sacred dialogue, individual exploration and communal experiment in the quest for divine wisdom. He taught the beauty of acquiescence and the dignity of acceptance of suffering — a mode appropriate to the Piscean Age. He showed salvation through love, sacrifice, and faith — of the regenerated psyche that cleaves to the light of *nous*. He excelled in being all things to all men while remaining utterly true to himself and to his “Father in Heaven”. He showed a higher respect for the Temple than its own custodians. At the same time, he came to found a

new kind of kingdom and to bring a message of joy and hope. He came to bear witness to the Kingdom of Heaven during life’s probationary ordeal on earth. He vivified by his own luminous sacrifice the universal human possibility of divine self-consecration, the beauty of beatific devotion to the Transcendental Source of Divine Wisdom — the Word Made Flesh celebrating the Verbum in the Beginning.

Above all, there was the central paradox that his mission had to be vindicated by its failure, causing bewilderment among many of his disciples, while intuitively understood only by the very few who were pure in heart and strong in devotion, blessed by the vision of the Ascension. After three days in the tomb, Jesus, in the guise of a gardener, said to a poor, disconsolate Mary Magdalene, “Mary!” At once she looked back because she recognized the voice, and she said, “*Rabboni*” — “My Master” — and fell at his feet. Then he said, “Touch me not”. Here is a clue to his three days in the tomb. The work of permanent transmutation of life-atoms, of transfiguration of vehicles, was virtually complete. He then said, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, ‘I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God’”. Subsequently he appeared three times to his disciples.

Jesus gave the greatest possible confidence to all his disciples by ever paying them the most sacred compliment, telling them that they were children of God. But, still, if a person thinks that he is nothing,

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or thinks that he is the greatest sinner on earth, how can the compassion and praise of Jesus have meaning for him? Each person has to begin to see himself undramatically as one of many sinners and say, “My sins are no different from those of anyone else.” The flesh is weak but *pneuma*, the spirit, is willing. And *pneuma* has to do with breath. The whole of The Gospel according to John is saturated with the elixir of the breathing-in and breathing-out by Jesus of the life-infusing current that gives every man a credible faith in his promise and possibility, and, above all, a living awareness of his immortality, which he can self-consciously realize when freed from mis-identification with his mortal frame.

The possibility of resurrection has to do with identification and misidentification. This is the issue not for just a few but for all human beings who, in forgetfulness, tend to think that they are what their enemies think, or that they are what their friends want them to be. At one time men talked of the *Imago Dei*. We now live in a society that constantly deals in diabolical images and the cynical corruption of image-making, a nefarious practice unfamiliar in simpler societies which still enjoy innocent psychic health. Even more, people now engage in image-crippling — the most heinous of crimes. At one time men did it openly, with misguided courage. They pulled down statues and defaced idols. They paid for it and are still paying. Perhaps those people were reborn in this society. That is sad because they are

condemning themselves to something worse than hell — not only the hell of loneliness and despair — but much worse. The light is going out for many a human being. The Mahatmas have always been with us. They have always abundantly sent forth benedictory vibrations. They are here on earth where they have always had their asylums and their ashrams. Under cyclic law they are able to use precisely prepared forums and opportunities to re-erect or resurrect the mystery temples of the future. Thus, at this time, everybody is stirred up by the crucial issue of identity — which involves the choice between the living and the dead, between entelechy and self-destruction.

The central problem in The Gospel according to John, which Paul had to confront in giving his sermon on the resurrection, has to do with life and with death. What is life for one man is not life to another. Every man or woman today has to raise the question, “What does it mean for me to be alive, to breathe, to live for the sake of others, to live within the law which protects all but no one in particular?” Whoever truly identifies with the limitless and unconditional love of Jesus and with the secret work of Jesus which he veiled in wordless silence, is lit up. Being lit up, one is able to see the divine Buddha-nature, the light vesture of Buddha. The disciples in the days of Buddha, and so again in the days of Jesus, were able to see the divine raiment made of the most homogeneous pure essence of universal *buddhi*. Immaculately

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conceived and unbegotten, it is *daivi-prakṛti*, the light of the Logos. Every man at all times has such a garment, but it is covered over. Therefore, each must sift and select the gold from the dross. The more a person does this truly and honestly, the more the events of what we call life can add up before the moment of death. They can have a beneficent impact upon the mood and the state of mind in which one departs. A person who is wise in this generation will so prepare his meditation that at the moment of death he may read or have read out those passages in the *Bhagavad Gita*, *The Voice of the Silence*, or *The Gospel According to St John*, that are exactly relevant to what is needed. Then he will be able to intone the Word, which involves the whole of one's being and breathing, at the moment when he may joyously discard his mortal garment. It has been done, and it is being done. It can be done, and it will be done. Anyone can do it, but in these matters there is no room for chance or deception, for we live in a universe of law. Religion can be supported now by science, and to bring the two together in the psychology of self-transformation one needs true philosophy, the unconditional love of wisdom.

The crucifixion of Jesus and his subsequent resurrection had little reference to himself, any more than any breath he took during his life. Thus, in the Gospel, we read that Jesus promises that when he will be gone from the world, he will send the Paraclete. This archaic concept

has exercised the pens of many scholars. What is the Paraclete? What does it mean? "Comforter"? "The Spirit of Truth"? Scholars still do not claim to know. The progress made in this century is in the honest recognition that they do not know, whereas in the nineteenth century they quarrelled, hurled epithets at each other out of arrogance, with a false confidence that did not impress anyone for long. The times have changed, and this is no moment for going back to the pseudo-complacency of scholasticism, because today it would be false, though at one time it might have had some understandable basis. Once it might have seemed a sign of health and could have been a pardonable and protective illusion. Today it would be a sign of sickness because it would involve insulting the intelligence of many young people, men and women, Christian, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, but also Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and every other kind of denomination. No one wants to settle for the absurdities of the past, but all nonetheless want a hope by which they may live and inherit the future, not only for themselves or their descendants, but for all living beings.

This, then, is a moment when people must ask what would comfort the whole of mankind. What did Jesus think would be a way of comforting all? Archetypally, The Gospel according to John is speaking in this connection of the mystery temple, where later all the sad failures of Christianity took place. This is the light and the fire that must be kept alive for

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the sake of all. Who, we may ask, will joyously and silently maintain it intact? Who will be able to say, as the dying Latimer said in Oxford in 1555, “We shall this day light such a candle . . . as I trust shall never be put out.” Jesus was confident that among his disciples there were those who had been set afire by the flames that streamed through him. He was the *hotri*, “the indispensable agent” for the universal Alkahest, the elixir of life and immortality. He was the fig tree that would bear fruit, but he predicted that there would be fig trees that would bear no fruit. He was referring to the churches that have nothing to say, nothing real to offer, and above all, do not care that much for the lost Word or the world’s proletariat, or the predicament and destiny of the majority of mankind.

His confidence was that which came to him, like everything in his life, from the Father, the *Paraguru*, the Lord of Libations, who, with boundless love for all, sustains in secret the eternal contemplation, together with the two Bodhi-sattvas — one whose eye sweeps over slumbering earth, and the other whose hand is extended in protecting love over the heads of his ascetics. Jesus spoke in the name of the Great Sacrifice. He spoke of the joy in the knowledge that there were a few who had become potentially like the leaven that could lift the whole lump, who had become true Guardians of the Eternal Fires. These are the vestal fires of the mystery temple which had disappeared in Egypt, from which the exodus took place. They had disappeared from Greece, though periodically there

were attempts to revive them, such as those by Pythagoras at Delphi. They were then being poured into a new city called Jerusalem. In a sense, the new Comforter was the New Jerusalem, but it was not just a single city nor was it merely for people of one tribe or race.

Exoterically, the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 63 BC by Pompey and was rebuilt. Later it was razed to the ground again in AD 70. Since the thirteenth century no temple has been in existence there at all because that city has been for these past seven hundred years entirely in the hands of those who razed the old buildings and erected minarets and mosques. Now, people wonder if there really ever was a true Jerusalem, for everywhere is found the Babylon of confusion. Today it is not Origen who speaks to us, but Celsus, on behalf of all Epicureans. Everyone is tempted, like Lot’s wife, to be turned into salt by fixing their attention upon the relics and memories of the past long after they have vanished into the limbo of dissolution and decay.

Anyone, however, who has an authentic soul-vision is El Mirador. Jesus knew that the vision, entrusted to the safekeeping of a few, would inspire them to lay the basis of what would continue, because of what they did, despite all the corruption and the ceaseless crucifixion. Even today, two thousand years later, when we hear of the miracle of the limitless love of Jesus, when we hear the words he spoke, when we read about and find comfort in what he did, we are deeply stirred. We are abundantly grate-

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ful because in us is lit the chela-light of true reverential devotion to the Christos within. This helps us to see all the Christos of history, unknown as well as renowned, as embodiments of the One and Only — *the One without a Second*, in the cryptic language of the Upanishads. When this revelation takes place and is enjoyed inwardly, there are glad tidings, because it is on the invisible plane that the real work is done. Most people are fixated on the visible and want to wait for fruits from trees planted by other men. There are a few, however, who have realized the comfort to be derived in the true fellowship of those who seek the kingdom of God within themselves, who wish to become the better able to help and teach others, and who will be true in their faith from now until the twenty-first century. Some already have been using a forty-year calendar.

There have been such persons before us. Pythagoras called them Heroes. Buddha called them *Shrāvakas*, true listeners, and *Shramanas*, true learners. Then there were some who became *Srotāpattis*, “those who enter the stream”, and among them were a few *Anāgāmin*, “those who need never return on earth again involuntarily”. There were also those who were *Arhans* of boundless vision, Perfected Men, Bodhisattvas, endlessly willing to re-enter the cave, having taken the pledge of Kwan-Yin to redeem every human being and all sentient life.

Nothing less than such a vow can resurrect the world today. These times are very different from the world at the

time of John because in this age outward forms are going to give no clues in relation to the work of the formless. Mankind has to grow up. We find Origen saying this in the early part of the third century and Philo saying the same even in the first century. Philo, who was a Jewish scholar and a student of Plato, was an intuitive intellectual, while Origen, who had studied the Gnostics and considered various philosophical standpoints, was perhaps more of a mystic or even an ecstatic. Both knew that the Christos could only be seen by the eye of the mind. “If therefore thine eye be single”, Jesus said, “thy whole body shall be full of Light”. Those responding with the eyes of the body could never believe anything because, as Heraclitus said, “Eyes are bad witnesses to the soul.” The eyes of the body must be tutored by the eye of the mind. *Gupta Vidya* also speaks of the eye of the heart and the eye in the forehead — the eye of Wisdom-Compassion. Through it, by one’s own love, one will know the greater love. By one’s own compassion one will know the greater compassion. By one’s own ignorance one will recognize the ignorance around and seek the privilege of recognition of the Paraclete. Then, when the eye becomes single in its concentration upon the welfare of all, the body will become full of the light of the Christos. Once unveiled at the fundamental level of causality, it makes a man or woman an eternal witness to the true resurrection of the Son of Man into the highest mansions of the Father. ✧

Individuation and Global Responsibility: The Subtle Magic of Lincoln, Eisenhower, and Mandela — I

JAMES TEPFER

I. Acknowledgements:

I would like to begin by extending my gratitude to Tim Boyd our International President who works tirelessly for that noblest of all human Causes, universal brotherhood. I would also like to offer the garland of gratitude to all those luminous teachers of the past who gave us soul-saving teachings and were such resplendent examples of the spiritual life: Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mahavira, Mohammed and a constellation of other wise and compassionate teachers. Each one promulgated some facet of *Theosophia*, the Wisdom-religion. And every single devotee of these pristine religions contributes, to and enriches the legacy of, humanity, as we move into the uncharted waters of the future. In this deeper sense, there is no such thing as a non-theosophist. We are all seekers of spiritual truths and we are all brothers and sisters of the human family.

I would also like to offer my pro-

foundest gratitude to both H. P. Blavatsky of the 1875 Cycle and Raghavan Iyer and Nandini Iyer of the 1975 Cycle. As to H. P. Blavatsky, she was remarkable in every way. She was, *par excellence*, the courageous purveyor of the teachings of the Brotherhood of Bodhisattvas in the nineteenth century. She had no immediate predecessors nor worthy successors that rose to her profound occult stature. She continues to be the spiritual gold standard of that most precious of all virtues, fidelity to the Wisdom-Teachers behind the Theosophical Movement and to their iridescent teachings. She remains today an unwavering beacon light for all students of Wisdom and virtue across the globe.

The coming of the 1975 Cycle brought with it two remarkable souls: Raghavan and Nandini Iyer. For those of us who had the privilege of knowing Nandini she was truly a marvel. She possessed the most acute and far-reaching philo-

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sophical intelligence that one had ever encountered. She was an Oxford don and a theosophical teacher all in one. With respect to the former, one of her Oxford tutors referred to her in a letter of commendation as perhaps the finest philosophical mind that Oxford had ever produced. With respect to Theosophy, Nandini was so brilliant in her intuitive grasp of the theosophical philosophy and its indissoluble bond with all the world's religions, that one can easily imagine a Plato sitting at her feet in radiant admiration and gratitude. But beyond her mastery of all things conceptual, Nandini was, in a sense, Sita-come-again. She was spiritual royalty. Her heart was pure as the virgin snow and it seemed to be one of oceanic depths. She was unflinchingly loyal to H. P. Blavatsky and, like the latter, lived and breathed for the amelioration of the human race. She was indeed what her consort Raghavan once said of her: "She is 'a golden Kshatriya' — the embodiment of spiritual fearlessness, ethical probity, and genuine humility."

Raghavan Iyer was the sacrificial, Promethean forerunner of the universal civilizations yet to come. He was wisdom and magnanimity incarnate. In this respect, he exemplified a multitude of supernal Aquarian qualities. He was, in one sense, very Indian: he was spiritual, cultured, brilliant, and full of the graces that immediately remind one of ancient Aryavarta and of Golden Ages long past. He was also very English: he was confident, highly educated, extremely

literate, and at ease with statesmen, scientists, educators, and royalty. He was also very American: he was a true and fearless rebel, innovative, resourceful, visionary, and the eternal friend of the common man. But, beyond all this, he was, in a much deeper sense, the Universal Man: original, *sui generis* and timeless. His sympathies were always compassionately inclusive and his repeated emphasis — from first to last — was to "draw the larger circle" through the magic of selfless action.

Speaking of magic, let us now turn to this evening's topic for consideration: "Individuation and Global Responsibility: the Subtle magic of Lincoln, Eisenhower and Mandela."

II. Individuation and Global Responsibility

Raghavan Iyer, in his pioneering book, *Parapolitics: Toward the City of Man*, tells us that true statesmen are "dreamers of the dreams of men". He also intimates that the very greatest statesmen can be more than dreamers. They can be "magicians of the heart". A magician, we are told, can be seen as an awakener and a precipitator of the latent, unseen wisdom and goodness in human beings. In fact, a magician is one who can, by a conscious act of his rationally directed imagination, help turn the forces of evil to good. However, a true statesman can neither be a visionary nor a magician unless he or she has spiritually, intellectually, and morally individuated to a

high degree. To individuate is to expand the circumference of creative initiative for the good of all and to simultaneously deepen one's feeling of responsibility for the suffering of others. This is not easy. However, philosophical understanding of what it might mean to "individuate" can be of great help.

Let me begin our exploration of the concept of "individuation" and the connecting cord of responsibility with a question: "Would you, ladies and gentlemen, agree with me when I say that we are all — in some meaningful sense — 'self-determining individuals'?"

Good. I agree. Now, let me ask you another question: "Aren't we all members of a particular community which has needs that its members must responsibly satisfy?" Good. I concur. So, we are all, in some sense, self-determining individuals with compelling obligations to the society into which we are born.

These two truths seem to be in constant tension with each other. How does one harmonize freely chosen actions with meeting the multi-leveled needs of our community? Without a moral hyphen that integrates self-determination and social obligations, we get unwholesome extremes. Thus, to overstress individual liberty usually results in the dilution of social values and the incremental retrogression of society into anarchy. However, if we stress the primacy of community cohesion and civil law over individual freedom, we create a boring uniformity, individual lethargy, and social stagnation. Fortunately, from the stand-

point of individuation, the bridging concept between individual liberty and meeting our social responsibilities is the notion of *dharma*, or voluntary compliance with our personal and social obligations. In this respect, India has something to teach the world, since *dharma* or self-sustaining family and community duties has always been its strength.

However, to simply meet our civic duties to our respective communities is not necessarily to "individuate" or self-actualize in a higher sense. Personal and community responsibilities performed in a quasi-unthinking manner can actually be a form of intellectual and moral passivity. That is, one might be an upright citizen but one might never really "think for oneself"; one might never pause; one might never reflect; and therefore, one might never intellectually enrich one's beliefs or show moral courage when one's society needs it the most. In other words, one might never really activate one's full intellectual, moral, and spiritual potential such that it intelligently elevates social consciousness and makes a Promethean contribution to the future of the human family. Sadly, the unbounded, multi-dimensional spirit in man is rarely activated to any significant degree in modern civilization. We are, in a Socratic sense, "sleepwalking" through life. Yet, in moments of crippling social crisis, the spirit in man often wakes up and inspires us to act with resolve and daring. When it does, it often leaves us in a state of amazement and wonder. To our delight, we rediscover that individual

human beings can be surprisingly self-surpassing, courageous, and compassionate.

Given that there is truly an indomitable spirit that dwells in the heart of each man and woman, how, then, should we characterize human beings? How might we conceive of that most complex, baffling, ridiculous, and yet, the most exalted of all creatures — man? There are clearly many ways of defining man. Those ways span the spectrum of human qualities from the divine to the demoniac. Man has been characterized as: a rational and moral agent, an incorrigible sinner, a fallen angel, a social animal, a sophisticated supercomputer, and, finally, a creature consumed with its passions and self-interests. All of these views embody some spark of truth about human beings at certain times in history and at certain moments over the span of an individual's lifetime. However, the most comprehensive way of characterizing man is to say that he is a “self-surpassing, self-aware, rational, and moral agent.” This very expansive, philosophical way of viewing man is, I believe, compatible with the Wisdom of the ages or *Theosophia*. It is also the only way we can come to understand the concrete reality of a Lincoln, an Eisenhower, a Gandhi, or a Mandela. It is also the only way we can begin to edge toward a minimum grasp of a Buddha, a bodhisattva, or a sage.

This inclusive and exalted view of man, by the way, is exquisitely expressed by Shakespeare when he has Hamlet say:

“What a piece of work is a man! How

noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and motion how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god!”

Clearly, Shakespeare's tribute to human nature at its best is an ideal toward which we may all aspire. However, we can only approximate the ideal by degrees. Individual moral and spiritual perfection must be won, it must be earned. To sculpt ourselves into the divine image [*imago dei*], we must courageously and skillfully conquer our passions, ambitions, and self-interests. We can only do this by consciously vowing to serve others.

Now, if we are willing to see man in this morally and psychologically more comprehensive and complex way, how then should we conceive of society? Society, like man, has been conceived in a variety of ways. It has been seen as a nurturer of virtues but also as an unavoidable oppressor of the human spirit. Both are true — at times. At its very root, however, society is a moral community. It is, ideally, a *polis*. It is a living, dynamic matrix of principled relationships confirmed by formal laws and cultural codes. Fundamentally, society is all about meeting basement-level needs and, simultaneously, fostering human excellences that reside in the cupola of human consciousness. For these dual purposes, every culture or society evolves what have been termed “civilizing centers” — centers that affect its citizens for good or for ill. These “civilizing centers” are called family, school, employment, religious institutions, and government. All

such seminal orbits of influence attempt to inculcate the best cultural qualities and behaviors in each of us. In a word, the cultural excellences that these primary institutions nurture and the opportunities they afford for meeting elementary human needs affect our ability to individuate, to mature, to self-actualize. To put it another way, all societies, whether closed or open, necessarily “socialize” their citizens to some degree. This is understandable and fulfills a vital *Vishnu* function. It preserves and forwards a society’s quintessential beliefs and practices into futurity.

But all of the preceding does not ensure that individuals will individuate beyond their culture and tap their unknown, intellectual, moral, and spiritual potential. They will not necessarily awaken their intuitive intelligence nor appeal to the latent intelligence and goodness in others. To individuate in a deeper sense is to go beyond being a good citizen and a responsible model. It is the capacity to creatively transcend self and society when it is most needed, when it is most helpful. It is, in some sense, to rise inwardly to the plane of the universal, the para-cultural.

Let me illustrate the notion of responsibly “transcending ego and society” by virtue of citing an example from ancient history. We have the true story of courageous individuation as told by the eminent Greek historian, Edith Hamilton. It is the tale of a Spartan soldier who engaged in an act that was both wise and unexpectedly compassionate for a

citizen of Sparta. It is an especially remarkable story because ancient Sparta, in contrast to ancient Athens, was a highly structured, militaristic city-state which allowed little room for individual creativity in thought and morals and resisted social change of any sort. The tale goes like this:

A young Spartan officer, responsible for entertaining the Spartan generals on the eve of the destruction of Athens, took courage in both hands and decided to read out a soliloquy on the importance of loyalty — a prime Spartan virtue. After voicing the eloquent monologue on the various forms of loyalty, the Spartan officer went quiet. The silence lasted a long time but finally the chief Spartan general asked the young officer what Spartan wrote such a magnificent piece of literature. The critical moment had come, and with a cool assurance that he was doing the right thing, the officer responded that it had been written by an Athenian playwright, Sophocles. A much longer silence charged the night air. Finally, the chief general said, “Fellow generals, it would seem that we must revise our thinking about the destruction of Athens. A city-state that produces a Sophocles deserves some form of mercy. Let it be known to all your officers and men that the Athenians’ most treasured cultural site, the Acropolis, is not to be touched. We will leave them their art and their architecture, their tribute to their gods.”

Now, what is interesting about this historical example and about our emerging concept of “the individual” is that

we have edged into the heady domain of the metaphysical and the metapsychological. How so? Well, once we acknowledge the potential for each individual to transcend both ego and culture, we have engaged in a quantum shift in thought and in perspective. We are admitting that we are not only self-aware, rational, and responsible agents but we are also self-surpassing beings. We are capable of transcending our personality and our culture. We are capable of consciously setting aside our name-and-form self; our limiting personal experiences, our mental habits, and our cultural mores. More importantly, we are acknowledging the moral fact that we are able to affect others for the greater good; that others, by virtue of our insightful actions, are able to rise above themselves and their culture and thereby change for the better — even if it is only for a moment. This we might say is “minor magic”, but magic, nonetheless.

What seems to be the deeper dynamics of any form of human magic — minor or otherwise? It is this. When we individuate or feel more universally responsible and open to the potential in each and all for spiritual and intellectual growth, we progressively awaken our own inner, spiritual powers of perception. To individuate intellectually and morally is to begin the mysterious process of assimilating the immortal self within us. Theosophically speaking, this immortal self is a boundless center of consciousness because it is linked to the Universal Oversoul. It is, as such, dimensionless.

It is capable of infinite expansion and that is why we are able to perpetually expand our sense of self (of who we are) to include more and more people of diverse qualities and in adverse conditions. The immortal self is all-knowing, replete with creative powers, completely fearless, and unconditionally compassionate. Furthermore, the immortal individuality sloughs off its mortal vestures periodically only to reassume new ones on its great return pilgrimage to the source of all life. So, when we consciously strive to think more comprehensively and with greater depth, we expand the circle of the embodied self as well as intensify our felt compassion for others. This invisible process can culminate in a “second birth”, a mental incarnation of our higher creative and intuitive faculties. This, in turn, releases a divine efflux that elevates those individuals within the radius of our increasingly refined consciousness.

It should be evident from all that has been said that genuine magic calls for highly individuated individuals who are both creative and responsive to the needs of others. Furthermore, the magic they bring about is not the magic of those who possess and display psychic powers such as telepathy, telekinesis, and the like. They amaze us perhaps and awaken an unhealthy curiosity about psychic powers but they do not affect our hearts or inspire us to engage in self-sacrificial action for the benefit of others. One engaged in spiritual magic, is one who awakens the deeper heart quality within us — the will to

serve and engage the world courageously and creatively. Since the heart has several layers (ranging from passions, to aspirations, to cosmic compassion), let us call the deeper layer that the magician touches the “alpha dimension” of the heart. It is that heart center that is benevolent, transformative, and makes

spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth possible. The true magician, then, has the soul wisdom to help fertilize this invisible center in the hidden chamber of the heart. It is up to us to make wise use of the karmic opportunity given us by the truly wise.

(To be continued)

You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.

Abraham Lincoln

Every leader should have enough humility to accept, publicly, the responsibility for the mistakes of the subordinates he has himself selected and, likewise, to give them credit, publicly, for their triumphs.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.

Nelson Mandela

J. Krishnamurti and Theosophy

RACHNA SRIVASTAVA

DR Annie Besant and J. Krishnamurti, fondly called Krishnaji, have been two great seekers of truth. They were both inspired and influenced by theosophical ideals which state that Truth is the highest religion. Their life was so dedicated to the quest for truth that they were prepared to sacrifice everything for it. It is clear from Besant's autobiography that, even before she joined the Theosophical Society and came to India, she never compromised with her perception of what was true, irrespective of the price she had to pay for it. She pursued the truth by transforming her life fearlessly. It was this quality in her, which must have led Krishnaji to say to Prof. P. Krishna in reply to the question of why people find it so difficult to get the truth of his teaching: "If Amma had been younger, she would have got it."¹

The Theosophical Society was created with the motto that Truth is the highest religion, and since Theosophy is not a new religion, but the essence of all religions or the Wisdom Religion, this demands that we come in contact with

the eternal Truth beyond all religions and beyond all forms. Now, if that is the essence of Theosophy, is that not what Krishnaji asks us to do all the time? He says we must understand ourselves; break through our conditioning. Only then we will have a true perception, without which we cannot come upon the truth.² So there is no division between Theosophy in its essence and what Krishnaji advocates as necessary for us. Preconceived notions about Truth prevent us from being free in the mind, the importance of which Krishnaji spoke about repeatedly. We need to be completely free to see that illusion arises when belief becomes strong.

Many people think that Krishnamurti denied the existence of the Masters and this created a big rift between him and Besant which led her to feel disappointed in him. This is a misunderstanding. What Krishnaji really objected to was "the belief of convenience", and the dependence on any outside agency for help. We must remember that Krishnaji did not deny God; he denied all the concepts people

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accept about God. He did not deny the sacred; he denied what people consider to be sacred. He did not deny love; but he denied all the usual concepts about love. He did not deny the religious mind; he denied all concepts and beliefs about what is religious. To him, something imagined and fashioned by thought, had little value, as it blocked inquiry and therefore, the perception of the deeper truth. He posited the truth as the unknown and advocated an approach to it through the denial of the false.³

Annie Besant was not of a much different view. She also believed and said that the society is intended to be a living body and not a fossil, and a living body grows and develops, adapting itself to new conditions. One can see the seeds of Krishnaji's later teachings in the above statement of Besant.⁴ Of course, Krishnaji did not accept these statements from her or from anyone else; he rediscovered the truth of these for himself. His whole teaching emphasizes the distinction between the *knowledge* of a truth and the actual *perception* of it. The mission assigned to him by Besant and Leadbeater, on the basis of messages received by them from their Masters, was to function as the World Teacher, giving a new interpretation to religion for the age of reason, and this is precisely what he did all through his life. The TS was founded with three main objects, of which the most important was "brotherhood". One of the other objects relates to the investigation of powers latent in human beings. Frequently, these

powers have been interpreted as psychic in nature. Krishnaji though endowed with such abilities rejected the desire to place any focus on them, seeing them as yet another binding or personal distraction from a genuine understanding. He saw the need to be in the state of "choiceless awareness" and "paying full attention". With the simple act of paying full attention and being perceptive, Krishnaji makes us reflect on the very exclusive properties of these actions. This can cause human beings to seriously transform themselves and attain freedom. The act of listening with full attention erases bad memories, habits, and all the accumulated traditions. It helps the elimination of conditioning. Krishnaji tells us that to be able to adopt a different way of life is not achieved for others, but for oneself, because the "other" is oneself. There is no "we" or "them" but only "us". History shows us that the teachers of compassion throughout the world promoted neither the teachings of a given religion nor the founding of a new one. Conditioning implies violence towards oneself.

After 1925, a more powerful and individual note began to sound through Krishnaji's discourses. Soon after, he dissolved The Order of the Star of the East, holding that those who seek Truth cannot reach it through organizations because organizations tend to precondition their conception of the nature of Truth. He spoke of reality as pathless and this caused some discomfort among many in the Theosophical Society, as is well

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known. In 1929 J. Krishnamurti grew away from Theosophy and dismantled the idea of his becoming the World Teacher. He had his own view of religion which was not bound by any community or conservatism. The aim of his education was to break humanity free from all those restrictions, which divide them in the name of caste, community, class, nationality, and conventions and thus bring a huge transformation in the mind-set of humankind.

The education provided to Krishnamurti gave him great freedom of thought and self-development. Krishnaji said of Besant in 1934, that she never told him to do or not to do this or that. P. Krishna says that what Krishnaji rebelled against during 1929 to 1933, was not the essence of Theosophy but the tendency towards encrustation, treating Theosophy not as an enquiry, but as some new form of belief, or some new body of knowledge, which one just accepts.⁵ He must have seen the danger of that, and he revolted against that, wanting to bring Theosophy back to the quest for what he called a religious mind — not a Christian or a Hindu mind. There is only one religious mind full of love, compassion, truth, beauty, and non-violence. Krishnaji said: “The religious mind has no beliefs; it has no dogmas; it moves, from fact to fact, and therefore, the religious mind is the scientific mind.” So a truly theosophical life is one which allows you to grow in truth, and discover greater wisdom.⁶

Now let us go back to when the Theosophical Society was formed in the

19th century. Madame H. P. Blavatsky made it clear that the purpose of such a society was to bring back, especially to the Western world, the possibility for the spiritual life, which also meant the possibility for wisdom to be available to humanity. The task before the Society was, and still is, to help humanity, which means each one of us needs to go beyond the materialistic approach to life and fulfil our destiny as pure human beings. “Pure” here means being in our fullness, without any trace of animalistic behavior, without the “me” and “mine” that are the outcome of the divisive, selfish mind.

Blavatsky wrote in a letter to the American convention in 1888, that the tendency of modern civilization is a reaction towards animalism. Theosophy seeks to develop the human nature in man. The day when Theosophy is able to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love — on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of Man. To accomplish this important task, we need to sacrifice the “me” in order to honestly call each other “Brothers”. There is another advice given by her in the same letter: “Let no man set up popery instead of Theosophy, as this would be suicidal and has ever ended most fatally. We are all fellow students, . . . but no one belonging to the Theosophical Society ought to count himself as more than . . . a pupil-teacher — one, who has no right to dogmatize.” This is really key advice, as she is clearly saying that there is no

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authority in spiritual matters, that all authority in the sacred land of the human heart creates dogmas, which are the opposite of Theosophy, and that fixed ideas are not to be imposed on anybody in the society. We can see that the TS exists for the betterment of human beings, for the growth of the human in us, and it has never intended to glorify personalities, to create idolatry, and therefore, dogmatism.

When we look at Krishnamurti's teachings, we can easily see that he never claimed authority in spiritual matters. On the contrary, he said: "I am not establishing myself as an authority to tell you what to do, because I do not believe in authority in spiritual matters. All authority is evil; and all sense of authority must cease, especially if we would find out what is God, what is truth, whether there is something beyond the mere measure of the mind." Like HPB, Krishnaji says: "In this there is no teacher, no pupil; there is no leader; there is no guru; there is no master, no saviour. You yourself are the teacher and the pupil, you are the master, you are the guru, you are the leader, you are everything. And to understand is to transform what is." To understand ourselves is the first step, self-knowledge is what we need to understand each other, and therefore to understand the world.

HPB also pointed out in the preface of *The Voice of the Silence* that unless a man seriously perseveres in the pur-

suit of self-knowledge, he will never lend a willing ear to the advice of a spiritual teacher. Krishnaji's entire life was dedicated to pointing out what we were and how it was creating the world in which we live. Krishnaji talks about a change that needs to take place in us, he is not concerned with changing the world by working externally.

Krishnaji's influence upon the members of the Theosophical Society has been profound. Although he was not a member of the Society, he proved to be a great reformer within it, changing the focus of attention for many members from received authority to individual experience — something which Besant had herself repeatedly attempted to do, as had Colonel Olcott before her, but which Krishnaji succeeded in doing with a new energy. That Krishnaji is a living example of someone who lived Theosophy we have no doubt, but our ability to see the relevance and beauty of such a life depends on our capability to listen. Jiddu Krishnamurti gave us a precious jewel. He gave to humanity the key to solve all problems created by a selfish mind when he says that solution to all problems lies in understanding and stopping our mind, which is the troublemaker and sees things in fragments and not in their entirety. It is the answer to the tears of a world that has suffered for countless centuries, waiting for the fresh waters of wisdom to descend, once more, upon the world of ignorance and darkness.



J. Krishnamurti and Theosophy

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There was no question of Krishnamurti betraying the TS or the Masters who instructed him. In the TS at that time, there was a group of people who claimed to have contact with the Masters, and who assumed authority for themselves. . . . [The then President of the TS, Annie Besant] had a very trustful nature. She trusted all people who worked with her — that may have been one reason why she did not oppose these. . . . Although Krishnaji felt that the Society was going in the wrong direction, he was not able to stop this trend, and therefore left the Society. I believe Annie Besant was not so much upset as deeply concerned about how he would look after himself. . . . So she advised some members of the TS to look after him and work for him.

Radha Burnier, *The Theosophist*, August 2005
“J. Krishnamurti, Theosophy, and the Theosophical Society”

Quotes on War

J. KRISHNAMURTI

Question: How can we solve our present political chaos and the crisis in the world? Is there anything an individual can do to stop the impending war?

J. Krishnamurti: War is the spectacular and bloody projection of our everyday life, is it not?

War is merely an outward expression of our inward state, an enlargement of our daily action. It is more spectacular, more bloody, more destructive, but it is the collective result of our individual activities. Therefore, you and I are responsible for war and what can we do to stop it? Obviously the ever-impending war cannot be stopped by you and me, because it is already in movement; it is already taking place, though at present chiefly on the psychological level. As it is already in movement, it cannot be stopped — the issues are too many, too great, and are already committed. But you and I, seeing that the house is on fire, can understand the causes of that fire, can go away from it and build in a new place with different materials that are not combustible, that will not produce other

wars. That is all that we can do. You and I can see what creates wars, and if we are interested in stopping wars, then we can begin to transform ourselves, who are the causes of war.

An American lady came to see me a couple of years ago, during the war. She said she had lost her son in Italy and that she had another son aged sixteen whom she wanted to save; so we talked the thing over. I suggested to her that to save her son she had to cease to be an American; she had to cease to be greedy, cease piling up wealth, seeking power, domination, and be morally simple, not merely simple in clothes, in outward things, but simple in her thoughts and feelings, in her relationships. She said: “That is too much. You are asking far too much. I cannot do it, because circumstances are too powerful for me to alter.” Therefore she was responsible for the destruction of her son.

Circumstances can be controlled by us, because we have created the circumstances. Society is the product of relationship, society changes. Merely to rely on legislation, on compulsion, for the trans-

J. Krishnamurti (11.5.1895–17.2.1986) was a philosopher, speaker, and writer who had a major impact on 20th-century thought.

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formation of outward society, while remaining inwardly corrupt, while continuing inwardly to seek power, position, domination, is to destroy the outward, however carefully and scientifically built. That which is inward is always overcoming the outward.

What causes war — religious, political or economic? Obviously it is belief, either in nationalism, in an ideology, or in a particular dogma. If we had no belief, but goodwill, love, and consideration between us, then there would be no wars. But we are fed on beliefs, ideas, and dogmas and therefore we breed discontent. The present crisis is of an exceptional nature and we as human beings must either pursue the path of constant conflict and continuous wars, which are the result of our everyday action, or else see the causes of war and turn our back upon them.

Obviously what causes war is the desire for power, position, prestige, money; also the disease called nationalism, the worship of a flag; and the disease of organized religion, the worship of a dogma. All these are the causes of war; if you as an individual belong to any of the organized religions, if you are greedy for power, if you are envious, you are bound to produce a society which will result in destruction. So again it depends upon you and not on the leaders — not on so-called statesmen and all the rest of them. It depends upon you and me but we do not seem to realize that. If once we really felt the responsibility of our own actions, how quickly we could bring to an end all these wars, this appalling misery!

But, you see, we are indifferent. We have three meals a day, we have our jobs, we have our bank accounts, big or little, and we say, “For God’s sake, don’t disturb us, leave us alone”. The higher up we are, the more we want security, permanency, tranquility, the more we want to be left alone, to maintain things fixed as they are; but they cannot be maintained as they are, because there is nothing to maintain. Everything is disintegrating. We do not want to face these things; we do not want to face the fact that you and I are responsible for wars. You and I may talk about peace, have conferences, sit round a table and discuss, but inwardly, psychologically, we want power, position, we are bound by beliefs, by dogmas, for which we are willing to die and destroy each other. Do you think such men, you and I, can have peace in the world? To have peace, we must be peaceful; to live peacefully means not to create antagonism. Peace is not an ideal. To me, an ideal is merely an escape, an avoidance of what is, a contradiction of what is. An ideal prevents direct action upon what is — which we will go into presently, in another talk. But to have peace, we will have to love, we will have to begin, not to live an ideal life, but to see things as they are and act upon them, transform them. As long as each one of us is seeking psychological security, the physiological security we need — food, clothing and shelter — is destroyed. We are seeking psychological security, which does not exist; and we seek it, if we can, through power, through position, through titles, names — all of which are

Quotes on War

destroying physical security. This is an obvious fact, if you look at it.

To bring about peace in the world, to stop all wars, there must be a revolution in the individual, in you and me. Economic revolution without this inward revolution is meaningless, for hunger is the result of the maladjustment of economic conditions produced by our psychological states — greed, envy, ill will, and possessiveness. To put an end to sorrow, to hunger, to war, there must be a psychological revolution and few of us are willing to face that. We will discuss peace, plan legislation, create new leagues, the United Nations, and so on and on; but we will not win peace because we will not give up our position, our authority, our money, our properties, our stupid lives. To rely on others is utterly futile; others cannot bring us peace. No leader is going to give us peace, no government, no army, no country. What will bring peace is inward transformation which will lead to outward action. Inward transformation is not isolation, is not a withdrawal from outward action. On the contrary, there can be right action only when there is right thinking and there is no right thinking when there is no self-knowledge. Without knowing yourself, there is no peace.

To put an end to outward war, you must begin to put an end to war in yourself. Some of you will nod your heads and say, “I agree”, and go outside and do exactly the same as you have been doing for the last ten or twenty years. Your agreement is merely verbal and has

no significance, for the world miseries and wars are not going to be stopped by your casual assent. They will be stopped only when you realize the danger, when you realize your responsibility, when you do not leave it to somebody else. If you realize the suffering, if you see the urgency of immediate action and do not postpone, then you will transform yourself; peace will come only when you yourself are peaceful, when you yourself are at peace with your neighbour.

— Bangalore, 11 July 1948
Second Public Talk

Questioner: Why do men fight?

J. Krishnamurti: Why do young boys fight? You sometimes fight with your brother, or other boys here, don't you? Why? You fight over a toy. Perhaps another boy has taken your ball, or your book, and therefore you fight. Grown-up people fight for exactly the same reason, only their toys are position, wealth, and power. If you want power and I also want power, we fight, and that is why nations go to war. It is as simple as that; only philosophers, politicians, and the so-called religious people complicate it. You know, it is a great art to have an abundance of knowledge and experience — to know the richness of life, the beauty of existence, the struggles, the miseries, the laughter, the tears — and yet keep your mind very simple; and you can have a simple mind only when you know how to love.

— *Think on These Things*
(1964, 1970 reprint), p. 32



Theosophical Work around the World

India — UP Federation

Mr Pradip Mahapatra, Vice-President of the Utkal Theosophical Federation, reports that Ms Suvralina Mohanty, Secretary of the Prayas Theosophical Lodge, Uttar Pradesh Federation, met the President of India, Mrs Draupadi Murmu, on 7 March 2023, and presented her with several Theosophical books such as *At the Feet of the Master*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, and *Theosophy and Education*. President Murmu appreciated the Theosophical work carried out by Ms Mohanty in the National Capital Region of Delhi. Ms Mohanty is a long-standing member of the Theosophical Society (TS) and has been doing a lot of Theosophical Order of Service and TS work in India. She is a good student of Theosophy.

Argentina — Holy Week Conference

The Inter-American Theosophical Federation (IATF), in collaboration with the Theosophical Center in San Rafael and the Argentine Section of the Theosophical Society, organized the Holy Week Conference from 3 to 8 April 2023, held in the San Rafael Center in an atmosphere of warmth, harmony, and fraternity, with around 25 participants. The theme was “The Practice of Theosophy in Today’s World”. Dr Enrique Reig, President of the IATF, was in charge of coordinating the program in

person, and Dr Isaac Jauli did so online, with both theoretical and practical parts oriented to self-inquiry and self-knowledge. Some of the subjects covered were: “Theosophy, Knowledge, and Wisdom”, “How to Know Ourselves”, “Discern Your Own Truth”, “Recognizing Our Own Shadow”, “Tools for Inner Development”, “Exploring the Wisdom of the Inner Teacher”, “Inspiring Concepts of the Ageless Wisdom”, and “The Process of Self-Transformation”.

Spain — Iberian Days 2023

Mrs Angels Torra Burón, General Secretary of the TS in Spain, reports that the 45th session of the Jornadas Ibéricas Teosóficas (Iberian Theosophical Days) was held from 6 to 9 April in Galapagar, Madrid, bringing together 56 people, including members of the Portuguese and Spanish Sections and sympathizers, as well as a large and varied number of viewers online from Portugal, Spain, and several Latin American countries. The theme was “Mysticism in the Perennial Wisdom”. The attendees had the opportunity to share many and very fraternal moments of meditation, presentations, and activities of reflection and sharing, but above all to realize the first and most important object of our TS: Fraternity. This is a great success for our efforts and undertakings, and stimulates us to continue on this beautiful path.

Theosophical Work around the World

The presentations were as varied as they were interesting and profound, and dealt with mysticism from multiple approaches, including “Science, Philosophy, and Mysticism”, “The Mystical Experience in Music”, “Reflections on Contemplative Prayer in the Christian

Tradition”, “The Dark Night of the Soul”, “The Mysticism of the *Bhagavad Gītā*”, “Nature, Mysticism, and Consciousness in Love”, “Sufi Mysticism”, “Alchemy and Sufism in al-Andalus”, and “Integration with Nature as Mystical Experience”. ✧

NOTICE

According to Rule 11(a) of the TS International Regulations, I nominated Dr Deepa Padhi to continue as Vice-President on 20 March 2023. At the end of the voting period we received 32 votes in favor, 0 votes opposing, 5 no reply from the General Council members. In view of the results confirming my nomination, Dr Padhi was re-elected for a third term as Vice-President, effective 20 April 2023.

Tim Boyd
President

* Having acquainted himself with its mysterious contents, which revealed to him the mysteries of creation, the initiated became a *builder* himself, for he was made acquainted with the *dodecahedron*, or the geometrical figure on which the universe was built. To what he had learned in previous initiations of the use of the rule and of architectural principles was added a cross, the perpendicular and horizontal lines of which were supposed to form the foundation of the spiritual temple, by placing them across the junction, or central primordial point, the element of all existences (Pythagoras), representing the first concrete idea of deity. Henceforth he could, as a Master-builder (see *1 Corinthians*, iii. 10), erect a temple of wisdom on that rock of *Petra*, for himself; and having laid a sure foundation, let “another build thereon”.

– *Isis Unveiled*, Chapter 8, p. 392

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

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