

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

VOL. 145 NO. 7 APRIL 2024

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

Cover: In the Buddhist tradition the moon represents the Buddha's knowledge and virtue. The moon for this sacred mandala was photographed through a telescope, then reconfigured into a fragmented pattern with 64 outer nodes, referring to the 64 facets of the Buddha's speech, presenting the stages in the complete path to enlightenment. Artist: David Orr / <david-orr.com>.

[In the cover caption of the Feb. 2024 issue, the name of the cover image artist was unintentionally left out. He is author/photographer Richard Dvorák: <dvorak.photography>]

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

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

The Three Pillars of Practice

TIM BOYD

IN all traditions that aim at self-transformation, or human regeneration, there is a necessary emphasis on the need for practice. Some people might resist the discipline and time required to develop and persist in a practice, thinking of it as just another process of conditioning, which it is, but it is paradoxical. Spiritual practice is a process of conditioning that leads to the possibility of *freedom* from conditioning. The preoccupation with practice in spiritual and religious circles is based on a couple of observations. The first is that whether we recognize it or not, we are continually practicing something.

For those living what has been described as the “unobserved life”, the training to which they submit is a constant conditioning that fixes one firmly within the limitations of the material world and that level of emotion and thought that align with it. Caught up in the pressing needs and wants of the body and personality for comfort, recognition, wealth, health, and a happiness based on the satisfaction of perpetually renewing desires, there is little room for the “still, small voice” of the soul, or Inner Self.

A second observation fueling the need for a practice that turns one’s attention inward is the age-old truism that “Practice makes perfect”. Having spoken to groups

of people around the world I have come to realize that this pearl of folk wisdom is present everywhere. However, the fact that everyone knows it and agrees does not make it true — at least not in the way that most people accept it.

Anyone, who has been involved in music, sports, medicine, or any field where an ever-expanding proficiency is sought, must develop a proper practice — a regular discipline that ingrains effective habits of body and mind. Persistent repetition leads to a “perfection” of sorts. However, a challenge to the belief in the infallibility of practice becomes evident in those cases where one’s diligence in practice is flawless, but one is practicing the wrong things. The athlete, injured because of their persistence in improper body mechanics; the physician trained in an incorrect view of medicine; the musician whose repeated wrong practice limits their growth, all become “perfect” in their imperfection. The time-honored expression would be more correctly stated as “Perfect practice makes perfect”.

Within the theosophical tradition there is a long-standing formula for correct practice, sometimes expressed as the “Three Pillars” of practice. Briefly stated, those Pillars are 1. Study; 2. Meditation; and 3. Service. It is simple language

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expressing profoundly valuable guidance.

One of the unavoidable difficulties facing any genuinely wise, or spiritually illumined person has been how to share their level of realization with others (us) who lack their level of experience. All of the great teachers try a variety of means to communicate, but much of their contribution takes place as words that with time become scriptures. They use language in a variety of ways — as straightforward analytical explanation, poetic imagery, storytelling, and parables — in the attempt to give us some clues to the unspeakable realms of Spirit. Historically it has been a losing battle for the Teachers. As much as we feel that everything can and should be explained, in the realm of Spirit, ideas and language not only fall short, but often confuse more than they illumine.

One problem is that words seem to convey fixed, universal meanings, but their meaning depends on consensus. Their value as tools of communication depends on a shared acceptance of meaning. Also, over time our use and understanding of words changes. There is an old expression that “Familiarity breeds contempt”. It is an attempt to convey the observation that with long association we lose sight of the value of things. Our tendency is to devalue things by taking them for granted. We can become inattentive and complacent in our relationships with people, Nature, ideas, and words. This is especially the case with longstanding ideas and the words used to describe them. I feel this

is true for the words of the Three Pillars.

In order to resuscitate some of the slippage of meaning for the Three Pillars, allow me to reframe the language. In our normal or academic view, “Study” is an intellectual process of searching out information as building blocks to larger structures of knowledge. Mostly it could be called a horizontal process because it broadens the horizons of our knowledge, linking it with other areas of study.

From the Ageless Wisdom perspective, the human being is “Highest spirit and lowest matter linked by mind”. The activity and focus of mind have the capacity to extend from engagement with “lowest matter”, all the way to “highest spirit”. Most people find themselves stuck in the cycling of thought around sensations, pleasures, pains, losses, gains, and the world of external activity, rarely allowing time for some exploration of more refined possibilities of the mind. In the context of spiritual practice, study is a vertical process. It is the elevation of our accustomed center of activity within the vast spectrum of mind. At its peak it comes so near to spirit that it becomes “enlightened” or “illumined” in its proximity. In Sanskrit it is called the “Mānasa Tajjasi” — the Radiant Mind. So, “Study” I describe as the “Elevation of the Mind”.

For most people, when they hear the word “Meditation” an image of someone sitting cross-legged, eyes closed, and motionless arises in their mind. Relaxation, inactivity, “no thought” might also be common associations with the word. But is all or any of that what meditation is?

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Probably not. The practice of meditation incorporates these features in the same way that playing musical scales is a part of the practice of playing music. It is a training that allows for a freedom to arise. Actual meditation occurs when one is free from involvement and attachment to the process of thought production and movement within the stream of thought. In the profound and clever words of Lama Anagarika Govinda, “Meditation is not what you think”.

So, rather than make the, mostly inaccurate, designation of Pillar #2 as “Meditation”, which for most “practitioners” is only an occasionally occurring experience, my preference is to refer to this pillar as “Experimenting with Quiet”. In the practice phase we do relax the body; we do attend to posture; we do (in most cases) cease from physical movement; we do pay attention to the flowing of the stream of thought. All of this has its beginnings in Quiet. But Quiet is nuanced and has progressive depths. The initial quiet of a concentrated mind alleviates distraction and uncontrolled activity.

There is a further depth of quiet that expresses itself as Stillness, where the consciousness is centered inwardly, unaffected by the outer world. Then there is an ultimate experience of Quiet — Silence, a union of the individual Soul, or Self, with the Universal Consciousness. “I”, “me”, “my”, “you”, “them”, all boundaries and separations lose their meaning in this absorption of Union. In Yoga philosophy these three stages of Quiet are named Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna, and Samādhi.

The third Pillar, “Service”, is vital and often undervalued. We could describe the effects of practice in this way: Study provides the building blocks of information that form structures of knowledge. Every field of knowledge has a specific and identifiable form. Scientific knowledge is distinct in its insistence on the scientific method and, as practiced currently, the material band of reality to which it limits itself. Christianity has its own form and distinguishing features. Islam, Buddhism, Theosophy, dentistry, agriculture, and all the rest also do. All of them form and develop structures as receptacles/containers for their knowledges. Spiritual study as an activity of “elevating the mind” also evolves its forms, intended as containers for what we might call the “water of truth”.

But study alone does not open the flow of a higher understanding, of wisdom. The point of experimenting with quiet is that in the experience of a deepening quiet, then stillness, and possibly silence, the floodgates of intuitive insight are opened, filling and giving meaning to the container built by persistent elevation of the mind. It is at this point that service reveals its profound importance.

In my reframing of terms I think of “Service” as “Conscious Compassionate Activity”. The emphasis is on awareness, becoming conscious in our activities of relieving the suffering of others. There are many things we all do without thought or intention that indirectly serve others. Even something as simple as breathing provides carbon dioxide that plants and

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trees require to live, which in turn make life on earth possible for all of us. The money one makes from their employment is taxed; those taxes contribute to the operation of schools, hospitals, the building of roads, the feeding of the poor, and so on. While beneficial, these are unintended collateral consequences of behavior we engage in without thought, or with our personal benefit in mind. When it comes to spiritual practice the primary focus is awareness and the intentionality that accompanies it.

In H. P. Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* the statement is made that "Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of Laws". This is a very high view of Compassion. For most of us compassion is experienced as the desire to alleviate the suffering of others. Everyone with a normally healthy mind engages in it on some level. Whether it is caring for elderly parents, children, friends, or animals, we all do it both as caring actions and in thought. As a practice, compassionate activity is a powerful antidote to our ingrained and cherished sense of separateness. The simple act of acknowledging the need or suffering of another is expansive. It moves us beyond mere self-absorption to concern for another. In a very real sense, the scope of our consciousness enlarges. It also has the effect of opening us to deeper, more potent energetic resources.

As the scope of our service expands, so too does our awareness and connection to genuine power. In the case of those we regard as the "Great Ones", their awareness and inclusion has come to embrace humanity as a whole. This is the power of Conscious Compassionate Activity — that it leads to Unity, Oneness, Non-separateness, Truth.

Having built a container by Elevation of the Mind, having opened the flow of intuitive insight by Experimenting with Quiet, through Conscious Compassionate Activity, we direct the overflowing wealth of understanding and power to others — in Buddhist terminology, "to all sentient beings".

Although any time is the best time to begin, the deeper effects of practice reveal themselves over time.

Self-transformation, human regeneration, yoga are different words for one process. It is not involved in spiritualizing oneself, or "becoming" spiritual. In its simplest description it is the removal of the obstacles to an inherent, ever-present, indwelling spirit. Yoga is not about positions, breath, or exercises. Rightly understood and practiced it is literally about "union". The goal and end result of its practice is described in the *Yoga-sutras* of Patanjali as "*chitta vritti nirodha*", literally "the cessation of the modifications of the mind". ✧

The mind is by nature restless. Begin liberating it from its restlessness; give it peace, make it free from distractions, train it to look inward, and make all this a habit. This is done by ignoring the external world and removing the obstacles to peace of mind. (p. 20)

Talks With Ramana Maharshi: On Realizing Abiding Peace and Happiness

Understanding Universal Intelligence

DEEPA PADHI

THE very concept of universal intelligence suggests that the universe is created by intelligent design. There is an intelligent principle working behind the universe and it exists for a purpose. The creation is teleological, not mechanical or coincidental.

In order to understand universal intelligence, we need to know its source — the Universal Consciousness. It is not Absolute Reality. Pure Consciousness is the Absolute Reality which is eternal and unmanifested, whereas Universal Consciousness is manifested through matter. In Advaita Vedanta, Pure Consciousness is termed as *brahman*. When Pure Consciousness gets manifested as the underlying essence of all “being and becoming”, it is called Universal Consciousness. It is also named as *āvara*, or God, and many other names in different religions. It is the real perceiver of all things and beings. Universal Consciousness is the prerequisite of universal intelligence. Intelligence can work only through Consciousness.

Universal intelligence is sometimes confused with human intelligence. If we go back in history, we find Aristotle defining intelligence as a means for executing power. In the 17th century René Descartes, a French philosopher perceived it in a different way. He believed that only human beings possess con-

sciousness and therefore, can reason on their own selves and the world around. His famous statement is “*cogito ergo sum*”, meaning “I think, therefore I am”, or “My existence is dependent on my thinking”. Man is a thinking being, therefore he is superior to all the other creatures. In the 18th century Immanuel Kant had made the statement, “Some people are rulers and some people are slaves. Intelligence is the difference between them.”

In the 19th century it was thought that an artificial model can be made to hold intelligence like in mechanized instruments and engines. In the 20th century, it was amazing to see how intelligence could be stored in machines and utilized in the future. In the 21st century, we have found Artificial Intelligence, the applications of which we find in cars without drivers, and machines doing all sorts of work done in every sphere of human activity.

Now, we talk of different types of intelligence like intellectual, emotional, spiritual, artificial, and innate intelligence. Intellectual intelligence is used in measuring analytical skills, cognitive abilities, and for many scientific projects. Emotional intelligence is said to be expressed through our ability to manage, and also understand our emotions and that of others as well. Spiritual intelligence is a much higher

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dimension of intelligence beyond the “I”ness in the form of various virtues like love, wisdom, compassion, empathy, happiness, and peace. Through spiritual intelligence, one realizes the true meaning and purpose of life. In fact, the aim of spiritual intelligence is to strengthen interpersonal relationships and to bring about transformation of the individual from fragmentation to integration, from diversity to unity.

Artificial intelligence is the most talked-about topic of the year. After the recent invention of “Google cars” or cars without drivers, robots are much talked about. When a human being drives a car, he has conscious feelings. But the car without a driver does not have a consciousness of its own. It is run by human intelligence, therefore it will be subject to error as human minds are. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, it is said: “Intelligence is said to be the mind’s instructor, not its instrument.” Artificial intelligence can be considered as an instrument of human intellect, not intelligence. Innate intelligence is understood as the inherent power of matter which is a piece of universal intelligence. In the words of R. W. Stephenson, “The force which Universal Intelligence gives to organic matter as a higher order of its manifestations is called Innate Intelligence.”

All the types of intelligence except innate intelligence come under human intelligence. Even human intelligence is not the same as universal intelligence. It is limited though it is a dimension of universal intelligence. The *Gītā* says: “Oh mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of mine which comprises all the living entities interacting with material Nature and are sustaining the universe.”

(VII.5) This means universal intelligence is in all matter and constantly gives to it all its qualities and actions. In short, whatever is existent possesses universal intelligence in the form of innate intelligence.

According to Theosophy, there is nothing inorganic or without consciousness and intelligence in the universe. One finds in the Universal prayer: “O hidden life, vibrant in every atom, O hidden light, shining in every creature . . .” Here, life is consciousness possessed by every atom, and light is referred to as intelligence possessed by every creature. Now scientists have demonstrated that plants perceive the world in their own way. Quoting a scientist: “A plant may not have eyes, but it perceives light through photoreceptor proteins that cover its entire body and are nearly identical to the ones in our own retinas. It is as if the plant had tiny eyes all over its body. A plant knows when you are standing next to it and the colour of your dress. Even a blade of grass sees the world around it, takes decisions, and acts accordingly. Because of this reason, some philosophers have granted personhood to plants.” Recent scientific research has proved that small invertebrates like bees think and handle abstract concepts.

Therefore, intelligence is not restricted only to human beings and animals. Universal intelligence exists in every organic as well as inorganic matter. But the degree of intelligence varies from one form to another form of existence. As Arthur Young says, “God (Consciousness) sleeps in minerals, wakes up in plants, walks in animals, and thinks in human beings.” It is true of the universal intelligence also. Therefore, it is not that intelligence is possessed only by human beings because

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they are supposed to be the highest form of creation and having self-consciousness. And again, intelligence is not possessed equally by all human beings.

It is said in the *Gītā* that though the all-pervading power or intelligence is manifested in multifarious things, it is found to be more powerful in some than others, be it living or non-living. Lord Krishna, the symbol of Universal Consciousness and intelligence is said to be identified as Bhṛigu among all rishis; among immovable things, the Himalaya; among warriors, Rama; and among rivers, the Ganga; and the list goes on in the *Gītā*. (X 19–41)

Human intelligence is but one manifestation of universal intelligence. When we intensely become aware of universal intelligence and get connected to it, wisdom will unfold for working in this world. Examples can be found in the cases of scientists who come out with new inventions for the benefit of the world. Universal intelligence is the energy, executing power manifested in various forms such as love, compassion, generosity, happiness, empathy, understanding towards others, environmental stewardship, and other positive qualities. It guides the human intellect to work selflessly for the welfare of all, not only for human society but for all creation, as, again, in the words of the *Gītā*, “*sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ*” — “for the well-being of all creation”. (V. 25)

In fact, in order to be clearer about universal intelligence, one needs to refer to the Sāṅkhya theory of evolution in Indian philosophy. *Puruṣa* is equated with Pure Consciousness and *mulaprakṛiti* is Primordial Matter. It is a state in which *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, the three *gunas* are in a homogeneous state. When the state

of homogeneity gets disturbed by the presence of the Pure Consciousness, or *puruṣa*, evolution takes place. *Puruṣa* is the witnessing consciousness which illuminates all individual consciousness but is unaffected by the changes in *gunas* of *prakṛiti* and the material world. Self-realization is attained when this distinction is realized, and one gets detached from the shackles of *prakṛiti*, or the material world.

The first evolute is called *mahat* meaning “great”. *Sattva guṇa* (spiritual/positive quality) predominates in this evolute. Being the evolute of Pure Consciousness, *mahat* is Universal Consciousness and also being the evolute of *prakṛiti*, or Matter, it is the Universal Intelligence, as it contains the essence of all manifestations. It can be said to be the tangential point between the Unmanifest and the Manifest. It is *sāttvic* and also called *buddhi*. Universal Consciousness by its very presence illumines Universal Intelligence to plan, project, execute, act, and achieve.

From *mahat* evolves *ahankāra*, or the ego, which means self-identity. From *ahankāra* comes out *manas*, or the Mind, the five *jñānendriyas*, or the sense organs, the five *karmendriyas*, or the organs of action, the five *tanmātras*, or subtle senses, and the five *mahābhūtas*, or Great Elements. In all these evolutes, one finds the trace of Universal Intelligence, though in different degrees. Each and every creation, however small it may be, has some inherent power or potentiality, because of which a thing or being is what it is. That potentiality is the Universal Intelligence. However small a creation may be, it has some significance, it has some utility in the universe.

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In Theosophy, *mahat* is called the “Universal Mind”, or the “Cosmic Ideation”. It is the Universal Intelligence which is not eternal as it ceased to exist in the *manvantara*, whereas Universal Consciousness is eternal. The *mahat* is used in various theosophical contexts. It refers to the Cosmic Principle of Intelligence, the Third Logos, and the Universal Mind which transforms Chaos into Order and through which the material world comes into being. It is also known as Cosmic Ideation. Everything that exists in the visible world has first existed as a state in the cosmic field of potentiality and everything emerges out of cosmic potentiality. Some consider it as an *a priori* principle. Universal Intelligence encompasses the wisdom beyond our individual minds and Nature itself.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky expressed the idea that the Cosmic Mind is *mahat*, Divine Ideation in active, creative operation. Cosmic Ideation is equated with *mahā-buddhi* and *mahat*. It is also the Third Manifested Logos. According to J. Krishnamurti, people of religious feelings, instead of using the word “intelligence”, have used the word “god”. Even David Bohm, the quantum physicist, was of the opinion that “It is a sort of metaphor, . . . god is intelligence . . . god means that which is immeasurable, beyond thought.” (J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm, Brockwood Park 1972, Dialogue — “On Intelligence”)

“The desire for this intelligence through time has created this image of god, Jesus, Krishna, or whatever it is, by having faith in that — which is still the movement of thought — one hopes that there will be harmony in one’s life.”

(*Ibid*) The *Aitareya Upanishad* maintains that “Everything in the universe is guided by this Universal Intelligence, supported by this Intelligence, and established in this Intelligence.” This is because the universe has a purpose.

Human beings are highly intelligent. Only human beings can understand, explore, and experience the Universal Intelligence, as they have a developed consciousness which no other creations have. Therefore, only they can understand the purpose of the universe. All creations are connected with each other and with the universe as a whole. The universe sends us information but because of our restless, adulterated mind and the limited capacity of our brain, most of us are not able to understand its meaning. Within each one of us is the spark of Universal Intelligence in the form of innate intelligence of which we are ignorant. Each and every one of us has the potential to access the Universal Intelligence. One needs to go within to be in constant touch with the Universal Intelligence by focusing the mind, or through meditation. This helps in our individual spiritual practices and growth. We do not have to depend on the outer world.

It is through Universal Intelligence that one is able to achieve the purpose of life — to understand that “I am Universal Consciousness.” Here “I”, the individual being, or person, is the evolute of *prakriti* (Matter), or Universal Intelligence. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that I, Universal Intelligence, is ultimately nothing but the Universal Consciousness. Universal Intelligence is not eternal, as it has its end with the end of the *manvantara*, but Universal Consciousness is eternal. ✧

Ancient Thought and Modernity: Monism and Panpsychism Today — I

ELTON HALL

“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”

— Mark Twain

THE well-known American author and humorist, who was also a man of great integrity, wrote these famous lines when reflecting on human history. For much of history, humanity has thought of time as generally circular, with history repeating itself in the rise and fall of civilizations and empires, and since we seem to fail to learn the lessons of history, we too often repeat them. While some ancient Greek philosophers may have thought that history literally repeats itself, most believed that history is more like a spiral staircase, where one returns to the same point but at a different level, again and again. In this sense, history rhymes.

In the known history of the Western world, we see periodic revolutions in how individuals and humanity as a whole see the universe and their place in it. Major changes occurred with the rise of ancient Greek philosophy. Another was the emergence of Christianity. One might think of the Renaissance, though the change it began culminated in the Enlightenment

of the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. And now we seem to be seeing yet another vast change.

Each new human adventure in thought brought fresh ideas that profoundly affected how people understood themselves, society, and the universe. And yet the past is never lost, and much of its contribution to human awareness persists through subsequent revolutions. What once appeared old and outdated often returns in new clothing. We will consider three ancient and fundamental ideas that deeply influence thinking today — ideas that were often suppressed or ignored by a majority of thinkers, but never lost. They are monism, panpsychism, and teleology.

In the most general terms, **monism** is the view that everything in existence has a single, ultimate Source, a unity that gave rise to the diversity that we call the universe. **Panpsychism** is the idea that consciousness pervades the entire universe and everything in it — though of course not just consciousness as we humans

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experience it. **Teleology** is the concept of purpose, that things have goals toward which they strive, limited by the conditions in which they find themselves.

We should note that these ideas are not absent in the non-Western world, including South and East Asia, South America, and Africa. But we will concentrate here on the Western world, Europe and North America. In some ways, these concepts are less developed in the Western world than elsewhere.

Philosophy is traditionally said to begin with Thales (626–548 BCE).¹ Before that, Homer had characterized the gods in ways generally acceptable to the Greeks of the time. This view has a world that is composed of what we perceive as intelligent gods whose activities affect human beings, but who are largely unconcerned with us. Thales is famous for saying that all things come from water — that water is the ultimate source of the universe. But he also said that all things are full of gods, suggesting that intelligence, or sentience, pervaded the material world. We do not know exactly what he meant because his thinking survives only in quotes and paraphrases found in the writings of others who lived long after him. Perhaps he was using water as a metaphor for a fluid principle of unfoldment and change.

Anaximander (610–546 BCE) made the ultimate source of all existence more abstract by calling it the *apeiron*, the unlimited or boundless. The old gods do not go away but they were exiled to the margins of existence. Heraclitus (about 500 BCE) made love and strife (Aphro-

dite and Ares, whom the Romans called Venus and Mars) principles of change, opposites that work together to create the universe. He also said that the thunderbolt (the weapon of Zeus, or Jupiter) guides all things. Notice that intelligence in the universe is acknowledged in all these thinkers. Anaxagoras (500–448 BCE) called this pervasive intelligence Universal Mind. As such, it is of course not like our everyday consciousness, but it is intelligent and purposive.

There is another profound element in ancient Greek philosophy, which we will touch on but not discuss in depth. Pythagoras (570–495 BCE), born in Samos but active in southern Italy, held that number was the root of Nature. For him, mathematics did not just describe Nature but constitutes it. Mathematics is reality. Anyone who has attempted to understand contemporary science knows the central role it plays in current theories.

Parmenides (around 475 BCE) declared that all things unfold from the One, the Source of all existence. Only the One is real, and compared to it everything else — the whole universe — is an illusion. This would imply that both matter and consciousness reside in the One as pure potential. Here even the gods are ultimately illusions along with everything else. When we come to Plato, many of whose writings survive, we are told that the universe is most like a single living being, suggesting both body, or matter, and soul, or intelligent spirit. Like the living cells in the human body, all life-forms are cells in the body of the intelligent universe. The gods, if there are any, are just superior cells

in the body of the universe. Humans understand Nature and the divine through reason and, if one undertakes the effort to do so, pure intuition. For Parmenides the gods, while still present, have been replaced by a Source that is the root of all existence, as well as that which guides its unfoldment and change.

The rise of Christianity at the beginning of the Common Era replaced the One of Parmenides and the organic intelligence of the universe with God the Creator and his Creation — the universe. While it took several centuries for the whole Christian understanding of the world to emerge, there is from the beginning a clear distinction between Creator and Creation, and between spirit and matter. As a consequence, much theology dealt with how the two are connected. What is obvious, however, is that the old gods are gone from the scene, but only to be replaced by hierarchies of angels and demons, intelligent, conscious forces that connect humans with the divine — and the demonic.

If one looks at the development of Christian thought, one immediately sees that much of Plato's thinking is found in Christianity. One also sees that making God separate from his Creation poses a number of problems. How do we know anything about God, the source of everything we know, since the Creation is distinct from the Creator? How does God guide the world if He is outside it? Theologians have struggled with these questions for two thousand years. The solution to the question of our knowledge of God is revelation — God tells us some

things about himself. And the answer to how God guides the world is through divine intervention. When He wishes to, He intervenes in world affairs. And so there are miracles as well as an invisible hand in the world's affairs. Put more philosophically, God is utterly transcendent — and we can know virtually nothing of that, except what He tells us in revelation — and, because God descended into the world in Jesus, he is in some way also immanent in the world.

The Renaissance (14th–17th centuries) reintroduced many writings of the ancients back into the European Christian world. But the Enlightenment (1685–1815) elevated reason as the basis for all human understanding. This transformation set revelation aside in favor of reasoning and direct observation of Nature. Two examples show the effect of this shift in thinking in theory and public awareness.

Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) attempted to use reason alone to understand the universe and its source. He concluded that God and Nature are one. This view was decried as atheism, but that is not true. Spinoza's God has infinite attributes, of which we as human beings share only two — mind and matter. This God which is Nature is infinitely beyond our capacity to understand, but using our mind, embodied in matter, we can understand that God is infinite and that we share very partially in the divine. Our understanding of Nature is also very limited, because it is the infinite God, but we can grasp that it, too, shares in the divine. Such a view, of course, transforms the Creator-Creation

distinction, making it merely a limitation of human understanding.

On the more public level, the French Revolution (1789–1799) went so far as to take over the great cathedral of Notre Dame and place the goddess of Reason on the altar. Here was the full return to observing Nature and reasoning about it, the birth of modern science. There is an old story that Napoleon, who brought the French Revolution to an end, asked Pierre Simon, Marquis de Laplace (1749–1827) where God fit into his mathematical theories of Nature. Laplace answered, “I don’t need that hypothesis.” He banished all divinity from existence and doing so marks the birth of strict materialism.

Science replaced revelation and ancient theories with new theories that arose from observation and experimentation. Over time, this new approach explained many things that had remained mysteries, solved many problems, brought about revolutions in all the subjects dealing with Nature, and culminated in the positivism of the early twentieth century. Only matter exists, according to this view, and consciousness, not to mention spirit or God, is not real. Consciousness is only a phenomenon that arises from the complex arrangement of atoms and molecules — it is not real in itself.

So, until recently, here we were, transient beings, mere epiphenomena, matter arranged so that it could discover that it is mere matter. All the old questions are answered — who we are, what we are, whether we survive death (we do not). We are just atoms, themselves not even basic,

but being composed of subatomic particles which do not even exist as particles until observed by transient consciousness.

And yet there is a problem that will not politely go away. How is it that consciousness, merely an arrangement of atoms, can ask questions and discover that it is nothing but an arrangement of atoms?

You may have noticed that, throughout this brief survey of our Western history, issues that were in the minds of the ancient Greeks have not really disappeared. What is the ultimate Source of everything? What is intelligence and consciousness? Dismissing consciousness as nothing but like the heat given off of the chemical process of fire, does not answer these questions. Nor does it give meaning to life. This is why the so-called old and outdated ideas have not gone away. They may be hidden in modern discourse, but they persist. Science did not replace Christianity, though it has affected many features of it, and it did not replace earlier thought, though that thought shows up in new ways.

Over the last few decades, three very ancient ideas have returned to the surface of human thinking, and now they emerge from science itself as well as from philosophy. Science and philosophy are linked because theory draws on philosophy, and observation of, and experiments with, Nature is the heart of science. Both are linked to mathematics. Throughout the 20th century and today, mathematics has increasingly become the language of science, used not just to describe the workings of Nature but to predict what we will

find if we undertake appropriate experimental observations. This approach, of course, goes right back to Pythagoras. Today there continues a great debate over whether mathematics is simply a tool for describing the workings of Nature, or whether mathematics is real and independent of observable Nature. Put another way, is mathematics a useful human invention or a reality that is discovered by mathematicians?

The first idea is **monism**, the conviction that all existence has a single, unique Source. Of course, we do not think that source is water, and quantum physics has replaced the *apeiron* or unlimited, and God the Creator with the Big Bang. It is called a singularity because it is unique in the history of our universe. In the picture that science currently draws for us, the universe is evolving, that is, it is changing. It began as a point, so to speak, that burst into time and space, in fact, contained time and space, and has been expanding ever since that initial moment.

The Big Bang is thought to have occurred some 13.8 billion years ago. I said “the picture that science currently draws for us”, because the great physicist Niels Bohr (1885–1962), a key figure in the development of quantum theory, insisted that this theory of the universe is rather like a map. It is a picture of fundamental reality, but it cannot claim to be a literal description of that reality.² In the famous phrase of the Polish-American scholar Alfred Korzybski (1879–1950), “The map is not the territory”, meaning

that the models we create are not the things they model. Quantum physics models the universe, but what the universe actually is may be quite different. Nonetheless, though physicists may agree, most treat the model as the reality. And this has led to problems, as we will see.

The conviction, that everything that has existed, exists now, and will exist in the future, has one Source, which has persisted since the days of Thales. What that source is, and what can be known of it, has changed over the centuries, but that there is such a Source has remained in the minds of people. We will look at an example, the views of a physicist.

In January 2023, Heinrich Päs (born 1971) published a book titled *The One: How an Ancient Idea Holds the Future of Physics*.³ Päs is a theoretical physicist in Germany, who has taught in the United States and Germany, and conducted research at CERN, home of the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. His work in quantum physics has convinced him that current physics, successful as it is, is now on the wrong road to further understanding of Nature and reality. Physicists, who tend to believe that physics is the most fundamental of the sciences and therefore closest to describing reality, look for ever more fundamental particles and forces that make up the universe.

Taking a cue from ancient Greek thought, Newton was convinced that Nature consisted of atoms — irreducible little particles — and basic laws of motion and interaction such as gravity. This view

can be found in Democritus (around 440 BCE), a contemporary of Socrates. Following his teacher Leucippus, he held that the universe consisted of atoms and the void, essentially empty space. Atoms eternally fell through the void, coming together in clusters and eventually falling apart. This falling motion accounted for everything we experience — things, growth and decay, all change. For Newton, of course, atoms did not just fall, for he understood the workings of gravity. But he was convinced that everything consisted of atoms which came together through gravitational attraction.

We should note that it was his large view of the universe — of planets moving around the sun — that informed Newton's understanding of the small events on our world, such as apples falling from trees. Put in general terms, from the beginning of modern science, cosmology — the study of the universe as a whole — affected efforts to understand the microcosm — little things right down to atoms themselves. Päs believes that cosmology again can help science, especially physics, move on to new discoveries.

Atoms did not turn out to be the most fundamental particles. Throughout the last century, atoms were dissected into protons, neutrons, and electrons, only to discover that protons and such particles consist of triads of quarks, themselves affected by even smaller particles such as gluons. In the second half of the 20th century, a new theory arose, the view that all these particles — all that makes up the so-called Standard Model — are them-

selves the result of even more fundamental entities called “strings”. They are inconceivably tiny vibrating units that can form curves, loops, and other shapes which, together, form subatomic particles.

This understanding of Nature has a problem. For over fifty years, all efforts to develop a convincing string theory have failed, not because none can be set out, but because hundreds of alternative string theories all seem to work! Which one is right? Further, in order to work, such theories require multiple dimensions to work, like our three dimensions of space, some requiring up to eleven dimensions. Are there really so many dimensions in the universe?

The deeper problem is that there is no way to experimentally confirm any predictions such theories might make. In science, it is not enough to explain what we know. To gain credibility as a theory, it must also predict something we do not know but can then experimentally test to discover if the prediction was right. In quantum physics, just such predictions have led to the discovery of previously unknown particles.

Even though Einstein was involved in the development of quantum physics, he was never satisfied with it. Rather, his most successful work was in cosmology where he developed his theory of relativity. He was inspired by the fact that light behaves as particles in certain experimental conditions and as waves in others. This awareness has pervaded our understanding of both large and small phenomena. By the time one gets to

quantum strings, the distinction between particle and wave — between an object and a vibration — has dissolved. Perhaps the universe consists of fields rather than particles, of interacting vibrations rather than things. For a long time now, physicists have known that one cannot describe the movement or location of a particle until it is observed, and it seems the observation “collapses” — to use a term common in physics — the wave into a particle which has a specific location.

All of this is a very brief and rather loose explanation of issues in contemporary physics, but it is all we need at this moment to see what Päs has in mind when he says physics is on the wrong road to new discoveries. He says:

At present physics is facing a crisis that forces us to reconsider what we understand as “fundamental” in the first place. Right now, the most brilliant particle physicists and cosmologists are alienated by experimental findings of extremely unlikely coincidences that so far defy any explanation. At the same time, the quest for a theory of everything is bereaving physics of its foundational concepts, such as matter, space, and time. If these are gone, what remains?

Thinking of the situation in which quantum physics finds itself, Päs reaches a surprising conclusion:

Quantum cosmology implies that the fundamental layer of reality is made neither of particles nor of tiny, vibrating, one-dimensional objects known as “strings”, but the universe itself — understood not as the sum of the things making it up

but rather as an all-encompassing unity.⁴

Notice that Päs is not saying that the universe is one thing in the way that an automobile is one thing, something made up of parts which can be separated and understood on their own — tires, a steering wheel, a frame, and so on. He is saying that the universe is just one thing in and of itself. In his words, “. . . there is a unique comprehensible, and fundamental reality”. There is, that is, in reality only this One, which we call the universe. This is fundamental. This means that the whole is not the sum of its parts, but rather that the whole is fundamental and the alleged parts are merely aspects of this whole as we perceive it. There is only one particle/force, and it is the universe itself. Such a view reverses our typical thinking about existence.

Päs develops his reasons for this reversal of perspective through an examination of quantum physics, arguing that what we know today compels us to this profound reconsideration of reality. When almost 2,500 years ago Parmenides held that the One is reality, it had an immediate implication for our diverse world of many things. Parmenides called his essay on the One, *The Way of Truth*. He wrote a second essay, most of which is lost to us, about the world we experience in daily life, which he called *The Way of Seeming*.

Compared to the fundamental reality of the One, what we experience is a kind of illusion, real to us because we are a part of it, but an illusion in relation to the reality of the One. This is Päs’s own view. Though the ancient Greek philosophers

and scientists did not have the conceptual and experimental tools available to us, they realized the fundamental truth of things. Päs uses all the tools we have to come to the same conclusion.

This is a strong form of monism. It holds that reality lies beyond even unity, for it is just One, while unity is the being and working together of parts. In this strong monism, the parts are perceptual artifacts of the One and not fundamental to it. In unity, if the parts are separated, the unity is lost. With the One, if the parts are separated, the One is unaffected; only our perception changes.

While we cannot pursue Päs's whole argument, which takes an entire book to lay out, we can notice a feature of his view through the quantum discovery of entanglement. This mysterious feature of the quantum world has baffled the greatest scientists for decades. If two particles are entangled, then separated even by vast distances, their entanglement remains. If something affects one of the particles, the other instantaneously responds.

For example, particles have a feature called "spin", rather like a spinning top. If two particles, one with a top spin and the other with a bottom spin, are separated, and if the first one is altered to a bottom

spin, the second immediately changes to a top spin. This is true even if the particles are separated so far from one another that no "message" of the change could reach from one entangled particle to the other — because nothing travels faster than the speed of light — the other nonetheless changes. How can this be? Entanglement seems to make the two particles act as just one particle in some mysterious way.

But particles are entangled everywhere, so that changes here "cause" changes elsewhere, no matter where that is. Päs points out that the whole universe is likely entangled so that every change has effects everywhere instantaneously. Think of the thyroid in the human body. If it goes too low or too high, it will affect many things, from memory to motor movement. So with the universe, in fact, even more so, since it is One.

We recall that Thales, who held that the Source of everything is water, whatever that meant for him, also said that all things are full of gods. Päs's view brings consciousness into the heart of physics, and, indeed, reality. For consciousness is as much an aspect of the One as the whole of diverse Nature. And so we come to panpsychism.

(To be continued)

Footnotes

1. The dates of many ancient Greek philosophers are reasonable scholarly guesses and should be accepted as approximate.
2. Albert Einstein (1879–1955) wanted physics to describe reality as it is, and Bohr insisted that physics only modeled reality. Most physicists believe Bohr has prevailed.
3. Heinrich Päs, *The One: How an Ancient Idea Holds the Future of Physics*, Basic Books, New York, 2023.
4. *Ibid.*, page 7.

Intuition in a Technological World

WAYNE GATFIELD

IS it possible to tap into our intuition in a world swamped with technological innovations?

With younger people in particular, iPhones and smartphones are the focus of their attention and artificial intelligence (AI) is lauded by some as the way to go in the future. But this AI is very much rooted at the lowest level of comprehension, and though machines may be able to store a vast amount of information they are completely devoid of any kind of spiritual insight.

The idea of following a spiritual path is to transcend the intellect and reach a state of being where the mind is illuminated by the Spirit and sees the world on a completely different level from the way it is viewed by the materialistically motivated mind.

Robots are created to feign interaction with humans but this so-called communion lacks the beauty and depth of the mingling of souls that arises from a place of love, something that a machine can only mimic but never understand. Can a machine ever appreciate art, music, or poetry except as a false admiration pro-

grammed into its database? Can it soar into the pure sky of mystical awareness and draw sustenance from Silence, or does it need the constant input of intellectual facts to maintain its existence in the world?

In Sufism, the word “Sohbet” implies a mystical communion between two people that transcends the words that they say, and what is generated is something beyond the mere physical meaning. Man lives on seven levels of being simultaneously, the machine only exists on one. Man (and woman) is part of the Universal Consciousness and has evolved from the lowest levels of existence in mineral, plants, and animals to what he is now, and he will continue to grow and expand into beings of a more ethereal nature; the machine will only grow as regards the retention of facts. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) mentions two kinds of genius in her article, “Genius”:

Great Genius, therefore, if true and innate, and not merely an abnormal expansion of our human intellect — can never copy or condescend to imitate, but will ever be original, *sui generis* in its creative impulses and realizations. Like those gigantic Indian

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lilies that shoot out from the clefts and fissures of the cloud-nursing and bare rocks on the highest plateaux of the Nilgiri Hills, true Genius needs but an opportunity to spring forth into existence and blossom in the sight of all on the most arid soil, for its stamp is always unmistakable. . . . On the other hand, artificial genius, so often confused with the former, and which, in truth, is but the outcome of long studies and training, will never be more than, so to say, the flame of a lamp burning outside the portal of the fane [temple]; it may throw a long trail of light across the road, but it leaves the inside of the building in darkness. (Lucifer, November 1889)

In the modern world many of those who are regarded as geniuses are merely individuals who are able to memorize more than most of us. They are similar to human computers, able to store information and access it readily. True genius, as HPB says, comes from the spiritual dimension of our being and is always original and spontaneous, varying with every individual. Awakening is said to come from many lives of experience and, as we grow, we become aware of our Oneness with all living things and the fact that the One Consciousness animates all. Love is something that can never be created artificially, as true love arises from the very depths of our heart of hearts and partakes of something that words and thoughts can never encompass.

Of course technology and AI may have a part to play in certain areas of society and may be put to great use, but we must be careful that it does not take

control of our lives and thereby shut out the Light of the Spirit which should always be our true guide across the stormy sea of life. The Neoplatonist Iamblichus states, as quoted by HPB:

There exists a faculty in the human mind which is immensely superior to all those which are grafted or engendered in us. By means of it we can attain to union with superior intelligences, finding ourselves raised above the scenes of this earthly life, and partaking of the higher existence and superhuman powers of the inhabitants of the celestial spheres. By this faculty we find ourselves finally liberated from the dominion of Destiny [Karma], and we become, so to say, arbiters of our own fate. For when the most excellent part of us finds itself filled with energy, and when our soul is lifted up towards essences higher than science, it can separate itself from the conditions which hold it in bondage to everyday life; it exchanges its ordinary existence for another one, and renounces the conventional habits which belong to the external order of things, to give itself up to, and mix itself with, another order of things which reigns in that most elevated state of existence . . . (Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, VIII, 6 and 7, "The Beacon of the Unknown".)

It is these "essences higher than science" that can never be fabricated, no matter how wonderful technological inventions may seem on the surface and how beguiling they are to the lower aspects of our mind and emotions. Drowning in a sea of nescience we mistake shadows for reality and are therefore led away from the Path that leads to the Heart of the

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Universe. We place too much trust in externals and too little in our Higher Self, which should become our guiding Light. What truly gives us insight is beyond words and images and will always be a direct experience that can never be formulated under any circumstances. What we put into words are pointers to that state of Being and nothing more, but essential at some point.

In Buddhism it is said that you need a raft to cross a river, but once across, the raft is left behind, as it becomes a burden. So, the intellect is needed at some point on our journey but then must be dispensed with, if we are to access deeper spiritual insights. HPB writes:

The INFINITE cannot be known to our reason, which can only distinguish and define; but we can always conceive the abstract idea thereof, thanks to that faculty higher than our reason — *intuition*, or the spiritual instinct of which I have spoken. The great initiates, who have the rare power of throwing themselves into the state of *samādhi* — which can be but imperfectly translated by the word *ecstasy*, a state in which one ceases to be the conditioned and

personal “I”, and becomes one with the ALL — are the only ones who can boast of having been in contact with the *infinite*; but no more than other mortals can they describe that state in words. (“The Beacon of the Unknown”)

Modern society finds it very difficult to be simple-souled and has to make everything complicated to feed the lower mind, which thrives on accumulating facts and thereby obscuring the Light of the Spirit, which can only be reached by transcending the image-making aspects of our being. Truly beautiful art, poetry, and music can help lift our spirits and consecrate our minds to that which is beneficial to our awakening Self. Studying spiritual literature and meditation can help to purify the mind which in turn will allow the Light of Intuition to shine brighter.

The Truth is very simple in essence, and yet paradoxically extremely difficult to understand with our conditioned minds. We need to cultivate the use of our Spiritual Intuition to free ourselves from the constrictions of the lower mind and become aware that we are in reality Spiritual Beings with endless possibilities beyond the physical. ✧

**I believe in intuitions and inspirations . . .
I sometimes FEEL that I am right.
I do not Know that I am.**

Albert Einstein

The Language of the Future

CATALINA ISAZA-CANTOR

WHEN I started to prepare my presentation, my first step was to do some introspection and try to visualize what or how the language of the future might be. While this question can be answered from many perspectives, I feel that given the fact that we are in a theosophical circle, where the common goal is the creation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood/kinship, the approach from unity and fraternity is fundamental when thinking about a language of or for the future.

So, we can think of it as the one that leads us to that fraternity, or that makes it possible, or that is a product of it, or all of the above at the same time. If we examine the history of modern civilization a little, we see that since the seventeenth century there have been several attempts to create what has been called an international language, a universal language, with the aim of enabling common communication and understanding.

For example, one of the first attempts in the West to create an international language to communicate across borders was made in 1661 with the creation of the “Art of Signs”, a “philosophical” or

“universal” language. Another attempt was made in 1668 with the aim of replacing Latin, which by then had been the international language of Western European scholars for 1,000 years, and was called “Royal Character”. During that century there were a few more attempts, but none succeeded because probably the ground for such languages had not yet been prepared.

Later, in 1879, Volapük (“World Speech”), became very fashionable, and in its tenth year of existence about a million people were using it. At its third congress in 1889, held in Paris, everyone was speaking it, even the waiters in the local restaurants. After this triumph, it began to decline rapidly, particularly because of internal disagreements. That shows us that the ground was not yet ready for this kind of language. Undertaking the search for a universal, man-made, and perfect language was a very popular goal in the 17th century. This had to do with the fact that in the 16th and 17th centuries the linguistic unity of Europe broke down. Not only did “national literature” begin to appear as a product of national languages,

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but Europe itself encountered nations whose languages had no kinship with Latin, such as those of indigenous tribes in the Americas or those of the Chinese empire. The more the frontiers became wider, the more these types of attempts were there, in order to make people understand each other.

Perhaps the most recent and one of the best-known universal languages is Esperanto, established in 1907. It currently has about 200,000 speakers. Throughout history we see official and common languages of empires and eras, such as Latin in the Roman Empire, French as the language of an elite with clear socio-cultural connotations, and today, English. Google has been working for years on a simultaneous translation project, like the Tower of Babel 2.0. Its applications are enormous, both professionally and for leisure.

There may have been other attempts to create a universal language. Many of these languages have become important due to commercial, cultural, and other issues. We try to reduce language barriers by becoming more involved in the cultures and traditions of other regions. But can such integration make them truly global? Well, after looking at some of the aforementioned attempts and seeing that they have not prospered as one would have hoped, it is worth asking why they have failed. We know that a language is linked to a culture. A language tells the history of the people and maybe, this could be a challenge in the creation of a common language. Some people may

feel their identity is lost or taken away when trying to communicate in a language that has been man-made. Could it have to do with some inherent human condition? Perhaps it is because they do not really include all possible languages and, therefore, all possible speakers? Could it have to do with the intention with which they were created? Many experts point to the difficulty of creating one. Experiments such as Esperanto and other newly created languages do not seem to have any prospect of success on a global scale.

Let us examine the following. Underlying the creation of this “universal language” is the need to transcend differences and separations and create some sense of community for mutual benefit, and stepping forward to facilitate communication. Perhaps this is because, deep within us, we are aware of that common essence that we share. At this point, if we are talking about the language of the future, it is important to understand what it is that we share and makes us one. Many of the options are based on an eminently rational proposal that starts from the belief that the universal tie among human beings is reason and, therefore, the construction of languages should be governed by rational patterns in the same way that a figure is constructed geometrically.

And indeed, it is mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine (SD)*:

Language is certainly coeval with reason, and could never have developed before men became one with the informing principles in them — those who fructified and

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awoke to life the *mānasic* element dormant in primitive man. (*SD*, Vol. II, p.199, fn)

So, if we look at it from a broader perspective, as Theosophy shows us, we know that man and the universe have a septenary nature. The rational mind, more related to the lower mental plane, is but a minor component of what we are. Its functioning depends upon the unification of all principles. Moreover, in most cases, this lower mental element (so far the only focus of created international languages), instead of uniting us, what it does is separate us, because we identify so much with our ideas and opinions that we end up creating more conflict and misunderstandings than unity and common communication.

It is fundamental, then, to understand the human being as a being of multiple dimensions that is directly connected with the Divine and with everything that inhabits the planet. As I mentioned at the beginning, I believe that keeping in mind the ideas that there is a kinship with others, that there is something divine in us that drinks from an eternal and immutable source, is the key in the light of which we should think about the language of the future.

Besides that, as students of Theosophy, we know the immense power that language has for creation. The language we use is vibration and symbol. The word has a creative power and depending on its quality, intention, and nature, we are creating our reality. Let us remember what H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) mentions:

The spoken word has a potency unknown

to, unsuspected, and disbelieved in, by the modern “sages” . . . [and] such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be. (SD, vol. 1, p. 307)

For Sound generates, or rather attracts together, the elements which produce an *ozone*, the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. (*SD*, vol. 1, p. 555)

Speech is an imitation or reflection of a divine power that is within us all. It is highly regarded in the world’s Scriptures. In the Bible, the first words of John’s Gospel state that “In the beginning was the Word”, perhaps in the sense of the sound that awakens all things into existence. If, as *The Secret Doctrine* shows, with the sounds we use we can move pyramids, it is not unreasonable that we understand the language of the future as that which leads us to that fraternity, which accounts for it, which is a product of it, or all of these at the same time. Thinking a little more deeply about this divine gift of the word could lead us to be more aware of the way we use it.

“To pronounce a word is to evoke a thought, and make it present: the magnetic potency of the human speech is the commencement of every manifestation in the Occult World” says HPB. (*SD*, vol. 1, p. 93) This has to do with the ability of speech to magnetize and attract. That is why it is fundamental to use the word with wisdom not only in moments that we would call sacred, such as at spiritual

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or religious gatherings but, more importantly, in everyday life, because it is from it that our day-to-day life, our reality, originates.

It is important to be aware not only of the way we use language but also of what we say. There are some theories that point out that one of the sources of evolution of communication and language is gossip, because it refers to everyday, basic, and instinctive issues of human beings. Whether this is true or not has not been completely proven. Let us suppose that it is true; these are elements of our lower vehicles, of the densest part of our being, since they are loaded with criticism, perhaps with bad intentions.

If we take into account that the way we communicate directly affects our reality, it is worth asking ourselves if gossip, for example, is creating a positive and truthful atmosphere. Perhaps many of us agree that the world we live in is not yet the ideal in terms of fraternity, equality, and compassion. Well, that is why we must be very careful with what we say when we speak, and even more, with the quality of our thinking in our daily life because in the present, we are building the future.

Continuing this train of thought, a language of the future should have, without a doubt, characteristics such as: truthfulness, kindness, and beauty. It should be wise, conscious, harmless (*ahimsa*), positive, respectful, at the same time assertive, precise, to the point, and not using unnecessary energy, or excessively verbose. There should be coherence between

the thought, the speech, and the action. The language should be able to express that coherence.

It is also important to remember that what we say and how we see and think about the world has to do with what we see and absorb from it. The two are intimately related. The materials we feed ourselves with also create the bodies and the reality we inhabit. Whether it is the physical, emotional, or mental body, we must feed ourselves with the best food possible. The things we say are important, but we also need to pay attention to the things we hear. Unfortunately, we are not surrounded by a lot of visual and auditory stimuli that convey uplifting, beautiful, good things. It is said that the caliber of a civilization can be measured by the way it uses words, and there are many songs, television programs, that make unrefined use of language.

All these vibrations, although many people are not at all aware of it, are affecting us. Let us remember that from the theosophical point of view space is not empty, it is *ākāśa*. HPB refers to the living atoms of *ākāśa* as “elementals”. Although they exist at a rudimentary level of consciousness, they are powerfully energized by the power of human thought. The mind of every person is a powerhouse of these thought forms in the field of elementals. Every time we have a thought, we attract the corresponding kinds of elementals into our subtle bodies. Whenever we interact from the place of truth, beauty, kindness, compassion, wisdom, and love, from the

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qualities of our higher nature, we attract higher elementals. And when we interact from the place of selfishness, personality, and instincts, in short, the lower quaternary, we attract elementals of a similar nature.

So, since through our language and thought we are agents of change, it is important that we are aware of ourselves and our process of self-transformation. Since we are part of the web of the One Life, any change at a global level has to start from individual work. In this process meditation and self-inquiry are fundamental elements, along with mindfulness. We are co-creators of the world, thanks to and through language. Mindfulness, instant by instant, is therefore a fundamental ingredient in what would be the language of the future. We can only think of “the future” from the total experience in the eternal present, because this is what builds it.

In Theosophy we are shown that, as each being evolves towards the encounter with the source and as it gets closer to that Universal Consciousness, the forms adapt themselves to be able to provide a better service to the form of consciousness, of which they are the physical vehicle. Since we are carriers of language, and it is its use that differentiates us from other animal species and makes us beings of a social nature, it is important that we set in motion this evolution in ourselves, this scientific building of character that spiritual practice helps us to carry out in our lives, as well as the building of a language for the future.

As part of that evolution, it is worth

asking ourselves if the language or the channel we use (the voice) to communicate as part of that language of the future should also be transformed. From a material point of view, there is a lot of talk about communication and language from the perspective of technology. Some say that the language of the future will be computer *programming*. For those who are not familiar, computer programming is the art or the process by which the source code of computer programs is cleaned, coded, traced, and protected. In other words, it is telling the computer what to do.

Programming is more like language than mathematics. Breaking a problem into small, communicable parts is similar to interacting with a person. You need to identify how you want to express yourself, figure out how to convey the message clearly, and then execute it in an organized way. It is said that in the future, as a universal language, programming will be able to break any linguistic barrier so that there can be collaboration and propagation of ideas with anyone anywhere, and that is why it is thought to be the tool to unite us in the future. In addition, learning to program implies thinking from the point of view of effective communication, since it is necessary to think carefully before communicating. Effectiveness is clearly a characteristic of the language of the future.

From the material and technological point of view, there are those who also mention emojis as a possible universal language contributing to communication.

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They are even mentioned as a kind of Esperanto of our time. Nowadays we can transmit emotions, sensations, or feelings with the use of some of these symbols. But is it programming, which makes new applications or conversational robots work, that allows us to continue to post on Instagram or Facebook and “communicate” to the world what we are doing? Do we have the possibility to make the universal fraternity something vital? Or, on the contrary, do all these new tools, that materially and mundanely facilitate communication, contribute in isolating us as a society, moving us away from face-to-face interaction and turning us into secluded individuals in capsules behind a screen?

I do not mean to say that technology does not provide us with wonderful opportunities to shorten distances and times. However, from a more profound point of view in terms of awareness, I feel that internally we are not prepared to take the best advantage of all these technological facilities. That is why these tools do not constitute a real step towards what would be the language of the future.

A step could be taken if we move into the realm of the perennial in us. As already mentioned, the language of the future is intimately related to the idea of unity and kinship. This would make us think that it is fundamental that it has common characteristics and that everyone has access to it, for this is something that would endow us with a transforming power. As the biblical story of the Tower of Babel shows, originally all peoples

spoke the same language. Their linguistic unity enabled them to collaborate effectively and endowed them with immense power. However, the story shows us that when God observed that they were building a great tower, so high that it reached to the sky, He realized that they were immensely powerful because of their ability to communicate and so, before the tower was finished, God made them all speak different languages.

That story exemplifies two things: 1. The potential of humanity to achieve anything when united and working in consonance, communicating in the same language. 2. As long as the ego prevails separateness increases, and until we are unaware that what really unites us must be used for the common good and not for the enhancement of ego and power, the gift of the common language will not be returned to us.

Then, as theosophists, it is fundamental to turn to the broader perspective of the spiritual point of view and the Divine Plan that is evolution. In this sense we would have that, when universal brotherhood becomes a fact, the use of sound, of the voice as a channel of communication may no longer be necessary. So, it is worth asking whether the language of the future must necessarily occur through the use of language, of symbols, of the spoken word or, instead, it could be a type of language that does not involve visible or audible communication in terms of the lower vehicles but is expressed more through the transmission of thought waves. The communication of

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the future could thus be telepathic in nature.

If so, on the one hand, we may no longer need languages and it would no longer be necessary to try to create international languages. At a time when humanity makes an evolutionary leap towards one of the future races, the languages currently used by our present race will not be necessary, because there will be a form of communication that will be heart to heart, soul to soul. We will have, as humanity, reached a state of greater commingling and closeness with the elements of our higher triad.

To conceive a language of the future within the context of the spiritual vision and the Divine Plan, it is fundamental to move away from the concept of language as we know it, because as HPB states in *The Secret Doctrine*:

Languages have their phases of growth, etc., like everything else in Nature. (*SD*, vol. 2, p. 662).

Languages have their cyclical evolution, their childhood, purity, growth, *fall into matter*, admixture with other languages, maturity, decay, and finally death. (*SD*, vol. 2, p. 199).

So, a language that does not have the limitation of words, but is transmitted from our most spiritual aspect, will be in itself a sacred language. It will not use the symbols that limit, but will have that divine energy that follows thought and that embraces everything. But while we are reaching that goal, it is worthwhile to add to those already mentioned above, some reflections on what we can do from our present as individuals interested

in cooperating with the Divine Plan.

As an educator, I think it is critical to provide a transformative education in which competition, senseless punishments, violence, and mere concern for intellectual knowledge are absent. Instead, we need an education for cooperation, compassion, service, fraternity, that fosters collaborative, cooperative, assertive, truthful, and harmless communication.

This use of language as parents and teachers is fundamental. It is important to have assertive communication with respectful and positive parenting and teaching. To be more careful in the use of words in our languages, we need to use them properly, to be sure of their meaning, and to take care that the words we use are helpful, not hurtful, full of kindness and goodwill. And this applies not only to education but to all spheres of our lives.

Let us also remember that language goes beyond the spoken and written word and that the way we move, look, and gesticulate has a very important impact on what we communicate. It is even said that a very high percentage of the impact and reach of our message has to do with elements of the nonverbal language that we have already mentioned.

So, in the context of a universal language that builds the humanity of the future, we would speak of a language of love, with a kind look, a serene smile, an attitude of constant listening and service, a readiness to give and receive from the cleanliness of being, a pure heart, an awakened intellect, a spiritual perception without veils.

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Eleanor Roosevelt used to say that “Small minds talk about people; average minds talk about events; great minds talk about ideas.” I would add: Those who are on the way to transcend the self and the limitations of the physical vehicles into a “we”, and are able to realize oneness, not only would they not need to speak, but their actions, their looks, and their recognition of that oneness would be enough to communicate.

All of this becomes attainable as we become more connected to the divine essence of which we are a part. As we establish an inner life in which we experience the joy of Silence, we quickly see that being excessively talkative is a waste of valuable energy. We can concentrate more on purifying the quality of our thoughts, on actions that have a positive impact, and so on. And as already mentioned, it is important to introduce into our life practices such as meditation, study, service, and mindfulness.

Let us ask ourselves as students of Theosophy what could be, for example, the contribution of an institution like the Theosophical Society (TS)? Along these lines, as we read what has been called the unique “Letter of the Maha Chohan”, it is mentioned that the TS was proposed as the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religion of humankind. HPB states that “there is a natural connection between language and religion”. (*SD*, vol. 1, p. xxix)

So, religion and language lead us to a union, a communion; these are the product of the need to transcend barriers, to unite. The fundamental doctrines of all religions are identical in their esoteric meaning; all languages have a common goal: to communicate. As Raghavan N. Iyer mentions, there are many synonyms for Theosophy: Wisdom Religion, *Brahma Vidya* and *Gupta Vidya*. But there is one that Iyer especially highlights as a synonym for Theosophy, the term *Brahma Vach*. *Brahma Vach* is the primordial latent sound and light, it is a creative, generative power and therefore deeply related to the power of speech. To sound the keynote of *Brahma Vach* in our lives, then, is to make Theosophy a Living Power through the Magic of Sound.

But I will add that this sound does not necessarily need to be physical or audible; it is the power of the sound of the voice of the silence. To make this keynote, sound in our lives connects us with that religion of the future, and with it, the future civilization and language. And this happens, to quote Iyer again, “when we consecrate our entire self to the practical realization of *Brahma Vach* and the shedding of its pristine light on the path of spiritual self-regeneration in the service of humanity”. Then, we can think not only of a language of the future, but a civilization of the future, and of the realization of the Divine Plan that is evolution.



Contemplation

DAMODAR MAVALANKAR

I

A GENERAL misunderstanding of this term seems to prevail. The popular idea appears to be to confine oneself for half an hour — or at the utmost two hours — in a private room, and passively gaze at one's nose, a spot on the wall, or, perhaps, a crystal. This is supposed to be the true form of contemplation enjoined by *Raja Yoga*. It fails to realize that true occultism requires "physical, mental, moral, and spiritual" development to run on parallel lines. Were the narrow conception extended to all these lines, the necessity for the present article would not have been so urgently felt. This paper is specially meant for the benefit of those who seem to have failed to grasp the real meaning of Dhyān, and by their erroneous practices to have brought, and to be bringing, pain and misery upon themselves. A few instances may be mentioned here with advantage, as a warning to our too zealous students.

At Bareilly the writer met a certain Theosophist from Farrukhabad, who narrated his experiences and shed bitter tears of repentance for his past follies, as he termed them. It would appear from his account that the gentleman, having read *Bhagavadgītā* about fifteen or twenty years

ago and not comprehending the esoteric meaning of the contemplation therein enjoined, undertook nevertheless the practice and carried it on for several years. At first he experienced a sense of pleasure, but simultaneously he found he was gradually losing self-control; until after a few years he discovered, to his great bewilderment and sorrow, that *he was no longer his own master*. He felt his heart actually growing heavy, as though a load had been placed on it. He had no control over his sensations; in fact the communication between the brain and the heart had become as though interrupted. As matters grew worse, in disgust he discontinued his "contemplation". This happened as long as seven years ago; and, although since then he has not felt worse, yet he could never regain his original normal and healthy state of mind and body.

Another case came under the writer's observation at Jabalpur. The gentleman concerned, after reading Patanjali and such other works, began to sit for "contemplation". After a short time he commenced seeing abnormal sights and hearing musical bells, but neither over these phenomena nor over his own sensations could he exercise any control. He could not produce these results at will,

Damodar Mavalankar was born in 1857 in India and went to Tibet in 1885. A chela of Mahatma KH, he was Secretary of the TS for several years and helped H. P. Blavatsky as managing editor of *The Theosophist*. From *The Theosophist*, February, April, August 1884, & *Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*, 1978.

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nor could he stop them when they were occurring. Numerous such examples may be multiplied. While penning these lines, the writer has on his table two letters upon this subject, one from Moradabad and the other from Tiruchirappalli. In short, all this mischief is due to a misunderstanding of the significance of contemplation as enjoined upon students by all the schools of Occult Philosophy. With a view to afford a glimpse of the Reality through the dense veil that enshrouds the mysteries of this Science of Sciences, an article, “The Elixir of Life”, was written. Unfortunately, in too many instances, the seed seems to have fallen upon barren ground. Some of its readers only catch hold of the following clause in the said paper:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown meditation must be practised and encouraged.

But, alas! their preconceptions have prevented them from comprehending what is meant by meditation. They forget that it “is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to ‘go out towards the infinite’, which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration”, as the next sentence shows. A good deal of light will be thrown upon this subject if the reader were to turn to the preceding portion of the same paper, and peruse attentively the following paras on page 141 of *The Theosophist* for March 1882 (Vol. III, No. 6):

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined, — literally, *not* metaphorically — to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil, or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This “next” is not a spiritual, but only a more ethereal form.

Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process . . . we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible material body — MAN, so called, though, in fact, but his outer shell — to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we *change skin* as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact. . . . Hence, if a man partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin, — so our astral, vital body . . . may be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them. . . . We can say no more.

A correct comprehension of the above scientific process will give a clue to the esoteric meaning of meditation or contemplation. Science teaches us that man changes his physical body continually, and this change is so gradual that it is almost imperceptible. Why then should the case be otherwise with the *inner man*? The latter too is constantly developing and changing atoms at every moment. And the attraction of these new sets of atoms

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depends upon the Law of Affinity — the desires of the man drawing to their bodily tenement only such particles as are *en rapport* with them or rather giving them their own tendency and colouring.

For Science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner men*, however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, not *hypothetical*, particles and are still subject to the law that an “action” has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser “shell” they are in contact with and concealed within.

(“The Elixir of Life”)

What is it the aspirant of *yoga vidya* strives after if not to gain *mukti* by transferring himself gradually from the grosser to the next more ethereal body, until all the veils of *māya* being successively removed his *ātma* becomes one with *paramātma*? Does he suppose that this grand result can be achieved by a two or four hours’ contemplation? For the remaining twenty or twenty-two hours that the devotee does not shut himself up in his room for meditation — is the process of the emission of atoms and their replacement by others stopped? If not, then how does he mean to attract all this time — only those suited to his end? From the above remarks it is evident that just as the physical body requires incessant attention to prevent the entrance of a disease, so also the *inner man* requires an unremitting watch, so that no conscious or unconscious thought may attract atoms unsuited to its progress. This is the real meaning of contemplation. The prime

factor in the guidance of the thought is WILL.

Without that, all else is useless. And, to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but a *settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment’s relaxation.*

The student would do well to take note of the italicized clause in the above quotation. He should also have it indelibly impressed upon his mind that

It is no use to fast *as long as one requires food*. . . . To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, any one who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown. Wallowing in the mire of exotericism, he knows not what it is to live in the world and yet be not of the world; in other words to guard *self* against *self* is an incomprehensible axiom for nearly every profane. The Hindu ought at least to realize it by remembering the life of Janaka, who, although a reigning monarch, was yet styled *rājarshi* and is said to have attained *nirvāna*. Hearing of his widespread fame, a few sectarian bigots went to his Court to test his *yoga*-power. As soon as they entered the courtroom, the king having read their thought — a power which every

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chela attains at a certain stage — gave secret instructions to his officials to have a particular street in the city lined on both sides by dancing girls who were ordered to sing the most voluptuous songs. He then had some *gharas* (pots) filled with water up to the brim so that the least shake would be likely to spill their contents. The wiseacres, each with a full *ghara* (pot) on his head, were ordered to pass along the street, surrounded by soldiers with drawn swords to be used against them if even so much as a drop of water were allowed to run over. The poor fellows having returned to the palace after successfully passing the test, were asked by the King-Adept what they had met with in the street they were made to go through.

With great indignation they replied that the threat of being cut to pieces had so much worked upon their minds that they thought of nothing but the water on their heads, and the intensity of their attention did not permit them to take cognizance of what was going on around them. Then Janaka told them that on the same principle they could easily understand that, although being outwardly engaged in managing the affairs of his state, he could at the same time be an Occultist. He too, while *in* the world, was not *of* the world. In other words, his inward aspirations had been leading him on continually to the goal in which his whole inner self was concentrated.

Raja yoga encourages no sham, requires no physical postures. It has to deal with the inner man whose sphere lies in the world of thought. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philoso-

phy which deals with the inner world of *noumena*, not the outer shell of *phenomena*.

The first requisite for it is thorough purity of heart. Well might the student of Occultism say, with Zoroaster, that purity of thought, purity of word, and purity of deed — these are the essentials of one who would rise above the ordinary level and join the “gods.” A cultivation of the feeling of unselfish philanthropy is the path which has to be traversed for that purpose. For it is that alone which will lead to Universal Love, the realization of which constitutes the progress towards deliverance from the chains forged by *māya* around the Ego. No student will attain this at once, but as our VENERATED MAHATMA says in *The Occult World*:

The greater the progress towards deliverance, the less this will be the case, until, to crown all, human and purely individual personal feelings, blood-ties and friendship, patriotism and race predilection, will all give way to become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and eternal one, Love, an Immense Love for Humanity as a whole.

In short, the individual is blended with the ALL. Of course, contemplation, as usually understood, is not without its minor advantages. It develops one set of physical faculties as gymnastics does the muscles. For the purposes of physical mesmerism, it is good enough; but it can in no way help the development of the psychological faculties as the thoughtful reader will perceive. At the same time, even for ordinary purposes, the practice can never be too well guarded. If, as some suppose, they have to be entirely passive and lose themselves in the object before them, they should re-

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member that by thus encouraging passivity, they, in fact, allow the development of mediumistic faculties in themselves. As was repeatedly stated — the Adept and the Medium are the two Poles: while the former is intensely active and thus able to control the elemental forces, the latter is intensely passive, and thus incurs the risk of falling a prey to the ca-price and malice of mischievous embryos of human beings, and the Elementaries.

II

[Comment by “FTS” with Damodar’s Note appended thereto.]

In the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist* occurs the following:

1. “Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, any one who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown”.

I cannot understand how an ordinary man, who has, on one hand, the above-mentioned defects in his nature, (which he generally tries to control, though sometimes with questionable success); and who, on the other hand, tries also to practise contemplation as explained in the article, runs the danger of being ruined. What are the dangers? Can they be named, and the particular causes which give rise to them?

2. “To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration

recognized by Esoteric Philosophy.”

This passage is too learned for an ordinary man. Can an example of “the highest ideal” be given? How is the ordinary man of the world to strive after it?

Suppose an ordinary man of the world rises in the calm hours of the morning after a moderate rest, what is he to do? What kind of ideas should he fill his mind with? How is he to sit? How is he to carry on the contemplation so as to steer clear of all shoals and rocks in the sea of occultism? The greatest aim of the man in question is to spiritualize himself as much as could be done *safely*, so that if he cannot eventually be accepted as a chela, in this life — he may at least have the *assurance* to lead the life of an ascetic in the next birth.

AN FTS

Note: I regret the whole article is totally misunderstood. All I meant to say was that temporary estrangement, from family or friends, does not constitute an essential qualification for advancement in occultism. This ought to be plain to one who weighs carefully my illustration of Janaka, although *in* the world, to be not *of* it. Failing to realize the meaning of this important teaching, many people rush in from a sentimental disgust of worldliness, arising probably out of some worldly disappointment — and begin practising what they consider to be a true form of *contemplation*. The very fact that the *motive* which leads them to go in for this practice, as is described in the quotation given by my correspondent itself is a sufficient indication that the candidate does not know the “contemplation” of a *raja yogi*. It is thus impossible in the nature of things that he can follow the

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right method; and the physical practice, which he necessarily undertakes, leads him to the disastrous results adverted to in the article.

Any reader, who has intuition enough to be a practical student of occultism, will at once see that to work up to perfection is the highest ideal that a man can have before him. That is not the work of a day nor of a few years. “The Adept *becomes*; he is NOT MADE” — is a teaching which the student must first realise. The aspirant works up to his goal through a series of lives. Col. Olcott says in his *Buddhist Catechism*:

Countless generations are required to develop man into a Buddha, and *the iron will to become one runs throughout all the successive births*.

That “*iron will*” to become *perfect* must be *incessantly* operating, without a single moment’s relaxation, as will be apparent to one who reads *carefully the article as a whole*. When it is distinctly said that during the time that this contemplation is not practised, that is, the iron will is not exerting, the process of the emission and attraction of atoms is not stopped, and that the desires, instinctive or otherwise, must be so regulated as to attract only such atoms as may be suited to his progress — I cannot understand my correspondent when he asks me what he should do at a particular hour in the morning. He should cultivate only such thoughts as would not be incompatible with the highest ideal he has to work up to. By perfection, which should be his highest ideal (I must add), I mean that *divine* manhood which the Occult Philosophy contemplates the seventh race of the seventh Round will

attain to. This, as every tyro [novice] knows, depends largely upon a cultivation of the feeling of Universal Love, and hence an earnest desire to do some practical philanthropic work is the first requisite. Even this state, I admit, is not *absolute perfection*: but that maximum limit of ultimate perfection is beyond our comprehension at present. That condition can only be intellectually realized as a practical ideal by those *divine men* — Dhyān-Chohans. To be identified with THE ALL, we must live in and feel through it. How can this be done without the realisation of the feeling of Universal Love? Of course Adeptship is not within the easy reach of all. On the other hand, occultism does not fix any unpleasant place or locality for those who do not accept its dogmas. It only recognises higher and higher evolution according to the chain of causation working under the impulse of Nature’s immutable law. The article on “Occult Study” [republished in *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 221–9] in the last number gives the necessary explanation on this point.

It is painful for me to find that the very thing I attempted to point out in that article to be mischievous in its results, is again put forward as a desirable attribute or adjunct of true contemplation. I would ask my correspondent to read again the same article, with these additional remarks, before thinking of the necessity of any peculiar or particular posture for the purpose of *contemplation*. I, at any rate, am unable to prescribe any specific posture for the kind of *incessant contemplation* that I recommend.

DKM

Contemplation

III

Notwithstanding the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist*, many of its readers still seem to imagine that “contemplation” is a particular form of gazing or staring at something, which process, when undergone a set number of hours every day, will give psychological powers. This misunderstanding is apparently due to the fact that the main point discussed has been lost sight of. Instead of realising that there is but one chief idea meant to be conveyed by that article by arguing it through many of its phases, it seems to be imagined that almost every sentence expresses quite a distinct idea. It may not therefore be uninteresting or unprofitable to revert to the subject and put forward the same idea from another standpoint and, if possible, in a clearer light. It must first be borne in mind that the writer of the article did not at all mean to imply the act of gazing by the word “contemplation”. The former word would have been made use of, were that the idea. “The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language” (1883) defines the word contemplation thus:

(1) The act of the mind in considering with attention; meditation; study; continued attention of the mind to a particular subject. Specifically (2) Holy meditation; attention to sacred things.

Webster’s Dictionary thoroughly revised — also gives the same meaning.

Thus we find that contemplation is the “continued attention of the mind to a particular subject”, and, religiously, it is the “attention to sacred things”. It is therefore difficult to imagine how the idea of gazing or staring came to be associated with

the word contemplation, unless it be due to the fact that generally it so happens that when any one is deeply absorbed in thought, he apparently seems to be gazing or staring at something in blank space. But this gazing is the effect of the act of contemplation. And, as usually happens, here too the effect seems to be confounded with the cause. Because the gazing attitude follows the act of contemplation, it is at once assumed that gazing is the cause which produces contemplation! Bearing this well in mind, let us now see what kind of contemplation (or meditation) “The Elixir of Life” recommends for the aspirants after occult knowledge. It says:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown meditation must be practised and encouraged.

That is to say, a *chela’s* meditation should constitute the “reasoning from the known to the unknown”. The “known” is the phenomenal world, cognisable by our five senses. And all that we see in this manifested world are the effects, the causes of which are to be sought after in the noumenal, the unmanifested, the “unknown world”: this is to be accomplished by meditation, that is, continued attention to the subject. Occultism does not depend upon one method, but employs both the deductive and the inductive. The student must first learn the general axioms. For the time being, he will of course have to take them as assumptions, if he prefers to call them so. Or per “The Elixir of Life”:

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the “Elixir of Life” and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter, at present, and proceed

Contemplation

on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or the so-called exact science laughs at it.

These axioms have sufficiently been laid out in the articles on “The Elixir of Life” and various others treating on occultism, in the different numbers of *The Theosophist*. What the student has first to do is to *comprehend* these axioms and, by employing the deductive method, to proceed from universals to particulars. He has then to reason from the “known to the unknown”, and see if the inductive method of proceeding from particulars to universals supports those axioms. This process forms the primary stage of true contemplation. The student must first grasp the subject intellectually before he can hope to realise his aspirations. When this is accomplished, then comes the next stage of meditation which is “the inexpressible yearning of the inner man to ‘go out towards the infinite’”. Before any such yearning can be properly directed, the goal, to which it is to be its aim to run, must be determined by the preliminary stages. The higher stage, in fact, consists in realising practically what the first steps have placed within one’s comprehension. In short, contemplation, in its true sense, is to recognise the truth of Eliphas Levi’s saying:

To believe without knowing is weakness;
to believe, because one knows, is power.

Or, in other words, to see that “KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.” “The Elixir of Life” not only gives the preliminary steps in the ladder of *contemplation* but also tells the reader how to *realize* the higher conceptions. It traces, by the process of contemplation, as it were, the relation of man, “the known”, the manifested, the phenomenon, to “the unknown”, the unmanifested, the noumenon. It shows to the student what ideal he should contemplate and how to rise up to it. It places before him the nature of the inner capacities of man and how to develop them. To a superficial reader, this may, perhaps, appear as the acme of selfishness. Reflection or contemplation will, however, show the contrary to be the case. For it teaches the student that to comprehend the noumenal, he must identify himself with Nature. Instead of looking upon himself as an isolated being, he must learn to look upon himself as a part of the INTEGRAL WHOLE. For, in the unmanifested world, it can be clearly perceived that all is controlled by the “Law of Affinity”, the attraction of one to the other. There, all is Infinite Love, understood in its true sense.

It may now be not out of place to recapitulate what has already been said. The first thing to be done is to study the axioms of Occultism and work upon them by the deductive and inductive methods, which is real contemplation. To turn this to a useful purpose, what is theoretically comprehended must be practically realized. ✧

**In order to improve the mind, we ought less to learn,
than to contemplate.**

Rene Descartes

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

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

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