

## **REVERSING THE FLOW: A CONSCIOUS CHOICE**

**Tim Boyd**

*(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 4.1.2016)*

As individuals, and as a human family, there is a broad pattern we adhere to. In its simplest terms we follow an arching path of outgoing and return. In the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* this path is described as 'the obligatory pilgrimage for every soul . . . through the Cycle of Incarnation.' Its beginnings flow from an unself-conscious divinity, to an unconscious involvement in matter, to an awakened state of conscious choice. This is the outgoing path. A critical point is eventually reached by every incarnating being where the force that has propelled into an ever-deepening veiling of consciousness diminishes and, like an arrow shot into the air, its movement slows, then stops, then reverses. For every soul this is a natural process that ultimately takes place regardless of our choice or involvement. However, the Ageless Wisdom teachings tell us, and our experience confirms that we can hasten the process.

The spiritual traditions of the world abound with stories that symbolize this idea. Examples of this type of story describe a journey that involves leaving home, becoming lost, wandering in some strange land, possibly losing hope, then awakening, finding the way back, and returning. In the Bible story of the Prodigal Son the soul's journey is described as the son receiving his riches from his father, then leaving the father's house to journey to a far land. In this land the son (soul) finds himself starving for spiritual sustenance and forgetful of its origins. This is our natural condition at a certain stage on this outgoing path. The intimate link between spirit and matter has consequences for the expression of higher consciousness.

In all of these stories there comes a point where the soul awakens and chooses to return. In the Prodigal Son story, in the throes of his hunger and suffering, the son remembers his divine heritage and says, 'I will arise and go to

my father's house'. This consciousness marks the entrance onto the path of return and is the all-important moment in the soul's journey. Prior to this point the spiritual consciousness is engaged in a process of becoming progressively shrouded by its deepening involvement in the material world. The experience of awakening to a renewed awareness of one's source commences a new phase of the cycle — the path of return. It is at this point that the previously hidden potential for genuine choice becomes possible.

The third of the Three Fundamental Propositions speaks about the dual phases of the cycle of outgoing and return, and the nature of the choices available to us. There it is said that the process of acquiring a functional 'individuality' is first driven by 'natural impulse'. In the outgoing phase of the cycle the choices we make are reactive. We are impelled, driven by Nature. So impelled we learn to divide the world into things that bring us pleasure, those that are painful, and those that are neutral, choosing an attachment to the pleasurable and an aversion to the painful. All of this occurs in a relatively unconscious manner.

As the soul approaches its moment of awakening, like the arrow shot into the air which slows in its outward flight as it nears its apex, the forces of natural impulse diminish, and for the first time a previously hidden potential dawns. It is the potential to respond rather than merely react, the potential to direct this process of awareness through active participation. The Propositions describe the soul's new

way of interacting with its environment as moving from natural impulse to 'self-induced and self-devised efforts' — in a word, 'conscious choice'.

The choice that is continually being made on this path of return is the choice to 'know thyself', and the prevailing truth that becomes the focus of the awakening consciousness is the truth of Oneness — that the soul is inextricably linked to a Greater Life within which all things 'live, move, and have their being'. There is a quote from Schwaller de Lubicz that says, 'When we can no longer divide, we are beyond Nature and approach the causal Cause, the abstract Cause'. Separateness becomes a relic of an unawakened intelligence.

As consciousness awakens, and as the possibility for a broadly expressed conscious choice becomes its dominating feature, the nature of those choices becomes more focused, in a sense more limited. It becomes apparent that in order to hasten a return to Oneness, compassion — responding to the suffering of countless 'others' becomes the necessary focus. Paradoxically, the primary avenue leading to the realization of Unity is response to its infinite diversity of expression.

In the Ageless Wisdom teachings there is the concept of '*upadhi*'. It is an expression of a fact of manifestation, that in order for something higher or more expansive to express itself at a lower level it needs a vehicle of expression. The mind is a vehicle for the spiritual intuition, substance is a vehicle for Spirit, the physical body is the *upadhi* through which all of the higher

potentials seek expression in the human stage. Compassion, described in *The Voice of the Silence* as, ‘the Law of Laws’ assumes as its vehicle the consciousness that is ‘responsible’ —

differently put, the consciousness that is response-able. Responsibility is the flowering of our ‘self-induced and self-devised efforts’ at cultivating our ability to respond.



## **COMPASSION: THE SOLE REASON FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE TS**

**Herman C. Vermeulen**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 4.1.2016)*

The Masters of Wisdom, Compassion and Peace are the initiators and inspiration behind the foundation of the Theosophical Society, the formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood of Humanity as a vehicle to disseminate Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom of the Gods.

Theosophists following the Path of Compassion have an obligation to respond to that need and they should work together to neutralize the forces

of obscurantism and evils in the world.

The TS in Point Loma is wholeheartedly supporting the International Theosophical Centre’s ideal to create a platform for all Theosophical organizations to meet in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and brotherhood.

The past is the past. Let’s learn from that past by not making the same mistakes again, and look up to the future, accepting our social responsibility by taking action together.



## **KARMA, REINCARNATION, BUDDHI-MANAS: FORCES OF POWER AND VIRTUE**

**Eugene Jennings**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 4.1.2016)*

HPB came to awaken the *buddhi-manas* of the human race, our highest spiritual perception and knowing of things. Theosophy, the teaching she shared, demonstrates the profound reality and far-reaching power of the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. This triad of ideas has the ability to explain all things, from individual and global ignorance, suffering and misfortunes,

to enlightenment and liberation subordinated to altruistic service.

Let us explore these three powers, including our responsibility, when we understand and embrace them. From such understanding, it is hoped that we will be inspired in our duties and, as spiritual powers, will live a life reflective of wisdom and compassion, in altruistic and universal action.

# **SUSTAINABILITY AND SPIRITUALITY**

**Michiel Haas**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 4.1.2016)*

Our home, Gaia (Earth), is in bad shape. Mankind broke off its communion with Nature since the Industrial Revolution, and as we still consider ourselves the rulers of Nature, we have destroyed parts of our home planet. However, nature fights back and we can clearly see the problems we have caused. This is our responsibility. We cannot just ignore and leave it there, saying 'people did this; we, you and me are

responsible.' It actually means that we, that is, again undoubtedly you and I, urgently need to start fixing this before we reach the point of no return. There are standard and well-known solutions, never openly discussed, lesser-known solutions that can be implemented.

Each one of us can make his or her contribution to the healing process of our home planet, Gaia.



## **COMPASSION LEADS TO UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Nagesh Lakshminarayan**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 4.1.2016)*

'*Ekam sat, viprah bahudha vadanti*' is a saying from the Upanishads. It means that all that exists is one, and the wise call it by many names. The Vedas describe an ultimate reality that is called *Brahman*, in which we live, we move, and we exist eternally. It is that consciousness which pervades the entire world. When we live in such a unitary state of mind there is no way that we can injure anybody or any creature because we are aware that we are injuring ourselves. Compassion is that state where we feel the pain of others as our own and we sincerely wish to help and protect all.

Chief Seattle, a Native American Chief, wrote a letter to the President

of USA in 1852 when the American government said that they would buy their land. In it he emphasized the relationship of man towards Nature and God saying: How can one buy or sell the land or sky, the idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of air and the sparkle of water, how can we sell them? . . . If we sell you our land, will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the Earth is our mother, and what befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. . . . We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell our land to you, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. . . . One thing we know: There is only one

God. No man, be he red or white, can be apart. We are all brothers.

What are we doing to Nature and in turn to ourselves? Are we at the brink of extinction? Is Gaia dying? Have we

reached the point of no return? Is our only planet doomed to go without life? Is there still a chance to save our planet and Mother Nature? Are we heading towards a breakthrough or breakdown?



## **COMPASSION AND REVERENCE FOR LIFE**

**S. Harihara Raghavan**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 2.1.2016)*

The tsunami of 26 December 2004, a disaster that hit Indonesia and coastal regions of South India, occurred during the Annual Convention in Adyar, and a few members immediately swung into action and mobilized funds and essential materials. The real theological spirit, nay, the humane spirit, sprung forth and for a month people continued their splendid service.

Recently, in November 2015, due to the severe floods in Chennai and nearby areas, people suffered unprecedented loss and damage to property, loss of lives and crops, affecting more than 4 million people. These events brought to the forefront

the dormant and latent humane spirit in man, fellow-feeling, spirit of sacrifice, compassion, passion to offer help, give succour and all dispassionately. We are all interconnected, as beads in a necklace. Hence reverence for other lives and beings is of supreme importance for our world. True human progress is a journey from a state of selfishness based on the illusion of separateness, to another dimension — which is love.

As Shantideva stated: If you are unable to exchange your happiness for the suffering of other beings, you have no hope of attaining Buddhahood, nor happiness in the present life.



## **AN OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE OF THE ADYAR ESTATE**

**Tim Boyd and Michiel Haas**

*(Summary of Presentation given on 3.1.2016)*

Tim Boyd and Michiel Haas explained in detail the campus development plans for what they called the 'next' period. It is divided into two parts,

the first five years and then twenty years. They pointed out proposals for renovating buildings, constructing some new ones, while at the same time fresh

ideas were given on how to make the estate more attractive and open for other groups.

During the presentation the Adyar

Renovation website was launched, where detailed plans and ideas have been introduced. Mr Boyd described how these plans could be financed.



## THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The TS in **Greece** reports that, out of their 11 Lodges, Apollon Lodge in Athens and Kaviros Lodge in Alexandroupolis are temporarily inactive. Study group 'Prokris' in the island of Cephallonia is working well, and Radamanthis and Minos Lodges in the island of Crete are doing very well. Their magazine is printed every three months, going to about 500 subscribers.

**Slovenia** has 54 members. They held three Schools during the year: the Spring School, organized by Lodge Surya on 'Dignity in the Light of Theosophy', had 28 participants; the Summer School, organized by Lodge Adyar, was conducted excellently by Mr Bhupendra Vora on the *Bhagavadgita* with 25 participants; and the Autumn School, organized by Lodge Understanding, was conducted by the Organizing Secretary, Mrs Breda Zagar on *At the Feet of The Master* — 'Love', with 24 participants.

The TS in **Hungary** has 39 members, but a third of them are staying in the countryside, so they can take part in meetings only occasionally. There are only 12-15 active members living in or near Budapest and a few in or near Debrecen, in eastern Hungary. They had two General Meetings and ten public lectures during the year,

continuing the work in all three Lodges, one in the countryside and the other two in Budapest.

The work of the Regional Association in **Ukraine** continues with 95 members, an increase of 6, in 5 Branches and 3 study centres, with the formation of the third study centre, Proteus, in Dnipropetrovsk. Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko, the Organizing Secretary, tells us that at four of the Branches and all study centres regular meetings are conducted and classic theosophical literature is studied. In November they had their 10th All-Ukrainian Convention in Kyiv on 'A New Mind for a New Time' with more than 50 participants. In July they held their 10-day Summer School in the Carpathian Mountains on 'Ethics as the Soul of Divine Wisdom' with 26 involved participants. They have active TOS members and volunteers in five cities, and a Science Group in Dnipropetrovsk, where nine publications and eight reports are prepared. Their website, <[www.theosophy.in.ua](http://www.theosophy.in.ua)>, continues its work, and every Branch and study centre has their own page on the website.

Mr Pavel Malakhov, Presidential Representative of the TS in **Russia**, reports that the theosophical movement in their presidential Agency is

getting stronger, with numerous gatherings and study activities throughout the year. They have 159 members, an increase of 4, in 6 Lodges. Anahata Branch (in Moscow) gave 12 public lectures on theosophical basics. It uses SMS and e-mail mailing lists to inform about their activities. There was a Facebook page created to support the Museum, <<http://www.facebook.com/hpbhouse>>, and a variety of Internet activities involving Russian members in their official web-site, <<http://ts-russia.org>>, including a weekly, year round, Skype webinar on *The Secret Doctrine* conducted by Mr Malakhov.

The **East and Central African Section** has a new General Secretary, Mr Narendra Shah, elected for the 2015 to 2017 term at their 47th Annual Convention, held in early April in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Mrs Ananya S. Rajan was the guest speaker at the Convention and she gave subsequent lecture tours in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Kitwe, Mufulira, and Kampala. Their Section comprises four countries (or Regions): Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia. Unfortunately, out of their five Lodges, only two are very active and have a good number of members. Membership shows a decrease of 20 from 155 last year to 135. This year's Annual Convention in **West Africa** was to be held in June in Accra, but the General Secretary, Mr John Boakye, reports that it had to be held in September in Koforidua due to serious flooding that followed their seasonal rainfall, causing a disaster with over 200 deaths. The Convention

theme was 'Theosophy in a Changing World and the Cycle of Life' and turned out to be quite worthwhile. The member in whose home the Convention was held, the Secretary of the Lodge in Koforidua, passed away six weeks thereafter. He had spoken on 'Theosophy in Daily Life' at the Convention and had been an indefatigable dedicated member. The number of members for the Section stands at 238.

The TS in **South Africa's** General Secretary, Mr Jack Hartmann, writes that activities geared to spiritual growth of members were conducted mainly in the Lodges, including public meetings, study groups, and yoga classes on a regular basis. Thought is being given to attracting younger members. The Johannesburg Lodge has redesigned its library, holding 8,800 titles, and their Section magazine is to be published in an electronic form to reduce costs. Their membership is now at 174, a drop of 35.

**Covenant Lodge**, in Tel-Aviv, Israel, held 3 public meetings each month in their centres. They held members' meetings on a weekly basis, 3 meetings every month, with an average participation of 10. They also offer weekend seminars, courses, and workshops with up to 75 participating. Six active monthly study groups, with 7 – 14 members in each, focus on various theosophical subjects. Their membership is 71, a decrease of 3 members. In addition to the Covenant Lodge, there are 6 other Lodges attached to Adyar, totalling 80 members, and 31 Fellows at Large. included in their membership.

In the **International Headquarters**, a number of tasks were accomplished and are listed below. In general, the wages of all workers were raised by an average of 35 per cent, keeping in view the minimum wages fixed for Tamil Nadu state. The proceedings of the 2014 Annual Convention were live-streamed for the first time. A new website for the TS was launched in September 2015. The number of international volunteers has increased in Adyar. A long-term cover was placed over the Adyar theatre open seating area with a significant donation from the TS in America. A renovation plan for the Adyar campus was initiated with the help of renowned architect, Mr Michiel Haas from the Netherlands, and fundraising for renovations has started. The Adyar campus has now two sets of new public toilets, one near each gate, and informative signboards have been placed around the campus. The dining area of Leadbeater Chambers was remodelled. The cover design for the monthly magazine *The Theosophist* was improved. A new National Section (for Bolivia) was chartered, the first new section in 22 years. The Anthroposophical Society held their annual conference in the TS campus for the first time this year.

The **Archives and Museum**, closed for several years, are now working with a team of four volunteers. An archivist from the TS in America visited our archives for one month. A range of materials was tested for toxicity and the results were found negative. The air conditioners have been repaired

and are working on a 24x7 basis. Extra funding has been provided for restoration of documents, photographs, pictures, and other objects. But more funding is required, and as the building is leaking, apart from being too close to the Adyar River, a new building is required for housing the Archives and Museum.

At the **Adyar Library and Research Centre** the digitizing of palm leaf and other manuscripts was initiated. Funds were provided to computerize the Adyar Library catalogue. The staff has been strengthened with one Director, one professor, two research officers, and one research associate. Mr K. Jaikumar was appointed during the year to look after the Library systems and their automation. The Shankaracharya Sanskrit University has been requested to grant affiliation to our Library as a recognized centre for undertaking doctoral research. The Adyar Library Bulletin, *Brahmavidya*, was published for 2014-15, and is now up-to-date.

The first course of the **School of the Wisdom** in November 2014 studied H. P. Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*, with Prof. R. C. Tampi. This was followed by 'The Psychology of Yoga' with Mr P. K. Jayaswal. Mr Vicente Hao Chin Jr, directed the course on 'Self-Transformation and the Spiritual Life', and Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu will lead 'The Science of Theosophy: Foundation and Practice' class in January 2015.

The **Theosophical Publishing House** released 22 books (20 reprints and 2 new compilations). The Editorial