



THE THEOSOPHIST

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

Letting Go

Renunciation means to let go, not merely outward objects (which is relatively easy) but to let go with the mind. Acceptance does not have the same meaning. If a person encounters difficult circumstances or he suffers a loss, he may say 'I accept the difficulty, I resign myself to the loss. It is painful but I accept it; I do not struggle with it.' But letting go is something else. It is to see that the very feeling of pain comes only because of one's attachment.

If a person desires to hold something and he cannot, it slips from his grasp; there is pain. But he sees that the suffering arises from his desire to possess, and so he recognizes that the cause of his misery is in himself. Seeing this he lets go. He sees that what he wants to hold can never be held and therefore he does not attach himself to it. He realizes that life at the material level is forever changing and so he does not try to hold it. It is not that he accepts pain, after feeling it as pain, but he understands that it is his attachment which causes the pain. And knowing this, he is free from the attachment.

Letting go may be of many things. Memory, when it has a psychological

content to it, is a form of attachment (not when it is of a practical or empirical nature). Somebody experiences something pleasant. He says, 'That was *my* pleasure. That experience was *my* experience.' He may not say it consciously, but his mind clings to the notion, and that is the memory. And inwardly the pleasure is repeated. 'Oh, I enjoyed it so much.' It is what makes us all talk so much about ourselves — 'my experience, my friendship'. In a discussion meeting, most people will tell you about their experiences. So there is something in the mind which attaches itself to experience and piles up for itself all those memories. Our mind is heavy with so many things. To let go is to let go of attachments of that order and then the mind is no longer burdened.

If renunciation is an idea, it *has* to be renounced because it becomes another achievement — 'I must renounce' — and one is back to square one. If it is not an idea but a reality, then there is nothing further.

Indifference is not at all the same as renunciation. If there is indifference when there should be action, it is because there is attachment to comfort, to self. And attachment is not renunciation. There can

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be no confusion between the two because letting go of attachment does not mean that one does nothing or that one does not help another when there is need of help. There are people who say that if somebody suffers we need not help them because it is their karma to do so. This only means that they do not want to help — that is all.

‘The fluctuations of the mind’ that one reads about arise from these emotions, thoughts and desires that we have been considering; so what is the state of the mind in which there are no fluctuations?

Discrimination Involves Looking Carefully

One has to learn to look — not only at the surface but at what lies under it, in order to understand all that is implied. When there is a thought of annoyance, let us say, do we realize what the implication of that annoyance is? Or do we come to the easy conclusion that it arose because somebody else did not do the right thing or that some circumstance was not right? If we do, it means that we have not really examined it; we have not gone to the root of what the annoyance is. Since the root goes deep, we have to look carefully to see. And looking carefully means looking quietly, because we cannot see it properly if there is distraction. If the mind is in two places at once, or if it seeks to cover up or to escape, it cannot see clearly. It must learn to be quiet, and objective, careful and patient.

To look in this way is to learn *viveka* or discrimination. And this is impossible

to a mind which is careless, which flutters around, occasionally looking and then getting lost in its own daydreams. As *At the Feet of the Master* says, we must practise discrimination every day, at every step, until the end.

Then we begin to see that what we call ourselves, myself, takes many disguises, has many subtle expressions. And in all expressions there are to be found many of the attitudes and the currents that we have been speaking about. So careful observation of what is subtle as well as what is obvious, is necessary.

In order to know you as you really are, I must put aside the concepts I have already formed of you and be ready to see you, to understand you, not just once but as many times as may be necessary. To have an open mind means to be free from fixed ideas, prejudices and memories of the past, and to be able to look anew.

If we are prepared to penetrate into these matters, our minds must be clear and free from disturbance; they must be able to ‘stay with’ the question and go deeper into it. And they must be able to concentrate without distinction, to focus without agitation or obscuration. The questions we have to consider are of the greatest importance and the answers to them must be discovered in depth.

We may find that the answers we discover for ourselves are by no means new or original. Others before us knew of the unreality of the self. But we are not Buddha-s, so we shall not discover Truth in the same way or to the same degree that he did when he became enlightened!

On the Watch-Tower

But we shall nevertheless get glimmerings of the Truth, enough for our purpose. There is a world of difference between what somebody else has said and what we discover by our own efforts.

What is Truth?

This is a famous question, and no answer is right, nor forthcoming. Many people have considered it, and some think they know the answer, but are they or can they be right? This is a problem in seeking the unknown. We know many things or have ideas about material in the field of time and, therefore, about that connected with the known. But is this identifiable truth? Is truth identifiable at all?

Truth is not fact. Facts are, of course, known. For example, the law of gravity is based on facts. It came to the attention of Newton when an apple fell from a tree. There can be other facts of a similar kind which refer to invisible facts we can know then because they are coherent, although not perceptible. Facts change but laws do not. Nobody knows anything about the law of gravity in full — either when it begins, or how to end it, or perhaps in other questions of that kind.

Is truth in the facts or in the invisible unity of the facts expressed as a law? Is it in the visible and variable yet perceivable, or is it in the immutable? Can we know it through the phenomenal, or only through trans-phenomenal awareness? Is truth a category apart from what is describable in words or suggestions? Allah, God, Brahman, etc., are really beyond words, images or concepts. In other words, is truth

ineffable? There is a law of justice which apparently unites in a coherent whole, many experiences. So does the law of karma. All such laws are seen to transcend time as we know it. Perhaps they exist in the very nature of the universe or universes. Perhaps real order exists only to those who are able to penetrate into a deeper dimension.

Intuition was needed for Newton to perceive the truth of gravitational law, which should have been apparent to many others before Newton perceived it and wrote about it! It is also needed, perhaps, to understand other kinds of facts because truth implies knowing the meaning of things.

When justice is intuited, the meaning of apparently arbitrary events unfolds itself. There may be perception of a vast Design in nature, but our relationship is limited to mother, father, friends, etc., and is therefore changeable. Perhaps what is truth, a truth which embraces everything in loving threads of unity and sympathy, is the only worthwhile experience, but it cannot be taught; it can be learnt, and meaning comes from love. Perhaps that is why everybody craves for it. Can we say that all worthwhile experience is part of truth — love, joy, peace and wisdom?

Man and Nature

A few years ago, there was an article in *The Guardian Weekly* about animals dying in experiments performed on them by people, to prove various things, such as testing drugs and cosmetics to prove that these products are safe for humans.

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The experiments included putting into the eyes of rabbits, chemical compounds which the manufacturers wanted to use.

Those who are lazy, and who do not care to test new advances, go on using old methods for out-of-date experiments. Animal tests are often useless. The European Union has banned these tests by mandating legislation on the use of non-animal tests, but many of the tests continue to be used by companies to save themselves effort, simply by having the experiments done outside European countries, like India. Thus tens of thousands of poor little animals are utterly at the mercy of people who want to make money, and who do not care too much about where the experiments are done.

The information given is only part of the story. Vast areas of primeval forest in South America and Indonesia have been destroyed by burning not only the trees, but also the wildlife living inside the forests, in order to grow products for feeding more animals; they need to be produced in countries which do not have the upper hand, even if they have the will. These forests cannot be reproduced for centuries. Man has, therefore, little concern for life as a whole and for nature, which thrives on non-interference. There

are very few areas which are left now in pristine beauty.

Man has now command over, or almost over, the majority of the creatures on Earth. He believes that everything on this beautiful planet is meant for his use. He is putting himself in danger because the outcome of these enterprises may not turn out to be as he thinks or wishes. In fact, nature exists for purposes of its own, one of them being to teach a creature as advanced as man, to see how little he knows as yet of creation. He cannot learn if he thinks that all changes and all of creation are under his control.

We have to have an entirely new attitude and disposition in regard to ourselves in relation to other living creatures. We need a different attitude in order to learn what is our real relationship with nature, instead of regarding everything else as a toy, perhaps a useful one to play with! Our attitude and comprehension of nature and all the tremendous hidden factors within this wonderful creation is hardly creditable. How are we going to change this? This is not a theoretical question, but a profoundly meaningful one, which we have to face instead of proceeding recklessly onwards, as at present. Towards what? ✧

**All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth
Allah; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.**

Qur'an, 57.1

Patañjali's *Yoga-sutra-s* and the Noble Truths of the Buddha

RAVI RAVINDRA

THE Buddha was a great yogi with subtle, natural (often mislabelled supernatural) powers; and Patañjali was a *buddha*, an awakened one. The teachings which resulted from their insights have had an immense influence in the world. Are there parallels between the *Yoga-sutra-s* of Patañjali and the celebrated Four Noble Truths of the Buddha? Since both of these are dealing with a diagnosis of the fundamental human situation, and a way of overcoming suffering and bondage, it should be surprising if they do not have many things in common. And if we do discover quite different perspectives and metaphors, our understanding of both of them is likely to be enhanced. In what follows, each Noble Truth, as found in *Samyutta Nikāya*, V.421 ff., constituting a part of the first sermon delivered by the Buddha at Sarnath after his enlightenment, will be mentioned in turn, along with bringing together the relevant teachings of Patañjali in the *Yoga-sutra-s*.

The Noble Truth of *Dukkha* (Suffering)

The Buddha said: 'Birth is sorrow, age

is sorrow, disease is sorrow, death is sorrow; contact with the unpleasant is sorrow, separation from the pleasant is sorrow — in short all the five components (*khandha-s*) of individuality are sorrow.' The five components in question here are form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedana*), perceptions (*sanna*), psychic dispositions (*samkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*), and a combination of these components is what constitutes a human individuality, the preeminent characteristic of which is transience.

The teaching of the Buddha begins by a recognition of *dukkha* (suffering) as a fundamental fact of human existence. The root meaning of the word *dukkha* is based on the sound made by a wheel turning around an axis which is not perfectly rightly centred. In human beings *dukkha* conveys a sense of suffering arising out of a lack of perfect matching of one's understanding with reality. Thus, not to accept the truth of transience of oneself, and not to live in accordance with it — as one does not, when one wishes the continuation of any state of existence, or of existence itself — inevitably leads to

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sorrow, simply because it is not in accord with reality.

One of the *kleśa-s* (hindrances) enumerated by Patañjali is *abhiniveśa* and YS, II.9 says:

Abhiniveśa is the automatic tendency for continuity; it overwhelms even the wise.¹

Although *abhiniveśa* is sometimes translated as ‘a wish to live’, it is closer to ‘a wish to continue’, or ‘a wish to preserve the status quo’. *Abhiniveśa* is what is technically called ‘inertia’ in physics, as in Newton’s First Law of Motion (also called the Law of Inertia) according to which a body continues in a state of rest or of motion in a straight line unless acted upon by an external force. *Abhiniveśa* is the wish for continuity of any state and any situation, because it is known. We fear the unknown and therefore we fear change which may lead to the unknown. In fact, this fear is of a discontinuation of the known, simply because the unknown, if it is truly unknown, cannot produce fear or pleasure.

YS, II.15 says that for a discerning mind all is indeed sorrow owing to the pain caused by change (*parināma*), the suffering caused by deep-seated conditioning (*sanskāra*) of the psyche, and the unhappiness generated by the opposition between the fluctuations of the mind (*vṛtti*) and the contours of reality (*guṇa-s*).

For the discerning, all is sorrow, resulting from the mismatch between what is actual and what is thought, and because of the suffering inherent in change, pain, and from past conditioning.

Because of the consequences of the force of *abhiniveśa* (see II.9), the *kleśa* which causes us to wish to continue in the state which is known, we suffer when there is a possibility of change. But change is constant. The universe is dynamic, constantly subject to the force of time: we move from one place to another; we see the seasons change and the movement of the planets; we grow old; we die. Even when pleasure exists, the very impermanence of pleasure leads to sorrow. There are instances of pain, and sorrowful consequences of past experiences which are rooted in all the *kleśa-s*. Therefore, for the discerning, *dukkha* is a pervasive feature of life.

The Noble Truth of Arising of *Dukkha*:

‘This is the noble truth of the arising of sorrow’, said the Buddha. ‘It arises from craving (*tanhā*) which leads to rebirth, which brings delight and passion, and seeks pleasure now here, now there — the craving for sensual pleasure, the craving for continued life, the craving for power.’ This *tanhā*, of course, is not the ultimate or the only cause of *dukkha*, as we know from the series known as ‘conditioned origination’ (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). Although *tanhā* is the immediately discernible cause of suffering, there is an interdependent series of causes, going all the way back to ignorance (*avijjā*) as the fundamental cause. According to Patañjali, YS, II.3–4, *kleśa-s*, the causes of suffering, are five: ignorance (*avidyā*), egoism or a sense of a separate self (*asmitā*), attachment to pleasure

(*rāga*), aversion to pain (*dvesha*), and clinging to the status quo (*abhiniveśa*). And out of these five *kleśa-s*, *avidyā* (*avijjā* in Pāli, as above) is the fundamental one, because all the others arise from it.

The *sutra-s*, *YS*, II.3–4 are:

The *kleśa-s* are ignorance (*avidyā*), the sense of a separate self (*asmitā*), attraction (*rāga*), aversion (*dvesha*), and clinging to the status quo (*abhiniveśa*)

and

Avidyā is the cause of all the others, whether dormant, attenuated, intermittent, or fully active.

For the Buddha, the causes of suffering are many but the emphasis here is on *tanhā*, selfish desire or simply, selfishness. For Patañjali also there are several sources of suffering, but rather than *tanhā* he emphasizes the mismatch between the way it actually is — determined by the interaction of the *guna-s*, the forces and constituents of Prakṛti — and what the mind thinks and expects, as shaped by the *vṛtti-s*. The gulf between reality and thought leads to sorrow. In our life, this gap is most manifest in our expectations of ourselves and of other people and our actual experience.

For the existentialist philosophers, who assume that the mind is the knower of reality, the recognition of the fact that reality does not correspond to thought led to the conclusion that the universe is absurd. This assumption is strenuously denied by all of Indian philosophy, and

in any case by the Buddha and by Patañjali for whom the mind is only an instrument of knowledge. The real knower is above the usual mind; for Patañjali it is Puruṣa, who knows through the mind and not with the mind. Puruṣa alone can know reality, and only when the mind is completely free of the *vṛtti-s* can it act as a perfect instrument of knowledge. Then we do not have expectations about the world and about others; we see and accept reality as it is.

The Noble Truth of the Cessation of *Duhkha*:

The Noble Truth of the cessation (*nirodha*) of *duhkha* 'is the complete stopping of that craving (*tanhā*), so that no passion remains, leaving it, being emancipated from it, being released from it, giving no place to it'. This state of the radical eradication of *tanhā* recommended in the Third Noble Truth is tantamount to Nirvāna (*Nibbāna*, in Pāli) which is *tanhākshaya* (extinction of craving). In keeping with the general tenor of the Buddhist writings, most of the descriptions of Nirvāna are given in negative terms, as extinction of attachment to pleasure (*rāga*), of attachment to hatred (*dvesha* in Sanskrit or *doṣha* in Pāli), and extinction of illusion (*moha*). Then there is the state of the Absolute: unborn, ungrown and unconditioned. The *Yoga-sutra-s* I.2–4 define the whole point of yoga to be the cessation (*nirodha*) of the fluctuations (*vṛtti*) of the mind. These fluctuations all arise because of the *kleśa-s* spoken about above. When freed from

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the *kleśa-s* and the *vr̥tti-s*, the Seer is established in one's true, original, unchanging and unconditioned nature.

The *sutra-s*, *YS*, I.2–4 are:

Yoga is the stopping of all the movements (*vr̥tti*) of the mind (*chitta*).

Then the Seer dwells in its essential nature.

Otherwise the movements of the mind (*vr̥tti-s*) are regarded as the Seer.

There is no need here to engage with the notion of *ātman* in the theory of Yoga in contradistinction to the teachings of the Buddha of no-self, because the Seer is said to be nothing but *pure seeing* itself (*YS*, II.20):

The Seer is only the power of pure seeing. Although pure, the Seer appears to see with the mind.

Still, it is worth mentioning that the Buddha does not deny the presence of the great Self as asserted in the Upanishad-s and in Vedānta. However this Self, just like Nirvāna, cannot be described and the Upanishad-s repeatedly say *neti, neti* (not this, not this). What the Buddha denied was the permanence or reality of the ego self which is constantly subject to change. Patañjali says in *YS*, II.2 that

Yoga is for cultivating *samādhi* and for weakening the hindrances (*kleśa-s*).

Among the *kleśa-s* to be removed, see *YS*, II.3 quoted above, is *asmitā*, the sense of a separate self — precisely what the Buddha maintained in his doctrine of

anātmā (no self). Furthermore, the state of *samādhi* is described in *YS*, III.3, as a state of consciousness free from the self.

Samādhi is the state when the self is not, when there is awareness only of the object of meditation.

The Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha*:

The Buddha preached the Middle Path (*Majjhimā Patipadā*) 'which gives vision and knowledge, which leads to Calm, Insight, Enlightenment, Nirvāna'. This Middle Path is generally known as the Noble Eightfold Path (*Āriya Atthāṅgika Māgga*) consisting of the following eight components: 1. Right Understanding (*sammā ditthi*), 2. Right Thought (*sammā sankappa*), 3. Right Speech (*sammā vācā*), 4. Right Action (*sammā kammanta*), 5. Right Livelihood (*sammā ājiva*), 6. Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*), 7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*), 8. Right Concentration (*sammā samādhi*).

The whole of the *Yoga-sutra-s* is concerned with the transformation of consciousness leading to freedom from all the causes of suffering. The practice of Yoga is especially elaborated in *YS*, II.28–55; III.1–12. The way to the ultimate freedom is an unceasing vision of discernment (*viveka*) which is aided by the eight-limbed (*ashtāṅga*) path of yoga. The eight limbs are: 1. *Yama-s*: the laws of life, consisting of non-violation, truthfulness, non-stealing, containment and non-grasping. 2. *Niyama-s*: the rules for living, consisting of purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study

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and surrender to the Higher Energy (*Īvara*). 3. *Āsana*: postures and attitudes, external and internal. 4. *Prānāyāma*: Regulation of vital energies, including breath. 5. *Pratyāhāra*: control of the senses. 6. *Dhāraṇa*: steadiness of mind. 7. *Dhyāna*: meditation. 8. *Samādhi*: the silent and settled mind.

The highest state of consciousness is called *Kaivalya* by Patañjali. This is, of course, as difficult to describe or comprehend as is Nirvāna. But the following few *sutra-s* indicate some flavour of it paralleling the few descriptions of Nirvāna.

III.54

This *jñāna* born of *viveka* is liberating, comprehensive, eternal, and freed of time sequence.

IV.26

Then, deep in *viveka*, *chitta* gravitates towards *Kaivalya*.

IV.29

One who, due to perfect discrimination,

is totally non-grasping even of the highest rewards, remains in constant *viveka*, which is called *dharmamegha* (cloud of dharma) *samādhi*.

IV.30

From that follows freedom from action coloured by *kleśa-s*.

IV.31

Then all the coverings and impurities of knowledge are totally removed. Because of the vastness of this *jñāna*, little remains to be known.

Clearly, there are many very interesting and close parallels between the Yoga Sutra-s and the Noble Truths of the Buddha, as we should have expected. Even the greatest expressions of Truth are at best different 'repeated raids on the inexpressible', in the felicitous phrase of T. S. Eliot. There can hardly be any doubt that Patañjali and the Buddha would have embraced each other with much friendliness, happiness and appreciation. ✧

Note

1. The translation of the *sutra-s* in the *Yoga-sutra-s* are taken from R. Ravindra, *The Wisdom of Patañjali's Yoga Sutras: A New Translation and Guide*; Morning Light Press, Sandpoint, ID, USA, 2009.

Acknowledgement

Dr Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Professor in the Philosophy Department in Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand, and I had started a discussion about the *Yoga-sutra-s* and the Noble Truths of the Buddha in 1984. But we did not get far before she renounced the world and became a Buddhist nun with the name Dhammananda Samaneri. I am grateful to her for the initial exchange.

Changing Perspectives and Converging Values

R. C. TAMPI

Perspectives and Values

If we just cast a glance around, we would be shaken by the sickening sights of pain and penury, war and violence — the result of the perverted perception of man. Surprisingly, the US astronauts and the Soviet cosmonauts who had a view of Earth from space, were alike struck not only by the beauty of the continents, but also by their closeness to one another and their essential unity. An astronaut who saw Earth from space as a shining blue pearl in the surrounding vastness, confessed to a spiritually transforming experience. The broader the perspective, the higher will be the values it engenders.

As science advances, it provides man with a finer and more comprehensive perspective of the universe. It, in its turn, leads to a nobler sense of values. In the course of its spectacular history, modern science with its shifting world views brought about a diverse sense of values in consonance with the perceived reality. From the deeply egocentric separative tendency nourished by narrow perceptions of the world, man is led by post-modern

science to a loftier perspective of unity, wholeness and harmony. Under its impact human nature progressively reveals a higher sense of values like love, goodness and sacrifice.

The Domineering Man

Modern science had its beginnings in the sixteenth century. It has become a world movement directly influencing all departments of life. It had its beginning when the geocentric conception of the world lingered in the mind of people — the ignorant and the learned alike. The altered view of the central position of the earth influenced an inflated sense of self-importance and domination of nature. Francis Bacon, who was not a scientist at all, was the proponent of the scientific approach. He was a Machiavellian in outlook, who denied the necessity of morality in public life and believed that craft and cunning were justified in the realization of one's ambitious goal. It is an irony that one who was not a scientist, and one who did not set much store by moral principles, was vested by

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Changing Perspectives and Converging Values

circumstance with the prerogative of defining the scientific outlook, to which some scientists still adhere. His attitude to Nature was imperious and irreverent. He said: 'We must put nature to the rack and with screws secure her secrets.' In his view, Nature had to be 'bound into service' and 'made a slave'.

Dualism

Descartes and Newton were the most important figures who influenced the world view up to the nineteenth century. Descartes' analytical method led to fragmentation in man's thinking and reductionism in science. Cartesian division into body and mind, mind and matter, and the observer and the observed had a great impact on the Western mind. Heisenberg observed thus on the far reaching impact of Descartes' dualism:

This partition has penetrated deeply into the human mind during the three centuries following Descartes and it will take a long time for it to be replaced by a really different attitude toward the problem of reality.

The Mechanistic Approach

Descartes' world was nothing but a machine with replaceable parts. Newton also established in the eighteenth century his picture of the world as a machine. This mechanical model of reality introduced by physics was thrown overboard by physics four centuries later. However, these entrenched notions were not easily erased from the human mind.

Newton's Clockwork Model

Isaac Newton was the real founder of pre-twentieth century physics. He was one of the greatest scientific geniuses. Even the poet, Wordsworth, who disliked scientists as a class, paid this tribute to Newton when looking at his marble bust: 'The marble index of a mighty mind, voyaging through the strange sea of thought alone.'

Newton changed the picture of the world and his mechanistic view influenced other sciences.

This view had many drawbacks. A machine cannot change or evolve and hence cannot symbolize evolving life. The entities forming parts of a machine exist independently in different regions of space. The force through which the parts of the machine interact can bring about no essential change in their nature. Each part of the machine is made independently of others and they interact with one another only externally.

Newton's clockwork model of reality assumes that space and time are absolute, and adopt matter as the basic underlying block of the world. Following Newton, many others treated other objects as machines. For Newton himself, stars were machines. Hobbes, the social activist, treated society as a machine. La Mattrie considered human beings as machines. Psychologists and physiologists like Skinner and Pavlov, considered human behaviour mechanical.

The mechanistic world view treated reality as something existing outside. It is objective and concrete. R. Mallikan

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described it as a 'philosophy of unintelligence'.

The mechanistic, materialistic, reductionist world picture suffered a setback towards the close of the nineteenth century. This ushered in a new world based on unity, non-materiality and organic interconnectedness.

Fields Replace Forces

The first sign of this revolution was the change in the concept of separate forces into force fields, like the gravitational field. Further, different force fields were unified, as in the electromagnetic field. Newton's Law of Gravitation unified all mass in the universe. Maxwell unified electricity and magnetism. Einstein unified matter and energy ($E = mc^2$) and space and time. He hoped that all the forces in the universe could be unified through a grand unified field theory. Thus, at the dawn of the twentieth century, science had changed its understanding of the universe as a field of energy, and not as a materialistic model.

J. C. Bose Saw the ONE in All

An epoch-making event which should have changed the future course of the history of modern science took place in London on 10 May 1901. Sir J. C. Bose presented before the Royal Society in London, experimental proof for the fundamental unity of life, showing that the boundary line dividing the so-called 'non-living' metals, living plants and human beings is only an imaginary one. On his achievement, *The Times* of London reported thus:

While we in England were still steeped in the rude empiricism of barbaric life, the subtle Easterner had swept the universe into synthesis and had seen the ONE in all the changing manifestations.

It is not surprising that in the then prevailing atmosphere of prejudice and conservatism even in the scientific community, this unforgettable incident was allowed to fade into oblivion.

Relativity

In 1905 and 1915 Einstein showed through his theories of relativity that space and time were interwoven inextricably as a 'space-time-continuum'. His most famous finding was that mass is a form of energy. He also showed that observation of space and time were not independent of the observer's own situation. Einstein achieved the stunning synthesis of space, time, gravity and matter and completely modified our world perspective.

The Quantum and a Crazy World

A fundamental and total reconceptualization in physics took place in the beginning of the twentieth century. Great scientists like Niels Bohr, Erwin Schrödinger and Werner Heisenberg lifted the veil on the mysterious subatomic quantum world, with its quaint laws and baffling paradoxical behaviour. The world of quantum physics is a web of dynamic interconnections. The entire universe is viewed as an unbroken whole where every element (wave/particle) depends on the environment. It reveals a mysterious

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non-local, non-causal relationship of elements distant from each other. Ideas of separateness, independence and objectivity are irrelevant and have no meaning in the quantum world. This 'unifying ground' has primacy over all separate parts (not the other way around — as in reductionism).

We came at present to the insight that we are embedded in the world as a whole.
(Ilya Prigogine, Nobel Laureate in chemistry)

The world view emerging from this is described by Erwin Schrödinger, the co-founder of quantum mechanics thus:

Inconceivable as it seems to ordinary reason . . . you and all other conscious beings as such are all in all. Hence this life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of the entire existence, but is in a certain sense, the WHOLE.

It was experimentally proved that through non-locality, feelings could be shared by more than one living being.

Schrödinger has also shown that consciousness which is the ground of all existence is a single unbroken wholeness.

Implicate and Explicate Order

An illuminating theory presented by David Bohm, considering the universe as an undivided and unbroken whole is that of implicate and explicate order. He compared the visible or explicate order to vortices on the stream and the unending unseen source or the implicate order to the stream itself. Bohm's theory lays

stress on the wholeness, multidimensionality, dynamism of existence and primacy of consciousness. The implicate order has infinite depth and in its inward recesses both matter and consciousness have their source.

Morphogenetic Field

Rupert Sheldrake explains many mysteries of nature through his hypothesis of a morphogenetic field. This accounts for the guiding influence that moulds living organisms as they grow. The morphogenetic field is the blueprint of forms as well as the means of communication within the same species over great distances and even the future times. The process of transmission is through morphic resonance. The 'hundredth monkey phenomenon' and the behaviour of the dog at home when the master leaves office far away are evidences of non-local communication.

Immensity

Yet another element of profound significance which influences the perspective of modern man is the realization of the vast immensity of the universe of which he is a part. In the conception of the scientists at the beginning of modern science the earth was just replaced by the sun as the centre of the world. Now the sun is seen in the remote outskirts of a lens-shaped galaxy, comprising 400 billion other suns. Moreover, at the beginning of the twentieth century it was thought that the Milky Way was the only existing galaxy. Now we have the

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astounding realization that there are a hundred billion other galaxies, 'all fleeing from one another, as if they are the remnants of an enormous explosion, the Big Bang' (Carl Sagan). It is an exciting realization for the modern man to recognize his oneness with that all-surpassing immensity.

Converging Values and the New Vocabulary

The awareness of an all-embracing unity and interconnectedness leads to empathy with all. It also expresses itself as reverence for universal life, compassion and commitment to heal the wounded earth and its bleeding inhabitants.

This reverential attitude is evident from the fact that words like *religion*, *God*, *spirituality*, *consciousness* and *love*, which were once considered unmentionable by science have been enthroned in the heart of science with enormous semantic value. The following statements from the most renowned scientists bear testimony to the shift in values caused by the change in perspective.

Science is an attempt to understand

reality. Science is a *quasi-religious activity* in the broadest sense of the term. (George Wald, Biologist, Philosopher, Nobel Laureate)

Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness the *energies of love*. Then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered *fire*.

(Teilhard de Chardin, Paleontologist)

Like Fritz Kunz, David Bohm seemed imbued with a feeling that whatever lies behind nature is *holy*.

Science is reticent . . . when it is a question of the great *Unity* . . . of which we all somehow form a part, to which we belong. The most popular name for it in our time is *God*. (Erwin Schrödinger)

I take the view that creation ultimately depends on some non-physical or trans-physical *reality, spiritual in nature*.

(Rupert Sheldrake)

Love is not peculiar to man. We should assume its presence, at least in an inchoate form, in everything that is.

(Teilhard de Chardin)

We try to realize the essential unity of the world with the conscious soul of man; we learn to perceive the unity held together by the one Eternal Spirit, whose power creates the earth, the sky, and the stars, and at the same time irradiates our minds with the light of a consciousness that moves and exists in unbroken continuity with the outer world.

Rabindranath Tagore

The Mind: Our Most Powerful Instrument

SHIRLEY MACPHERSON

WHAT is the origin of the mind? What part does it play in our evolutionary journey? Each one of us is, in essence, a being of pure Spirit and divine power.

This true Spirit within each of us expresses itself in three ways — Will, Wisdom and Intelligence — or Will Power, Spiritual Intuitiveness and Intellect. Humanity's work at this period of its evolution is to develop the mind; by this means we are able to think, observe, analyse, deduce, correlate and express in thought, emotion, speech and action.

We can also say that we are spirit, mind and body with seven Principles, a Principle being a basic differentiation upon which everything is built and denoting seven individual and fundamental aspects of the One Universal Reality in the Cosmos and in human beings.

The mind is the middle one and thus called the mediator. The mind is also dual in nature: one side is exposed to the light of spirit — subjective; the other side darkened by its own shadow — objective. Humanity's stage at this time, therefore, is caught up in the activity of the dual

mind. This is our trouble spot but also the crux or turning point in our evolutionary journey, the tool by which we carve out our future.

At our present stage of growth, it is probably this second aspect which is predominant because our minds are still dominated by desires. We have come, as it were, to the 'peak of our adolescence' as one writer put it. The true Spirit (the essence of each) is a Spiritual Being and cannot itself come into contact with the lower or denser worlds — but it does so through a reflection or ray of itself — thus the lower Manas or mental world. During our earth life the lower mind and desire (*kāma*) are joined together (*kāma-manas*) and they are closely interwoven so that they rarely act separately. Even if these emotions and desires are not active there is always an emotional background.

While we are in the region of the lower mind, we are confined to our mental images so that we never see and know things as they really are. An image is a relative thing and can never give us the whole. This should put us on our guard

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and show us that our views and ideas are not realities. We cannot therefore really know or understand through the intellect — we need to transcend the intellect, always remembering that the mind has its limitations because it usually works from imperfect data. Thus the mind's action is partial and so its outlook is partial. As Bro. Sri Ram said: 'No mental image is the truth of anything, only its symbol, though the invisible, impalpable truth may shine through it.'

Intellect or Intuition

It may here be interesting to note the difference between the intellect and intuition.

The intellect is an instrument of knowing although a rather ineffectual one. True knowing — wisdom — is the intellect illumined by intuition. Intuition is concerned with mutual relations and significance of facts; thus the perception of a new relationship between facts can completely alter their significance. In that way intuition can change our outlook and attitudes without changing the outer circumstances. A course of action indicated by wisdom is invariably followed without hesitation — it is thus right action.

The mental world is the world of the real person — the Self or *man* — the very word 'man' as we know, being derived from the Sanskrit *man* which is the root of the word 'to think'. Thus man is the thinker. The thinker, or individuality, endures. He is the one for whom 'the hour never strikes', the eternal youth who, as the *Bhagavadgītā* expresses it, puts on

and casts off bodies, as man puts on new garments and throws off the old. Each personality is a new part for the immortal Actor and he treads the stage of human life over and over again; in life-drama each character he assumes is the child of the preceding ones and the father of those to come, so that the life-history is a continuous one (Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater). The mental world is the realm of our true belonging — the realm of ideas, not physical phenomena. It is the land of our birth — where we truly belong.

As Geoffrey Hodson put it:

When man, the thinker, became incarnate in the physical vehicle built for its reception, the senseless animal became the thinking being by virtue of the Manas which entered into and dwelt within him. Thus Man the thinker became clothed in his 'coat of skin' after his 'fall' into physical matter in order that he might eat of the Tree of Knowledge and thus become a 'God'. Hence man is the link between the Divine and the animal.

That is why the human being is different from other forms of life because he has been described as that being in whom highest spirit and lowest matter are joined by intelligence.

The Mental Plane

It is divided into seven sub-planes — or different degrees of vibration. The lower four serve as a medium for our concrete thinking and form the lower mental world; the higher three, the

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medium of abstract thought, forming what we call the higher mental world.

For these two worlds we have two vehicles or bodies — the lower mental body and the higher mental body which belong to two different parts of our inner nature. The lower mental body is the subtlest part of our personality which changes from incarnation to incarnation. Indeed the life of a personality begins when the Thinker forms a new mental body.

The higher mental body, called the causal body, forms the lowest vehicle of the immortal self which endures from life to life. So the demarcation — between the higher and lower mind — separates the lower self, the personality, and the higher self, the individuality or soul. Our mind or intellect is the meeting ground of those two selves — the temporary personality and the immortal, permanent Self. It is in the Higher mental world, the Causal Body, where we spend most of our time, briefly dipping down into the physical world for each incarnation where we gather more experience necessary to further our journey on the evolutionary arc. We need to distinguish between the Mind and the Brain.

The Brain is mainly a screen on which the phenomenon of the different worlds produce their shadows. Those phenomena have their origins in different parts of our being.

We are complex beings: we have vehicles that connect us to all the planes — physical, emotional, mental and spiritual; each vehicle sends its vibration into the brain. Our sensations and feelings

come from the emotional world; our thoughts from the mental plane. Our true intuitions come from subtler planes still. Our thoughts are concrete and abstract and they both appear in our physical consciousness through the physical brain but they have their origin in two different vehicles of consciousness working on the mental plane.

The Mental Body

This is built of the four lower sub-planes of the Mental World plus the mental elemental essence. This elemental essence is a strange semi-intelligent life which surrounds and vivifies matter of the mental plane (the emotional and physical too). It responds very readily to the influence of human thought. It is on the involutory arc and so needs and develops through constant activity, darting from one thing to another. It is therefore largely responsible for our wandering thoughts. The shape of the mental body is ovoid, following the shape of the Causal Body, made up of the three higher sub-planes of the Mental World.

In the midst of the ovoid is the physical body which attracts into it the emotional matter and that, in its turn, attracts the mental matter. Consequently most of the emotional and mental matter is gathered within the physical frame. To clairvoyant sight, the mental body appears as built of dense mist, of the shape of the physical and surrounded by an ovoid of much finer mist — so in the mental world a person is just as easily recognized as in the physical. The portion projecting beyond the

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physical is the aura. Unlike the physical body which has remained substantially the same in size since Atlantean days, the mental body grows in size as we develop.

It is understood that reading alone does not build the mental body: thought does. Reading furnishes the material for thought.

When the mental body is exercised and vibrates under the action of thought, fresh matter is drawn from the mental atmosphere and built into the body and so it increases in size and complexity. The amount of thought affects the growth of the body. The quality of thought affects the kind of matter that is built in. A warning is given by CWL for those who are argumentative. He says:

Those who are easily provoked to argument should recollect that when they rush out eagerly to verbal battle they throw open the doors of their mental fortress, leaving it undefended. At such times any thought-forces that may happen to be in their neighbourhood can enter and possess their mental bodies. While strength is being wasted over points which are often of no importance, the whole tone of their mental bodies is being steadily deteriorated by the influences which are flowing into it.

He concludes: 'It is a common experience that argument seldom tends to alter the opinion of either side; in most cases it but confirms the opinions already held.' On a board outside the Rosslyn Hill Unitarian chapel in Hampstead was a notice saying: 'A great many people think they are thinking when they are only re-arranging their prejudices.'

The particles of the mental body are in ceaseless motion. It also appears to be divided more or less regularly into segments, each corresponding to a certain department of the physical brain. Many of us, however, are so imperfectly developed that a number of special departments are not yet in activity so that any thoughts on those subjects are clumsy and uncomprehending; e.g., some people, have a head for mathematics while others find a simple mathematical process extremely difficult.

The principle functions of the mental body are:

1. To serve as a vehicle of the true Self for the purpose of concrete thinking.
2. To express those concrete thoughts through the physical body working through the emotional body, the etheric brain and the cerebro-spinal system.
3. To develop the powers of memory and imagination.
4. To serve, as our evolution proceeds, as a separate vehicle of consciousness on the mental plane.
5. To assimilate the results of experience gathered in each earth-life, passing on their essence to the real Self living in the Causal Body which is the vehicle of all knowledge, past, present and future.

As well as serving as a repository of the quintessence of experiences gone through by the personalities in different incarnations and of the faculties developed through them, it is also the storehouse of the good and not-so-good Karma which the personalities have made during those incarnations. These remain as potential

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impressions or seeds in the Causal Body and gradually come to fruition and determine the conditions of future lives.

Just as one of the principal features of our emotional bodies is that of colour — i.e., to clairvoyant sight — so does colour apply to the mental body. These colours, known and unknown, exist on all the planes of Nature but become more delicate as the vibrations become finer. For example, we have the glowing rose colour of affection, the healing colour portrayed as silvery-white; a steady mental effort shows forth as golden yellow. Yellow, it is said, in any vehicle indicates intellect but its shades vary; e.g., in philosophical and scientific thinking. Aspirational thought shows itself as a beautiful violet colour and with it the blue of devotional thought. The mental bodies of many people are crowded with concrete images, the principal colour here being green and often shaded with brown and yellow. For more information on colours, refer to *Man, Visible and Invisible* and *Thought Forms*.

The main function of the mental body is, of course, to think. Here we use a powerful force — the energy of the Universe. There are four effects of thought — two of these are on the thinker and two are outside the thinker. On the thinker — it can change a person, e.g. habits, and it builds character. Outside the thinker — we produce waves of thought force and we produce thought forms.

We are well aware of the adage: ‘What a man thinketh that he becomes.’ We are creatures of reflection and so that which we reflect on in this life, we become the

same in the future. There is hardly any limit to the degree which a person may recreate himself by concentrated mental activity. Thought is the manifestation of creativeness. It is thought which acts, creates and carries out the decrees of the will. So thought, concentrating on any idea builds that idea into the character. Annie Besant said: ‘The process of building character is as scientific as that of developing muscular power.’ Geoffrey Hodson has given some directions for character building:

To live wisely and to have a goal in life so that we do not just drift;

To accept unchangeable conditions;

To learn to laugh — especially at yourself;

To make up our minds and reach decisions promptly;

To live in the present, for yesterday has gone and tomorrow has not come.

To have the right attitude to mistakes and difficulties, which means not to look back, for the past is finished. Whatever it gave us in the experiences was something we had to know. No lessons are lost.

Henry Ford said: ‘The man who never made a mistake never made anything!’

Meditation can be used to develop character, to build into it various qualities and virtues. Ernest Wood suggests, for instance, that we select the quality of harmlessness in act, thought, desire and speech. See how it would affect the daily life, how we would treat people. Then having meditated upon that quality we try to carry that state of mind into our daily living.

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Now as to our habits . . .

The mental body is subject to habit as are the other vehicles. If we allow ourselves to think negatively of another, it soon becomes a habit. On the other hand, to train ourselves to think positively or to look for the desirable qualities in another person will also give rise to a habit of liking rather than disliking. In one sense we are our habits. But we can change them. Geoffrey Hodson explains what happens physically in the brain and the nervous system as we learn a new habit or break an old one:

When we have performed an act, we have set up a sort of 'brain path' or 'nerve path' leading to our motor centres. In a somewhat similar manner, the matter of the astral and mental bodies responds to thought. Thus, the next time the impulse or desire or idea of performing this act strikes us, since the path is already marked out, a weaker impulse, or desire, or idea will travel over the same path, causing us to act, i.e., to carry out that desire, impulse or idea. By and by, as we repeat this process, the nerve cells and the astral and mental bodies become so well organized and integrated that the resulting act or behaviour becomes almost automatic. Thus habits are formed.

To form a new habit is to reverse the operation using constant mental repetition of desired control and course of conduct. You, the real you is in charge and determines what your thinking will be. The task of overcoming bad habits and building character is positive, not negative.

Dr Arundale wrote:

A weakness is a strength in the becoming.
A vice is a virtue in the becoming.
A strength is a power in the becoming.
A virtue is a glory in the becoming.
Hatred is love in the becoming.
Pride is understanding in the becoming.
Selfishness is generosity in the becoming.
The coarse desire becomes the ideal
emotion.

Character building and the correction of bad habits consists really in a redirection of energy, from destructive, harmful expression to a constructive, harmonious one. Again, G. Hodson says:

To get angry when somebody calls you a fool is to prove his assertion.

To get angry when things cannot be helped is to make them worse.

To get angry when others disagree with your opinions is to discredit the worth of your opinion.

To get angry when you are slandered is the poorest kind of answer to make.

To get angry when you cannot have your own way is to prove you cannot be trusted.

To get angry when your conscience tells you that you are wrong is to fight a losing battle.

Now let us look at the effect of our thought on others. When we think, a vibration is set up in the mental body and this produces two distinct results:

1. Radiating vibrations or waves
2. Production of thought forms

A vibration in the mental body communicates itself to any surrounding

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matter. As the atmosphere is filled with mental matter it produces a ripple and this radiates outwards. When it strikes another mental body it will naturally set up a similar vibration. Put simply, it means that when our mental body is struck by a thought wave, we shall probably produce a similar thought. It will have the same character although not necessarily the same subject matter. The distance, strength and definiteness of a thought wave will depend on the clarity and definiteness of that thought. A self-centred thought will plunge into the emotional world and be ineffective (at the mental level). As mental matter is much finer than physical or emotional, the life forces on the mental plane are increased in activity. That mental matter is in constant and ceaseless motion and it takes form whenever we have a thought. It actually moves with thought.

Thought Forms

A thought gives rise to a set of vibrations in the mental body, then a vibrating portion is thrown off and gathers from the surrounding atmosphere elemental essence of the mental world.

Elemental essence is a strange semi-intelligent life which surrounds us, vivifying matter of the mental plane. It responds very readily to the influence of human thought. So we have a thought form which is a temporary living entity. The thought-force is the soul and the elemental essence, the body. So quite often these thought forms are called elementals or sometimes artificial elementals. (The same applies to the emotional and physical matter.)

The quality of thought will determine its colour — the colours we have already briefly referred to. The nature of the thought will determine its form and the definiteness of that thought will determine how clearly it is outlined.

If our thoughts are intellectual and impersonal then they will stay on the mental plane. If they are of a spiritual nature there will be some touch with the Buddhist or intuitional and those thoughts can be very powerful and influential. If we are thinking selfish thoughts and those are filled with personal desires they will be drawn into the emotional matter — because of that close relationship between the mental and emotional bodies and they work in combination. These are the most common thoughts because most of us still have our desires and passions and emotions. So with most of humanity there is a vast number of cloudy and irregularly-shaped thoughts, for many of us have as yet untrained minds.

Many of our thoughts are self-centred and so they hang around us and if repeated, grow in strength. Such thoughts can also attract similar ones from other people. These hover around us and follow us wherever we go. Other classes of thought forms that we produce are those that are neither selfish nor specifically aimed at anyone and they leave behind us a sort of trail. There are others that are aimed at some particular person or object and they shoot straight away from the thinker. Anyone who can think at all, exercises the power to create thought forms — thoughts are things and we are generating these thought forms night and day.

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We, therefore, have enormous power in our hands — for good or ill. What is more, our thoughts are not exclusively our own business, for any thought, good or ill, will reach much further than words.

There are lots of other disturbances in the mental body. If we worry for instance (a thought form and emotion), we set up a storm or a sore place. If we are argumentative, the mental body is perpetually inflamed and can break into an open sore. If we become fixed with an idea or subject, then any thought on that subject will solidify as it were, and appear as a prejudice.

As CWL graphically put it:

A small eddy is formed in which the mental matter runs round and round until it coagulates and becomes a kind of wart. Unless, or until, this wart is worn away or forcibly rooted out, the man cannot use that particular part of his mental body and is incapable of rational thought on that subject.

These are diseased spots in the body and the inability to think or see clearly increases and spreads to other parts.

Religious prejudice is possibly the commonest and most serious and prevents any rational thought on the subject. As a Master wrote: 'Your mind is too full and there is not a corner vacant from whence a previous occupant would not arise to struggle and drive away the newcomer.' With all these we form then a shell of self-centred thought around us and we look upon the world 'as through a glass darkly'. This is a closed mind.

If we hope to make any occult progress on our evolutionary journey we need to

open our minds and become balanced.

The human mind is not only the most wonderful thing in creation but it is also the greatest problem for the person who is trying to tread the path which leads to perfection. It is the separative principle which makes us see the many in the One. It is the centre of egoism which makes us feel we are separate individuals with interests in conflict with those of others. It is the creator of illusion which shows us a distorted view of Reality. And so we have that well-known aphorism from *The Voice of the Silence*:

The Mind is the slayer of the Real
Let the Disciple slay the slayer.

It is such a slayer because we have allowed all our prejudices to grow up in it. It is commonplace knowledge that we never see things as they are; we never see another person, only our thought of him. So the disciple has to bring the positive powers of the higher *manas* or mind which is divine, by concentration and meditation, down into the denser worlds of the lower *manas* or mind which is only a reflector or mirror. This is done through the *antahkarana* which is the link between the divine soul or Higher Self and the personal ego. The personality thus becomes an instrument and the disciple is the master of that instrument. Even if we feel we are a long way from setting our feet on the Path of Discipleship, each one of us, if we are wise, will watch our thoughts with the greatest care, realizing that in our thinking, in our minds, we possess a powerful instrument, for the right use of which we alone are responsible. ✧

Theosophy — Time to Come Out?

J. S. BRIG YOUNGS

THE formation of the modern Theosophical Society was intended to announce to the western world, and the world at large, that a body of knowledge called, for want of a better word, ‘Theosophy’, existed. To assist that endeavour, HPB, Olcott, W. Q. Judge and those that followed them wrote much upon the subject but they addressed the educated in society.

George Arundale’s book, *You* (ch. 13, ‘Theosophy and the Society’), states:

It is the glory of the Society that birds of infinitely divergent plumages flock together in the name of common brotherhood, live together in a spirit of solidarity, understanding and mutual appreciation, and yet may radically disagree with one another on innumerable apparently vital matters. Each one of us needs other people’s differences to make his own more true. In the Theosophical Society differences abound, partly for this very purpose; for in every difference there is truth, even though, blinded by our own differences, we are unable to perceive it.

Living as we do in an increasingly pluralistic society, we must come to realize that Theosophy is the one teaching

that could heal the divisions that exist. The concept of the One Life; that all is One and comes from the One, is a simple message. As Annie Besant concluded in her lecture, ‘Aspects of the Christ’:

And so I would leave you with my message for the coming year, to be repeated whenever controversy arises, or when any would attack your thought or assert his own. Take as the year a watchword that phrase I have so often quoted, place it in the mouth of the Supreme Teacher, ‘On whatsoever road a man approaches Me, on that road do I welcome him, for *all roads are Mine*’. (my emphasis).

To those who argue that one cannot ‘sell’ Theosophy, or esotericism, one may say that if one does not inform others that such a thing as Theosophy exists, then the individual personality does *not* have a choice. To those that rigidly adhere to, ‘When the pupil is ready, the Teacher cometh’, we may invoke the same argument — choice! Such attitudes preclude this. Surely we have a *duty* to inform but not preach. Staying in the twilight of an esoteric closet is not an option if Theosophy is to

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be utilized as a catalyst for healing humanity's wounds.

Fortunately we have a vast body of extant work by our Founders and those that followed them; however, we must beware of taking every utterance of HPB, Olcott, Judge, etc., as absolute truth. As Arundale succinctly observes in the same chapter:

Theosophy is *not* authority. It is a statement as to the nature of the Science of Life, and only a *partial* statement at that. You may call it, if you like, a revelation, for it primarily comes from Those who are wiser than humanity. It largely represents that which humanity *has yet to begin to learn*. But the revelation does not claim to be [an infallible doctrine], a Word which must be believed if salvation is to be achieved. It is a picture. And those who look upon it are obviously free to like or dislike either any part or, for the matter of that, the whole (my emphasis).

Arundale alerts us, as does HPB to the dangers of blind acceptance of supposed truths:

The Lord Buddha has said that we must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said, nor traditions for they have been handed down from antiquity; nor rumours as such; nor writings by sages, because sages wrote them; nor fancies that we may suspect that have been inspired in us by a Deva (that is in presumed spiritual inspiration); nor from inferences drawn from some haphazard assumption we may have made; nor because what seems to be an analogical necessity; nor on the authority

of our teachers and masters. But we are to believe when the writing, doctrine or saying is corroborated by our own reason and consciousness. 'For this', says he in concluding, 'I taught you *not* to believe merely because you have heard, but when you believed of your own consciousness, then to act accordingly and abundantly' (my emphasis).

We must, therefore, question *everything*, no matter how exalted, erudite or respected an author or speaker may be regarded. In this vein, no author or speaker should be held up, by any Theosophist, as the dispenser of Absolute Truth. Not even the Masters would lay claim to such arrogance!

It must also be remembered that many 'second' and 'third' generation Theosophical writers have been criticized and dismissed for their efforts to elucidate the core teachings. In the light of the above I would claim that this is a grave injustice. Dr Edi Bilimoria writes:

Far from diluting (still less polluting) the classical literature, as some die-hard HPB adherents would ungenerously claim, these so-called Second Generation theosophists were indeed 'assist[ing] in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists', as the best of their works rendered the extremely abstruse and difficult classical literature more accessible using simpler language and drawing upon metaphors and analogies pertaining to their age, hence amenable to a wider public.¹

In no way does the writer wish to

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demean or criticize the sterling efforts, selflessly given, by a succession of past and present servants of our Society but the time to face unpalatable truths is upon us. I would suggest that we

Have not moved with the times.

Do not use 'everyday' language.

Have not introduced Theosophy to the wider public.

All the above needs careful consideration before a methodology is evolved to address such problems. Theosophy's vehicle, the TS, is only as good as its members. This is where we come in. By making our feelings known to those involved in the decision-making process and our brothers and sisters, through dialogue and consultation, we can contribute to the greater Whole. The officers

of our Society cannot be expected to do everything for us!

I believe that Theosophical teachings have the potential to make a major contribution towards healing the religious, spiritual and social divisions that exist today but they need rejuvenating and revitalizing. If we see Theosophy as part, if not all, of the transformation in human consciousness that is required, then let us begin by making our views known, no matter how radical. All views are valid and of equal import; to regard them otherwise would be a betrayal of our First Object. By sharing knowledge gained by study and life experience, we *can* contribute to a greater Whole.

As Mahatma Gandhi said: '*Be the change.*' ❖

Reference

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OFFICIAL NOTICE

CONVENTION 2012

In accordance with Rule 46 of the Rules and Regulations of the Theosophical Society, the Executive Committee has determined that the 137th international Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the international Headquarters, Adyar, Chennai, India, from 26 to 31 December 2012.

Mrs Kusum Satapathy
International Secretary

The Prophet Muhammad

C. JINARĀJADĀSA

THE Prophet Muhammad is like us and unlike us. He is like us because He claimed no Divinity or separateness from mankind, and was humble towards God like the simplest man. He was unlike us because of the greatness of what issued to humanity from his character. The Prophet's greatness can be seen from the fact that He was a never-ending source of inspiration to all who came after him and built up a great civilization.

The Prophet's teaching emphasizes three fundamentals. The first is the loftiest conception of God to be found anywhere, and equalled only in the highest Vedānta. This is the conception of God who is not to be imaged in symbol or representation, and yet is the Creator of all things. The second is the assertion that there is only one Will, the Will of God in the Universe. Man has therefore to learn to unify his little will with the Great Will. One meaning of the word 'Islam' is resignation; that is, 'God's will be done'. The third fundamental is a Brotherhood which has been proclaimed by every religion, but which the Prophet has succeeded more than anyone else in establishing. He is the only great Teacher who has succeeded in

welding the professors of one faith, not into a sentimental Brotherhood, but one which makes the practice both of inter-dining and inter-marriage. The Prophet proclaimed that man should be judged, not by his colour, but by his character.

The result of these doctrines was a powerful impetus to culture and civilization. When the young religion of Christianity was discarding as useless the torch of the wisdom of Greece and Rome, the infant religion of Islam took up that torch and saved Europe from at least 500 years of retrogression. Islam saved the writings of Greece and Rome on philosophy, astronomy, mathematics and medicine. Furthermore, in the universities of Baghdad, Cairo and Seville in Spain, this and other knowledge was developed to form the great culture of Islam. That culture inspired poetry, especially in Persia; architecture wherever the religion spread; and in India it built a beautiful cult of Nature in loving gardens and flowers. All that is precious for civilization descended like an avalanche of divine force through the Prophet at Mecca, and swiftly and strongly built up a new civilization.

There is yet one further greatness

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The Prophet Muhammad

possible for Islam, and that is to extend the teaching of the Prophet in new ways. Today the Muslim considers as his brother only the man who recites the creed. But a greater sense of Brotherhood is his who regards as his brother every man also who does *not* recite the creed. If the Prophet were alive today, when the world needs Brotherhood more than any other doctrine, surely He would call upon

his followers to extend the Brotherhood of Islam to the whole world. The Prophet himself has declared that there is a Brotherhood among the Prophets; and if this idea could be recognized as fundamental in Islam today, Muslims would honour the Prophet in reverencing with affection as a brother, not only the followers of Muhammad, but every man and woman who lives in the world. ✧

This Ātmā, which dwells in the heart, is smaller than a grain of rice, smaller than a grain of barley, smaller than a grain of mustard, smaller than a grain of millet, smaller than the germ which is in the grain of millet; this Ātmā, which dwells in the heart, is also greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than all the worlds together.

Containing all works, containing all desires, containing all odours, containing all tastes, encompassing this whole world, the unspeaking, the unconcerned — this is Ātmā within the heart, this is Brahma. Into It I shall enter on departing hence.

Chāndogya Upanishad, III.14.3.4

Alchemy

D. P. SABNIS

ALCHEMY, analogous to mysticism, is a science of all sciences, an art of all arts and is the Law which governs all laws by which the Universe is made or unmade. It is the art of altering vibrations through natural law. It is a natural philosophy to enable one to penetrate the mystery of life. It provides a key to the Divine Wisdom by which man may regain his lost Kingdom with God.

The main difference between an alchemist and the modern scientist is that the alchemist believes in starting at the bottom or with one of the simple metals and adding +ve or -ve charges or the building up of these. Science, on the contrary, believes in starting at the top and tearing away the charges necessary for transmutation. Alchemy is a constructive and creative process, whereas science is a destroying process. This is how the modern scientists discovered and mass-produced nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of self-destruction, which may consume entire humanity in a matter of minutes. These weapons have fallen into the wrong hands. This has created chaos and disharmony all around the world.

Alchemy is a copy of Nature's divine

evolving processes, whereas science has a wholly materialistic viewpoint. In the mad rush to master Nature, scientists have been over-utilizing the natural resources, thereby creating environmental hazards. The global warming due to excessive human interference has reached a dangerous level which will tear off the 'ozone layer' that protects our planet from ultraviolet rays directly entering into the atmosphere. Planet Earth is really in danger today.

Alchemy is a natural process, and science is an unnatural one. The alchemist follows the safe process of evolution and the scientists use the process of devolution. Nowhere do we find any devolution in Nature, but everything seems to be in a state of evolution. Science, with all its bombarding apparatus, is trying to do just that, but in a negative way. It is no wonder that millions of volts of electricity and various magnetic conditions are necessary to pull or pry off several +ve or -ve charges. The scientists do not know that with this, they are fighting with Nature or God himself, the Creator of this world.

Man himself cannot produce anything. All that man can do is to duplicate the

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conditions used by Nature in the process and then to depend upon Nature to perform the transmutation. A surgeon operates but Nature has to perform transmutation. This is why the surgeon, before operating, takes a written consent to absolve himself from the consequences. The surgeon never gives a 'guarantee'. A farmer ploughs the field and sows seeds. If all the conditions are favourable crops will be produced or grown. We cannot say that the farmer produced or grew the crop, for he only created, within his own power, the conditions necessary by which Nature performed the transmutation.

Alchemy is thus the Law operating behind all manifestations in man — physical, astral, mental and spiritual.

The qualifications to become an alchemist are that one must be a mystic and philosopher, highly ethical, deeply religious in the true sense of the word.

It is not at all difficult to undertake this flight to Alchemy, provided we study the subject sincerely, as we do for our school, college or university examinations.

It is unfortunate that with humanity going downhill in ethical and moral standards day by day, it does not seem to be qualified to conceive its principles. ✧

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;
Hold you there, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower — but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

O Friend, hope for Him whilst you live, know
whilst you live, understand whilst you live; for
in life deliverance abides.

If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what
hope of deliverance in death?

It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have
union with Him because it has passed from
the body;

If He is found now, He is found then;

If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death.

Kabir

The Extraordinary Miracle of Everyday Life

TOMMY WÅGLUND

PEOPLE often talk — not the least so in spiritual circles — about special miracles, something unusual and extraordinary that has happened, some deed or magic. But the most extraordinary miracle of all is our everyday life, which we literally see every day. If we think of it, there is nothing as miraculous as this everyday life. Nothing is so mysterious, so unbelievable, or so unexplainable. It blossoms everywhere, in the sky, in the deep sea, in every flower, in every garden, and in everything — whatever is right before our eyes. The only reason we often fail to see it is just because it is there all the time — we get accustomed to it, and take it for granted. We look out for some miracle although we are in the middle of the greatest miracle that has ever been created.

A couple of years ago I visited a sort of seminar in which present-day science met religion. Beside me in the hall sat a man with whom I started to have a little chat about the subject of the seminar. I soon found out that the man was a recognized professor in a branch of biology, and he was a little bit aggressive about the superstition he meant was the essence

of religion. Contrary to my claim the reputed professor argued that science had come to an almost absolute knowledge about its subject, e.g., biology, and had almost surpassed Nature itself, as Nature was full of mistakes, which human science corrected, according to the professor. When I told him that, in my opinion, there was a lot more to know and that the professor, as an example, could not reveal the mystery why it all works in Nature, down to the tiniest of the tiny — why a little sparrow can do such incredible deeds as to survive in a complex and changing environment and also manage to help its offspring to survive . . . and of course the professor could not, I added very kindly, create such a little ‘machine’ himself and let it do the same miracles as the living sparrow. He would indeed be pretty helpless in such a project. At this point the professor became upright, furious, and stopped talking to me.

Later in the evening I realized that the mistake of the frustrated and arrogant professor is what I myself and all of us do all the time when we think we understand something just because it is very familiar.

Mr Tommy Wåglund is a member of the national board of the Swedish Section of the TS.

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We have to regain the eyes of our childhood, when everyday life was seen as what it always has been — an overwhelming miracle. Now, if everyday life is such a rich place indeed, it is no surprise if we can create supreme spiritual practices from the elements of everyday life. I guess Lord Kṛṣṇa did something in that direction when he created Karma Yoga and if I have got it right, also Jesus, the son of a timberman, turned to everyday life. Neither of these spiritual giants seems to have proposed the spiritual path to be a particularly odd or sophisticated path. However that may be, I and many others have found out that simple elements from everyday life put together can be a rewarding, meaningful and highly inspirational spiritual path.

I do not have to go into every detail here, but want to highlight some points, also remembering that each individual can design his or her own profile of prioritized aspects (designs that always can be updated along the road, as is often the case in everyday life). And it is proven many times, my Guru taught me many years ago, that such a natural path is even very well suited to take an adept all the way to enlightenment, should that aspiration be growing intensely in the heart of the adept and he or she is guided by a true spiritual master. It does not have to be more complicated than that.

Other levels, higher levels also, levels beyond everyday life in some ways, are of course not denied, but everyday life has all that it takes, and for all of us who do not possess 'magical' power,

this is good news, indeed.

To begin with, health and a basic well-being are very practical, and it is common sense to cultivate them in everyday life. There are a lot of good, practical books that teach us what to do, but we ourselves have to take the initiative, to make health a priority in our life. Gradually I have arrived at an important insight (I hope). What is good for my health is also mostly good for my spiritual life. Spirituality is very practical and pragmatic. Although we cannot control health totally, because we are under the influence of the environment, chance and our genes, there are a lot of things we can do.

We can be cautious not to open ourselves unnecessarily to poisons of different kinds in the environment. We can avoid all types of different psychosomatic diseases, in several cases stress-related. We can above all live a balanced, yet joyful life, eat clean food with proper nutrients and use healthy sleeping habits. And on top of that, we can train our bodies in suitable ways (I myself use a lot of long distance walking and daily practice of the ancient Chinese art of t'ai chi ch'uan).

Besides the practical and wise nurturing of our health, physical as well as mental, we can protect and improve our emotional status. We want to be in a good mood all the time (more or less). This does not demand that we should be in a constant state of ecstasy, although it is very nice to be able to tap in now and then to the divine flow of nectar. More important, though, in daily life, is probably to be in a positive motivational force and

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avoiding as far as possible, all negative outbreaks as well as the more slow, sour wear-outs of our inner system, due to uncontrolled leakage of accusations, fear, unreasonable doubts and so forth (the list can be very long).

In order to check out negative thoughts and emotions, we have first to be very aware of them and their effects. As we all know, it is not a quick fix. However, this checking out of the negative cannot be the whole remedy. We must also step in for powerful positive actions in life, and what can be more positively powerful than LOVE, although this force has such a mild and soft appearance. Love is also not just a quick fix; there is no easy button to press, so we have to learn the art of loving, and, not the least, showing love. And this showing of love . . . is a big thing, I think much bigger than we mostly are aware of. It takes a lot of courage to show love, if we really want to show it generously and not just as very tiny drops once in a blue moon.

When it comes to love we are in no way allowed to sneak out by the back door; we have to stand up and sincerely express our appreciation for people, or whatever is at hand. We must choose the type of language that is proper for the moment and our own individuality, but the expression must be so heartfelt that it really goes to the bottom of the heart of the other individual (or individuals). Love can be expressed as a sincere and continuous interest in other people's well-being or other life-circumstances. It does not have to involve big gestures; small

everyday signs of affection are often the most powerful. In the long run, who wins the most from this practice? We ourselves, of course, although it can also be a very good injection for the other.

Imagine that we start this kind of most sincere process of expressing love frequently. Do also take the time to feel what this practice can do for us, our inner systems. It is very great stuff! Also, remember that when we love all (more or less), all will love us! That is the incomparable power of love. And it touches our heart so deeply, almost overwhelmingly, that this powerful force at the same time is or can be so incredibly soft and humble.

One final remark on the improvement of our emotional status: This work also has a huge positive impact on our health. But good health will also support pretty efficiently our work with the emotional status. As we all know — everything is connected, everything is basically one.

Inner freedom is the third anchor for the quality of everyday life in a spiritual context. Inner freedom safeguards what has already been achieved by the two previous factors, health and a positive emotional status (read love). Of course, this means that inner freedom also is good for our health; it unburdens us so much from stress and tension. Inner freedom signifies freedom from our own ego and those of others, a sort of non-attachment to this limiting force. Inner freedom grows with integrity. In integrity we can take responsibility for another's well-being and rights, but we have the strength and courage to walk our own way through

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life, independent of the other being's conditioned judgements of our choices. We respect others' choices but we also make our own choices, which we take full responsibility for. In inner freedom we are also integrated, meaning that we have 'harmony of opposites', of our own opposing inner and outer traits.

This harmony 'competence' can also be used to bridge gaps to other beings, cultures, life forms, etc., in such a way that we do not get trapped in specific cultural patterns or our own small group (you know, 'we' and 'them'). Inner freedom also means that we can use our thinking power to the most, but without being overly attached to our thoughts — we are also able to enjoy deeply and for long periods the landscape of inner silence.

If we cultivate these everyday factors, health, positive emotional status, and inner freedom, we grow little by little. Our health improves, our emotional life improves, and our inner freedom improves. As with everything else in everyday life, it is not always easy, but if we hold on to the path patiently and with a flexible attitude, we will improve over the years. Since we belong to the Theosophical Society of Adyar, we are like a *sangha* (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), and we can support each other with friendly advice, alert listening, and of course, a steady flow of friendly love from heart to heart, in this very mystical experience that we call life, everyday life, with a spiritual direction.

As we grow, we slowly mature into

real wisdom, strength and love. This maturity helps us to make really good choices as we flow further with life. If people do not mature they make unwise choices, which in turn have bad consequences. If whole cultures or societies have a tendency to make unwise choices, that results in severely bad consequences. One type of bad choice that humanity in general has been making for a long time concerns pollution and destruction of the environment, our planet. I think that the heavy consequences of our maltreatment of Mother Earth now have come to a very critical point. A lot of skilful actions on a broad scale are necessary. But if these actions are going to be executed, something must happen with humanity's wisdom level at large. A sort of human leadership must emerge. This leadership must include every human being (more or less), so the task is formidable.

Since human beings are on very different levels, the leadership must be of different types. We can visualize figuratively that the Masters on the highest level teach students at a level below, and these spiritual students try to inspire people on a level further down, and so on. It might not fall out that properly in practice, of course, but the bottomline truth is that all spiritual people of all traditions must take a very deep responsibility to inspire such a leadership wave. There is no time to organize such a thing very much, so everybody has, to a great deal, to take on the mission individually and in small groups. Everybody has to be involved. Everybody has to take the lead and show

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the way by their own example in some arena.

It might be a help to anchor to some degree the everyday factors discussed above. This has to be intense and stable work every day for a long period, a true mission for everyday life. Remember, there is nothing as miraculous as this everyday life. It is precious. We have

to do everything in our power to protect it!

Human spiritual progress has always been important, but perhaps more today than ever. This time it is for real, and it has already lifted the warning flag. So we all (it seems to me), in different ways, have to take an absolute, overwhelming, active and loving responsibility — NOW! ✧

God made the universe and all the creatures contained therein, as so many glasses wherein he might reflect his own glory: he hath copied forth himself in the creation; and in this outward world we may read the lovely characters of the divine goodness, power and wisdom. In some creatures there are darker representations of God, there are the prints and footsteps of God; but in others there are clearer and fuller representations of the Divinity, the face and image of God; according to that known saying of the schoolmen, *Remotiores similitudines creaturae ad Deum dicuntur vestigium; propinquiores vero imago*. But how to find God here, and feelingly to converse with him, and being affected with the sense of the divine glory shining out upon the creation, how to pass out of the sensible world into the intellectual, is not so effectually taught by that philosophy which professed it most, as by true religion: that which knits and unites God and the soul together, can best teach it how to ascend and descend upon those golden links that unite, as it were, the world to God. That divine wisdom that contrived and beautified this glorious structure, can best explain her own art, and carry up the soul back again in these reflected beams to him who is the fountain of them.

John Smith the Platonist

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