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THE GREAT AWAKENING

Dorothy Bell

(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 2.1.2018)

The aim of this lecture is to give a perspective on the reality shift — from a material worldview to a spiritual worldview — that is associated with *the awakening of spiritual consciousness*. And, in relation to this, the intention is to consider the development of experimental self-education strategies as tools that might be useful in preparing the ground and planting the seeds for the foundation to be laid for *its future unfoldment*. The removal of obstacles to natural growth and the unfolding of inherent potential reflects Patanjali's axiom of how transformation occurs.

The focus will centre on two of "The Golden Stairs" that lead to spiritual enlightenment and "the Temple of Divine Wisdom" — "*an open mind*" and "*an unveiled spiritual perception*" — as they are seen to interrelate.

Questions such as — What is the Great Awakening? How relevant is it to the First Object? What self-education tools might be useful in attempting to work through or overcome obstacles to

"*an open mind*" and "*an unveiled spiritual perception*" — will be explored.

Initially, the "Great Awakening" will be examined, not in the context of any mass religious movement — such as that of the mid-18th century in the Western world — but within the context of theosophical teachings and the purpose and work of the Theosophical Society. Discussion of the importance of this "Awakening" to the First Object and to the reasons for the original establishment of The Theosophical Society — will be based on Letters written by the Mahatmas and the initiators of the Society.

An integral part of theosophical teachings is the unfolding of an inspiring and awesome "Divine Plan": the bigger canvas that portrays the evolution of consciousness over periods of time that the human brain finds difficult to assimilate.

Nevertheless, it provides a reference point for the present developmental stage of our human "life wave": it identifies the critical shift in consciousness as the

awakening of spiritual consciousness in humanity to “a new continent of thought”—a new way of being—a new way of seeing things, of thinking, knowing and living that revolves around the key principle of Oneness, not separateness, and which is distinguished by a new, caring, and compassionate nature. This is to be achieved eventually by a long and arduous process of removing the obstacles and impediments that have produced the closed mind, which will allow the awakening and unfolding of loving insight and compassionate wisdom of the newly revealed Heart-Mind.

A Persian love poem also gives insight into the title “The Great Awakening” and, in simple terms, will reflect the overarching and timeless goal of the Theosophical vision as it is presented in the teachings, the awakening of human consciousness—including the awakening of the human heart—to a full realization, a complete realization of the Oneness of all things, all beings, all life. Annie Besant maintained that the sense of Oneness at the heart of things was testimony to spiritual consciousness. This love story will point to the effects of “a unveiled spiritual perception.”

A Theosophical worldview is a tool to use, because its insights describe “our truth and our reality” and reason for being on Earth; and will in time, with constant use, replace our existing programmed worldview, until it too, is no longer needed. Psychology is also a tool of self-knowledge because it provides some insights into the nature of social

conditioning, perception and projection that help in understanding the personality-mind with its programmed beliefs, emotions, judgments, and control over behaviour. “Every response to a problem is a conditioned response ... We are second-hand people”, advised J. Krishnamurti.

Initially, examples of the use of experimental strategies with direct experience—even from the armchair watching the news on TV—will provide fertile ground for self-study and gaining insight into our programmed beliefs and attachments when, for example, we react and get “hooked into” controversial issues, stories of injustice, abuse, violence, murder, and mayhem as the fear-mongering across the globe reaches new heights. Seeing these things with the eyes of spirit is the challenge.

Overall, in the scheme of things, we find ourselves experiencing another life-time on Earth—the schoolhouse or Shakespearean stage of experiences and lessons for the growth of the soul. The aim is to learn how to see through illusion—through separateness, form and death—with the eyes of spirit and reflecting a Theosophical worldview rather than being dominated by the fleshy eyes, beliefs and emotions of the socially conditioned or programmed mind, and stuck to the karmic wheel of life.

The aim is to learn how to love and not to fear, and to see others as aspects of ourselves, all on the same journey with the same purpose, but with unique and individual life plans. All from the One Source, in the One Existence and One Life, under the One Law.



WHAT LEADS TO INSIGHT

(Summaries of Symposium Lectures delivered on 3.1.2018)

C. A. Shinde

The reason we need to explore “what leads to insight” is that we cannot have theories or a blueprint for it. There is a profound collection of insights in Theosophical teachings and in one’s book of life; one just needs to perceive them. One needs to be a lamp unto oneself.

The eight-fold path of the Buddha begins with right belief, which means right perception, without which the treading of the spiritual path would have no proper basis. Only a few people who are serious seekers of truth, are capable of insight through their study and ethical living, and therefore start to listen before they speak, think before they act, and try to go into the depth of discernment, coupled with understanding. Such right effort, awareness, or attentiveness opens up a new insight into human life. With theosophical teachings, being both expansive and deep, one can have insight into the threefold human evolution, reincarnation, karma, the human constitution, consciousness, and so on. Perhaps that makes him see good in others and the

oneness of life and resolve not to think or feel evil of any being. H. P. Blavatsky said insight arises from practising “a clean life, an open mind and a pure heart”.

The insight we are inquiring into is related to intuition, but it is not the same. Intuition is the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning, whereas insight is based on a fully conscious examination and analysis of phenomena in order to see the true nature of things.

One comes to insight when the mind is very still, when thought is absent and when the mind is not burdened with its own noise. It comes with extraordinary rapidity, or as a flash of understanding. The process is, insight to inspiration to intuition. The role of inspiration and insight is to infuse values in the individual to incubate and inculcate.

A serious study of the teachings may lead to basic questions like “who am I, where am I going and what do I do with my life?”, which transform our life into a spiritual journey.

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Isis Resende

If we want to go from intellectual knowledge to insight, we need to live in a certain way. We need to study, meditate, and serve. When we study, we enlarge our horizons, we increase our understanding of life and its processes. The progress we make studying deeply the Arcane Knowledge puts us

in full rapport with the forces that guide humanity through evolution, and quickens our perceptions to clearly grasp all things relating not only to matter, but also the spiritual part of ourselves. Study should be self-study, relating what we read in books with our lives, changing ourselves accordingly.

That brings us to meditation, where we create the appropriate conditions so that spiritual insight can occur. This deep self-study, will lead us to meditation, so that peace reigns in the house of our lives and we start receiving insights, which are flashes coming from *buddhi*. Then we start to realize better the Divine Plan, our lives, the processes we pass through, and the suffering in our lives and in the lives of the ones that surround us. Then the source of our knowledge changes from the brain

to the heart, and we start to realize the need to spread to others that knowledge that has helped us so much, so that they could also benefit from it. We begin to realize that it cannot be bliss when all that lives must suffer. We realize that there is no use in “saving ourselves” and go on hearing the cry of the world. That leads us to remain unselfish till the endless end. So through study, meditation, and service we can pass from intellectual knowledge to insight.

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Gerard Brennan

This talk explores the notion of what true spiritual insight really is and how genuine insight moves well beyond the intellect to a deeper level of understanding and experience. It examines the important relationship between knowing the Teachings thoroughly and dwelling upon them until they become an expression of our true nature. At the heart of genuine insight is the importance of listening to the Truth, contemplating its meaning and finally meditating on the Teachings so they become part of our

being. The journey from the more external aspects of our nature into the heart of who we really are is the Path that leads to insight. This suggests that there is a part of ourselves that exists beyond the mind, the intellect and emotions that can be experienced through a greater awareness of Unity, emerging from the compassion of an Altruistic Heart. In essence the expression of Universal Brotherhood through our thoughts, words, and actions implies the living of loving kindness that opens the heart to real Insight.

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INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II

Pure Heart and Eager Intellect

(Summaries of Talks delivered on 3.1.2018)

Dr C. P. Bhuyan

We all know that God has a plan and that plan is evolution. Evolution implies change towards the better for all. Each of the various kingdoms in Nature has its own role to play. Human beings are

meant to understand the Universal Law and apply it consciously at their level. But in our arrogance, attitude of supremacy and self-centredness we become blind to our responsibilities, causing harm and violence to others.

As a child grows in years, a feeling of separateness, in terms of caste, creed, colour, language, religion, and nation, makes deep impressions in its mind. The present-day world reveals that international relations are in a dangerous state. Human beings are becoming slaves of greed, hunger, and ignorance, or *avidya*. Prejudice is distorting our clear thinking. We lose purity of heart because of all these forces.

But we can live a different kind of life that has the potential to dispel the darkness of *avidya* and embrace goodness, devotion, harmony, and truth. In order to start the journey to reach wisdom, a pure heart and eager intellect are very much necessary. A pure heart is that which is free from all sorts of bad qualities. On the destruction of impurity arises spiritual illumination, which develops into awareness of Reality. At

the Feet of the Master reminds us of the four definite qualifications that we must set ourselves to acquire:

1. Through Discrimination, the Divine World and its qualities begin to unfold slowly.
2. With the help of Desirelessness we learn unselfish service, attain a loving, selfless, helpful nature, and affectionate detachment.
3. Through Good Conduct we learn to have control over our thoughts, steady concentration, self-discipline, true, kind and helpful speech, tolerance, endurance, and faith and confidence in ourselves and the Masters.
4. Love is the state of oneness, the personal love becoming noble, unselfish, refined, and purified. Thus we can achieve a Pure Heart only through these four qualifications.

A pure heart and an eager intellect are two of the definite steps towards Wisdom. ("The Golden Stairs")

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Prof. Satheesh S. G.

Our attitudes flow from our motives, and from these are derived perspectives on any field of life. If our life is based on sincerity and an honest concern for others, we are exhibiting a pure heart. We can find examples of purity of heart, not only in the great saints, but also among many around us. In order to be pure-hearted we should at all times think only good thoughts and do good deeds.

Purity of heart can only be attained when there is purity of body, mind, and soul. Purity of heart aligns us with the Inner God from where knowledge and wisdom can flow at the appropriate time and not just by intellectual training. The

harmonization of the Inner and Outer man leads to a profound joy and happiness because we are working closer and closer to Nature's purpose.

A Pure heart has infinite Love. Not love in the romantic sense of the word, but love without boundaries, without conditions, and without sentimentality. It is love that embodies compassion for all beings, great and small. It is love that allows the heart to be open at all times. It is love that allows freedom for every individual to be who they are. Our intelligence can only take us so far. Eventually we need to turn off our minds and open our hearts.

Frequently, the Mahatma Letters

say that the Masters are looking for the light of compassion shining in the hearts of aspirants wherever they are around the world. When they find this “Buddhic Light”, they watch and guide those who demonstrate a genuine purity of heart and motive to serve humanity and at the right time their direct training can commence, perhaps after lifetimes of testing or probation.

The heart is the testing instrument that determines what the mind shall transmit. A pure heart will permit the mind to transmit only the truth. It will reject the false, the wrongly motivated, or the hurtful. “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

“An eager intellect” does not mean having a high IQ like Einstein, but rather an eagerness and willingness to think issues through, with the intellect we are each uniquely blessed with. It really means a willingness to know, a search to comprehend, a quest for knowledge. An eager intellect is more than the open, receptive mind. It is eagerness, ardour to search for knowledge. An eager intellect is of the nature of fire. An open mind needs an eager intellect to search

for the truth in each field of knowledge.

Someone who has a clean life, an open mind and a pure heart desires to know the facts about human existence. An eager intellect is *buddhi-manasic*; its energy comes from the soul. It responds to the impulses whose origin is in the immortal soul. Its spiritual consciousness is blind to the illusions of separateness, but has a critical view of life and provokes changes. Such an individual desires peace and wisdom for others more than himself. He truly practises altruism. An eager intellect relates to compassion. An individual who has an open mind and eager intellect may have to radically innovate culture and karma around him, and fight injustice.

There are two ways of truth practised in Indian traditions. They are *bhakti*, or devotion, and *jnana* or knowledge. Bhakti — devotion to a teacher, God, or a religious system — is the easiest way and is thus pursued by most people, as it fits in with the demands of normal life and human psychology. Jnana — the path of knowledge through study and meditation — utilizes the intellect to build mental pictures of the truth.

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Y. P. Desai

When one is told to live a clean life, it does not just refer to physical cleanliness, which is superficial. It also does not mean just refraining from consuming flesh, alcohol, or tobacco, or promiscuous sexual behavior. One needs to have a pure heart as well. Cleansing the heart means removal of all selfish

motives, resulting in the realization of many beautiful virtues.

How does the heart become pure? Ordinarily, we take any action with the intention of deriving benefit from it. This needs to be rectified, and we act only for the benefit of others. As J. Krishnamurti said, we need to be constantly aware of all that one does, including eat-

ing, talking, behaving, and so on. Per the Buddha, we should not profit at others' expense; we must adopt the right means of livelihood by ceasing to do evil, learning to do good, and cleansing the heart. We need to "kill out ambition" as prescribed by *Light on the Path*, because ambition tends towards selfishness.

Discipline, according to Krishnamurti, is essentially learning, prompted by inner feeling and not the result of mere outer rules. We have to learn by our own understanding. We should not only aspire, but be willing to learn. Living a life of awareness requires an open mind, willingness to consider other points of view with attention, without any pre-conceived notion or judgment, neither rejecting nor accepting. Also, the mind

must be without activity, and highly sensitive. Any activity of the mind suppresses receptivity. While listening to music, if you begin to think, you miss the music. Similarly, when there is thinking, judging, condemnation, the listening stops. The mind is no longer open.

Buddhism speaks about the "opening the doors of the mind". The mind has to become like the open sky, cloudless and expansive. The mind, in its pure nature, knows the TRUTH at once. Such a mind is all-embracing and has depths in it which are unknown to a closed mind. With such a transformation of mind, our life becomes exceedingly beautiful and helpful, and then one can live a different kind of life.

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Ashutosh Pati

At some point in their lives people start thinking of spirituality, the spiritual goal, why it is needed, and so on. There are many different ways to achieve the spiritual goal. H. P. Blavatsky presented a writing taken from the letter of a Master which has been called "The Golden Stairs". It consists of a set of thirteen steps that a learner can climb to reach Divine Wisdom. Two of the preliminary steps are "a pure heart", and "an eager intellect".

"A pure heart" means knowing what is really important in life and not letting anything else distract us. It means freedom from uncertainty and indecision

about what is ultimately good and useful. Those who have a pure heart do not wonder about where their lives are leading them; they know that there is only one direction to go.

To carry out the single-mindedness of purpose in a pure heart, one must also have "an eager intellect". With it we recognize the existence of the opposites, including good and evil, and we also have a basis for choosing between them. An eager intellect makes possible discrimination between the real and the unreal. Thus, in the tradition of the Ancient Wisdom it is a basic premise that learning leads to goodness, that intellect is part of ethics. To be good, we must know.

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Number of delegates registered as of Tuesday, 2 January: 950

THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The **Bolivian** General Secretary, Mrs Guillermina Ríos de Sandoval, participated in the Inter-American Federation Congress that took place in Brasilia on “The Masters’ Letters” and the Section sent José Luis Rojas to participate in the International Gathering of Young Theosophists in February in the same city. Their National Meeting was held in La Paz with the theme: “The TS: Why and for what purpose was it founded?” Their 124 members are spread over 11 Lodges and 6 study centers.

The **Brazilian** Section continues to be the largest in Latin America with 676 members in 33 Lodges and 20 study centers. They have a new General Secretary, Sergio Carvalho de Moraes, Jr, succeeding Marcos de Resende. Their Winter School was held at the Theosophical Institute in Brasilia. Their International Theosophical School, held in the same venue in Brasilia, had Esteban Langlois, as its Visiting Lecturer, who spoke on “Applied Theosophy: Abstract Teachings for a Concrete Life”. The International Youth Group met in February on “Diversity as a Way to Universal Brotherhood”. *Sophia* magazine has entered its 15th year with 636 subscribers. It sells at newsstands all over the country.

The **Canadian** Regional Association (CRA) reports a membership of 124, an increase of 6 from last year, working in 5 Lodges and 2 study groups. All Lodges

have been active, holding at least monthly meetings. In late August, York Lodge hosted the CRA’s Annual Convention with Michael Gomes, from New York City, as the speaker for a conference on “HPB, Her Life and Work”. On 26 and 27 August Les Montagnes Bleues Lodge had its 3rd Summer School with guest speaker Jacques Mahnich, from France, who spoke on “Science and Theosophy”.

The TS in **Chile** membership stands at 47 working in 3 Lodges. Their Convention was held in March on the theme, “Live Spiritually”. Pamphlets were distributed in subways and on electronic pages. Both *The Chilean Theosophical Magazine*, a hardcopy printed version, and the electronic “Theosophical Brochure” are sent monthly to different Spanish-speaking countries. They have an Online Radio <stradiochile.caster.fm>, transmitting lectures and classes. For more information see the Blog: <sociedadteosofica chile.blogspot.com>.

The **Colombian** Presidential Agency has a membership of 28 working in 4 Lodges and 4 study centers that keep active studying a variety of theosophical teachings and authors. In the TS in **Costa Rica** there are 52 members in 5 Lodges. Although the Lodges meet at least weekly, and one meets twice per week, the attendance is low overall and most of them did not submit their reports to the Presidential Representative.



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