



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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## CONTENTS

Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS <i>Tim Boyd</i>	5
C. W. Leadbeater – A Personal Appreciation <i>Pablo Sender</i>	12
The Vedas and Upanishads <i>Bhupendra R. Vora</i>	18
Of Enemies and Friends – Part I <i>Pradeep Talwalker</i>	24
Evolutionary Progress in Morality <i>Raisa Kalashnikova</i>	28
Islām in the Light of Theosophy <i>Annie Besant</i>	34
International Directory	40

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**Cover:** A crescent moon at sunset in Manama, Bahrain, marking the beginning of the Islamic month of Ramadan, during which fasting is observed by Muslims from sunrise to sunset to commemorate the first revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad. Ramadan started this year at sundown on 5 June.

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# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

# Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the Theosophical Society

TIM BOYD

THE first of the three truths in the little book by Mabel Collins, *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, says that the soul “is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit”. This is a concise statement of the trajectory of our unfoldment. Within every one of us there is a germ of the Highest that lies hidden, but whose growth and capacity to radiate into this world with what is described as “splendour” is without limit.

We are all familiar with the ideas of the contemporary scientific community about evolution, the Darwinian model, which focuses on the evolution of life forms. The two driving forces of this model are random mutation and natural selection (survival of the fittest). The basic idea is that from time to time small changes take place in various life forms which make them more adaptable to their environment. This will determine which of those forms will endure. This model describes a progressive evolutionary process, continually leading towards greater complexity and capacity, but not in any way tied to an end goal; it is a linear vision of evolution. Unfoldment takes place randomly, continually moving ahead;

species appear and disappear towards no great purpose. This is the dominant scientific idea in which we are trained in our normal educational process.

When we speak about spiritual evolution, we could ask: What is the difference? The changes, mutations, and processes by which life forms come and go are accurately described in the Darwinian view of evolution. However, what is not described or considered is the all-important aspect of consciousness. Nowhere is consciousness or its unfoldment formally addressed within contemporary science. It is a significant limitation to the scientific model of the moment.

In the current model, in order for something to be considered worthy of scientific consideration, it must exist clearly within the material realm — be able to be tested, heard, touched, tasted, felt, or observed by various instruments. Anything lying outside of what can be observed in these ways, is deemed as beyond the field of contemporary science. This approach has been described as “reductionist materialism” — the cosmos is reduced to the material realm. Consciousness is outside of

## Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS

these limits. Fortunately, there are many scientists who clearly see this limitation and are making efforts to move beyond and actually carry out experimentation in consciousness.

Though consciousness itself is not measurable, *its effects* are visible everywhere and *are* measurable. But subtle energies are as yet beyond the realm of measurement, so consciousness is left out of the equation. Yet for those who are involved in the spiritual path and its study, consciousness is all-important. A genuine understanding of the functions of consciousness leads to the unfoldment of powers of various types, attunement to the patterns of non-material energies, intuitive perception, the ability to be happy, and a capacity to share these things with others. So it seems that consciousness is worthy of consideration.

The Proem to *The Secret Doctrine* speaks about an “obligatory pilgrimage” for the soul — a pilgrimage of outgoing and return. The soul, or the spark of the Divine, goes out from a unitive state and associates itself with matter. This is the state we are in, where the spiritual germ within us becomes hidden from our normal perception because we are so deeply enmeshed in the processes of the body and the limitations of our day-to-day awareness. This evolutionary process involves the spiritual germ coming more and more to life, to the point that the powers of the spiritual entity within us reveal themselves even through the medium of physical matter.

This process of unfoldment begins

from a state of spiritual *unawareness* which, as a result of the increasing association with matter, takes on deepening levels of awareness, power, and capacity. It is linked with the physical evolution of the Darwinian type by expressing itself through the physical forms that arise, which inevitably are developing more and more in terms of their complexity. The development of these forms allow for an expanding range of expression for the consciousness.

In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patañjali there is a statement about the purpose for the coming together of spirit and matter. Patañjali gives a concise explanation: the purpose of the coming together of spirit (*purusha*) and matter (*prakṛti*) is for the gaining of the spiritual component of an awareness of its true nature and the unfoldment of the powers inherent in both *purusha* and *prakṛti*, in spirit and matter. The spiritual component begins with an *unselfconscious* unitive awareness, until it becomes individualized in various forms. Through these forms it gains the awareness of its true nature. The association also develops those powers inherent in matter. It is a mutual process.

This process of coming together has also been given an image. It is said to be like someone who cannot walk riding on the shoulders of somebody who cannot see. The spiritual component has vision, but no capacity to directly influence the material world; the physical component can carry the spiritual, but it needs the guidance of a higher vision. Together they make this journey, and together both

## Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS

unfold, and, ultimately, they both go in their own particular directions, taking with them the richness of experience gained during this time of association.

This cyclical process of spiritual evolution is depicted in the spiritual literature of the world. Many of the great stories we encounter in different religious tradition exemplify this process. An example would be the *Rāmāyana*, where you have the great Lord, a spiritual incarnation in the form of Rama, being expelled from his kingdom, wandering in the forest, having various experiences, finally fighting and winning a battle, and eventually returning as an awakened ruler. This is one of the archetypical forms in which these stories appear.

For those who were born in the West, we encounter a similar form in the familiar story of “The Prodigal Son”. The son says to his divine father that he needs to go out into the world and gain his experiences. He asks for his share of the father’s wealth. The son receives it and travels to a far land. So the soul, the spark from the Divine, leaves the father’s house — the state of unity — takes with him the wealth of spiritual awareness, and squanders it on the way to the far land. In that land of material living, the soul forgets its origins; forgets that it has a divine father, in whom all things are present. In the Bible story, the soul is living in this far land in a time of famine, which is to say, in a condition in which the nourishment that the spirit requires is absent. The soul descends to the lowest of occupations, which in the biblical

model was feeding the swine. Not only was he feeding the swine, but he was so hungry that he would even eat the food that he fed to them!

This depicts the lowest point in this evolutionary arc, where the consciousness is most deeply imbedded in matter and blinded by the close association. In many ways this is the most important point in the journey of the soul, because it is at this moment in the story where suddenly the son remembers living in another condition, that he had a father whose house was once his. It is at that point that the soul says: “I will arise and go to my father’s house.” This is the all-important moment of awakening for the human being as an individual, because with the dawning of an awareness of the spiritual entity and its higher potentials comes the possibility to *consciously* begin the journey homewards. That is the path we are on. Theosophy, yoga practice, any form of spirituality is hollow and without meaning until this internal experience arises.

When we consider the founding of the Theosophical Society we look to such people as H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, and W. Q. Judge. These were all exceptional people: brilliant, selfless, with many personal qualities that were extraordinary. These are the people through whom the TS came into being. But we make a mistake if we think that the Theosophical movement was generated by people, even exceptional people.

What made these people exceptional was their selfless openness to the Inner

## Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS

Founders of this movement — the Masters of the Wisdom, the Great Ones, who for long years had been searching for opportunities to make their presence known through the reintroduction of a teaching that could ennoble and aid people in the process of transformation. The opportunity presented itself when this particular constellation of individuals came together in the late part of the 19th century.

Of all the many wonderful things that HPB wrote, she herself would be the first to admit that much of it she did not understand. Many things she did understand, but some of the profound teachings of Theosophy that were being reintroduced to humanity came *through* her, but were in no way her personal conscious contribution. She described it as a garland of flowers to which her contribution was the string that held it together. She was available for this to take place in a pure way, so that the influence of the Masters was minimally coloured by the consciousness of the individual. Because of her work, we had the nucleus of individuals that allowed for a greater expression to take place and to survive for more than 140 years.

Late in HPB's life she made a statement about the Theosophical Society which is worth our consideration, because it speaks about its future and purpose. She said that the TS had been two things: (1) On the one hand, it had been a "stupendous success"; and (2) on the other hand, it had been a "dead failure". The "stupendous success" of

the TS was that this movement and the ideas and concepts it was promoting had spread throughout the world. This is even more true in our time. Think about the late 19th century; ideas that are so familiar to us now were unavailable in the Western world, such as reincarnation, karma, yoga, planes of nature, and so forth. At that time these were concepts that were not even beginning to be understood in the West. Today these words are found in the dictionaries of any Western language in the world. These ideas now are so familiar that we regard them as completely normal. This is the stupendous success of this Theosophical movement. For the first time in human history, we have a global language with which to interact about matters of the inner life. It used to be an impossibility; one was strictly bound to whatever tradition one happened to be born in. Wherever one was born in the world, determined the horizon of one's vision.

What did HPB mean by saying that the TS had been a "dead failure"? Albert Schweitzer made a statement that might illustrate the point. He was an extraordinary man — a great humanitarian, profound thinker, Nobel Peace Prize winner, one of the most gifted organists in Europe, as well as a medical doctor, theologian, and philosopher. In the face of a prominent career in Europe he left it all behind to go serve in a remote area of Africa as a doctor — completely away from the public eye. But because of his profound commitment, the world sought him out. On one occasion Schweitzer

## Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS

was asked about the best way of teaching and leading, and whether teaching or leading *by example* might be a good method. His response was: “Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the *only* thing.” Teaching or leading is not accomplished simply through word. It is passed through the example of a life that is integrated, which then becomes linked with those words. Only then do words have power. Neither the meaning nor the power are in the words, but in the consciousness that rides out *on* the words.

In the most basic sense our experience of the Mahatma letters is as ink on a piece of paper. None of us have heard the words uttered in our ears, only a few have seen the actual letters that today are kept in the British Library, yet for more than a century they have been a source of instruction and inspiration. The words become powerful to the extent that we are able to read and hear, not with our physical ears or eyes, but with the eyes and ears of the intuition. Only then do we have the capacity to understand.

According to HPB’s idea, the Theosophical Society was a dead failure because of the lack of examples of the universal brotherhood which it came into being to promote, and because the TS came into existence to provide a vehicle through which a spiritual current could flow into the world — a current that originates with the Inner Founders, and then finds an outlet through the lives of those attempting to live these ideals.

What is the future of the Theosophical

Society? In many ways its future is the same as its past. There is no new 21st century mission for the TS or its members. The mission of trying to align the life, mind, and actions to the ideals has not changed. Only when that occurs is it possible for the spiritual current to flow. The signs of its flowing will not be found in the numbers of people who sign a piece of paper and say “I am a member”, but are in the ways in which these ideals are personally embodied, and then stimulated in the world around us.

Thousands of organizations today are dedicated to the promotion of some aspect of the far-reaching theosophical doctrine. There are organizations that focus solely on mindfulness meditation, others that focus on different energy healing modalities, and other groups focus on their perspective of the Masters of the Wisdom. These different organizations have taken only one *aspect* of the teachings and promoted it. In many cases they do it much better than the Theosophical Society would be able to.

Just one example of a group doing high quality “theosophical” work is the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS). They carry out scientific work which was started by astronaut Edgar Mitchell. He had walked on the Moon, and when he was coming back to Earth he was looking out of the spaceship window. He was trying to see where his home was on a globe. He became aware that the globe did not look anything like the maps he had studied; there were no lines dividing it into different areas. Gazing out the

## Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS

window, seeing the Earth in the setting of the cosmos, he had a mystical experience of the Oneness of all things, of this beautiful blue globe floating in space, connected in some way to all of the other globes of different appearances. He had an experience of a unity that was all-encompassing. In his words: "I suddenly experienced the universe as intelligent, loving, harmonious." As a scientist, he made the commitment that he was going to spend the rest of his life using the methods of contemporary science to demonstrate the power and availability of consciousness. He formed the IONS organization to do that work. IONS has been working with scientists around the world very effectively. But that is not the work of the TS.

Everything that comes into this world, that takes on life and form, ultimately dissolves and goes back to its source, whether we are talking about a building, a body, an institution, or organization. All have their time. As long as the current of life is sufficiently strong, life remains within these various forms. The Theosophical Society is a form — an organization. Theosophy, the Ageless Wisdom, is the current that maintains its life.

The TS does not have a need simply for more bodies, or for more ink on paper, but to take responsibility and find those truths in the teachings that resonate within us. *All* of them may not immediately appeal to our intuition; that is not required, but when we find the truths that cause us to feel an inner

quickenings, we need to dive into those.

There are certain things we know to be true. Ideally, we seek to expand our awareness of the profound things that resonate within us. As we do this, when we come in contact with others, our inner state communicates itself wordlessly. The Mahatmas said that as long as there are three people within the Society who are alive, awakened, committed, and living through these truths, the Theosophical Society will stand. That is not our problem. The real and only problem is, where do we stand? Not the person next to us, not the group across the waters, but where does each one of us stand in relation to our embrace of and commitment to those things that we recognize as real and true?

Very often we find ourselves wavering. Although we feel that something is true, we hesitate, we do not commit, because it seems as if it demands more than we can give right now; maybe later, but not now. There is a quote, widely, and perhaps wrongly, attributed to Goethe. Whether all of it was said by him or not, it stands on its own:

Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back. Concerning all acts of creation there is one elementary truth, ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help someone, that never would otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen

## Spiritual Evolution and the Future of the TS

incidents and meetings, and material assistance, which no man can dream would come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.

This is something we witness in our ordinary lives, and it applies equally to our inner lives.

When we come together in our theosophical gatherings, from time to time there are moments when there seems to be a harmony that settles upon us. These are the moments when we become most useful in this process of spiritual evolution. It is when something

much more potent moves among us and within us. We feel it as a sense of peace or expansion, but it is a presence that makes itself known because, consciously or not, we have provided the opportunity for it to express itself through us.

This presence is very good for us as individuals, but more important is the fact that we provide the avenue for it to do its work in the world. This is our part of an important work. We then become more effective in our potential service to the higher good that is so needed in these times, and for which the Theosophical Society exists. ✧

### NOTICE

As of this issue of *The Theosophist* we are using a world English standard according to *The Oxford Dictionary of English (ODE)*, available on the Internet (and updated every three months) at: <[www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/world-english?q=world+English](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/world-english?q=world+English)>.

Tim Boyd

# C. W. Leadbeater — A Personal Appreciation

PABLO SENDER

**C.W. LEADBEATER** (CWL) is perhaps as controversial a figure within the Theosophical Society (TS) as Mme Blavatsky is outside of it. Since I have been asked by some members to share my impressions of him, the present article offers my assessment of some aspects of CWL's character, for those who may be interested in reading what a fellow student of Theosophy feels about his life.

There are some aspects of his work that do not resonate with me. I have always been drawn to the way H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) presents theosophical metaphysics. My mind is inspired and stimulated when it works with abstract concepts and obscure statements that veil a profound meaning. Leadbeater's presentation of theosophical teachings tends to be more concrete, which, though very convenient for many people, does not particularly appeal to me. Also, I am not very interested in descriptions of phenomena, whether physical or subtle, so I do not feel drawn to those clairvoyant investigations of the hidden side of things that he abundantly developed.

In addition, I was always interested

in J. Krishnamurti's teachings; in his emphasis on an exploration of the states of consciousness that we can experience within us, and the development of a state of awareness. As some readers may know, the typical followers of HPB's and Krishnaji's teachings are not very fond of Leadbeater, and they are, at times, quite vocal in their criticisms of both his character and his teachings. With this background, it is easy to see that I was predisposed not to feel very close to him. In fact, during my first years in the TS, I had become aware of these criticisms and was somewhat biased by them.

Ten years after getting in touch with theosophical teachings I had the opportunity to live and work at the international headquarters of the TS in Adyar for about two years. In the course of my work in the Archives department I came across material about the "Leadbeater Case" in which he was accused of sexual misconduct with teenagers that were under his tutelage. The material included historical accounts and personal correspondence with members around the world during that time. After having gone through the

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## C. W. Leadbeater — A Personal Appreciation

documents, not only was my negative bias about him removed, but I developed a sense of admiration for him that is today a source of inspiration in my theosophical life.

A similar change happened in regard to his teachings. To appreciate what I am about to point out, a reference to my own life may be helpful. Before going to Adyar, I had a few rather simple inner experiences. My knowledge of HPB's or Krishnamurti's teachings did not give me tools to interpret or understand their meaning, because these teachers did not elaborate on them. As my view of Leadbeater changed while working in the Adyar Archives, I began to explore more of his work. I came across certain statements in his writings, of which I had not been aware, that perfectly explained my experiences. It is easy to understand that his teachings gained a certain validation by the small corroboration provided by my personal experience. Although my preferences regarding theosophical metaphysics and clairvoyant investigations have not changed, I came to find great value in CWL's teachings about the path of inner development. I may write more about this in a future article, but here I want to focus on why I found inspiration in his life and character.

### Leadbeater's training

CWL was an ordained priest in the Church of England, but he had always had a wide field of interests that included spiritualistic and psychic phenomena. After reading A. P. Sinnett's *The Occult*

*World*, he joined the TS in November 1883. A few months later, he met H. P. Blavatsky in London and decided to write a letter to one of the Masters offering himself as a disciple. In the letter he said he would be willing to go to India if that was necessary for his training, although he would not be able to do it for a few years, due to certain "ties of gratitude" that bound him to England.

Seven months later, on the morning of 31 October 1884, he received a letter with an answer from Mahatma KH. In it, the Master said it was not necessary to go to India to be a chela. However, due to the attacks the TS was receiving, it would be good if he went to Adyar for a few months to help. The Master added that the ties of gratitude would not suffer from this.

CWL did not think he could leave his obligations for a few months and then return to them, but he was willing to leave everything behind if that was necessary to help in the Master's work. He rushed to London to see HPB, who was to depart for India the following day, and asked her to transmit his answer to the Master. HPB said that the Master already knew the answer, and asked CWL to stay with her for the day. Later that evening, he and a group of members that were around HPB saw a note gradually appearing in her hand. She told him, "There is your answer", and asked him to leave the room and read the note in private. It said:

Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was my desire you should go to Adyar

## C. W. Leadbeater — A Personal Appreciation

immediately — I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika [HPB] at Alexandria. Let no one know you are going and may the blessing of our Lord, and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

Greeting to you my new chela — KH.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, his willingness to follow the Master's suggestion was enough to prove him worthy of being a chela. He left his old life behind at a moment's notice and four days later was on his way to join HPB in Alexandria. During the trip to Adyar, CWL was subjected to HPB's characteristic training, which frequently involved being put through very embarrassing situations in front of others, in order to get over the attachment to the personal ego. In his book *How Theosophy Came to Me*, CWL very appreciatively mentions "the somewhat severe but remarkably effective training through which she [HPB] put her pupils", and says:

When I came into her hands I was just an ordinary lawn-tennis-playing curate — well-meaning and conscientious, I believe, but incredibly shy and retiring, with all the average Englishman's horror of making himself conspicuous in any way or occupying a ridiculous position. After a few weeks of her treatment I had reached a stage in which I was absolutely hardened to ridicule, and did not care in the slightest degree what anybody thought of me.<sup>2</sup>

As we are going to see, future events

would show that he had indeed learned to be beyond people's opinion of him and his work.

It is also interesting to note that, later in life, when he would in turn train pupils, some of them complained that he was too tough. In this quote we can see that this is how he was very successfully trained by HPB, although evidently most people are not able to bear this course of action as well as he did.

CWL is also a remarkable example of occult development. He was not a born clairvoyant, as HPB was. When he joined the Society, he had not shown any signs of psychic sensitivity. But while at Adyar, sometime in 1885, the Master gave him some instructions to develop the faculty of clairvoyance. CWL explained:

Master Kuthumi . . . recommended me to make a few efforts along certain lines, which He pledged me not to divulge to anyone else except with his direct authorization, and told me that He would himself watch over those efforts to see that no danger should ensue.

Naturally I took the hint, and worked away steadily, and I think I may say intensely, at that particular kind of meditation day after day. I must admit that it was very hard work and sometimes distinctly painful, but of course I persevered, and in due course began to achieve the results that I had been led to expect. Certain channels had to be opened and certain partitions broken down; I was told that forty days was a fair estimate of the average time required if the effort was really energetic and per-

## C. W. Leadbeater — A Personal Appreciation

severing. I worked at it for forty-two days, and seemed to myself to be on the brink of the final victory, when the Master himself intervened and performed the final act of breaking through which completed the process, and enabled me thereafter to use astral sight while still retaining full consciousness in the physical body.<sup>3</sup>

During these 42 days he remained secluded in the octagonal building at Adyar, having people bringing him food and milk. When he came out, he was clairvoyant. However, the completion of his training took, in his words, “a year of the hardest work that I have ever known”.

### The “Leadbeater Case”

In his first letter to CWL, Master KH wrote a very curious and prophetic statement:

There is also the collective karma of the caste you belong to, to be considered. It is undeniable that the cause you have at heart is now suffering owing to the dark intrigues, the base conspiracy of the Christian clergy and missionaries against the Society. They will stop before nothing to ruin the reputation of the Founders. Are you willing to atone for their sins?<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the aggressive work of the missionaries in leading people away from their native beliefs and towards Christianity, today we know that a very serious “sin” of the Christian clergy was that of sexual misconduct with the youngsters in their charge. It is interesting to note that this is exactly what CWL was later to be accused of, although he and

most of the people close to him emphatically denied the accusation. Was this the karmic “atonement” the Master was referring to? As mentioned before, after reading the material available, I feel he was innocent of this charge. But there is not enough space in this article to enter into an examination of the case. The aim is to focus on the attitude that he maintained throughout this trying time.

As anybody can understand, an accusation of such a serious nature, forever staining one’s good name and standing, would be appalling. Regardless of whether the person accused is innocent or guilty, one can expect that this would shake the very foundations of his personality. However, by all accounts and the historical documentation I have come across, CWL retained a remarkable calmness and dignity, even when put through very humiliating and demeaning situations.

After these accusations spread through the TS, CWL offered Col Olcott his resignation as a member, in order to avoid putting the Society through yet another crisis. This was quite a noble act in itself. We must note that, regardless of whether a person is guilty or innocent, the normal reaction in these cases is to put up a fight in an attempt to clear one’s name and convince society of one’s innocence. But in CWL’s heart the welfare of the TS came first. His resignation was accepted and he went on to lead a quiet life outside the organization.

At the time of the accusations, in 1906, CWL was already a renowned Theosophist worldwide and had an important

## C. W. Leadbeater — A Personal Appreciation

following. In my work in the Archives I came across correspondence of members from different parts of the world in his support. Some of them asked him to form another organization, offering to leave the TS and join his. But he dismissed this plan of action and advised people not to leave the TS. In his letters he would tell them that, in spite of all the troubles, the Society was doing the work of the Masters and they should stay right where they were. He added that he continued to work with the Masters, and that it did not matter much whether he was doing it from inside or outside the Society. This attitude, again, is quite remarkable, especially taking into account the fact that, in similar situations, other influential Theosophists such as W. Q. Judge, A. A. Bailey, R. Steiner, and several others left the TS and created their own organizations, taking along with them all the members that would follow them.

During his time in “exile” CWL continued the clairvoyant research for which he had been trained and this was eventually published in books such as *The Hidden Side of Things*.

One may suppose that throughout this ordeal one of the most painful moments must have been when his dearest friend, Annie Besant, believing what some people told her about his actions, condemned Leadbeater publicly. As she had proved several times in the past, Annie Besant was a person that held Truth in the highest esteem, and was ready to sacrifice anything, even the love of family and friends, to uphold what she thought was true.

There is a private letter from CWL to Annie Besant written around this time, in which he asks her very affectionately to keep in mind all the work they had been doing together on the astral plane, and asks if she thinks it would have been possible for him to hide such vile tendencies from his astral body, if he had them. He also asks her whether she thinks the Master would even approach a person like this and use him for his work. From this letter, it seems evident that the work they did on the inner planes was as real to them as our activities on the physical world are to us. Besant eventually came to realize that the accusations were false, and after being elected as international President of the TS, she invited Leadbeater to return to the organization. He returned quietly, showing no resentment against those who had wronged him, no tendency to be vengeful towards them, but simply continued to do his work as if nothing had happened. How many problems could be averted if we would show at least some measure of this dignity and unselfishness!

### Final words

In the course of theosophical history, it seems quite common that most leaders, from HPB onward, had to face some kind of character attack. The accusations against Leadbeater were among the cruellest of them all. However, the way he reacted seems almost incredible. The humility, the absence of resentment and ill will, and the unshakeable trust he maintained in the Masters throughout, can be a constant

### C. W. Leadbeater — A Personal Appreciation

inspiration to us in those times when we have to face our own difficulties.

It is evident that, after the initial training he gained from HPB, Leadbeater was able to live with the philosophical equanimity reflected in a saying he repeated on occasion: “Nothing matters much; most things don’t matter at all.” But perhaps this attitude can only stem

from an ever deeper realization — that of the Unity of life, described by him as follows:

When we know quite certainly that we are part of a whole, we do not so much mind where this particular fragment of it may be, or through what experiences it may be passing.<sup>5</sup> ✧

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**The standard of the theosophist as to right and wrong is always higher than that of the less instructed person, yet s/he is far gentler than the latter in his feeling towards the sinner, because he comprehends more of human nature. . . . He goes further than tolerance, charity, sympathy; he feels positive love towards humanity, and that leads him to adopt a position of watchful helpfulness. . . . If anyone desires from him explanation or advice, he is more than willing to give it, yet he has no sort of wish to convert anyone else to his own way of thinking. . . .**

**The Will of the Deity is humanity's evolution; whatever therefore helps on that evolution must be good; whatever stands in the way of it and delays it, that thing must be wrong, even though it may have on its side all the weight of public opinion and immemorial tradition.**

C. W. Leadbeater  
*A Textbook of Theosophy*

# The Vedas and Upanishads

BHUPENDRA R. VORA

THE Vedas are the earliest writings of the human mind going back to thousands of years before the beginning of the Christian era. The *Ṛg-veda* and the three others — *Atharva-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Yajur-veda* are ancient Vedic hymnodies. Traditionally they are regarded as “superhuman knowledge, revealed by seer-sages (*rshi-s*) in a heightened state of awareness.” They relate to the early era of the Indus Valley Civilization, and tradition names the great sage Veda-Vyāsa as the compiler of the Vedas.

The word “Veda” literally means Wisdom or Science, but is given technically to the oldest literature of ancient India. In respect to the Vedas, the great German philosopher Schopenhauer says:

Access to the Vedas is the greatest privilege this century may claim over all previous centuries. In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death.

The *Ṛg-veda* which is the most ancient of the four Vedas and considered the

oldest scripture in the world, is a seminal work and consists of ten books (*mandala-s*) of 1,017 hymns covering a total of about 10,600 stanzas. Madame Blavatsky dates it as far back as 30,000 BCE (*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. 5, Section 40, page 343). They are concerned with peace, prosperity and liberation to a better world. This Veda is further divided into four major collections namely: the *samhitā-s*, Brahmanas, *Āranyakas* and the Upanishads. The first two books consist mainly of hymns, liturgies for sacrificial rites and give general rules of conduct. The last two books, the *Āranyakas* and Upanishads form the Vedanta (end knowledge or the cream of knowledge). *Āranyakas* mean forest dwellers and form the first of the great teachings that arose from the rejection of materialistic life by the *rshi-s* (sages) to take up study, contemplation and meditation in the forest. They precede the Upanishads and have the same extensive metaphysical depth. The *Bhagavadgītā* springs from the *Āranyakas* and the Upanishads. Scholars have often symbolised the Vedas as the cow, the Upanishads

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## The Vedas and Upanishads

as the milk and the *Bhagavadgītā* as the cream of the milk from the cow. Making his observations on the Vedic philosophy, Professor Monier-Williams states:

A system which is in some respects almost identical with that thought out by Spinoza and the profoundest thinkers of modern Europe. Indeed if you will pardon the anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozas more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza and Darwinians . . . many centuries before the doctrines of evolution had been accepted by the Huxleys of our time and before any word like Evolution existed in any language in the world.

Two very significant *sukta*-s [hymns] of the *Ṛg-veda*, are the *nāsadiya sukta* and the *purusha sukta*. An English translation of the *nāsadiya sukta* appears in *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume 1, just prior to the commencement of the Stanzas on Cosmic Evolution. It is a very profound and poetic *sukta* referring to the night and day of Brahma. It reads as follows:

Nor Aught nor Nought existed; yon bright sky was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above. What covered all? What sheltered? What concealed? Was it the water's fathomless abyss?

There was no death — yet there was nought immortal, there was no confine betwixt day and night; the only One breathed breathless by itself, other than It there nothing since has been. Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled in gloom profound — an ocean without

light. The germ that still lay covered in the husk burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.

. . . . .

Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here? Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang? The Gods themselves came later into being — who knows from whence this great creation sprang? That, whence all this great creation came, whether its will created or was mute, the Most High Seer that is in highest heaven, He knows it — or perchance even He knows not.

Gazing into eternity . . .

Ere the foundations of the earth were laid,

. . . . .

Thou wert. And when the subterranean flame shall burst its prison and devour the frame thou shalt be still as thou wert before and know no change, when time shall be no more.

O, endless thought, divine ETERNITY.

In a profoundly poetic rendition, the great sage who composed this *sukta* describes the manifestation of life after the night of Brahma and the unmanifestation when the cyclic period ends.

In the other significant *sukta*, the *purusha sukta*, is a remarkable description of the One Reality that pervades all manifestation and is timeless. This *sukta* is at the heart of the Bhārata Samāja Puja that is performed in the Bhārata Samāja Temple at Adyar every morning. In *The Secret Doctrine* Madame Blavatsky discusses the deeper significance of this *sukta* as follows:

## The Vedas and Upanishads

Hence in the *purusha sukta* of the *Ṛg-veda* the mother-fount of and source of all subsequent religions, it is stated allegorically that “the thousand-headed *purusha*” was slaughtered at the foundation of the World, that from his remains the Universe might arise. This is nothing more nor less than the foundation — the seed, truly — of the later many-formed symbol in various religions, including Christianity, of the sacrificial lamb. For it is a play upon the words “*aja*” (*purusha*), “the unborn”, or eternal Spirit, means also “lamb”, in Sanskrit. Spirit disappears — dies, metaphorically — the more it gets involved in matter, and hence the sacrifice of the “unborn”, or the “lamb”.

*The Secret Doctrine*,  
Adyar Edition, 1971, Vol. 5, Section 43,  
“The Mystery of Buddha”, p. 370

Also having its origin in the *Ṛg-veda* is the well-known Gāyatri Mantra which is an invocation to the Sun God. This mantra has been considered very auspicious, since thousands of years and much has been written about its effects. The Gāyatri Mantra is recited five times during the Bhārata Samāja Puja or congregational worship.

The second book, the *Yajur-veda* is subdivided into the *śukla* (white) and the *kr̥shna* (black) Vedas. Both of these deal with sacrificial formulae. In early Vedic times the sacrifice was still, in the main, an unfettered act of devotion.

The third book, the *Sāma-veda* is a purely liturgical collection. Much of it is found in the *Ṛg-veda*. It has about fifteen

hundred mantras arranged for being sung at sacrifices.

The fourth book is the *Atharva-veda*. It has been considered, by some, as being next in importance to the *Ṛg-veda*, for like it, it is a historical collection of independent contents. A different spirit pervades this Veda, which is the product of a later period.

Many scholars consider the Vedic hymns as being mere praises of the various gods (*devas*), but when studied theosophically, they are seen to reveal a vision of cosmic order wherein all the various deities are seen to be working together, linking each other and humans in a harmonious whole, a cosmic solidarity.

The *r̥shi*-s (sages) of ancient India were very pragmatic in their approach to problems of life. Their deliberations and contemplations covered not only the subjective world but also the objective material world. The Vedas and Upanishads give a holistic view of life in which the subjective and objective aspects of existence are considered together. They do not merely speculate on the metaphysical levels of consciousness but relate these to the physical world. The sages who are credited with giving this wisdom to the world were able through studies, contemplations and meditations, to penetrate the veils of *māyā* that separate the grosser physical world from the subtler regions of existence. Through their keen observations of Nature and deep reflections on metaphysical concepts, they were able to give a holistic view of Man, God and Universe.

## The Vedas and Upanishads

Many of these sages remain nameless, for they were free from an egocentric nature, and had no desire to immortalize their names. But the wisdom contained in the Vedas and Upanishads is timeless. It was the tradition in ancient India to seek an enlightened being to acquire wisdom and many a seeker went to the ashrams (hermitages) of these sages for this purpose. The tradition was for the aspirant or seeker of knowledge to go to the ashram of the sage (usually in the forest) carrying firewood for the fire of the sage. The symbolic meaning from the exoteric point of view was: "I will serve you in every possible way." The deeper or esoteric meaning was: "I surrender my personality (physical, astral & mental) at your feet so that you may mould me rightly." The *rshi*-s taught their disciples the ancient wisdom by practical examples or by stories that had morals to emulate. With the passage of time, however, the teachings of Vedic philosophy, were corrupted by the moss of rituals and dogmas, and the deeper meanings were lost. It was left to the truly enlightened beings to unravel the mysteries of these priceless scriptures. The great teacher Ādi-Śankarāchārya wrote commentaries — on all the major Upanishads — that are considered as very authoritative works for any true seeker.

A misconception commonly held is that the teachings of these ancient works have no relevance to this modern consumerist and technological age. But the sages who wrote them were practical men who balanced the spiritual and

material aspects of life. They led the lives of householders and were aware of the material needs of human beings. In the stories they told their disciples, were messages relevant to the needs of men, intended to bring about a balance in their lives. Through their teachings they pointed to the futility of the search for happiness through material possessions only.

The *Brhadāranyaka-upanishad* has profound discourses of Sage Yājñavalkya that are the Indian counterparts of Plato's dialogues, but perhaps more ancient. In one particular dialogue the subject of material possessions is discussed. Sage Yājñavalkya about to leave the world as a hermit wants to make a final settlement of his worldly goods between his two wives, Maitreyi "who knows the speech of *Brahman*", and Kātyāyani "who knows only what all women know". "Maitreyi," said Yājñavalkya, "I am leaving now. Behold, I want to make settlement between you and Kātyāyani." But Maitreyi scorning material possessions and expressing a desire to know about the Eternal said: "What should I do with which I may not be immortal? Tell me my Lord, what you know." And Yājñavalkya talks to her about *ātman*: "One can enter his [the Lord's] all-unity beyond the world of limited consciousness, which comprises the duality of the seer and seen, of the knower and the known; that is the meaning of immortality."

Thus on the one hand the desire of the individual frightened by the transiency of the material world which eventually leads to death, and on the other

## The Vedas and Upanishads

hand the highest ideas of the Eternal, are juxtaposed as questions and answers in the dialogue. The aspirant prays and says: “From the unreal lead me to the real. From darkness lead me to the light. From death lead me to immortality.”

The human quest is for peace, prosperity and happiness in life. Equally there is an inner quest for understanding of the deeper purpose of life. There is a beautiful story in one of the Upanishads that illustrates this message:

Once upon a time, the devas (celestial beings), the *mānava-s* (men) and the asuras (adversaries of the celestial beings) found themselves facing the same type of problem — of finding peace and contentment. The devas had all the comforts they could aspire for and led a life of pleasure. They were free from thirst, old age and death, and yet something was lacking from their lives and they were not happy.

Unlike their brothers in heaven, the *mānava-s* — men on earth — were leading a hard life. They had to work hard for their crops to secure their future. Therefore on no account would they part with what they had gained. Yet despite all the riches they had earned and stored away, they too were far from happy. They had no contentment or peace of mind.

The asuras, the demons, inspired fear amongst both the devas and *mānava-s*. They were cruel and obtained whatever they wanted by force. They killed without showing any mercy. But the asuras too were overcome by a feeling of dis-

satisfaction. Although they were powerful and were feared by all, they were not happy.

All of them — devas, *mānava-s* and asuras — decided to go to their father, the Creator, Brahma, to seek his advice on how to attain peace and contentment. The Lord Brahma on hearing their petition uttered just one syllable — *da*. The devas, *mānava-s* and asuras were perplexed as to the meaning of this single syllable. They all went to their respective homes contemplating over this syllable to discover the hidden meaning. In time they all derived their own meanings according to their own way of life.

The devas interpreted the *da* to stand for *dāmyata* or restraint. They realized that only by putting aside pleasures of the senses and exercising self-control could they move from that which is transient to that which is Eternal. And by doing so they experienced a satisfaction never known before. The *mānava-s* interpreted the *da* to mean *dāna* or charity. They decided to become charitable and share whatever they had with others — men, beasts and birds — and realized the joy of giving, thereby experiencing a peace never realized before. The asuras understood the *da* to stand for *daya* or compassion. They started practising compassion when dealing with others and experienced joy and contentment never realized before.

The symbolism of this Upanishadic story is obvious. It is only by the practice of the three cardinal virtues of self-control (*dāmyata*), charity (*dāna*) and

## The Vedas and Upanishads

compassion (*daya*) that true contentment and peace can be realized. That this story has a relevance to the present state of things in the world is obvious.

There are four *mahāvākya*-s or great sentences (aphorisms) that convey the essence of Vedic teaching. They are profound in their meaning and require deep contemplation.

1. *prajñānam brahma*: Consciousness is

Brahman (*Aitareya-upanishad* of *Ṛg-veda*)

2. *tat tvam asi*: That thou art (*Chāndogya-upanishad* of *Sāma-veda*)

3. *ayam ātma brahma*: This Self is Brahman (*Māndukya-upanishad* of *Atharva-veda*)

4. *aham brahma asmi*: I am Brahman (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanishad* of *Yajur-veda*)

The Vedas and Upanishads have teachings that are relevant to all ages. ✧

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If the Upanishads help us to rise above the glamour of the fleshy life, it is because their authors — pure of soul, ever striving towards the divine — reveal to us their pictures of the splendours of the unseen. The Upanishads are respected not because they are a part of *sruti*, or revealed literature, and so hold a reserved position, but because they have inspired generations of Indians with vision and strength by their inexhaustible significance and spiritual power. Indian thought has constantly turned to these scriptures for fresh illumination and spiritual recovery or recommencement, and not in vain. The fire still burns bright on their altars. Their light is for the seeing eye and their message is for the seeker after truth.

Dr S. Radhakrishnan

# Of Enemies and Friends — I

PRADEEP TALWALKER

“NO man is your enemy: no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers.” We are exploring this thought from *Light on the Path*. It is not hard to understand. We all know that those on whom we look as enemies or friends have all come in our lives through our own past karma; that working out the karmic bonds affords us fresh opportunities to correct our attitudes. We have exchange of love with friends, and both sides benefit. But about our “enemy” — we feel he has come to the party uninvited, to torment us. Has he? We have been told by wise men, have read in different books, and have also *experienced* to a certain extent, that no torment is caused from outside. It comes from within by agitation of our reactive mind: a product of our own self-centredness. We evidently need plenty of improvement. Once peace is established *within*, no one or nothing can distress us. (We experience this equanimity even now when in a happy, peaceful mood. If the mind is troubled, we are upset even by trifles.) This realization put our distress in the right perspective, drives self-pity out, forces us on to the right Path. If the

person we look on as an enemy puts us on the right Path (though unwittingly), how do we call him an enemy? He, too, is a teacher. Some teachers teach with love, others by use of the cane. If we ourselves do not provide a *cause* for being caned, even that problem shall not remain. Friends teach us love, “enemies” teach forbearance and introspection — both essential in our evolution. Friend or foe, both teachers! Being convinced about the law of karma, why forget that the cause for the foe’s animosity has really been supplied by us? If we realise this, we come closer to *understanding* the man. If this leads us to sympathise and love him, even he may reciprocate. We are freed of a persistent negativity, and carry a lesser burden thenceforth.

All this, we already know. But we do not regard only people as our enemies. Aspirants regard even the so-called “lower” emotions as the “six foes” — the *shadripu* (*shad* = six; *ripu* = enemy). These are: 1) *kāma* = carnal lust; 2) *krodha* = anger; 3) *lobha* = greed; 4) *moha* = delusion; 5) *mada* = pride; 6) *matsara* = envy. Then again, we love animals, but

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work for the extermination of houseflies, mosquitoes, and other bugs. Why? They, too, are a part of God's creation; why should they be regarded as pests? Once inner peace is achieved (as we will see), even these cease to be "pests". Let us examine these thoughts in a bit of detail.

We know that as we evolve from the animal kingdom, our early human lives are ruled by *tamas* (darkness — mental darkness). Although in the human kingdom now, the ego still has a large leftover of brute qualities. Its desires are centred on the physical body; it struggles for gratification of mostly physical needs. Life moves around the threesome of food, sex and sleep. This "darkness quality" is called *tamoguna*. (*Tamas* becomes *tamo* in word combination; *guna* means quality in Sanskrit. "Higher" *guna*-s than *tamas* — *rajas* and *sattva* — come at much later stages of evolution and these will be discussed later.) The man is surrounded by people of his own kind. They too have only animal desires. If the means of gratification are limited, or if more persons look for the same thing, evidently there is going to be a tussle. The only functional rule is: might is right. Nature discourages survival of the weak. An animal, or a man influenced by *tamas* thinks nothing of snatching the object of desire from the weak. Submission to the strong is without protest. "Pecking order" is a major consideration.

In the current context money has acquired more importance than even food — by robbing another's money a man can get what he wants without

much hard work. Of course, this is not easy. The owner takes care to protect his property. To get his money by outwitting him needs cunning; it also involves risks. The same skill and daring used properly will bring in much more wealth, with honour and greater ease. But the *tamas*-ruled person's thought-process is strangely programmed. Using various skills, taking extreme risks, he elects thievery. Robbing is his idea of achievement. He does not see anything wrong with it; in *his* way of thinking he possibly sees it as the right thing to do. With points of view peculiar to each one of us, we *all* see peculiar things as "self-evident". We see strange quirks even among "educated" people. Under the control of *tamas*, "each for himself" is the norm. Brother, sister, mother or father, all are secondary to self-interest. Reports of neighbourhood quarrels, fights, or murder over trivial reasons — even among immediate relations — adorn the daily newspaper. Most papers have reporters chasing the police for crime news.

The drive for perpetuating the species is also inborn. Here also, getting the desired object by force is seen as nothing wrong. The trait even seems to be essential in Nature for natural selection. Fights over the female between males (as with lions, and also with deer) can be studied, sitting at home, on TV channels like "Animal Planet". The victor keeps the female which too, seems to have no objection to the arrangement. It is not surprising then that the same instinct should continue to rule over the feeble

conscience of early human incarnations. All that take place in current society owing to this drive, also get flashed on the front pages of newspapers. Even “dignified” papers print it. Electronic media thrive on such sensational news. Most readers or TV viewers regard it with relish.

Addictions lend a further dimension. In the company that he keeps, it is hard *not* to fall a prey to such habits. After the hunger for food and sex are satiated, the rest of the day is spent in intoxication or sleep. Sleep of mind as well as body. The mind is not yet capable of inspiring him for anything better. That comes very gradually — almost imperceptibly over a long succession of lives.

At the early stage when “might is right” rules, there is little evidence of “pride” having sprouted. No glee of triumph in overpowering the weak; no shame of defeat in grovelling before the strong. To survive anyhow is the limited aim for the primitive instinct. Domination or cringing is only a matter of unimportant detail, easily exchangeable as fits the occasion. Success in early births is in proportion to physical abilities. In later births he sees that brawn coupled with brain is far more effective. Gradually, dawns the thinking faculty. Early smartness tends towards slyness. Practice makes it sharper. As he garners the fruits of smartness, pride takes root. Even the rise of conceit is a step *forward* in evolution — a sign of incipient *rajoguna*: the desire to grow “bigger” than others, promoting pride. (From Sanskrit *rajas* = dust; dust

particles are seen in a sunbeam moving constantly, signifying activity. People with *rajoguna* as the predominant *guna* are described as *rājasi*.)

Low cunning and vanity is a heady combination. It makes a man feel special, distinct from the rest of the flock. This is the start of “separateness”. It may look like a downslide in evolution, but it indicates waking up from the slumber of *tamas*. He has growing awareness of his “self”. Spending some lives in arrogance, he starts acquiring a sense of dignity. He becomes conscious of his “status”. He avoids acts that he considers unbecoming of a “person like him”, at least openly.

Slowly, he learns to keep lower desires in check. By and by he starts doing a few good deeds, to win praise. He gathers a band of sycophants who fawn on him. The beginning may be humble. In the present context he joins a group that, say, organizes local festivals. He becomes a toady of the local politician and worms his way up. Eventually he becomes a party boss; or an industrialist; or starts private universities (though not much educated himself!) — anything to shine in society, but still remains quite crude. He becomes rich by whatever means and struggles to bring a large group under his control. He acquires substantial political clout. In his progress he hurts many, wins their enmity and curses. In the intoxication of defeating others, he *enjoys* their hostility. But after a period of gloating over vain triumphs, this ceases to amuse and has to come to an end — it is tiring.

## Of Enemies and Friends — I

The hunger for love wakes in his breast. People's expressions of love are pleasing. When he makes efforts in that direction, he gets response from others. He sees that this loving relationship is more durable, and satisfying. His notion of self, initially limited to himself, now takes into its fold his family, group, tribe, and so on. Side by side he is taking successive incarnations, learning newer lessons. No more a despot over his sphere of influence, he now identifies himself with his team, becomes one with them. Funnily, that actually sets him apart and now the *group* elects him as the leader. He now strives to nurture team spirit and unity in the group. All his effort now is for the good of others, not for himself. This is the rise of *sattvaguna*, the noble quality of purity (Sanskrit *sattva* = goodness, essence, purity). Now there is no more a reign of terror, but of benign love.

These are all natural stages which even the Adepts must have gone through. For spiritual progress *annihilation* of "self"

is not needed; it is important that its ambit grows, ultimately to include the entire creation. As the "Higher Self" awakens, personal pride quietly vanishes, being converted into love for all. Separateness ends here. Narrow vanity cuts off a man from others; the all-encompassing Ego nudges away conceit. The person mentally melts into the entire creation. Otherwise pride is such a thing that the more we try to get rid of it the more it sticks to us. But the selfsame sentiment is capable of bringing about salvation step by step. After traversing maybe hundreds of thousands of years, going through hundreds of human incarnations, all-inclusiveness ultimately *liberates* us. A great paradox, but truer than anything else. This shows that pride is not our enemy but a flight of steps that leads us to the spiritual acme. Pride is *mada*, the fifth of the six "foes" (*shadripu*). When taken on the positive path the "enemy" is no longer an enemy, but our liberator.

(*To be continued*)

**Your friends will believe in your potential,  
your enemies will make you live up to it.**

Tim Fargo

# Evolutionary Progress in Morality

RAISA KALASHNIKOVA

*What is beautiful is moral.*

Gustave Flaubert

THE human race has already begun ascending the evolutionary arc of spiritual progress. As a result, the renaissance of ethics, including morality and humanistic ideals is also following the path of evolutionary progress. But if this is so, why is there an opinion that while technological progress is taking place, “moral progress” does not happen? Many people believe that in the old days people were “purer and kinder”, but today, society is frequently discussing “morality collapse”, “spread of the contagion of violence”, and “attack on freedom of speech”.

It is possible to answer the question “Is there progress in morality?” by discussing the following:

What is “morality”, and is it synonymous with “morals”?

Where and how does morality arise?

Why were things “better in the old days than they are now”?

What contributes to the formation of morality, and how is this implemented?

What are the vectors of morality changes in *the changing world*?

Today, many scientists, psychologists and philosophers believe that morality and morals are synonymous. However, there is an opinion that these notions are completely different, though *they always stand side by side*. Probably, the latter opinion is closer to the Truth because both morality and morals are studied by the same discipline which is called “ethics”.

Both morality and morals mean certain norms of behaviour, rules, and established order, which people should follow in society. But there is a major difference between these two notions. For morals, such norms, rules and order are the external factors. Morals are governed by norms of objective reality which are typical for a specific development stage of the society and imposed by the “here and now” necessity.

Morals reflect a person’s attitude toward the society and other persons, as well as society’s requirements toward a person. Morals consist of rules of human behaviour, which establish people’s individual responsibilities toward each

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## Evolutionary Progress in Morality

other and toward society as a whole. Moral requirements are associated with the notion of how a person should behave in a situation. A person can be taught morals by certain instructions, advice, recommendations, demands. For instance, it is possible to elaborate standards for corporate ethics, to establish rules regulating conduct in public spaces, etc.

On the contrary, it is impossible “to teach” morality, because morality is a specific internal constituent element, which is characteristic to each individual; morality represents personal morals, self-appraisal and the spiritual state of each particular individual, and thus, morality represents morals, self-appraisal and the spiritual state of a society as a whole. When a person is moral, it is expected that he/she has established his/her own internal regulator and limits.

Each individual who is evaluating his/her behaviour and behaviour of other people applies the set of rules addressing first of all the following questions: “What is good and what is bad?” and “What is good and what is evil?” By accepting standards and rules of conduct that correspond to high ideals and principles, a person can learn identifying and telling the difference between the criteria that allow to determine the state of morality and to achieve spiritual growth.

So, where does individual consciousness start or where and how is morality born? Let us turn to our compatriot Helena Petrovna Blavatsky who in her book *The Secret Doctrine* brought to the world the renewed teaching on the

Timeless Wisdom — Theosophy. She wrote: “Theosophy is a teaching about ethics and moral principles.” It is Theosophy which provides an answer to this difficult question based on the following three main Laws of the Universe:

1. The Unity of Everything Existing
2. The Law of Karma
3. The Law of Reincarnation

At the Theosophical Lodge meetings in London in 1889, referring to the Commentaries to Verse 4, Stanza I of *The Secret Doctrine* (Part I, Cosmogogenesis), HPB stressed twelve major causes of existence called *nidāna*-s, which give birth to the Manifested Universe according to the Law of Karma. It is these that are moral agents in the Universe and are included in *māyā*. It means that morality is already born at the very first moment of the manifestation of a new *manvantara*, new life, or new cosmos. Each *nidāna* represents a link in the chain of causation, “a concatenation of causes and effects”. According to *The Theosophical Dictionary*, *nidāna*-s are placed in the following order of enumeration:

1. *Jāti*, or birth, according to one of the four modes of entering the stream of life and reincarnation.
2. *Jarāmarana*, or decrepitude and death, following the maturity of the *skandha*-s.
3. *Bhava*, the karmic agent which leads every new sentient being to be born in this or another mode of existence.
4. *Upādāna*, the creative cause of *bhava* which thus becomes the cause of *jāti* which

## Evolutionary Progress in Morality

is the effect; and this creative cause is the clinging to life.

5. *Tr̥shnā*, love, whether pure or impure.
6. *Vedanā*, or sensation; perception by the sense.
7. *Sparśa*, the sense of touch.
8. *Shadāyatana*, the organs of sensation.
9. *Nāmarupa*, personality, i.e., a form with a name to it, the symbol of the unreality of material phenomenal appearances.
10. *Vijñāna*, the perfect knowledge of every perceptible thing and of all objects in their concatenation and unity.
11. *Samskāra*, action on the plane of illusion.
12. *Avidyā*, lack of true perception, or ignorance.

Then, in her “Instructions of Teachings for the Inner Group” H. P. Blavatsky wrote the following: “*Nidāna*-s are the detailed expression of the law of Karma, under twelve aspects.” She explained that since “the *nidāna*-s belong to the most subtle and abstruse doctrines of the Eastern metaphysical system, it is impossible to go into the subject at any greater length”. Nevertheless, if we try to unveil in fragments the inner essence of each *nidāna* and then to join everything to obtain the integral whole, it becomes clear that an individual is born with those morality principles acquired as the result of actions during previous lives and these have to be perfected in the new life according to the Law of Karma.

Famous twentieth century psychologist Carl Gustav Jung in his work entitled “Soul and Myth. Six Archetypes”

mentions that “already in human blood plasma — in embryonic form of life, . . . there is something embedded, something spiritual, an inclination to be spiritual”. In such a case, what should direct a person toward developing this gift of spirituality?

From the theosophical point of view, everything that happened in the past and is currently happening before our eyes has only one sense and only one explanation: it is necessary for each individual to gradually expand his/her own consciousness. Moreover, consciousness should be understood in the widest sense — as the work of Mind, Heart, Conscience, Will and all-unifying Love. While working on expanding his/her own consciousness, the individual is learning lessons from the life experience as the Soul passes from one physical life to another; so this results in the revelation that bad deeds lead to suffering.

After many reincarnations, a person’s Soul realizes that obeying the morality laws helps to avoid unnecessary suffering. The Soul is nurturing these morality and moral values, which as far back as in ancient Greece were called “ethical virtues”. Ukrainian teacher, writer, philosopher, and enlightener Hryhoriy Skovoroda, who was called “Heavenly Wisdom”, considered compassion, mercy, good sense, benevolence, justice and brotherhood to be the main items on the list of these virtues. These positive qualities form the foundation of the spiritual life of every human being. They serve as the basis for the development

## Evolutionary Progress in Morality

of brotherly relationship among people, and in the long run, they contribute to the implementation of “the first and most important Goal of the Theosophical Society”. Radha Burnier in her work “Spiritual Regeneration of Mankind” stressed upon the fact that without morality it is impossible to build the Universal Brotherhood, which can manifest itself only at the *buddhi* level. Already on the Earth, here and now, it is necessary to engage ourselves in the development of our own morality and spiritual growth.

While perfecting one’s own inner nature in the process of evolution, a person becomes able to raise the consciousness to higher levels, so he/she starts manifesting the aspects and qualities of morality, which correspond to the individual development level. In other words, the level of morality depends on the level of consciousness of specific persons in particular, and so, of the society as a whole. However, sometimes in one society a certain person is recognized to be of high morality, but in another society of more advanced consciousness, the morality of the same person might be considered inadequate. This has always been in the nature of things, and it is still so nowadays.

We may remember that at the time when Peter the Great ruled Russia, according to one of the rules of conduct, it was forbidden to go to bed in boots. Is this rule there now? It is obvious that today this issue is absolutely not relevant. This is a good example of the manifestation of inner morality

through a higher level of consciousness.

H. F. Pisareva in her book *On the Hidden Meaning of Life* clearly correlates human morality level with one or another level of consciousness starting from the lowest level which is intrinsic to barbarians and finishing with the higher consciousness level of modern people, practically until the present time. She stresses upon the fact that the highest level of consciousness is still to be achieved, and that each level had, has and will have its own criterion of morality, which allows the determination of the development level of a person as an integral part of the whole, and so, the development level of the whole itself.

Life still goes on. Today, we feel especially keenly how far life has advanced. Behaviour requirements become tougher, the previous consciousness stage is losing its power and a new consciousness stage approaches to replace it. Meanwhile, consciousness of the majority of people does not catch up with the overall pace of evolution. That is why some people still consider the obsolete life styles to be a model of order, strength and balance, and they focus on the past only and lose the vision of the future. As a result, these people frequently say: “It used to be better before.” The reason for such an opinion is that these people do not combine the past and the future into a single evolutionary flow of a transitory epoch when a process of adaptation and rethinking of everything happening has started; this gives the false impression of a regress. H. F. Pisareva

## Evolutionary Progress in Morality

addresses this issue and writes the following:

This process is taking place because the existing equilibrium is shaky, human psychology is evolving to become more sophisticated, and while it is adapting to higher life requirements, all its outer manifestations become more chaotic, contradicting former standards, “knocked out” from the existing morality context, . . . a lot of time is needed to get rid of previously acquired characteristics, . . . for gradual reformation of all previous concepts, feelings and inner skills . . . Such an adaptation period is always characterized by difficult events and signs of moral degradation.

Moreover, for a long time now the worldwide scientific community has discovered, so to speak, a “well-functioning” universal formula which also may help explaining why “it used to be better before”. The formula is as follows: satisfaction equals a fraction where success is the numerator and aspirations are the denominator. Hence, it is clear that the higher the aspirations, the lower the satisfaction of actual goals achieved. Thus today, it is “bad” not because it has become worse indeed, but because our aspirations, demands and wishes drastically increased, and hence a so-called “success” in our society cannot yet meet our aspirations.

What, after all, contributes to the morality formation at various stages of a person’s life, and how does it manifest itself? It is worthwhile to remember the

saying of the genius scientist Albert Einstein: “We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive.” In other words, in order to build your new behaviour and attitude towards others, to mould your morality at a certain stage of life, it is necessary to change your mentality. Besides, the founder of integral yoga, Sri Aurobindo, as though he had read the thoughts of the great scientific genius, advises:

At the same time we need to turn . . . mind towards ethics, to moral purity, and so to wake up the inner reality of our natural essence, to contact the highest reality, stay connected to it, adhere to it, and, due to such a contact and adherence, to transform your essence by converting it to a new essence, new personality, new nature.

However, there is only one transforming force — Love. Without Love everything becomes nothing. According to Jiddu Krishnamurti, morality is not a product of thought only, it is not an outcome of social pressure, not an immediate yesterday product or a product evolved from a tradition. Love is the highest life value. An unknown author, in the following inspired words, reminds us about this value:

Duty without love makes a person irritable.

Responsibility without love makes a person rude.

Justice without love makes a person cruel.

Truth without love makes a person captious.

Good manners without love make a person two-faced.

## Evolutionary Progress in Morality

Affability without love makes a person hypocritical.

Intellect without love makes a person cunning.

High knowledge without love makes a person uncompromising.

Honour without love makes a person arrogant.

Power without love makes a person violent.

Wealth without love makes a person greedy.

Faith without love makes a person fanatic.

That is why whatever we are doing we should do it “with love”. Only this way we can cultivate in ourselves a high level of morality, to transform ourselves in the changing world.

Individual moral development leads the person toward spirituality. True morality enhances the vibrations of consciousness in the human essence, and such a person becomes able to receive divine vibrations. Rules of morality are to divert people from behaving selfishly, from caring only about themselves. They teach a person to care more about others;

they direct a person towards altruism, which is the keynote of Theosophy. This is exactly where the main vectors of individual morality development should be focused, because by following these vectors every person will be able to find a way toward the True Self, to transform his/her own individual inner nature, and as a result, will foster the moral evolution of all humanity. When we “start shining from inside” we will be able to say:

Listen and hear! You by yourself became the Light, you became the Sound, you by yourself are your own Teacher and God. You by yourself are the goal of your search; non-stopping Voice rushing through eternity; you are free of changes, free of sin, – in the One – there are seven sounds of the Voice of Silence.

In conclusion, morality is evolving, though slowly yet, but steadily and continuously. As HPB has asserted in her work *The Key to Theosophy*, the time will come when “earth will be a heaven . . . in comparison with what it is now”. ✧

**Morality is the basis of things, and truth is the substance of all morality.**

Mahatma Gandhi

# Islām in the Light of Theosophy

ANNIE BESANT

IF we translate “Theosophy” into English, it means simply ‘Divine Wisdom’. By that name is indicated THE WISDOM in its relation to all the religions of the world. Every religion in its turn has grown up from the great Root of the Divine Wisdom. Every religion in its place is an exposition of the Divine Life in humanity, and so this teaching which takes only the name of the Divine Wisdom, without any sectarian limitation, is the fervent helper and defender of every religion which has uplifted and consoled humanity. It is no one religion, but *every* religion, that has in it a friend and a defender.

Some of our Christian brethren have regarded Theosophy as inimical to the great religion of the west. But that is a misconception, probably arising from the fact that Theosophy has strengthened Eastern faiths against aggression, and has also pointed out the additions and omissions which have injured popular Christianity in the present, just as it has pointed out similar additions and omissions in popular Hinduism and Buddhism. Theosophy has stood as a defender of every faith of the Western or the Eastern

world. For everywhere in these days religion is attacked, and its defence becomes the duty of a true Theosophist; and in the East, especially in India, where the religions of Hinduism and Islām have their home and their numerous adherents, wherever those religions are attacked, Theosophy becomes defensive and stands in the breach against attacks, to explain, to illuminate, and to defend. But nonetheless in the Western lands, in Christendom, Theosophy is the servant of Christianity, as it is here the servant of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Islām. There, in the West, at last it is being recognized as filling up a great gap in the defence of Christianity, not against the attacks of any other religion but against the attacks of materialism, against the attacks of scientific thought, where that scientific thought has no spiritual ideal. So everywhere Theosophy comes forward to explain and to illuminate.

In this country of India, where so large a proportion of Indians belong to the great faith of the Prophet Muhammad, there are some seventy million people who regard him as the chief messenger

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**Annie Besant** was the second international President of the Theosophical Society from 1907 to 1933. Excerpts from *The Theosophist*, April and May 1910.

## Islām in the Light of Theosophy

of God. Here naturally Theosophy comes in to help all those who follow that faith. Their position among the religions of the world is not as fully recognized as it ought to be; that is, Islām is not regarded as it should be by very many, as one of the great exponents of Divine Wisdom. Taken as a religion, it is often unfairly attacked because it is utterly misunderstood, as to the greatness of its Prophet and the nobility of his teachings to the world. Often in the West you find attacks on Islām made on the ground that it is fanatically persecuting and not progressive; on the ground that the position of woman in Islām is not such as it should be; on the ground that it does not encourage learning, science, and intellectual endeavour. These are the three chief attacks which the Westerners make against Islām. These attacks are not justified by the teachings of the Prophet, and are controverted by the services which Islām has rendered to the world. It is true that today Islām does not stand before the world as the exponent of high learning, of great intellectual endeavours, but that is not due to the fault of the teachings but rather to the neglecting of them. Islām has suffered, as all the other religions of the world have suffered, because its followers are unworthy of its Founder.

Islām differs from the other religions of the world in one important fact. With regard to its Founder, the Prophet, there is no intermixture in his history of the mythic element which surrounds the other great religious teachers; his life was led in times that are regarded as historical.

In the seventh century of the Christian era, this man was born and lived out his life in lands the history of which is known.

How splendidly his life can face the light, how utterly ignorant are they who attack the Prophet Muhammad, is shown by history. Many do not know the history of his life — so simple, so heroic, and so noble in its outlines; one of the great lives of historic men. He was born in difficult times, surrounded by difficult circumstances, amongst a people who were sunk in superstition, amidst a people in whom superstitions were bearing their most evil fruits. We shall see in a moment from the testimony of those He converted, from the words of those who bore witness to him whilst still He lived, and who held him Prophet of God, what were the lives of the masses of the people. But even before this, He stands out as a Light in the darkness, and we find his life so noble and so true that we realise why He was chosen out to bear to all those around him the message of his Lord. What was the name by which all men, women and children in Mecca knew him? It was the name of *al-amin*, the Trustworthy. I know of no higher and nobler epithet than that with which they named this man who had been amongst them from his youth — the man worthy of trust. It is told of him that when He walked in the streets, the children ran out from the doors and clung to his knees and hands. Where you have these two qualities in one character — the love of children and a character that makes the men around him call him the Trustworthy — you have the elements

## Islām in the Light of Theosophy

of a hero, of a born leader, of a teacher of men.

It is a story of great significance, that of those fifteen weary years of struggle, of thoughts, of meditation, of living in the life of the world and then away for a time in the cave of the desert, He wrestled with thoughts that at first overpowered him, and He shrank with the weakness of a man against the call from the powers of Spirit. One night He came back from that cave when the Angel of the Lord had bidden him: "Rise, O Prophet of God, and go forth and cry to the people". He shivered, fearing and doubting: "Who am I, what am I, that I should go as Prophet of the Lord?" It was then that his wife cheered him up, bidding him obey the call. "Fear not", she said, "art thou not the Trustworthy? Never will God deceive a man trusted by men." Nowhere can there be a fairer testimony to a prophet. Then He went forth to his great mission, the wife of his bosom was his first disciple, that dearest and noblest of women who lived with this leader of men for twenty-six years of perfect married life. Such was the character of the man as judged by her who knew him best.

Now it is said popularly that a prophet is without honour in his own country. This prophet was not without honour in his own country and his father's house. He was honoured in the hearts of his relatives, and from them He won more disciples. Then came those who were nearest akin to him, and then others amongst those whom He loved. After three years of patient labour there were

thirty who recognised him as the Prophet of the Lord. And how simple and frugal his life. He mended his broken shoes, patched his own coat — tailor and cobbler for himself, even when, towards the close of his life, thousands around him bowed down to him as prophet. Such was the character of the man — so simple, noble, and straightforward.

One day he was talking to a rich man when a blind man cried aloud: "O prophet of God, teach me the way of salvation." Muhammad did not listen, for He was talking to a wealthy man. Again he cried aloud: "O Prophet of God, show me the way of salvation." The Prophet frowned, and turned aside. On the very next morning there came a message that for ever remains in the *Quran*, as testimony to his honesty and humility, "wherein He put it that all might remember".

The Prophet frowned and turned aside because the blind man came to him; and how dost thou know whether he shall peradventure be cleansed from his sins, or whether he shall be admonished and the admonition shall profit him? The man who is wealthy thou receivest respectfully; whereas it is not to be charged on thee that he is not cleansed; but him who cometh unto thee earnestly seeking his salvation, and who feareth God, dost thou reject. By no means shouldst thou act thus.

Few men would be brave enough to publish such a reprimand, addressed directly to themselves; but on the contrary, so great was this man and so true, that afterwards whenever He saw this

## Islām in the Light of Theosophy

blind man, He rose and brought him forward, saying: "Welcome, because it was for thee my Lord reprimanded me." So great He was that the slightest weakness and breach of kindness were promptly recognized, and the man who was the cause of the reprimand He held as dear, and honoured him. No wonder we find that all men loved him who were near to him.

This love that his immediate followers, who knew him personally, had for Muhammad was one of the most touching in the history of the world's religions. His followers were persecuted in a most ghastly way; they put them on the heated sand with the scorching Arabian sun burning down on them; they piled stones upon them; they refused them a single drop of water to moisten their parched lips; they tore them into fragments; one man was cut to pieces bit by bit, his flesh torn piecemeal from his bones, and they said to him in the midst of his agony: "Thou believest in thy prophet, wouldst not thou rather that Muhammad were in thy place, and thou at home?" Answers the dying man: "As God is my witness, I would not be at home with wife and children and substance, if Muhammad were for that to be pricked by a single thorn." Thus you may learn how this man was loved by his followers.

There is nothing more pathetic than an incident which took place after a battle, one of the early battles where the Prophet troops had conquered, and there was great spoil taken. He divided the spoil, and those who were nearest to him and

who had helped him longest and best had no share in the division. They were angered and secretly murmured. Thereat He called them around him and said:

I have known a discourse you held among yourselves. When I came amongst you, you were wandering in darkness, and the Lord gave you the right direction; you were suffering, and He made you happy; you were at enmity among yourselves, and He has filled your hearts with brotherly love, and has given you victory. Was it not so, tell me?

"Indeed, it is even as thou sayest," was the reply, "to the Lord and his Prophet belong benevolence and grace." The Prophet continued:

Nay, by the Lord, but ye might have answered, and answered truly — for I would have testified to its truth myself — "Thou camest to us rejected as an impostor and we believed in thee; thou camest as a helpless fugitive, and we assisted thee; poor and an outcast, and we gave thee an asylum; comfortless, and we solaced thee." Why disturb your hearts because of the things of this life? Are ye not satisfied that others should obtain the flocks and the camels, while ye go back to your homes with me in your midst?

And it is said that at these words from his lips, "tears ran down upon their beards," and they said: "Yea, Prophet of God, we are well satisfied with our share." So much, then, He was loved; why? Because He brought the Light to those who were in the darkness of ignorance.

## Islām in the Light of Theosophy

The testimony of his followers to what they were, and to what they had become by the teachings of the Prophet stands on record; we can understand what they thought of him as Prophet, when the divine flash struck them by the teaching that He gave. They said in a petition still preserved:

We adored idols; we lived in unchastity; we ate dead bodies, and spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; we knew no law but that of the strong; when God raised among us a Man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity, we were aware; and he called us to the unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with him; he forbade us the worship of idols, and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of our neighbours; he forbade us to speak evil of women, . . . he ordered us to fly from vices, and to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings.

Once He had some converts from whom He took a pledge, the pledge of Akaba. As regards this pledge, remember that you are not dealing with a far-off time with no historians living, but you are dealing with the time of the seventh century, when records were well kept. See the pledge taken by these followers of the Prophet:

We will not associate anything with God; we will not steal, nor commit adultery, nor

fornication; we will not kill our children; we will abstain from calumnies and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is right; and we will be faithful to Him in weal and sorrow.

Such is the pledge. The very words of the pledge speak eloquently of the condition of the people whom He raised. Judge it by those things from which they promised to abstain. Human sacrifice was common, profligacy was widespread in ordinary life. Such was the pledge He accepted, such was the promise He took from his followers. See how wisely adapted to the needs of the time were his moral teachings . . .

I have had a purpose beyond that of amusing you by repeating things that many of you must know as well as or better than I. That purpose is the drawing together of Muslims and Hindus, for India can never become a nation until Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Muslims understand each other. Shall we not all put aside theological hatreds and feel as brothers? Shall not the Muslim cease to mutter “Giaour”, and the Hindu cease to whisper “Mlechchha”, and the Christian cease to say “Heathen”? Shall we not learn to respect each other’s faith and reverence each other’s worship? There is no need for conversion from one religion to another; each is a Ray of the Sun of Truth.

We must all return to the home whence we came, and we may well live with our minds at peace in the land in which we must physically dwell side by side. None

## Islām in the Light of Theosophy

need give up aught that is dear to him, that has been handed down by generations of his ancestors, that is the centre round which cluster the sanctities of home. Each should not only love his faith, but also live it, and realize that his neighbour's faith is as precious to his neighbour as his own is precious to himself. Let us learn from our neighbours instead of quarrelling with them, love them instead of hating, respect them

instead of scorning. It is written: "All shall return to God." It is written: "All shall perish save his Face." Call him Allah, call him Jehovah, call him Ahura-Mazda, call him Ísvara — names are many, but He is One. We see the Sun from different places, but he stands the same unchanging Light in heaven, shining on all alike. We are all children of one Father; why should we quarrel on the journey home? ✧

**Hatred and conflict are often rooted in differences between people of different races and religions. We all need to respect people of different races as well as people of different faiths and religions. We need to unite by recognizing our common desire and need for a harmonious society — a society in which we and our children and families and friends and communities can all live our lives in peace and harmony. Regardless of our race or religion, we all want and need such social harmony. . . . And without a harmonious society, how can there be the necessary economic development and atmosphere conducive to spiritual happiness and self-realization?**

Jagad Guru Siddhaswarupananda Paramahansa  
(Chris Butler)

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Date refers to the date of formation

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