

## Freedom of Thought

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

## Freedom of the Society

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

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



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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**Cover:** “Creative Forces” (1936), painted by Emil Bisttram (1895–1976), from his *Cosmic Egg* series. He describes these colored rays as having “received their source out of the One, which is within the egg and yet outside of it, the One being suspended out of another still larger egg, or Infinity”. He is also known for his commitments to the ageless wisdom traditions and study of *The Secret Doctrine*. <[emilbisttram.com](http://emilbisttram.com)>. (See related article on p. 28 of this issue.)

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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.

# Message in a Bottle: Be Open — II

TIM BOYD

IN last month's article I mentioned a question that I was asked during an interview, "If you were to write a message in a bottle and entrust it to the sea, what would you write?" My answer was five words: "Trust, Be Open, Do Something." Having given attention to "Trust" in the previous article, I would like to give some thought to "Be open". A good starting point might be to ask what it means to be open.

Openness, in theory and practice, appears in a number of forms. In our normal way of thinking it includes ideas like transparency, inclusion, accessibility of knowledge, permeability of organizational structures, lack of secrecy, and honesty. These ideas find expression in different ways depending on the field of human activity. In government, openness is thought of as citizens' rights to information and proceedings, with democracy being our age's standard for the highest ideals of governmental function. In education it expresses as equality of access to quality education — one of the reasons that the educational system in Finland regularly receives such high praise. In social and interpersonal relations, honesty and forthrightness are seen as indicators of openness. While these are all valuable approaches to human affairs, they are products of a deeper dimension of the human being; they are forms created to contain a measure of a more exalted con-

sciousness. These forms are not what I had in mind in my "Message in a Bottle".

For me the focus of the message is on the spiritual life. As with much of the inner life, openness can be paradoxical — both open and secret. The Higher Self, or soul which is occult, hidden, and secret within us is obvious to those with eyes to see, and to ourselves whenever we can pause our frenetic searching and attempts to control the world. Previously I shared a quote from *At the Feet of the Master*: "Unless there is perfect trust, there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power." In that little book the two things that are to be trusted above all others are stated as "your Master" and "yourself". Trust removes obstacles. It is the nature of trust that it dissolves barriers to openness. In the presence of someone or something that we trust, we feel safe and supported. The genuine friend not only "has our back", but encourages us to move forward. True rest is only possible when we feel safe.

This kind of openness is not about systems, processes, knowledge, or ideas. In one of Rumi's poems, he makes the statement that "Hundreds of thousands of impressions from the invisible world are eagerly wanting to come through you." Openness enables our receptivity to that dimension of being. In the absence of obstructing self-protecting walls, we can rest, unafraid, and allow for the flow of

intuitive insight. Although it is only two words, “Be open”, it is about openness to the intuition — the “still, small voice” that brings the unitive insight of *buddhi*.

Scattered throughout the Mahatma Letters, HP Blavatsky’s (HPB) writing, and the whole of theosophical literature are hints on the cultivation of intuitive awareness, which alone connects us to the “hidden splendor” of our divinity. Annie Besant called spirituality “the realization of unity, the seeing of the oneness of all things”. The *buddhic*/Intuitive field marks the entrance to such awareness. The physical expresses in action; the emotions in feeling; the mind in thinking; and *buddhi* in intuition.

For many, intuition can be a “fuzzy” idea — everything from “gut feelings” to psychic perception to emotional and even physical impulses. There is a need to be clear. HPB gives the description: “Every one of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, known as *intuition*, . . . the only faculty by means of which men and things are seen in their true colors. It is an *instinct of the soul*, which grows in us in proportion to the use we make of it, . . . awakens the spiritual senses in us and the power to act.” I. K. Taimni described intuition as “the faculty of direct perception or awareness of truth, which results when the consciousness of the seeker somehow becomes attuned to the Divine Consciousness”.

The issue for us is: How do we access the intuition? All of the fields of consciousness within us are constantly interacting. We step on a nail and it affects the body, invokes feelings of sadness or anger, attracts the attention of the mind

for cures and ways to diminish the pain. Intuition is a function of *buddhi*, but *buddhi* cannot be said to be the intuition. So, *buddhi* and the intuition are unaffected. On the other hand, the intuition is continually communicating to body, emotions, and mind, yet they too are unaffected. The first reason for the inability of intuition to make an impression is that, at least in the early phases of our spiritual life, it is subtle. There is a reason for it being described as the “still, small voice”. It is not accompanied by the deafening roar of the crowd. It does not strike us on the head, or disrupt our emotional life, so it goes unnoticed. We have louder, more pressing, personal concerns.

Another reason is that we have not developed sufficient sensitivity to the more rapid and refined vibrations of the intuitive dimension of our being. We can, but early on we are largely unaware of its existence. It is only with the trust and dawning conviction of the soul’s existence that we can meaningfully turn our attention toward cultivating our receptivity. Another reason is that only when the body, emotions, and mind are at rest can they be receptive. In speaking about the effect of trust in the Universal or Divine consciousness a Hermetic text says: “The knowledge of It is divine silence and the rest of all the senses.”

Two short comments from the Mahatma Letters further develop this point: “The mind can be made to work with electric swiftness in a high excitement; but the *buddhi* — never. To its clear region, calm must ever reign.” And, “It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions

## Message in a Bottle: Be Open — II

gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world.” In the Bible this same idea is expressed as “in quietness and trust is your strength”.

One might ask the question: Why bother? Why take the time and effort to cultivate this consciousness? Life goes on whether or not we are in touch with the intuition. There are a great number of reasons that could be given: the access to creativity, to holistic vision, to an on-going confirmation of unity and wholeness, to a world of inspiration, to the capacity to rightly evaluate the people, circumstances, and situations in daily life in a manner that transcends mere logic. Poets, writers, artists of all types, speakers, scientists, entrepreneurs, CEOs, saints, sages, healers, and housewives who have done the necessary work to recognize the “voice” of the intuition are unshakeable in their conviction of its value.

Albert Einstein had a lot to say about the intuition, not only in relation to scientific discovery, but to life:

I believe in the brotherhood of man and the uniqueness of the individual. But if you ask me to prove what I believe, I can't. You know them to be true but you could spend a whole lifetime without being able to prove them. The mind can proceed only so far upon what it knows and can prove. There comes a point where the mind takes a leap — call it intuition or what you will — and comes out upon a higher plane of knowledge, but can never prove how it got there. All great discoveries have involved such a leap.

The reasons for making the effort to access the intuition are many and could

be convincing to some people, but intuitive awareness is not a rational process. It is superrational and only enters the sphere of normal rationality in the effort to describe, or act on it. It is then that we encounter the challenge of clothing the experience in words, or creating the formulas, structures, or plans that give form to the vision.

For a few the answer to “Why bother?” is much simpler. For them it would be like asking the baby, “Why bother coming out of the womb?” It is not a matter of choice. Like birth, it is the natural progression of a consciousness ready to learn and function in the same world we all share, but at a different level.

I had a friend who accomplished amazing things. She left a comfortable life as a nurse in Chicago, initially to help children in her homeland, Haiti. Over time her work grew into a large operation that included an orphanage, hospital, food bank, and other services operating within a very difficult environment. She was a simple person, but fully alive and inspirational. In talking with her you would hear one amazing story after another of unplanned, rationally unlikely, seemingly impossible occurrences that continually flowed to her in her efforts to serve others. I never heard her use the words intuition or *buddhi*; she was a religious person and tended to give all credit to God. But when asked about how she was able to bring into being all of her remarkable accomplishments she would say that it all came down to “the joy of being open”.

Trust and Be Open.

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*(To be continued)*

# Krishnamurti: Ninety Years of Theosophical Ripples — III

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

**I**N the February 1964 issue of *The Theosophist*, in his column “On the Watch-Tower”, N. Sri Ram, as President of the Theosophical Society (TS), addressed the controversial matter of E. L. Gardner’s booklet. Below are some extracts of what he wrote:

It is stated in the pamphlet, “Obviously there has been no Coming”. I would add to this sentence the words “as expected”. Krishnaji is giving a teaching, message or whatever else we may call it, which is of unique value and importance. He is him-self quite an extraordinary person, unlike anybody else in so many respects. May it not be that he *is* fulfilling the mission to which the prophecy really referred? Even after breaking from the Society and with the traditional lines of Theosophical thought, Krishnaji in 1928–1929 did claim to have reached complete identification with the Truth. He used the words, “One with the Beloved”, and explained — this explanation is printed in Mr Gardner’s pamphlet — “To me it is all, it is Sri Krishna, it is the Master KH, it is the Lord Maitreya, it is the Buddha, and yet it is

beyond all these forms. What does it matter what name you give?”

Dr Besant started her political work in 1913, and it was then that she said she put aside the use of her clairvoyant faculties. The proclamation as to the Coming was made by her in a Convention lecture at Adyar, entitled “The Opening of the New Cycle” in December 1910, three years after she became President, and while she was still obviously in the plenitude of her powers. It is difficult to imagine that in a matter of such tremendous importance, she could have made the proclamation without any grounds of her own. She spoke with great assurance and as if she knew, and not as if she had been told by a colleague.

It is quite possible that both Dr Besant and Brother Leadbeater understood what was hoped for and expected according to their own ideas of the form it should take, but based the central idea on what they had learned through contact with the higher Sources. . . .

There is the statement in Mr. Gardner’s pamphlet that “The Lord Maitreya and the Masters with whom C. W. Leadbeater

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(CWL) was on such familiar terms were his own thought-creations”. This is a statement which the world at large would readily believe, but in the form in which it is made it may not coincide with the truth. Brother Leadbeater through the faculties he had probably got a great deal that is valuable and correct, yet there might be mixed with it certain of his personal ideas and the influence of his personal predilections.

I feel that no one — and not only Brother Leadbeater — should be considered infallible, and such a view is consistent with the highest respect to the person concerned, and with faith in his integrity.

As HPB says in *The Secret Doctrine*, there are “enormous mysteries connected with the mind”. Something might easily go wrong in the process of translation from a higher to a lower plane, in one’s recollections of what he had heard or knew inside himself. The only safe rule for all of us is to consider for oneself impersonally every statement, from *whatever* source it may come, and act according to one’s own understanding, not imagining that one’s understanding and judgment must be absolutely correct.

#### **Radha Burnier on Krishnamurti**

In an interview at the San Rafael Theosophical Centre, Argentina, in April 2004, Radha Burnier, then President of the Theosophical Society, answered questions from young Theosophists. The full text can be seen here: <[theosophical.society.org.au/articles/j-krishnamurti-theosophy-and-the-theosophical-society](http://theosophical.society.org.au/articles/j-krishnamurti-theosophy-and-the-theosophical-society)>. Below are a couple of excerpts:

Q: *Many people say that, when he left the*

*TS, Krishnamurti betrayed the TS and the Masters who instructed him. What do you think about this?*

RB: Not many people, but some people say this. I think it is a wrong idea. There was no question of Krishnamurti betraying the TS or the Masters who instructed him. In the TS at that time, there was a group of people who claimed to have contact with the Masters, and who assumed authority for themselves. They believed they were in a position to declare: “You have been put on probation; someone else has become a pupil of the Master”, or “Now you are an Initiate”. But it could be seen by the behaviour of these people that they did not fulfil the qualifications which are described in *The Masters and the Path* and other books about what a true disciple of the Master or Initiate would be like. So it became like a drama, a farce, and Krishnamurti disliked all this very much. . . .

I think the idea that he betrayed the Masters is ridiculous. My personal opinion is that he was in constant touch with the Masters. He knew far better what the Masters were than most of the people who talked much about the Masters and claimed to be their agents. According to Krishnaji, the mistake made in the TS at that time was that the sacred and holy were brought down to a personal and material level. Swami T. Subba Row objected even to HPB talking as much as she did about the Masters, because of the danger of degrading the concept of the Masters. God is said to be made in the image of man; similarly people attribute to the Masters what is familiar to themselves, but it has little to do with



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what they actually are: very holy, pure, wise people. Madame Blavatsky also made it clear that those who want to contact the Masters must rise to their level, it being impossible to bring them down to the worldly level. But the bringing down was what was happening. Krishnaji rejected the ideas about the Masters, but not the existence of liberated ones. . . .

According to Pupul Jayakar’s account of Krishnaji’s life, when the “process” was taking place, he sometimes said: “They are here.” Who are the “they”? “They” were doing something to his brain, and so on. Even just before he died, it is reported that he remarked: “I am ready to go. They are waiting for me.” Another side to the matter was that in the TS too much was made about where the Masters lived, what kind of colour of hair each one had, and that kind of thing. These details, even if accurate, concern only the outer appearance; the Master is really a state of consciousness. He may wear a certain body at some time, and another body at another time. Thinking of the appearance and the physical body as the Master is completely wrong. HPB wrote that the people who say they want to contact the Master do not know what they are talking about, because the body is only a mask, not the real thing. This is true even in our case; the body is a mask, concealing a different reality. In the case of the Mahatmas, the reality is a certain level and quality of consciousness. Perhaps Krishnaji did not like reducing the Masters to these details, and thinking about them as being somewhat like ourselves.

#### **Krishnamurti on the Masters**

An article containing some of my

conversations with Radha Burnier was published in *The Theosophist*, January 2014. It contains some passages about Krishnaji:

While walking along with her and with others, Krishnaji said to her on seeing the Garden of Remembrance [at Adyar]: “Something is not right.” He then asked her what kind of ceremonies were being held at Adyar and she told him that only the usual ones were being performed like Masonic rituals, the Ritual of the Mystic Star, ES meetings, etc. He said: “It is none of these.” He then asked her: “Has anything been changed here?” Radhaji then told him that during John Coats’s administration many changes had been made including the two pillars which were shifted from their original location near the six-pointed star to the entrance. “That’s it!”, he said, “there were magnetized jewels under them. They should not have been moved.” After an absence of forty-seven years from Adyar he was aware of a change that had taken place without his knowledge.

After she offered him some orange juice and they talked for a while in her house, Krishnaji left in the car with Radhaji accompanying him. When the car was about to reach the main gate he asked her: “What are you going to do now?” Radhaji said: “I will walk back”, to which Krishnaji said: “No, we will drive you back.” When the car started off from the main gate area Krishnaji asked her: “Radhaji, do you believe in the Masters?” Radhaji replied: “Yes.” Krishnaji said, with emphasis: “What do you mean by saying ‘yes’? Do you know that Annie Besant’s life was entirely different

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because of it?” There was silence for some time after which Krishnaji again asked: “So Radhaji, do you believe in the Masters?” Radhaji replied: “Yes, Krishnaji, I do believe in the Masters.” “Good”, he said. . . .

Once at Adyar we were having lunch at Mr Ranjit Tolani’s house. Several TS members were present. Eventually the conversation moved to an incident involving Krishnaji. Radhaji told us then that she wished she had asked Krishnaji many more questions as she felt he knew so much. But there was one question in particular that she [had] wanted to ask him [and she did]. She said: “Sir, in your talks and in your books you have sometimes said that the Masters are not important and that they may not even exist. However, we have documents and letters signed by you when you were younger attesting to the effect that you saw them. What do you have to say about this?” She clarified that she was talking about the two Masters involved in the formation of the TS, M. and KH. She said Krishnaji was silent for some time and the only thing he said was: “They were two of many people.”

In her book *Krishnamurti — A Biography* (Harper and Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1986, p. 129), Pupul Jayakar relates an incident with Krishnamurti while he was staying at Ootacamund, South India:

Krishnaji had been suffering excruciating pain in his head and neck, his stomach was swollen, tears streamed down his face. He suddenly fell back on the bed and became intensely still. The traces of pain and fatigue were wiped away, as happens

in death. Then life and an immensity began to enter the face. The face was greatly beautiful. It had no age; time had not touched it. The eyes opened, but there was no recognition. The body radiated light; a stillness and a vastness illumined his face. The silence was liquid and heavy, like honey; it poured into the room and into our minds and bodies, filling every cell of the brain, wiping away every trace of time and memory. We felt a touch without a presence, a wind blowing without movement. We could not help folding our hands in *pranams*. For some minutes he lay unmoving, then his eyes opened. After some time, he saw us and said, “Did you see that face?” He did not expect an answer. He lay silently. Then, “The Buddha was here, you are blessed.”

#### HPB on Truth

Some have suggested that because his [Krishnaji’s] teachings departed, in many respects, from the teachings of HPB, they are not true. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the following statement by Madame Blavatsky on absolute and relative truth:

To sum up the idea, with regard to absolute and relative truth, we can only repeat what we said before. *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND — he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.* Were even the goddess who dwells at the bottom of the well to issue from her place of confinement, she could give man no more than he can assimilate. Meanwhile, every one can sit

near that well — the name of which is KNOWLEDGE — and gaze into its depths in the hope of seeing Truth's fair image reflected, at least, on the dark waters. This, however, as remarked by Richter, presents a certain danger. Some truth, to be sure, may be occasionally reflected as in a mirror on the spot we gaze upon, and thus reward the patient student. But, adds the German thinker, "I have heard that some philosophers in seeking for Truth, to pay homage to her, have seen their own image in the water and adored it instead."

("What is Truth?", *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. IX, pp. 40-41)

### HPB on the Torchbearer

In *The Key to Theosophy* by H. P. Blavatsky, originally published in 1889, at its Conclusion, Madame Blavatsky alludes to the coming of "the new torchbearer of Truth" in the 20th century. This is what she had to say:

Theo. I must tell you that during the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those Masters, of whom I have spoken, to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. Towards the close of each century you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality — or call it mysticism if you prefer — has taken place. Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge and teaching has been given out. If you care to do so, you can trace these movements back, century by century, as far as our detailed historical records extend.

Enq. But how does this bear on the future of the Theosophical Society?

Theo. If the present attempt, in the form of our Society, succeeds better than its predecessors have done, then it will be in existence as an organized, living and healthy body when the time comes for the effort of the 20th century. The general condition of men's minds and hearts will have been improved and purified by the spread of its teachings, and, as I have said, their prejudices and dogmatic illusions will have been, to some extent at least, removed.

Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the new torchbearer of Truth. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path.

Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish. Measure it by comparison with what the Theosophical Society actually *has* achieved in the last few years, without *any* of these advantages and surrounded by hosts of hindrances which would not hamper the new leader. Consider all this, and then tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say that if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years — tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-

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first century in comparison with what it is now!

<[theosociety.org/pasadena/key/keyconc.htm](http://theosociety.org/pasadena/key/keyconc.htm)>)

Also in *The Secret Doctrine*, Introductory, p. xxxviii, originally published in 1888 (facsimile edition, The Theosophical University Press Online Edition), Madame Blavatsky makes another allusion to the coming of an advanced disciple of the Masters:

In Century the Twentieth some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called *Gupta-Vidyā*; and that, like the once-mysterious sources of the Nile, the source of all religions and philosophies now known to the world has been for many ages forgotten and lost to men, but is at last found.

#### **K on the Benediction**

Below are excerpts from *Krishnamurti's Notebook* in which he alludes to non-ordinary states of consciousness:

But there's a sacredness which is not of thought, nor of a feeling resuscitated by thought. It is not recognizable by thought nor can it be utilized by thought. Thought cannot formulate it. But there's a sacredness, untouched by any symbol or word. It is not communicable. It is a fact. . . .

Our look is as bound by time-space as our brain. We never look, we never see beyond this limitation; we do not know how to look through and beyond these fragmentary frontiers. But the eyes have to see beyond

them, penetrating deeply and widely, without choosing, without shelter; they have to wander beyond man-made frontiers of ideas and values and to feel beyond love. Then there is a benediction which no god can give. . . .

It's as though everything stood still. There is no movement, no stirring, complete emptiness of all thought, of all seeing. There is no interpreter to translate, to observe, to censor. An immeasurable vastness that is utterly still and silent. There is no space, nor time to cover that space. The beginning and the ending are here, of all things. There is really nothing that can be said about it . . . .

Last night woke up with that sense of complete stillness and silence; the brain was fully alert and intensely alive; the body was very quiet. This state lasted for about half an hour. This in spite of an exhausting day.

The height of intensity and sensitivity is the experiencing of essence. It's this that is beauty beyond word and feeling. Proportion and depth, light and shade are limited to time-space, caught in beauty-ugliness. But that which is beyond line and shape, beyond learning and knowledge, is the beauty of essence.

#### **Adyar Day 1924 – Adyar Day, 17 February 1986**

This is what Krishnaji wrote about Adyar in 1924:

It is essential for the individual member and for the Society that Adyar, as a great spiritual centre, should be maintained worthy and dignified. The importance of

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this is so obvious that few can doubt it. Adyar is and always has been a spiritual oasis to which the weary traveller looks for comfort and repose. Though it may not be the privilege of each member in the Society to go there from the world of wilderness, yet the mere existence of such a centre gives hope and encouragement.

I have visited many a wonderful land and seen many a famous sight, but there is none to equal the extraordinary intangible something of our Adyar. There is an atmosphere there that does not exist in many a church and temple, and there is a Presence there that we expect to perceive in a sacred shrine. One can become either a God or a pitiful sinner at Adyar. It is a wondrous spot, and it must be maintained as though it were a holy temple.

Adyar Day exists to remind the members of the glorious place and to urge them to do their best to make Adyar a worthy and dignified shrine for the Masters<sup>1</sup>. (From *Adyar – Historical Notes and Features up to 1934*, compiled by Mary K. Neff, TPH, Adyar, 1999, pp. 45, 46. Quoted from *The Adyar Notes and News*, 12 April 1928)

Much before the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer was made upon his return from India to California, to his residence in Ojai in early 1986, Krishnamurti had told some of his close friends, including Mary Lutyens and Mary Zimbalist, that he knew when he was going to die. However, he would never reveal to them or to anyone else the date. He used to say that “they” know it, the beneficent presences that had accompanied him throughout his life and which he had not

named. He died on 17 February 1986, which the TS observes worldwide as Adyar Day, when members throughout the world remember Adyar as both the International Headquarters of the Society as well as the home of the Founders. It was also for some years Krishnaji’s home.

But before the physical end came he made a significant statement, on 7 February 1986, which was recorded. It speaks for itself:

I was telling them this morning — for seventy years that super energy, no, that immense energy, immense intelligence, has been using this body. I don’t think people realise what tremendous energy and intelligence went through this body — there’s a twelve-cylinder engine. And for seventy years — was a pretty long time — and now the body can’t stand any more.

Nobody — unless the body has been prepared, very carefully, protected and so on — nobody can understand what went through this body. Nobody. Don’t anybody pretend. Nobody. I repeat this: nobody amongst us or the public, know what went on. I know they don’t. And now after seventy years it has come to an end. Not that that intelligence and energy — it’s somewhat here, every day, and especially at night. And after seventy years the body can’t stand it — can’t stand any more. It can’t. The Indians have a lot of damned superstitions about this — that you will and the body goes — and all that kind of nonsense. You won’t find another body like this, or that supreme intelligence operating in a body for many hundred years. You won’t see it again. When he goes, it goes.

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There is no consciousness left behind of *that* consciousness, of *that* state. They'll all pretend or try to imagine they can get into touch with that. Perhaps they will somewhat if they live the teachings. But nobody has done it. Nobody. And so that's that. (From *Krishnamurti — The Open Door* by Mary Lutyens, John Murray Publishers, London, 1988, pp. 148–149.)

His ashes were distributed among the several schools he had founded, but part of them were immersed in the sea by Prof. P. Krishna, a Trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation India and one of his close associates, near the spot on the Adyar beach where Krishnaji was discovered in 1909. That is near the place where the Adyar river merges into the sea, which is also a metaphor for Liberation.

When he dissolved the Order of the Star, in 1929, he shook the TS to its foundations, but more importantly, he caused the Society to question what its purpose was. Was it to create a creed or an army of “initiates”? To make high-sounding statements about the Masters? Or to focus on its Three Objects and its motto, “There is no Religion higher than Truth”, helping people know that “such a thing as Theosophy exists”?

The theosophical ripples about Krishnaji will probably continue in certain quarters. The momentum created ninety years ago is not easy to dispense with. There were also ripples coming from individuals associated with the different

Krishnamurti Foundations. But it is a fact that both HPB and the Mahatmas alerted TS members about the conditioning of the mind and how an “unexamined life is not worth living”. They also decried any form of speculation about the Masters and their work. One of them wrote to Annie Besant: “How few are they who can know anything about us.” (*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, Letter no. 59, TPH Adyar.)

Ripples exist on the surface of the ocean. In its depths there are strong currents that cause the life of the ocean to move. Although Krishnaji ceased to be a member of the TS in 1930 his work was profoundly theosophical, for he was helping people to become aware of their own conditioning and go beyond it.

He probed very deeply into the nature of the mind and showed how an individual can become completely free, thus unfolding love, intelligence, and compassion in his or her life. He was convinced that this would change society at a very fundamental level. He said that choiceless awareness effortlessly causes the mind to be silent. In this complete silence, free from any activity of thought, there is an uncreated perception of the all-embracing unity of all life, which is sacred in its incomprehensible newness. Such flowering of goodness transforms the world.

In his mind there were no ripples. After ninety years, it is time for them to end in our minds too. ✧

**The dewdrop slips into the shining Sea!**

Sir Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*

# Imprisoned by the Intellect

TIM WYATT

IT sounds deeply paradoxical, but humanity is becoming progressively stupefied by its own cleverness and strangely stultified by its own intellectual prowess. Some even assert that this mental ingenuity threatens its very future because it has acquired the ability to invent and deploy ever more demeaning and devastating technologies of destruction, depletion, and control. Has the mind become man's worst enemy?

In one sense the rapid development of the mind over the past few centuries has been a towering achievement and perhaps the key triumphal ingredient of the material "progress" we have encountered and enjoyed. But the mind remains an enduring and impenetrable mystery. Science cannot satisfactorily define it other than as an epiphenomenon of neurochemical activity in the cerebral cortex — that is, a purely material phenomenon and nothing more. Most laboratory dwellers cannot envisage the mind without the brain. Those of an esoteric bent most certainly can because they appreciate its true capabilities and that it can operate in non-physical realms.

The bulk of human beings tend to misuse this mighty intellect. On the one hand they fail to understand its immense hidden potential. On the other, they have no idea of how to control it. Some are even ruled by it.

The theosophical idea of *kāma-manas* — the mind fuelled by desire — is an apt description because apart from a select and elevated few, the majority of people's thoughts are chiefly coloured by deeper, often venal and frequently reptilian, emotional urges. Uncontrolled monkey-minds chatter incessantly to themselves.

Greed, anger, conquest, brutality, profit-at-any-cost, supremacy, jealousy, domination, and hosts of lesser emotional evils pervade the wide-open spaces of much human psychology — and by definition, large swathes of human behaviour as well.

Welcome to the world of the lower, concrete, desire-fuelled mind. This is the realm where most people's thoughts are confined as they jangle around in their own, private echochambers. Animated by often base emotions, the lower mind can wind up imprisoning itself.

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It is the emotional code which needs to be cracked here because this continues to dominate the lower mind's operations. Who was it who observed that experiencing emotional love was like being chained to a savage wild dog? Inflamed and negative emotions especially can often be the sworn enemy of happiness, contentment, equilibrium, balance, nobility of character, and decent behaviour. (I know this to be a fact from personal experience.)

Therefore, it would seem to be an overriding imperative that human beings at least begin to develop a much greater degree of emotional control — and intelligence. Emotional intelligence is only just beginning to appear on humanity's curriculum. Some enlightened schools have begun to teach it. One day we may all be as coldly analytical and of devoid emotion as Mr Spock in the classic TV sci-fi series *Star Trek*, but this is unlikely to happen any time soon. In the meantime, *kāma-manas* rages on unchecked.

However, human beings have a more elevated counterpart to the lower, mundane mind which endlessly pursues its repetitive, yet futile, quest to fulfil its own unsatisfiable longings. This higher mind offers a different universe in which to operate. It is not as congested or polluted with everyday trivialities, reactive responses, or deadening banalities. It has a more sophisticated function. It is part of the soul.

This higher mind — part of that trinity which along with wisdom-intuition (*buddhi*) and spirit (*ātma*) makes up the

eternal reincarnating individuality or soul — has superior abilities. It can conceptualise and create. It appreciates truth and beauty. It is the home of inspiration and the imagination. It understands the world of spirit and higher concealed realities.

To use a vehicular analogy, if the lower mind is a crude ox-cart struggling up a steep, muddy mountain track then the higher mind is our most advanced aeronautical vehicle soaring majestically through the upper reaches of the stratosphere.

Everyone has a higher mind — at least potentially. But in many people it is entirely latent and rarely if ever accessed, let alone used. What proportion of humanity actively and regularly applies their higher minds can only be a matter of wild speculation. I believe it would be true to say that it is only a relatively small proportion of the eight billion plus human inhabitants currently alive on this planet. But I believe its use is indeed increasing.

Far be it from me to belittle the lower, concrete mind. Its rapid development over recent centuries has been the cornerstone of advancement technologically, scientifically, socially, economically, and in virtually every other respect. The lower mind of logic has inspired science and helped it number-crunch its way through mysterious mathematics as well as exploring the most distant vistas in the universe and the most miniscule and intimate interactions of the quantum world. With it we can memorise facts and master skills. Without it we would not be where we are now — for better or worse.



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Whatever its analytical and practical uses in day-to-day life, the lower mind still has severe limitations and boundaries beyond which it cannot advance. It relies very much on our very constricted five physical senses. Using these it determines our highly restricted view of reality — which remains largely materially based. It is difficult for the lower mind to transcend these crude senses but it has the potential to connect with its higher part and produce a fully integrated mind.

While we would not be able to operate without this lower mind, we are unable to advance without finding a way to locate and fire up that higher vehicle. This is one of the chief developments slowly but gradually unfolding in the human kingdom at the moment.

The modern theosophical movement has been promoting this idea for a century and a half — acutely aware that no mass mind-awakening programme, either scientific or religious, has or will ever achieve this. As always, it is a matter of personal effort and application and only a relative few aspire to this. Only comparatively small numbers feel this is a desirable and viable endeavour. This has always been the case. Mind exploration and expansion has always been a strictly minority pursuit.

Employing the higher mind will be the task of forthcoming development groups of humanity as new subraces and root races eventually emerge. There is evidence that what is effectively an enhanced form of consciousness is already beginning to make its presence felt

in some of those now reincarnating.

And yet discovering, exploring, and using our higher minds will still not represent the full flowering of human achievement. We will still not have reached the mountain's summit. We have something even more potent to unlock and unleash from our spiritual arsenal. Beyond but attached to our higher minds is that even more mighty faculty of *buddhi*, or wisdom-intuition, mentioned earlier. As with higher minds, in the bulk of humanity this also lies largely dormant and untapped. Some are entirely unaware of its existence.

Wisdom-intuition bypasses and transcends the intellect, offering direct inputs of higher-grade knowledge, unfiltered by either the lower or higher mind. It is fully functional in some, while with some individuals this ability occasionally breaks through in the form of hunches, flashes of insight, or strong gut instincts which are then frequently, but thankfully not always, ignored. In its basic form it also displays as raw conscience and basic morality — a sense of what is inherently right or wrong, true or false. It is also a realm of compassion.

This is where the “ideas” of artists, inventors, composers, writers, philosophers, social reformers, and other visionaries originate. This faculty provides a conduit to a limitless storehouse of knowledge.

Ultimately this *buddhic* principle will become fully enshrined and operative within the human constitution. Eventually it will become standard issue and fully functional. This faculty will emerge

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more fully during the final two subraces of our present Fifth Root Race. By the time we reach the Sixth Root Race at some distant point in the far future, wisdom-intuition will have become a permanent sixth sense and will augment and extend the existing five — touch, taste, hearing, smell, and sight.

At this point — and perhaps long before — humans will realise that intellect, both lower and higher, offers a necessary, functional, but restricted type of perception and ensuing consciousness. But wisdom-intuition extends the horizons much further and opens up new avenues of awareness beyond brain and mind.

Its appearance will no doubt play a major role in developing humanity's emerging psi abilities especially in such areas as telepathy or direct mind-to-mind communication. It may also help to upgrade our fractured linear view of time into

the singularity of an eternal present. It will hopefully promote a greater understanding and utilisation of human parapsychological capabilities. Despite monumental evidence for the existence of these noetic faculties such as telekinesis, precognition, and clairvoyance, they continue to be denied and often derided by most proponents of hubristic and myopic modern science because they offend its rigid worldview.

The eventual maturation of the wisdom-intuition principle will fundamentally change who we are, how we operate and why. But this is a lofty and long-term challenge. In the meantime controlling that lower merry-go-round mind is the immediate priority and this is one of the most challenging things humanity has to achieve.

If I were a betting man — which I am not — I would not put money on a fast fix for any of this. ✧

**Intuition is soul guidance, appearing naturally in man during those instants when his mind is calm. . . . The goal of yoga science is to calm the mind, that without distortion it may hear the infallible counsel of the Inner Voice. Solve all your problems through meditation.**

Lahiri Mahasaya

**The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. . . . The intellect has little to do on the road to discovery. There comes a leap in consciousness, call it intuition or what you will, and the solution comes to you and you don't know how or why. All great discoveries are made in this way.**

Albert Einstein

# Learn So That You May Teach Theosophy: The Real Work of the TS

DARA TATRAY

IN the writings of the founders of the Theosophical Society (TS) may be found quite a number of aims involving a transformation of the mental landscape one way or another; either at the level of culture and worldview or the level of the individual. This twin direction permeates the works of H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) and her teachers, helping to clear away errors of mistaken judgment clogging up our inner and outer worlds like plaque in the bloodstream. This essay explores selected elements of this work, sometimes described by former TS presidents N. Sri Ram and Radha Burnier as human regeneration.

Human regeneration entails transforming the mind, and therefore society. It encompasses both zeitgeist and psyche. The Buddha put the inner work simply in three interrelated steps when he bade his disciples as follows: “Do not commit any evil deeds, collect all virtuous qualities, completely transform your mind.” (Dalai Lama, p. ix) In *The Joy of Living and Dying in Peace*, the Dalai Lama sug-

gested that eliminating negativity (evil deeds) and cultivating positive acts (virtuous qualities) is made possible by transforming the mind. Some give the wording of the Buddha’s supposed final words to his disciples as: cease to do evil, learn to do good. A pithy summation. It struck me at first as though learning to do good was by far the harder of the two, assuming a very high degree of wisdom. On further reflection however, it appears that the two are inextricably entwined, and that they depend upon and engender the transformation of mind that is our evolutionary destiny as human beings.

## The Real Work

In the subtitle of this essay — The Real Work of the Theosophical Society — what is meant by the work?

“The work” was an expression used by Jiddu Krishnamurti, from time to time. In 2011, I met with Ms Ahalya Chari at Vasanta Vihar. Ms Chari was a well-known educationist and long-time member of the KFI (Krishnamurti Foundation India).

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Over tea, Ms Chari told me that while visiting her at Damodar Gardens on the TS property where she was then residing, Krishnaji made a sweeping gesture with his hand taking in both the main campus of the international headquarters and the KFI headquarters at Vasanta Vihar over the river, as he said: “You know, Ahalyaji, all these resources were meant for the work.”

What Krishnamurti meant by the work was made abundantly clear from the outset of his independent teaching, when in 1929 he announced that he had only one purpose, to urge us towards freedom, to help us break away from all limitations. He said then, as in effect he said hundreds of times since, that only freedom from conditioning would give us the eternal happiness of Self-realization. A position maintained equally fervently by the great exponent of Advaita Vedānta, Ādi Shankarāchārya, who instead of pointing out the limitations of thought and the problem of conditioning as Krishnaji did, referred to the phenomena of projection and superimposition, which surely amount to the same thing. The projections of thought (conditioning) are superimposed on reality, thus veiling the ever-present Self. Among other things, the work involves liberating ourselves from these conditions.

In the foregoing context, it may be useful to consider our current situation, we human beings, as viewed in Vedānta and in Kashmir Shaivism, among other systems. The embodied self — the me — is referred to as *jīva*, the Sanskrit word

for life, in the sense of biological life (not the big L). The *jīva* is “the empirical self whose consciousness is conditioned by the *samskāra-s* of his experience and who is identified with the limitations of his subtle and gross constitution”. In contrast, the liberated human being, a *jīvanmukta*, is described as one “who while still living in the physical body is not conditioned by the limitation of his subtle and gross constitution . . .” (Singh, p. 244) The *jīvanmukta* is living in a condition of freedom from the known. The conditions remain, but the liberated one is free of them, abiding in the awareness of pure unconditioned consciousness, or the Self.

The Neoplatonic conception of theurgy or divine work may seem as though singing from a different playbook, but when looked at closely, reveals more than a marked similarity with the above. In *The Key to Theosophy* HPB described theurgy as making oneself as pure as the incorporeal beings so that “the gods” might impart the Divine mysteries. (Blavatsky, p. 2) Iamblichus taught that the idea or form of God was imprinted in the soul, “by a spiritual conception which is eternal and contemporary with the soul”. (Wilder, p. 17).

In the works of Plato, the idea or form of God was “imprinted on the soul”, a notion akin to the *ātman-Brahman* conception in Aryan traditions. Theurgy, then, was the work of purification leading to awareness of the Self and thus to the state of divine wisdom. That is where both Neoplatonist and theosophist are

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headed, ultimately. And in that state, yes, the gods impart divine wisdom, which is perhaps an anthropomorphic turn of phrase for a condition in which the knower is at one with the known in a state of Self-realization, either temporarily or (for the *jīvanmukta*) permanently. It appears that in the end, no one is going to be imparting anything to anybody.

“The real work” was a phrase used by a number of leaders in the TS, including the fifth president, N. Sri Ram, who in March 1970 gave a talk to the Australian Convention in which he shared his views regarding the “high aim of the Society”. This was, he said, “the radical transformation of man, his whole nature, mode of conduct, and future”. In Sri Ram’s view, if this aim was borne in mind, we would know what kind of activity to best pursue in the TS at any given time. The three Objects, he argued, are not sufficient to answer this need, for they are so “elastically phrased, that almost any good work, whether humanitarian, or intellectual, or of the nature of psychic research, can be brought under their blanket”. Concluding that train of thought, Sri Ram offered this beautifully logical notion:

The more carefully one considers this question the more surely one will come to the realization that it is the word *Theosophy* . . . that indicates the character of the work in which we should be engaged. (Sri Ram)

Such being the case, it becomes necessary to begin to understand what is meant by the word Theosophy: to distinguish it from the background noise of vague spirituality. That is always the first step

on the road to knowledge or learning, discerning the actual object of knowledge, or the subject matter if you prefer. In my opinion, we should not shy away from this when introducing someone to the TS.

To stress the importance of identifying exactly what is meant by the word “Theosophy” (and yes, I know, we ought not be dogmatic about it), I call upon a 5th century textbook on Indian linguistics or grammar, *Vākyapadīya*, by the grammarian-philosopher Bhartr̥hari. The title of the book in English would be “Words in a Sentence”. Never was there a more prosaic title for a profound treatise, taking the subject all the way to the top: or, in fact, starting all the way at the top with *śabda-brahman*. *Śabda* means sound, word, and noise. All sound ultimately emanates from Brahman and is at one with Brahman (*śabdādvaīta*). The Word was and is always with God. Proper sustained attention will therefore lead back to the source. Not an easy read by any stretch, *Vākyapadīya* does have some exceptionally apt ideas related to the importance of identifying what is meant by the word Theosophy, which is, after all, a philosophical cognate of Brahman.

In the commentary to *Vākyapadīya*, śloka 1.86, the author states:

Knowledge, without the thing to be known, does not enter into usage. And nothing can be expressed through the word which has not assumed sequence. (Subramania Iyer, 1965, p. 87)

“Assumed sequence” here means having made it to the stage of being uttered or expressed, from first having

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been conceived in the mind of God as it were. In other words, in this world there can be no knowledge without specifying the object to be known. Even the most subtle innermost must be selected as an object of knowledge before it can be meditated upon and assimilated. We need not fear stepping Theosophy down to our own level — narrowed, eviscerated, and simplified — by merely pointing out the provenance and etymology of the term. It is in fact essential that it be clearly delineated, for otherwise it cannot be known, and it cannot be shown.

It was HPB who in *The Key to Theosophy* stated that the TS “was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities”. (Blavatsky) There are two parts to this deceptively simple pronouncement. The first points out that the TS was formed to show that Theosophy exists; a fact frequently lost to view. The TS is meant to allow or cause Theosophy to be visible, to be revealed — two meanings of the word show.

The second part is equally important. The TS is not only to show that Theosophy exists, but to do whatever it can to help us ascend towards it by study and assimilation. The kind of study that affords assimilation of the teachings would then become a pillar of activities in the TS, occupying a prominent place in programs offered by the TS to members and the public: especially to members.

Let us consider a few simple factual statements about Theosophy, which you

may well already be familiar with, and which we could consider sharing with the casual enquirer. As almost every reader will know, the word Theosophy comes from the Greek *theosophia*, meaning “divine wisdom”. As a body of thought by that name, it can be traced back to the third-century Eclectic Theosophical System of Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus. As a concept and as a possibility for the human being, however, the notion of divine wisdom goes back much further, to the Vedas and the Upanishads, as far back as 3,000 BCE or even significantly earlier. Teachings about Theosophy have also been given voice by the Theosophical Society from 1875 onwards, it being one of the chief aims of Helena Blavatsky to bring about their revival.

Should such a statement be made to a prospective member or a new member, we would already have faced them in the right direction, away from occult entertainment and towards the goal of all spiritual endeavour. Simply put, the teachings with which the TS is concerned concern divine wisdom. They date back to ancient Greece and, before then, to ancient India, the fountainhead of Theosophy, which nevertheless may be found in all true religions, especially at the apex where a religion nears the *summum bonum*, the final goal. Instead of directing the casual enquirer to the plethora of peripheral material on many of our programs, we could also point out that drilling a little further down, we find that within that body of thought, whether in Vedic or Greek guise, there are built-in guides showing

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aspirants or enquirers how to use the map of the territory, and how to get from where they are to their final destination, as portrayed in the wisdom teachings. In some cases, the relatively modern theosophical writings help make the teachings more accessible.

By contrast, in my experience of the TS, enquirers are often treated as though they will, if they come along to a few meetings, figure it out for themselves; they will happen to notice Theosophy. There appears to be an aversion to defining it, perhaps for fear of seeming to be dogmatic, or scaring people away with the prospect of hard work. Unfortunately, a typical Lodge/Branch program will not necessarily facilitate an enquirer stumbling upon Theosophy.

If *theosophia* is by definition “divine wisdom”, it also becomes necessary to offer some understanding of what is meant by the word divine — at least suggesting a direction in which to look, which is possibly all that could ever be said about the ineffable. To that end, I love Herbert Guenther’s treatment of the word divine:

The “divine” is essentially a symbolic expression of the fact that interest and attention have been drawn away from the surface of sensuous objects and have been directed toward the within, the background and source of all things. (Guenther, p. 1).

Right up front here, we are reminded that the word divine, as any other word, is, at best, a symbolic expression pointing in the right direction. Although everyone

knows that the word is not the thing, there is a tendency to feel as though by uttering a word frequently enough we have something in our hands. That “sugar is sweet” can convey meaning only to those who have tasted it at least once. With repetition of a word like divine however it is easy to forget that nothing has been tasted but an empty word, filled only with assumptions. Fortunately, the teachings make this perfectly clear, demonstrating how to go from empty air and shallow meaning to deep meaning and realization.

The word as symbol discloses the fact that there is something, or some nothing, behind the door marked “X” (divine wisdom), and everything in the tradition tells us that we need to look away from the surface to come to what is behind that veil. The word points to and conceals the object. Guenther’s definition immediately alerts us to the fact that we must look where we do not normally look; with eyes other than those with which we apprehend external objects. We also learn from this brief definition that the divine, which is the within, is the background and source of all things. That is the tail of the tiger to hold on to.

While all this may seem to be out of our league, even in terms of conceiving of it, and way too much to include in a preliminary statement about Theosophy (should we be considering what to say to an enquirer), it becomes less inconceivable if we recall the definition of the *jīvanmukta*, one who is not conditioned by the limitations of the gross and even subtle constitution, and therefore liber-

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ated while still embodied (Singh, p. 244). The *jīvanmukta* is one who is free from the natural and inevitable conditions imposed by the physical, astral, and mental bodies. It is in that state that it is possible to be aware of divine wisdom. Looked at in this fashion, the divine becomes somewhat less unintelligible.

Terminology varies from *darśana* to *darśana* [one school of philosophy to another] in the family of traditions stemming from the very old Aryan doctrine referred to by HPB as Cis-Himalayan, or Trans-Himalayan, at once Hindu and Buddhist. However, whether called moksha, nirvana, divine wisdom, or enlightenment, the to-do list for those wanting to be there always involves freedom from the known (by whatever name). It is only under those conditions that we enter the territory of the divine. Or so we are taught.

In *The Key to Theosophy* the author penned the words, “Dedicated by HPB to all her pupils that they may learn and teach in their turn”, which is where I pinched the title of this essay from. Possibly that expression originated with Master KH in a letter written in 1884 to Francesca Arundale, treasurer of the London Lodge:

It is not enough that you should set the example of a pure, virtuous life and a tolerant spirit; this is but negative goodness — and for *chelaship* will never do. You should, even as a simple member, much more as an officer, learn that you may teach, acquire spiritual knowledge and strength that the work may lean upon you.

(Jinarājādāsa (Ed.), Letter 4)

This advice applies to anyone who would like the TS to continue and flourish; to be what it should be. Much depends on the likes of us, as HPB suggested when commenting on the future of the Theosophical Society:

Its future will depend entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members, on whom it will fall to carry on the work, and to direct the Society, after the death of the founders. (Blavatsky, p. 304)

### From “Learning About” to “Learning”

Some hearing the phrase, “learn Theosophy”, may insert an extra word there, turning HPB’s exhortation into “learn about Theosophy”. It seems to me that there is a difference between “learning” and “learning about”. When we want to learn Spanish, we say we are learning Spanish, not learning about Spanish. We are learning to be readers and speakers of the Spanish language, in the process of which we will be transformed into those who have Spanish (if we get that far). It is in that way I believe that we could be thinking about learning Theosophy; instead of learning about Theosophy. Just a minor point perhaps, but “learning about” can be purely academic, while “learning” involves a different order of assimilation and deeper transformation.

For learning to take place, the mind must be fit for absorption, which is a worthy subject on its own, involving, for example the *yama* and *niyama* of the Yoga system. Unless our minds are



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able to absorb, the teachings will fall on somewhat deaf ears. In Vedānta the chief process of learning is known as *śravana* (hearing), *manana* (reflection), and *nididhyāsana* (deep, repeated contemplation and assimilation). This is the triple-flow of learning to be applied to sacred teachings from a true guru or, these days, from a text. The listening (*śravana*) in this model is the kind of listening possible only in the confidence that the source of the teaching is pure. We are hearing the truth from a valid source, we listen without interpolating, with respect and humility. There must be a state of receptivity. This is necessarily followed by reflecting on the teaching (*manana*). Here we start to add muscle to that faith when by our own efforts we question, study, face, and remove doubts. This is an ongoing process returned to again and again, as is hearing and listening.

Finally, if we are to arrive at knowledge or to learn, reflection must become contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) in which we hold ourselves steadily in front of the object of knowledge and pay undivided attention. In the state of undivided attention, we ourselves are undivided, and the object of knowledge is absorbed, at least to some extent. Ultimately, learning Theosophy involves all this. I imagine that along the way, we would become more and more reliable as those upon whom the work may lean.

Towards the end of the *Bhagavadgītā*, Krishna says to Arjuna: “I have imparted

to you very secret knowledge; reflect on it critically and then act as you like.” (18.63) Once we have heard Theosophy, reflected upon it, contemplated it, we may indeed do as we like, promote Theosophy and the TS any way we like. Those who have studied Theosophy are able to distinguish it from other objects of knowledge, and are therefore able to help show it.

*Vākyapadīya* has a special message for dedicated members of the Theosophical Society who have been enjoined to learn Theosophy. It refers to knowledge as being recorded through “the uninterrupted tradition of cultured people”. (1.141) The cultured are those who have heard, reflected, and contemplated. In the commentary, Bhartrhari further remarks:

What is remembered from generation to generation, in an uninterrupted manner, is again and again embodied in words . . . preserved by the continuity of the practice of the cultured. (Subramania Iyer, pp. 124–5).

Priceless, liberating knowledge has come down to us from the distant past, largely courtesy of the Theosophical Society. Knowledge however is not made up of written documents. It is not in the ink on the page but conveyed as living energy *prāna* (spirit) to *prāna*, passed down in an unbroken succession that can remain so only so long as there are those to receive it. At times the flame may appear to be small in the TS, but it can be stimulated by those attending to it. ✧

## Learn So That You May Teach Theosophy: The Real Work of the TS

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Thought has constructed this culture of aggression, competition, and war, and yet this very thought is groping after order and peace. But thought will never find order and peace, do what it will. Thought must be silent for love to be.

...

Light is an extraordinary thing; the more you watch it the deeper and vaster it becomes; and in its movements the trees were caught. It was startling; no canvas could have caught the beauty of that light. It was more than the light of the setting sun; it was more than your eyes saw. It was as though love was on the land.

...

Meditation is not a separate thing from life; it is the very essence of life, the very essence of daily living. To listen to those bells, to hear the laughter of that peasant as he walks by with his wife, to listen to the sound of the bell on the bicycle of the little girl as she passes by: it is the whole of life, and not just a fragment of it, that meditation opens.

J. Krishnamurti  
*The Only Revolution*

# Painting the Cosmos: A Key to the Influence of Theosophy on Modern Art

MICHAEL CARTER

IN the past thirty years, much has been said of Theosophy's influence on modern art. This influence, beginning soon after the founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) and reaching a peak at the opening of the twentieth century, was well attested in the early stages of artistic Modernism, its most visible effects emerging in the radical transformation of the visual arts into different lineages of abstraction in painting. This story has been well documented now including the waning of this influence and the general marginalization of the fact of this deep influence for reasons of history, fashion, politics, and inevitability of changing conditions under unfolding cycles.

This condition would persist until the late twentieth century when serendipitous discoveries and those same changing, cyclical conditions would once again push the awareness of these theosophical influences back into the broader consciousness. These currents would take their most manifest form in the exhibition, "The Spiritual in Art: Abstract

Painting, 1890–1985", first staged at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1986, thereafter traveling to Chicago and The Hague. In the exhibition catalog, in essay after essay, art historians of the era demonstrated the foundational influences of Ageless Wisdom traditions on artists of the early twentieth century — most regularly from close readings of theosophists H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* and Annie Besant's and C. W. Leadbeater's *Thought Forms* — and the continued evidences of this influence into the (then) present.

Today, this exhibition has taken on an almost legendary status among contemporary artists. Currently, there is the sustained exhibition of these historic artworks in a way that likely eclipses their popularity during the lifetimes of the actual artists. Most overtly, the works of Hilma af Klint have travelled the globe to wide acclaim and has shone a light of renewed or new interest into her contemporaries. In America, a traveling exhibition of the Transcendental

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**Michael Carter** is an artist based in Los Angeles and lectures at the Geffen Academy at UCLA. His artworks integrate the insights of modern spirituality with a criticality born of scientific practices and have been exhibited nationally and abroad. He has lectured publicly at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Ojai Valley Theosophical Lodge, and more.

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Painting Group (“Another World: The Transcendental Painting Group”) has, for the first time, fully investigated the works of this association of artists, deeply influenced by their theosophical studies.

The recent publication of Carolyn Wayland’s *Painting the Cosmos: A Metaphysical Universe* (Shakti Press, 2021) opens up a unique insight into this history from the perspective of a practicing artist. Across the four sections of *Painting the Cosmos*, Wayland employs her skills as a painter and explanatory proficiencies as a teacher to depict and describe fundamental doctrines of the Ageless Wisdom tradition. The text centers around thirty-three paintings most commonly picturing specific teachings from *The Secret Doctrine*. Attempts at visualizing these metaphysical doctrines have been executed before — James Perkins’s *Visual Meditations on the Universe* (1984) comes most immediately to mind — but it is Wayland’s use of “abstract” painting that is particularly illuminating.

If, as the art history so attests, we can look to the influence of Theosophy as critical to the emergence of abstraction in painting in Europe, America, and beyond, then we can see Wayland’s paintings and the intent behind *Painting the Cosmos* as something like coming full circle or returning to the roots. It is through the very mode of her painterly vocabulary — gestural, expressive, symbolic colors and geometric forms — that we can trace this artistic language back to its source in those artists of a century ago who first attempted this same effort in the modern era. Conse-

quentially, we can use the thirty-three paintings presented in *Painting the Cosmos* as a lens to better understand this theosophic influence.

Although aimed at a wider audience who might be unfamiliar with the metaphysics of the Ageless Wisdom traditions and the history and influences of the TS, an audience which Wayland capably addresses in the preface and introduction, the persistent reader will begin to notice a certain formal vocabulary which resonates with historic, twentieth-century abstract painting. That is to say, in the act of painting inspired by passages from *The Secret Doctrine*, Wayland arrives at a series of works which seem to recapitulate the visual language of abstract painting of the previous century.

It is the pairing of this formal vocabulary with specific, fundamental concepts (the first fundamental proposition, *pralaya*, periodicity, and so on) and, importantly, associated quotations from *The Secret Doctrine* itself (“ . . . let him set out with the postulate that there is one absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned being”, and so forth) which shines a strong and clarifying light into the influence of Theosophy on modern art.

Although much has been written about this influence, it is almost always in the most general sense. Vanishingly few are the art historical scholars with a strong command of the metaphysics and associated theosophic texts; even rarer is the contemporary artist with this same perspective. Thus, I would like to look at a

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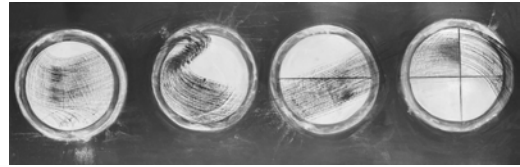
few examples from Wayland's effort in comparison to art historical analogues to further emphasize this point.

Fittingly, Wayland opens the introduction with a quote from Piet Mondrian. Comparing the paintings made during that artist's transition into abstraction during the 1910s (Mondrian became a member of the TS in 1909) with Wayland's painting and comments in the "Cosmic Evolution" section makes clear the relationship I wish to highlight. In "Cosmic Evolution", Wayland presents the first four stages of the famous sequence of sacred geometry from *The Secret Doctrine's* "Proem" along with a summary of the related text:

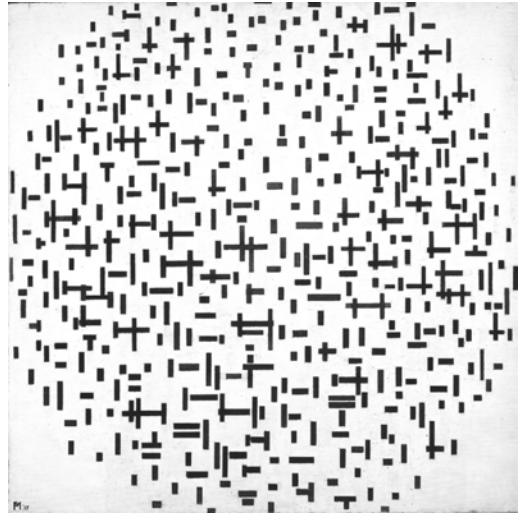
After this, time and space manifest, symbolized by the horizontal line dividing the circle in half. The vertical line further divides the circle into the duality of spirit and matter, which are not two independent principles but two aspects of the absolute reality.

If we use this presentation as a lens to consider the early abstract works of Mondrian — for instance, *Composition with Lines (Composition in Black and White)* from 1917 — one notes immediately the same formal elements: the ellipse, the horizontal line, and the vertical line. Indeed, it is this very doctrine that Mondrian aimed to embody in his "*Nieuwe Beelding*" ("Neoplasticist") works: a cosmic harmony of the union of "vibrations of energy" represented by horizontal and vertical lines. Wayland's rendering of "Cosmic Evolution" and Mondrian's "*Nieuwe Beelding*" are in fact near equivalents, inspired by both artists'

study of the same aspects of *The Secret Doctrine*.



"Cosmic Evolution" by Wayland



"Nieuwe Beelding" by Mondrian

Continuing, I want to jump ahead to a later work in Part III of Wayland's *Painting the Cosmos*: "The Identity of All Souls with the Universal Over-Soul". Here the artist pairs quotations from *The Secret Doctrine* discussing the soul and Over-Soul with her own summary:

Every form, every being, is a spark of this universal Over-Soul or 'spirit', which is its essential identity and connection with all other beings.

She pairs this with an intriguing image: a circle containing a vertical, pointed oval shape, a *vesica piscis*. With this pairing of image and words, I want to now look

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again at another historic artist known for his commitments to the Ageless Wisdom, traditions and study of *The Secret Doctrine*: Emil Bisttram, cofounder of the American Transcendental Painting Group (1938-1942). Here Bisttram's *Cosmic Egg* series — produced in the 1930s during the artist's embrace of abstract compositions — is particularly illuminating; one in particular, *Creative Forces* (1936), has an element I would like to highlight. Setting aside momentarily the cluster of prismatic forms that occupy the lower two-thirds of the painting (I will return to that next) and instead focusing on the upper third, we see again the same element from Wayland's depiction of the Over-Soul: the *vesica piscis*. In this case, we have Bisttram's own words to confirm my argument. He describes these colored rays as having

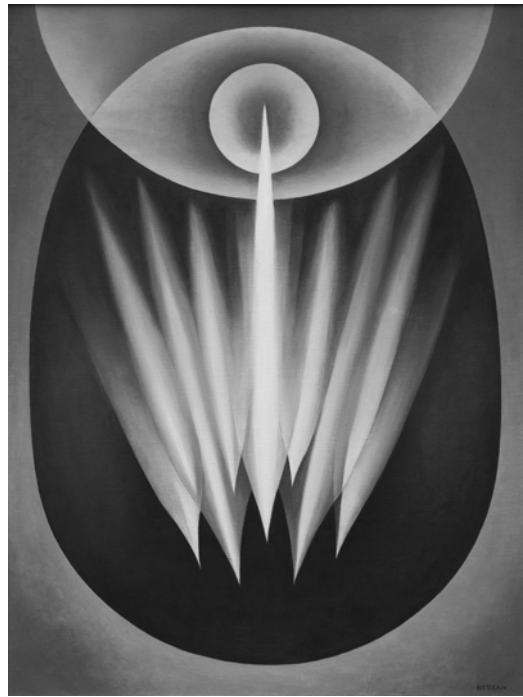
. . . received their source out of the One, which is within the egg and yet outside of



"Over Soul" by Wayland

it, the One being suspended of another still larger egg, or Infinity.

Both artists have homed in on the shape produced by the overlapping disks and the conceptual implications of this formal arrangement to depict this doctrine: unity and diversity yet all inseparable from a greater totality. As an artist myself, I find their solution particularly elegant and evocative.



"Creative Forces" by Bisttram

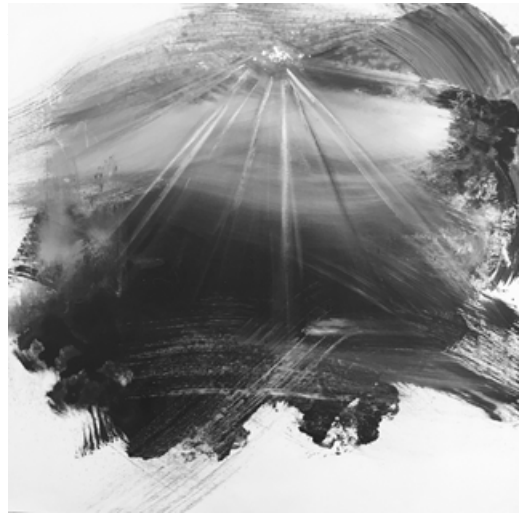
Finally, I want to address a third section and artwork from *Painting the Cosmos*, "The Seven Rays: Seven Creative Forces". In this section, Wayland presents a brief summary of the doctrine of the Seven Rays including a list of corresponding qualities attributed to each Ray:

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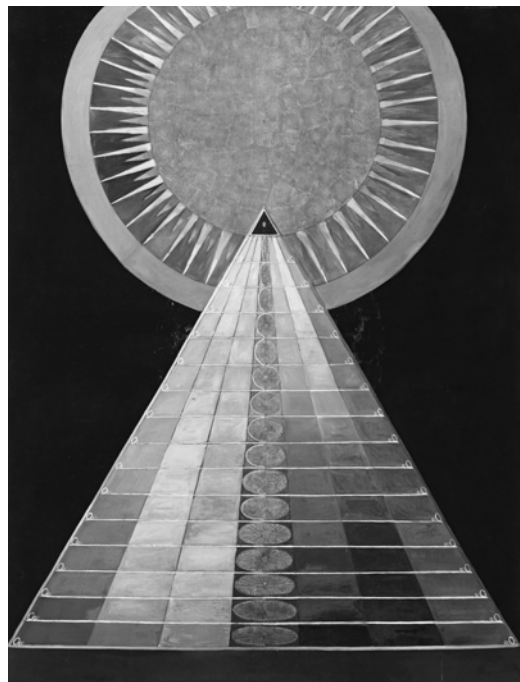
They are the primeval seven rays, each ray representing both a manifestation of the supreme and an eternal truth or quality.

She pairs this discussion with an image of seven beams of light emanating from a cluster of white points, the entire element forming a triangle against a ground of black and white brush strokes. Circling back to Bistram's *Creative Forces* — if it was not abundantly clear already — it is unambiguously that artist's effort to visualize the same doctrine. However, to really emphasize the point and underline how often representations of the Seven Rays appear in the work of modern, theosophically influenced artists, let us look to another historical example and what is likely the most well-known of the same: Hilma af Klint's *Group X, Altarpieces, No. 1* (1915).

Indeed, both Wayland and af Klint settle on a similar composition in their visualizations: a triangle of colored rays emanating from a common point, from red on the left to violet on the right, on a field of black. Although I am not yet aware of any statements by af Klint definitively linking the specific doctrine to this painting, the many facts of her biography and historical context produce overwhelming evidence for the connection. Scholarship has established that *The Secret Doctrine* was a subject of study for The Five, the group of quasi-spiritualist peers that af Klint met with regularly around the turn of the previous century. Indeed, she had a copy of *The Secret Doctrine* in her personal library until she died: the foundation that bears her name



“Seven Rays” by Wayland



“Group X” by af Klint

possesses this copy to this day. Regardless, to those familiar with ageless wisdom teachings, the intent is abundantly

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evident and Wayland's presentation further bolsters the point. As I stated at the beginning, the theosophical influence on modern art is well established now. There is really no ground to assert otherwise. However, as much as the fact of this relationship is unassailable, its specific character — between inspiring doctrine and artistic form — is so far only loosely understood, especially to the contemporary artist, art historian, and general public. I believe this presents an uncommon opportunity for the student of the Ageless Wisdom traditions. I picked three examples here guided by the parallels I

observed when first reading Carolyn Wayland's *Painting the Cosmos*; it is in no way an exhaustive investigation of either the book or the art historical record. I hope this inquiry will encourage others to look more closely and with a different lens at the art of the twentieth century — especially abstract painting — and reflect on how this historic influence might be continuing to unfold in this present cycle today.

(*Painting the Cosmos* is published by Shakti Press, an imprint of Fohat Productions, and is available via their website [fohatproductions.com](http://fohatproductions.com))

Kandinsky points out [in his book *The Spiritual in Art*] that Theosophy (in its true sense; not as it generally appears) is yet another expression of the same spiritual movement which we are now seeing in Painting.

Piet Mondrian



# Can We Be Free of Conflict?

KAMALA NELLEN

A COUPLE of months ago, in a moment fraught with tension, a dear friend suddenly slammed the phone down on me; that was the end of our communications for a long while. The suddenness of what occurred stunned me, opening a wide space with no thought coming in. I did not have a response, a thought or an emotion. I waited, and nothing happened. After a while, I chose to stay with that spaciousness that had opened, and the wondering of what might still happen. The potential for it being an ending to the friendship became apparent as the days and then weeks went by.

It was during the sustained pause in our communication that I came to understand clearly that my friend had been overwhelmed with what he had going on in his life, so our agreement to travel together had become unimaginable for him. I also realized that on my part I had been making demands on someone who was clearly overwhelmed.

Still, I waited, though I had started to enjoy the peace that had replaced the emptiness and along with the wonder if

that was all there was. When he did apologize many weeks later, I admit that I was immensely relieved and grateful, which was expressed along with my own apology for adding to the overload. There was growth on both sides into compassion for self and the other, and wanting to be more sensitive toward others' needs going forward.

My point in telling this story is the potential in the pause to end conflict. I was fascinated and incredibly curious during that long pause I experienced and, the longer I stayed in non-action, the greater the acceptance and contentment of letting go. Consequently, I have focused on allowing more frequent pauses during my daily life simply as a way of resetting myself to become present to the peace inherent in a pause and, when I can see it, the potential to defuse an oncoming conflict with another or within myself.

When I pause, I can see how self-importance arising from the content of my consciousness is driving the bus, and the equal potential to drop it and return to equilibrium. When I can stay with a

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**Ms Kamala Nellen**, formerly a professional dancer, spent seven years living in an ashram while studying with a spiritual Master from India and, after his passing, spent another eleven years with his successor. She is currently a performance coach and a yoga teacher.

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pause, I open to receiving clarity. It is a beautiful space to enter, like being a passenger on a plane gliding high above the clouds — the spaciousness between thoughts, between actions — and it is very powerful with its held energy which can travel in any direction or stay in suspension. So when asked the question, “Can we free ourselves of conflict?” The answer for me now is a resounding “Yes”.

Let us examine what Krishnamurti has said:

Our consciousness has been programmed for thousands and thousands of years to think of ourselves as individuals, as separate entities struggling, in conflict from the moment we are born until we die. We are programmed to that. We have accepted that. We have never challenged it; we have never asked if it is possible to live a life absolutely without conflict. Never having asked it we will never learn about it.

We repeat. It is an innate part of our existence to be in conflict — nature is in conflict: that is our argument — and we consider that progress is only through conflict. Religious organizations throughout history have maintained the idea of individual salvation. We are questioning very seriously whether there is an individual consciousness; whether you, as a human being, have a separate consciousness from the rest of mankind. You have to answer this, not just play with it.

(2nd Public Talk, 14 July 1981)

One evening recently, I was with a small group in Pine Cottage, at the Krishnamurti Foundation in America,

Ojai, California. Our focus in the dialogue that night was on the very quote by Krishnamurti mentioned above and the idea that we, as a group, could make a contribution to end conflict in the world. There were five of us present that night, and one person said: “Five of us is enough that if we as a group experience a shift, we will impact the world.”

We all agreed we would see what might happen during the next couple of hours. What he said rang true for me along the lines of Yoga, that the world is as one sees it; everything we say and do colors our own experience and so, the world. Physics also tells us we are living in one connected biosphere so one action does impact the whole; a conversation here may change something on the other side of the planet.

My studies had shown me what Shaivism has said, *chaitanyam ātma*, “the Self is Consciousness”. Consciousness is the perfect principle, which is all-pervasive. (*Secret of the Siddhas*, by Swami Muktananda, p. 98). There is only one Consciousness, though myriad thoughts and worlds arise within an individual, creating the illusion of individual consciousness. So I easily opted into the idea.

And we began our focused exploration that evening; we would look into this together, keeping a pulse on what was going on within ourselves as we looked at what was said, because the mind has lots of propaganda, opinions, beliefs, and a diverse database of what is right and wrong, and facts and figures stored in

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memory. My Master always said that whether good or bad thoughts, to see them all as simply the play of Consciousness and let them all go. This aligns perfectly with Krishnamurti as far as I can tell. To dismiss the whole lot of everything in my thinking mind in order to be present to navigate the discussion from openness. It was a challenge of great proportions for me to simply listen and watch both inside myself and inside others.

To me, a dialogue is a kind of entering into what a friend once described as a “third space” — a neutral space, a place of potentiality, where preconceived notions are left out in order to see what will arise. In my experience, this often leads to immense creativity and the outcomes are fresh and exciting. It requires the individuals to leave out any preconceived ideas or personal agenda and to come into the space empty to work together to see what can happen. When I am in a dialogue or watching one, it is often clear that people really do not understand each other and are not taking the time to slow down enough to try to do so.

When I engaged with another person in the group that evening, it was only after listening and reflecting back multiple times to each other, that we finally each began reaching to truly listen and understand each other; longer, deeper, quieter pauses began occurring. Eventually the entire group entered into an open and sensitive space. As another person in the group pointed out, we had shifted into curiosity — open to what might arise from the unknown. This is the point where

the magic of dialogue occurs; there was a tangible awareness of an expansiveness we could have remained with for a long time.

By the end of the evening, we had made a shift as a group and there was a sense of deep peace and love among us. Call it, as Krishnamurti termed it, the Immeasurable, or what you will. . . . I, for one, wanted to bask in that expansive peaceful space — true meditation, without thinking. I believe that night we did create a change in the world. For me, it was a significant shift. There it was again, that beautiful pause, a dropping into Consciousness/the perfect principle, or the Immeasurable. The power and beauty inherent in a pause have been more consistently apparent to me since that dialogue. To me, the dissolving of conflict lies in the pause. It happens in a third space.

Only when conflict is not tolerated, but is seen, understood, and therefore dissolved in one action can there be emptiness, stillness, and truth.

J. Krishnamurti, (*In the Presence of Krishnamurti*, by Mary Zimbalist, p.17)

Now I am more attuned to catching the moment where conflict starts, and I can pause and wait, like I do when my car is stopped at a red traffic signal. I have the ability to stay there as long as needed. I am the cause of my conflict and its dissolution and you are the cause of your conflict and its dissolution. I can stay in the pause until I see what is occurring and the conflict ends. It is in the seeing and dismissing of self-important

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thinking and the filter of the past that the dissolution of conflict lies; how I choose to receive and how I choose to respond. In my opinion, the first and last step is to pause. Pause, see, dissolve, listen.

When we pause, there is the potential to enter the heart and to pay attention to what is there. It has been said: "The head is never without conflict; the heart is never with conflict." The Masters have told us to turn within to access the heart because therein lies wisdom and the ending of

conflict. Only Goodness arises from the heart. And when we act out of the heart's prompts, our impact cannot help but be positive. It is up to each one of us to end conflict.

We are the receivers of grace when we pause, and listen to the heart. There is understanding, compassion, care, seeing the beauty of the other and of oneself and of this world. Then action is clear and it has a beneficial impact on the whole. ✧

**A good man complains of no one; he does not look to faults. Most of conflicts and tensions are due to language. Don't pay so much attention to the words. In love's country, language doesn't have its place. . . .**

**A life without love is of no account. Don't ask yourself what kind of love you should seek, spiritual or material, divine or mundane, Eastern or Western divisions only lead to more divisions. Love has no labels, no definitions. It is what it is, pure and simple. Love is the water of life. And a lover is a soul of fire! The universe turns differently when fire loves water.**

Shams Tabrizi

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