



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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**Note:** Articles for publication in *The Theosophist* and any feedback about the published articles may be sent to: [<editorialoffice@gmail.com>](mailto:editorialoffice@gmail.com)

**Cover:** Glacial Lake Willoughby is located in Westmore, Orleans County, in Vermont, US. It is over 300 feet (91 m) deep in places, making it potentially the deepest lake entirely contained within New England. To see the whole beautiful lake area use the link: [<commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ALake\\_Willoughby\\_October\\_2021\\_003.jpg>](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ALake_Willoughby_October_2021_003.jpg)

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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 and women 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 human beings to know the Spirit as themselves and the mind and body as their 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.

# What is Theosophy?

TIM BOYD

Theosophy is everything, but everything isn't Theosophy.  
Adam Warcup

THE Theosophical Society (TS) came into being 150 years ago. Its purpose was stated by its principal founder as to make it known “that such a thing as Theosophy exists”. During its time it has attracted people from all walks of life, including some of the most advanced thinkers and creative people in the world. All of them knew what it was that drew them to it, but if asked to explain, the answers varied.

During the lifetime of H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) her magnetic personality, combined with her enthralling capacity to describe the many strange and remarkable things she had seen in her global travels piqued people's interest. The fact that she was constantly producing a range of psychic phenomena further added to her attraction.

Over the years many sincere, knowledgeable, and prominent members of the TS have developed descriptions of Theosophy. Often those descriptions have resulted in disagreements, even acrimonious separations, because one's view of such an important subject does not conform to the view of another. It is one thing to disagree about the price of a house, or the best route to a destination, but when

the disagreement centers on the nature of the universe and the intelligences that guide it, tempers can flare. If one had any doubt about it, just look at human history. More blood has been spilt in the name of God than any other cause.

## **But what is Theosophy?**

Because (wisely) no formal definition was given by the TS founders, we as members have been obliged to develop at least some partial idea for ourselves.

During the lifetime of the Buddha there were a number of metaphysical questions that he refused to answer, even though directly asked. His stated reason for withholding an answer was that any answer he would give would only result in confusion. His view was that it would encourage a distracting false understanding of a subject that was not merely beyond the questioner's grasp, but irrelevant to the task of self-transformation.

When it comes to Theosophy there are clear categories that these definitions fall into.

For some, Theosophy is the study of its wealth of teachings on a vast range of subjects — cycles of unfoldment, planes of consciousness, descriptions of the birth

## What is Theosophy?

and development of the human being and humanity itself, of the birth and unfoldment of the cosmos, and so on. From this point of view, it is seen as an inexhaustible fount of knowledge, providing answers and explanations for the deep mysteries of life: Who am I? Why am I here? What happens when we die? What is the nature of the human being, the universe?

### **Theosophy as a system of knowledge**

Some of the most prominent “second-generation theosophists” gave definitions of Theosophy emphasizing facts and a system of knowledge. For example:

Theosophy may be described to the outside world as an intelligent theory of the universe. . . . It is a statement of the great facts of Nature so far as they are known — an outline of the scheme of our corner of the universe. — C. W. Leadbeater

And another by Geoffrey Hodson:

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.

A list of the headings in the book, *First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinarājadāsa (the fourth president of the TS), gives an indication of the approach to Theosophy as a system of knowledge:

Evolution of Life and Form; Rise and Fall of Civilizations; Laws of Reincarnation; Law of Karma; Invisible Worlds; Man in Life and Death; Evolution of Animals; Work of the Triple Logos; Kingdoms of Life; Evolution of Matter and Force; Evolution of Life; Nature’s Message of Beauty; Evolution of Consciousness; Inner Government of the World; Path of Discipleship; God’s Plan; and so on.

### **Principles and a Different Way of Thinking**

One of the frequent observations of those embarking on a study of Theosophy is that so much of its teachings are abstract. Such a strong focus on the invisible abstract creates challenges for students. A different way of thinking needs to develop.

HPB’s constant emphasis was on deductive, top-down reasoning — moving from principles to specifics. At its best it leads to an intuitive approach to understanding. So much of normal education focuses on its opposite, inductive reasoning — the attempt to derive universals from particulars. She suggested that the student employ the Hermetic Axiom as a foundation for study:

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As is the inner, so is the outer; as is the great, so is the small; as it is above, so it is below: there is but ONE LIFE AND LAW.

I. K. Taimni, a professor of chemistry, TS author, and a profound thinker/practitioner of yoga philosophy, made the following comment:

Once we have derived or discovered a principle by correct and reliable methods we can depend upon it under all kinds of circumstances. But when we are dealing with a mass of detailed facts we are liable to trip any moment. The reason for this is obvious. All principles and relations exist in the realm of the Universal Mind as eternal verities and are not subject to change or modification. The phenomena, on the other hand, form a flowing stream, every part of which is changing all the time.

### **The Broad Canvas of Theosophy**

For some, Theosophy is confined to only those teachings that were given by H. P. Blavatsky during her lifetime.

For others, the views of “second-generation theosophists” like C. W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant, Geoffrey Hodson, J. Krishnamurti, or Taimni take precedence.

For some, Theosophy is to be found in its history, the network of people and activity that have influenced global culture through the worlds of art, science, politics, literature, spirituality, religion, and so forth. To some others, it reveals itself in conscious, compassionate activity — service — to others. For yet others, it is only to be understood in the profound experience of meditative silence and mystical union.

It is a broad canvas on which we find our place, and establish our relationship with the Ageless Wisdom.

Theosophy is both knowledge and wisdom, and the mystical experience of union.

### **From Fragmentation to Union**

The literature of Theosophy is strewn with hints, suggestions, clues that point us toward some deepening realization of a direction from which to approach our study/practice.

In the Mahatma Letters, the statement is made that we are “the temporarily isolated fragments of the Universal Soul”. It helps us to be aware that our condition of isolation and the self-centered behaviors that accompany it are temporary. From the theosophical perspective, we have a role in determining how long such a condition lasts. To become an active participant in ending our fragmentation is a focus of Theosophy and one of the purposes of the TS. The result of the resolution to our isolation is an end to our fragmented existence.

In many of the Ageless-Wisdom traditions there are recurring images that describe both our current condition and our potential future state. In the Bible there is a phrase: “In my Father’s house there are many mansions (dwelling places).”

Within the Universal Consciousness there is an infinity of spaces within which “temporarily isolated fragments” dwell, each one trying to define the Father’s house by the limits of their isolated space and understanding. It is like living in a closet and trying to project that limitation onto a palace and onto a kingdom. Plato’s

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Allegory of the Cave illustrates how a shadow world formed the basis of the cave dwellers' limited understanding and conditioned their projection of what the rest of the world must be.

### **The Mystical Interpretation of Theosophy**

What is it that lies on the other side of fragmentation? Union, unity, selflessness.

At its deepest levels, Theosophy is both a description and guide to the experience of Oneness. Below are the comments of three past TS presidents on this mystical interpretation of Theosophy.

The obtaining of "a direct knowledge of God" is . . . the ultimate object of all Theosophy, as it is the very heart and life of all true Religion; this is "the highest knowledge, the knowledge of Him by whom all else is known"; but the lower knowledge, that of the knowable "all else", and the methods of knowing it, bulk largely in theosophical study.

Annie Besant

True Occultism or Theosophy is the "Great Renunciation of the self", unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action.

Radha Burnier

Theosophy is God's knowledge of Himself.

George Arundale

There is One Life, is a description of Theosophy. There is One Life which is imprinted in all of the lesser lives it contains, is another description. There is One Life whose operations in the various

lives/worlds/universes is like this (Theosophy information/facts/truths), is yet another. These are mystical, abstract, archetypal, and practical descriptions, yet still somehow incomplete for a word that is so easy to say.

### **Theosophy in the Words of HPB and the Mahatmas**

I close with some quotes from HPB . . .

Theosophy is the accumulated wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of seers. To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle.

Real Theosophy IS ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once people do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth.

Theosophy, in its abstract meaning, is Divine Wisdom, or the aggregate of the knowledge and wisdom that underlie the Universe — the homogeneity of eternal good; and in its concrete sense it is the sum total of the same as allotted to man by Nature, on this earth, and no more. . . .

Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love, and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection.

Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society, human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent.

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Theosophy, finally, is the fixed eternal sun, and its Society the evanescent comet trying to settle in an orbit to become a planet, ever revolving within the attraction of the sun of truth.

Theosophy is not *a* religion, but it is the essence of *all* religion.

The essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the ter-restrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfish-ness, charity, goodwill to all beings,

and perfect justice to others as to one-self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of goodwill; and the converse of this is true also — he who preaches the gospel of goodwill, teaches Theosophy.

H. P. Blavatsky

... and finally from one of her Masters:

Theosophy is no new candidate for the world's attention, but only the restatement of principles which have been recognized from the very infancy of mankind.

Mahatma KH

*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*



**Theosophy has no code of morals, being itself the embodiment of the highest morality; it presents to its students the highest moral teachings of all religions, gathering the most fragrant blossoms from the gardens of the world-faiths. . .**

**Never forget that life can only be nobly inspired and rightly lived if you take it bravely and gallantly, as a splendid adventure in which you are setting out into an unknown country, to face many a danger, to meet many a joy, to find many a comrade, to win and lose many a battle. . .**

Annie Besant



# Guru Purnima and Spiritual Rebirth — II

KIRK B. GRADIN

The Jain tradition also observes Guru Purnima each year during *āshādhā* to honor Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara and spiritual founder of their tradition. He is revered as having perfected the four soul qualities of Infinite perception (Ananta darśana), Infinite knowledge (Ananta jñāna), Dauntless spiritual energy (Ananta virya), and Infinite, unshakable, eternal bliss and joy (Ananta Sukha) independent of any external or material conditions. He perpetually manifested an imperturbable forbearance and patience (*kshama*), absolute non-violence (*ahimsa*) and complete detachment (*aparigraha*). Practitioners of Jainism believe that Mahavira accepted Gautama Swami as his first disciple on the same full-moon day. The event marked the re-enactment of the guru-disciple relationship in the Jain tradition, the ineffable passing on of spiritual wisdom and guidance.

Guru Purnima is also deeply significant in the Buddhist tradition, celebrated as marking the day upon which Śakyamuni, the historic Buddha, delivered the First Turning of the Wheel, the first discourse on the Four Noble Truths and the

Noble Eightfold Path to the five ascetics at Sarnath. According to Tsong-Kha-Pa and the Dalai Lama, the entire corpus of the Tibetan canon, now forming over 100 volumes is summarized in this short, first sermon. Through the spoken teaching sounded, Kaundinya, one of the five ascetics who was present, had the wisdom eye opened, thus establishing on earth all Three Jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha — again upon this day.

In the Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, Guru Yoga plays a central and indispensable role in the Bodhisattva path where through a process of purification and meditative self-transformation, one's chosen teacher is recognized as a living embodiment of the Buddha lineage. This is why such great care and discrimination is advised in determining one's spiritual guide. Likewise, there is a golden, cosmic, or archetypal element in the guru's chosen paradigm of disciples as witnessed in the seven Rishis of the *Śiva Purana*, the five ascetics of the Buddha and the twelve disciples of Jesus. These guru-chela mandalas do not arise by chance, but are cultivated bonds

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**Mr Kirk B. Gradin** is a renowned international speaker and writer, a student of *Theosophia* since 1975, co-founder of Studio Vach and the Gupta Vidya Circle, a board member of the Institute of World Culture in Santa Barbara, and CFO of International Theosophy Conferences.

reinforced, and tested over lifetimes. This is evidenced in the tulku tradition of Tibet, where even by the age of two or three, a reincarnating lama will recognize and identify his teachers from a former life. As depicted in Mathew, chapter 4, the first disciples, namely Peter, Andrew, James, and John, were engaged in their profession when Jesus encountered them at the Sea of Galilee. He simply said: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." They dropped their nets and obeyed. Apparently, there was an immediate recognition, a soul memory activated by the hidden dimensions of the spoken words of the living presence of logoic light. This superseded all earthly concerns. No doubt the first moment of recognition was confirmed again and again over the months and years that the disciples spent in the company of their guru.

Many theosophical students rightly emphasize self-reliance, "self-induced and self-devised effort". No one can walk the path for another. No one but ourselves can purify our motive or permanently dispel our own karmically induced mental, moral, or spiritual turpitude. There is no substitute for noetic self-discipline, continuous altruistic effort, daily consecration, and concentrated focus in the fulfillment of one's *svadharma*, in sacred study, meditation, self-study and ethical self-reform. But it is illogical to think that every sincere aspirant is not continuously aided by those who watch over and aid the progress of humanity as a whole. No one is exempt from such aid except the self-excluded. When the disciple is

ready, the indispensable Teacher appears. HPB repeatedly pointed to the vital need for the true Guru on the Bodhisattva Path of Theosophia:

I am enough of an occultist to know that before we find the Master within our own hearts and seventh principle — we need an outside Master. As the Chinese Alchemist says, speaking of the necessity of a living teacher: "Every one seeks long life (spiritual), but the secret is not easy to find. If you covet the precious things of Heaven you must reject the treasures of the earth. You must kindle the fire that springs from the water and evolve the Om contained within the Tong: One word from a wise Master and you possess a draught of the golden water."

I got my drop from my Master (the living one). . . . He is a Saviour, he who leads you to finding the Master within yourself.

(Letter to Dr Franz Hartmann, c. 1885, Published in *The Path*, March 1896)

In the esoteric teachings outlined in *The Secret Doctrine*, each disciple is understood as a ray of the same Dhyani Buddha, the same "Father in Heaven" of which the Teacher is a living embodiment. HPB states that the Dhyani known as *Amitabha*, the Buddha of Boundless Time and Infinite Light, who incarnated as Gautama Buddha, also incarnated as Tsong-Kha-Pa, the 14th century Tibetan adept. Tsong-Kha-Pa was founder of the Gelugpa tradition and is also credited with initiating the Seven-Century Plan of the modern Theosophical Movement. His direct disciple became the first Dalai

Lama. Amidst his voluminous writings is the *Lamrin Chenmo*, *The Great Exposition on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. In the *Lamrin*, a famous prayer called “The Foundation of All Good Qualities”, Tsong-Kha-Pa offers a concise and stirring outline of instructions on the central importance of the Guru (only portions of which are quoted here).

The foundation of all Good Qualities is  
the kind and venerable guru;  
Correct devotion to him is the root of  
the path.

By clearly seeing this and applying  
great effort.

Please bless me to rely upon him with  
great respect . . .

Just as I have fallen into the sea of  
*samsāra*,

So have all other migratory beings.

Please bless me to see this, train in  
supreme *bodhichitta*,

And bear the responsibility of freeing  
migratory beings...

Please bless me to practice the *bodhi-*  
*sattva* vows with great fervor...

In all my lives, never separated from  
perfect gurus,

May I enjoy the magnificent Dharma.

By completing the Qualities of the  
stages and path,

May I quickly attain the state of  
Vajradhara.

*Lamrin Instructions: Jor Cho* booklet,  
trans by Jampal Lhundrup

Vajradhara literally means “diamond  
holder” or “the holder of the Vajra”. It

arises from the ultimate or primordial  
Buddha, also called *Ādi-Buddha*, who is  
“awake since beginningless time”, “iden-  
tical with Parabrahm and Ain Soph”. It  
is equated by HPB with Maha-Vishnu  
(see her article: “The Mystery of the  
Buddha”) which “emits” the first logos,  
the highest unmanifested essence or  
Dharmakāya. It is a vesture of such  
universal purity that it cannot manifest  
and so sends into the world its heart, the  
Diamond Heart called Vajrasattva, the  
second logos.<sup>1</sup>

In *The Voice of the Silence*, Vajrasattva  
is a symbol of the full Mahatma, holder  
of both bell and dorje, the highest union  
of Compassion and Wisdom. The third  
logos is Mahat, the Universal Mind, which  
emanates the seven Dhyāni Buddhas  
pervading and sustaining all of seven-fold  
Nature. This is a sublime impersonal  
alignment and unfoldment correlated in  
*The Gupta Vidya* with the Nirmānakāya  
vesture. According to Shri Raghavan Iyer,  
it is the most difficult of all perfections  
to realize:

The *nirmānakāya* . . . involves perfection  
of the capacity to create out of the subtler  
vestures an astral form which is devoid of  
qualities. This alchemically regenerated  
form enables one to move anywhere invis-  
ibly and to assist human beings unknown  
to them. It also enables one consciously  
to take whatever body is necessary or  
available for the purpose of extending the  
work of universal enlightenment. Most  
Nirmānakāyas are unseen, anonymous,  
and disguised. One cannot discern them  
from outside, because they have chosen to

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come in ways in which they can perfect right livelihood and, at the same time, maximize the work they do in the realm of contemplation, ideation, true theurgy, healing and, above all, beneficent meditation. . . . “Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for another” is one of the greatest *mantrams* of all times. Here is the authentic accent of that particular kind of spiritual perfection which is the highest and holiest in human evolution. It is much harder than everything else because it involves overcoming the ego, while at the same time remaining in a world which, as depicted in the Allegory of the Cave, remains a dungeon whose language is egotism.

*The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. II, p. 21

While the Dalai Lama series of incarnations has been one in which each successive rebirth follows within a year or two upon the death of the previous, in the West the appearance and Teachings of Messengers of the Masters has followed the 100-year cycle of centuries. This great series of impulses occurring in the last 25 years of each century was most explicitly given by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*, the last book written by her before her passing:

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.

Someone 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.

In a private letter to her sister Vera, written in 1851, H. P. Blavatsky described the day she met, for the first time in the flesh, her Master and Guru who had watched over her and protected her since childhood. At age 20, it was a definitive turning point in her life and in the spiritual history of the globe. It occurred in Hyde Park, London, at the first World’s Fair and near the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the Crystal Palace, the same year and location in which the famed Kohinoor diamond was first publicly displayed in the West. Delegations from all over the world were gathered together.

Amidst the crowd was a tall Indian gentleman who she immediately recognized from childhood visions. “He spoke of a work he was about to undertake . . . which required her cooperation” and for which she would be attacked and defamed in the court of public opinion. “To prepare for it she would need to spend three years in Tibet.” From that day forward, she later narrated, everything was done in strict obedience to her Teacher. From that moment her extraordinary energies and indomitable will were focused upon one aim: to serve the Masters without fail. It was at their behest and under their guiding hand and

influence, that HPB's great literary output took place. Everything she wrote or translated was done on behalf of or with the assistance of the Masters, the true Gurus who stood behind her.

This is confirmed in Mahatma KH's 1888 letter to Colonel Olcott manifesting without any form of postal carrier while he was on the steamship, SS Shannon, at sea. It describes H. P. Blavatsky as their "direct agent" offering explicit warnings which many have since chosen to ignore.

But this you must tell to all: — With occult matters she has everything to do. We have not abandoned her; she is not "given over to chelas". She is our direct agent. I warn you against permitting your suspicions and resentment against "her many follies" to bias your intuitive loyalty to her. . . . I have also noted your thoughts about the "Secret Doctrine". Be assured that what she has not annotated from scientific and other works, we have given or suggested to her. Every mistake or erroneous notion, corrected and explained by her from the works of other theosophists was corrected by me, or under my instruction. . . . Since 1885 I have not written, nor caused to be written save thro' her agency, direct and remote, a letter or line to anybody in Europe or America, nor communicated orally with, or thro' any third party. Theosophists should learn it. You will understand later the significance of this declaration so keep it in mind."

Mahatma KH, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Letter no. 19

*The Secret Doctrine* was called "a triple production", for this reason. It was

through her tireless writing hand that the bare but alchemical outlines of the esoteric Science of Spirituality, also called *Theosophia*, the Divine Wisdom, or the Wisdom Religion, was given for the first time in history in the English language. It was and is the same esoteric or secret Wisdom-Science, called *philosophia* by Pythagoras, which animates the dialogues of Plato, the inner teaching of the Buddha, of Jesus, of Krishna, Lao Tse, Zarathustra, Hermes-Thoth, and many other great teachers, known and unknown throughout the ages. She goes on to explain at the end of *The Key*:

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 twentieth 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 torch-bearer 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 and material obstacles and difficulties from his path. Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish.

## Guru Purnima and Spiritual Rebirth — II

The outpouring that occurred in the last quarter of the 20th century, the seventh impulsion initiated by Tsong-Kha-Pa, 5,000 years since the time of Krishna, and the culminating 2 x 10 in the cycle of centuries since the time of Jesus, is evident to one who cares to discover it. Many sacred texts from diverse traditions have been made available through the Tibetan diaspora, the efforts of Sanskrit, Greek, and Arabic scholars, Gnostic researchers, and professors of comparative religion. But most importantly for those seeking discipleship under the tutelage of the Masters, there emerged since 1975 through the writing and editing of Shri Raghavan Iyer, a magnificent reaffirmation and extension of *Brahma Vach* in contemporary English. Not only is there a deep and abiding appreciation and confirm-

ation of the centrality of the writings of HPB, but also an effervescent elaboration and luminous commentary upon the metaphysical architectonics and metaphysical application of Blavatsky's magnum opus for both beginning and advanced students. In the absence of a visible living teacher, mystic encounters with logoic light can arise through the written word. All aspirants moved by the suffering and chaos seen all around us, who are seeking spiritual self-transformation and rebirth in the service of humanity, should at least test the warmth of the fires by entering into circles of study with other students of *The Gupta Vidya* so that as many as possible may cross the threshold into the small, old, but now very evident Bodhisattva path of Divine Wisdom.

(Concluded)

Footnote:

1. *The Secret Doctrine*, 1888 facsimile edition, p. 571.

**. . . the real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*siddhi*) to control the forces of Nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being: — this is the real Guru.**

H. P. Blavatsky  
“Chelas and Lay Chelas”  
Supplement to *The Theosophist*, July 1883

# Path of Devotion for Divine Wisdom (Brahma Jnānam)

R. ARUNACHALAM

## Devotion and Its Various Aspects

“Devotion is supreme love for the Supreme.” Our mind wanders as we only love God; and our loving God is not enough. Devotion should be the continuous stream of thoughts flowing towards God. Such all-absorbing devotion is the result of unflinching faith, unswerving and unconditional love, and total steadfastness.

The spiritual practices should be regular and steady. Practice, mainly spiritual practice, should be performed with understanding, which makes the practice more meaningful. Then comes total steadfastness in seeking God. The great saint Mirabai said, “O Lord! Even if you break our relationship, I will not. I have nowhere else to go.”

The other aspect is “faith”. There should be faith in the scriptures, the Guru, God, and in oneself. There cannot be doubt-ridden, partial faith. Our total faith should be with the understanding that God is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. As Lord of the Universe, God wields his inscrutable power (Māya) and creates the world. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and

Destroyer. God is endowed with qualities like love, compassion, and grace. All Nature’s laws function because of His will. As the Cosmic Form, God manifests as the entire creation of things and beings.

The individual may worship or meditate on either the form or the formless or both, but in his heart there should not be any conflict or contradiction with either aspect. Devotees seeking God either with form or without form reach the same Truth. The one whose mind is more absorbed in God is a greater devotee. The one whose mind is totally absorbed is the best.

On most occasions we are not in control of our mind, intellect, or our life. Situations put us under pressure. Hence, we should place the reins of our mind and intellect in the hands of the Lord and sit back and enjoy the ride through life.

Devotees are of two categories: those who have realized God and the ones who are still walking the path.

## Beginner, Practising, and Best Devotees

Devotees can be understood across different stages of growth:

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## Path of Devotion for Divine Wisdom (Brahma Jñanam)

- The beginner devotees see God only in idols and only love people who follow their own beliefs about God.

- The practising devotees see God in the good and are indifferent to the bad.

- The best devotees see God in all and therefore love all.

Devotees' characteristics are of great relevance in day-to-day life:

- Our vital energy is lost in hating and plotting against others; whereas in loving God, we hate none and love all.

- Virtues make us happy. We cannot be happy when our hearts are filled with hate or revenge.

- Love begets love. We receive more love when we love all.

- Foregoing false expectations, not agitating others, not getting agitated by others, being friendly to all, and loving all are the characteristics to be followed, and even our family ties and social standing improve. Spiritual prospects too will grow because of the above. By adopting the above, we can be unperturbed by the world, nor does our presence agitate anyone.

### Fixing Our Mind on a Goal

Fixing the mind on a goal means to make the goal the object of all our desires and the intention behind all our actions. The same goal will be applicable for subsidiary desires too. Hence, all contrary desires must be avoided and conducive desires alone should be entertained. One should have a strong determination to achieve the goal come what may.

### Integration of Mind and Intellect in the Path of Devotion

Mind is the seat of emotion and the

intellect of knowledge. The integration of mind and intellect is to love what we know and know what we love. "Seek what you value and value what you seek." Loving God alone or knowing him alone will not give total fulfillment and attainment of Bliss, or God. Hence, the integration of loving God and also knowing him should take place.

We can consistently do something only when our feelings back our actions. Action without love brings tediousness and boredom. Hence, doing action with love (mainly the spiritual practices) is better than as a need or a duty. All spiritual practices should be done with love. Love removes hatred, dislike, attachment, and so on. Love for God is inclusive of all.

### Likes and Dislikes Neutralized Through Karma-Yoga

Since our mind is too extroverted, we should practice karma-yoga in order to exhaust our extroversion. This will lead to the attitude of dedication to a higher altar (offering to God) and the results are considered as His gift (prasāda). The likes and dislikes will automatically get neutralized, thus giving up the notion of "doership" in action and "enjoyership" in the results of action.

Whatever work we do, let us do it as perfectly as we can — that is the divine in man. We should perform our duties perfectly without the notion of "doership" in action or "enjoyership" in the results. We should develop the attitude that "I work with the Lord's strength and his knowledge for his work". This will lessen

our ego and extroversion and make us fit for meditation.

Greeting others with folded hands implies that “The Self in me and in you is one and I salute and greet thee”.

### **The Perfect Devotees**

The perfect or supreme devotee identifies himself totally with God, which is the same as Self-Realization. A realized Master is one who has the characteristics of a perfect devotee. The perfect devotee is set as a role model whom we can emulate.

Love is identification with the beloved. The characteristics of a perfect devotee are loving God and therefore loving all, and hating none, irrespective of plant, animal, or human. In loving God, you love all. Love expresses as friendliness, kindness, and so on within us; the perfect devotee shows his friendliness and kindness towards all and he makes everyone his friend. Love needs to be not only towards those who are good and happy, but also to those who are tortured by worldly afflictions and following evil ways.

More so, the characteristics of a perfect devotee are contentment in life. He has found the source of happiness within. He is self-content, full and fulfilled within, and remains the same with or without material pleasures. He has no dependence on any object and therefore remains desireless. Since the perfect devotee is self-content, he is not affected by the external atmosphere.

The perfect devotee is free of competition, jealousy, or envy. The actions of a perfect devotee will not leave any

inherent tendencies in his mind. Therefore, the actions performed by him will not prompt future actions. The perfect devotee sees the same supreme Truth as real; and the distinctions of noble and ignoble are merely transactional, not absolute. The perfect devotee rules over the hearts of all. The perfect devotee’s vision is holistic, and the essence of all problems and his solutions to them are holistic.

“Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, my devotee, is dear to me.” — *The Bhagavadgītā*, 12.14.

### **The Power of Love and Forgiveness in Daily Life**

Love is the only antidote to hate. Hate within expresses as anger in speech and violence at the physical level. When the hearts of many are filled with hate, it results in war. It poisons first the heart of the hater and then of the one he hates. Where there is true love, hatred has no place.

A loving heart can always forgive. With true love, we do not feel hate when another wrongs us, which is real forgiveness. The height of forgiveness is when we do not even feel that another has wronged, because of true love. Forgetting the hurt is very important in forgiveness. But as long as the hurt feeling continues, forgiveness is never complete. One should have great strength to forgive.

A mother forgives her son even when he hurts her, because of her love for him. But she may not have the same

restraint towards others. “A loving heart can always forgive — a loveless heart is unforgiving.”

When wronged, a weak person is helpless and may therefore have no other option but to forgive and forget. A strong person has the ability to retaliate; however, it requires even greater strength to control oneself and forgive. Therefore, forgiveness is called the ornament of the truly strong. However, forgiveness should not be wrongly interpreted as insensitivity.

To reform a person, punishment is required as a corrective measure. It is given not to avenge the wrong done or to humiliate or hurt the person. So, punishment may still follow forgiveness. For example, a mother withholding ice cream because of her child’s misbehavior. Forgiveness plays a vital role in our daily life and is important while being in society. The day-to-day life will be peaceful and calm when we adopt the above points on forgiveness. We should develop the attitude of forgiveness.

### **Renunciation and Renouncing Results**

“Renunciation brings immediate peace” as per *The Bhagavadgītā* (12.12). The Kaivalya Upanishad asserts: “Renouncing the false alone bestows immortality.” A simple lifestyle and a righteous life will give peace. Unpleasant company, unnecessary activity, unhealthy relationships, and such other similar entanglements complicate our lives. Renouncing these gives instant peace. Negative thinking, anger, attachment, fear, and such other similar things agitate our mind; and a mind free of them is calm and poised.

Giving up of the gaining of a parti-

cular result in action is renunciation. It is anxiety, attachment, and insistence on specific results at every stage that hinder our growth and do not allow us to enjoy what we do. Hence, we must renounce our expectations of particular results in order to grow either in spiritual or material aspects. Such expectation of a particular result causes misery. We should give up the insistence of getting results in a particular fashion.

Renouncing the result of the action means one should not worry about the result and accept what comes cheerfully. It also means that we share what we get and give the credit to God and others. Also, renouncing the result of action means that we accept the result as a gift from God considering it as “prasāda”.

### **Meditation**

Meditation plays a vital role in the path of devotion. Meditation is withdrawing the senses and mind from external preoccupations and focusing on one point — it may be with form and attributes or formless and attributeless. Meditation should be done without fear and worry, and the meditator must renounce any expectation about the outcome.

Seekers of God with attributes seek Him through worship, rituals, meditation on his form, and listening to the stories of His avatars (incarnations). A person who is more attached to his body, bodily comforts and pleasures, and objects and beings related to the body, will find it very difficult to meditate on the formless Truth.

The fit seekers of God without attributes are the ones with well-disciplined senses, well-balanced emotions, a poised

and steady mind, and an alert and subtle intellect. Because God is the very Existence-Principle, it is imperishable. It cannot be described or indicated. Being the Self, the subject, it cannot be objectified and remains in an unmanifest form; and it is all-pervading. Being the illuminator of all thoughts, it cannot be known by thinking, that is, by the intellect. The Truth is the changeless sub-stratum like an anvil. It is motionless and also timeless.

### **Practice of Understanding vs. Mechanical Practice**

“Meaningful doing is better than mechanical practice”, again as per the same verse in the *Gītā* (12.12). Though “doing is better than not doing”, “doing the right thing is better than doing aimlessly”. This applies also to spiritual practice.

Right from our routine activities up to the level of spiritual practices or even meditation, we tend to do them without alertness of the mind. Many spiritual practices are done without understanding the why, how, when, and what of them. Proper understanding helps to make them more meaningful and effective, and we can do them more single-pointedly, carefully, sensitively, and correctly.

### **Distinctive Features and Paths of Seekers**

The paths of those seeking the Divine differ based on the nature of their focus:

- **Focus and Ease:** In seekers of God with form, the mind and the senses can have a form and attributes to hold on to, and hence it is easier for most. Whereas, in seekers of God who is formless, the mind and the senses have nothing to

hold onto, and hence it becomes difficult.

- **Internal Requirements:** A seeker of God with attributes needs a strong faith; whereas a seeker of God without attributes should have subtle discrimination and strong detachment.

- **Practices:** Seekers of God with attributes employ the body, senses, and mind in order to worship and meditate on the Lord through remembrance, rituals, and so on. Whereas, seekers of God without form have to still their body, withdraw the senses and the mind from the external world, and become absorbed in the Self within to realize the Truth.

- **Relationships:** Seekers of God with attributes can have different feelings and relationships with God, whereas seekers of God without attributes can have no emotional relationship with God, but think of God as the dearest inner-Self of all and consider Truth only as their own Self.

- **Divine Assistance:** The seekers of God with attributes are assured by the Lord: “I shall lift them from the ocean of change and death”, provided they totally surrender all their actions to God and consider Him alone Supreme. From the vast ocean of transmigration, God uplifts his devotees by way of releasing them from all bondages by his mere look, touch, or thought. God sees that his devotees never perish. On the other hand, seekers of God without attributes attains oneness with God through meditation and would have to adopt the policy of “elevate yourself by your own self” in order to realize the Truth. ✧

# Going Beyond: Masters and the Path

KRISTA UMBJARV

## The Masters

To talk and write about the spiritual path in its most serious aspect and the existence of the Mahatmas is somewhat a sensitive matter in the Theosophical Society (TS). Early theosophical literature and vocabulary sprang partly from the correspondence of the Mahatmas Koot Hoomi (KH) and Morya (M.) with A. P. Sinnett. Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) always claimed that these two Masters were the real founders of the TS and that she was just their messenger.

Belief in the existence of Masters or Mahatmas is not a prerequisite to join the TS, and often new members learn about their role only after having joined the Society. Radha Burnier, previous international President, when asked about the role of the Masters, explained why we should not talk too much about them:

The Masters are not officially proclaimed by the Society. The only thing that the Society stands for are its Objects.

It is important to realize that the state of consciousness, the inner being which is the real Master, is very holy. When we feel

the sacredness, we cannot purvey it, talk much about it. If a person feels a certain sense of sacredness in relationship with anyone, wife or husband or somebody else, he does not like to wear his feelings on his sleeve, and tell everybody what he feels. Even at that level, it would not be right. But the Master is very sacred, and not to be talked about and advertised.<sup>1</sup>

In the early years of the TS, some disciples of the Mahatmas considered that talking about the Masters was a sacrilege. One can easily understand and agree with what Radha Burnier said. At the same time if we go to an extreme and do not even mention their existence and what they represent in the spiritual evolutionary process, our understanding of the path and the history of the TS will be reduced.

At one point, although probably very far in the future, we also inevitably will reach this state of consciousness. Hence, it would be helpful for us to try to understand even now what this level of realisation represents. So let us delve into all this based on the writings that have come to us to try to have a glimpse into what

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the nature of the Mahatmas is and what teachings they gave.

It is said that the state of a Mahatma represents the epitome of human evolution. They show us that liberation from all limitations is possible although according to their own writings they are also still on the Path and not yet perfect or omniscient. According to various sources, some of them have physical bodies while others might work for the benefit of humanity on other planes. Some are more advanced than the others, but they are all characterized by their unselfishness and complete dedication to lessening sorrow in this world.

There is an interesting passage in one of the letters addressed to A. P. Sinnett. At the time, some members of the TS felt like they had to prove to the world that the Masters exist, but Mahatma M. told him the following:

And I wish I could impress upon your minds the deep conviction that we do not wish [...] you to prove conclusively to the public that we really exist. Please realize the fact that so long as men doubt there will be curiosity and enquiry, and that enquiry stimulates reflection which begets effort; but let our secret be once thoroughly vulgarized and not only will sceptical society derive no great good but our privacy would be constantly endangered and have to be continually guarded at an unreasonable cost of power.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, nobody should just believe or try to convince others that such realised beings exist. We should rather reflect whether this state of consciousness and

step in the human evolution that is represented by the Masters exists, makes sense, and is logical. If we accept that evolution would at a certain moment lead us inevitably to this state, then it would also be logical to conclude that probably there are beings in this world who have attained this stage.

As a result of a surge of good intentions and zeal, at a certain point in the history of the TS, there was too much emphasis on the existence of the Masters and the path that leads to them. Mahatma KH referred to it several times. He wrote:

There is a hero-worshipping tendency clearly showing itself, and you, my friend, are not quite free from it yourself. [...] If you would go on with your occult studies and literary work — then learn to be loyal to the Idea, rather than to my poor self. When something is to be done never think whether I wish it, before acting: I wish *everything* that can, in great or small degree, push on this agitation.<sup>3</sup>

Some years later he said something similar, when he wrote:

The cant about “Masters” must be silently but firmly put down. Let the devotion and service be to that Supreme Spirit alone of which each one is a part. Namelessly and silently we work and the continual references to ourselves and the repetition of our names raises up a confused aura that hinders our work.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, those who worked for the TS were invited to direct their devotion and service to the idea that the Society tried to bring to the world. Not only were they

invited to rather work for the idea, but they were discouraged from referring to the Mahatmas too much as it disturbs their work.

All our thoughts and emotions are actions on invisible planes of existence, and so we should learn to become aware sooner rather than later what we are setting in movement without realising it ourselves. Everything has an impact and everything is interconnected and interdependent. Due to this, we should learn to use reason and measure in what we do. According to Master KH:

Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and, there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man; thought runs swifter than the electric fluid, and your thought *will find me* if projected by a pure impulse, as mine will find, has found, and often impressed upon your mind. [. . .] Like the light in the sombre valley seen by the mountaineer from his peaks, every bright thought in your mind, my Brother, will sparkle and attract the attention of your distant friend and correspondent. [. . .] it is our law to approach every such a one if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true “Tathāgata” light within him — then how far easier for you to attract us.<sup>5</sup>

According to the above-mentioned text, due to affinity and thanks to good intentions, whenever there is pure and bright thought, it will have an impact and attract attention.

### The Path

What caused Masters to react and say that they wish to be less in the limelight

was not only the fact that everyone was fascinated about their existence but also that somehow, suddenly, everyone wished to become their disciples or *chelas*. The matter became so prevalent that H. P. Blavatsky had to write a clarifying article titled “Chelas and Lay Chelas” in which she listed all the conditions necessary for somebody who would like to tread on this Path.

There was a lot of imagination and wishful thinking about what advantages becoming a Master’s disciple would confer, but less attention was paid to what is the nature of such a relationship. In “Practical Occultism”, HPB explained:

There is one important fact with which the student should be made acquainted. Namely, the enormous, almost limitless, responsibility assumed by the teacher for the sake of the pupil. From the Gurus of the East who teach openly or secretly, down to the few Kabbalists in Western lands who undertake to teach the rudiments of the Sacred Science to their disciples — those Western Hierophants being often themselves ignorant of the danger they incur — one and all of those “Teachers” are subject to the same inviolable law. From the moment they begin really to teach, from the instant they confer any power — whether psychic, mental or physical — on their pupils, they take upon themselves all the sins of that pupil, in connection with the Occult Sciences, whether of omission or commission, until the moment when initiation makes the pupil a Master and responsible in his turn.<sup>6</sup>

HPB talks about karmic results that the

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Master would bear for all mistakes committed by the disciple. In another letter, the Mahatma KH refers also to this link that such a relationship would bring about:

It is a familiar saying that a well-matched couple “grow together”, so as to come to a close resemblance in features as well as in mind. But do you know that between adept and *chela*—master and pupil—there gradually forms a closer tie; for the psychic interchange is regulated scientifically, whereas between husband and wife, unaided Nature is left to herself. As the water in a full tank runs into an empty one which it is connected with; and as the common level will be sooner or later reached according to the capacity of the feed pipe, so does the knowledge of the adept flow to the *chela*; and the *chela* attains the adept level according to his receptive capacities. At the same time the *chela* being an individual, a separate evolution, unconsciously imparts to the master the quality of his accumulated mentality. The master absorbs *his* knowledge . . .<sup>7</sup>

Hence there is a two-way communication through a process of diffusion. Both disciple and Master absorb something from the other and at the same time enrich the other.

There is another reference about what this connection can and will bring about:

To sum up: the misuse of knowledge by the pupil always reacts upon the initiator; nor, do I believe you know yet, that in sharing his secrets with another, the Adept by immutable Law, is delaying his own progress

to the Eternal Rest. Perhaps, what I now tell you, may help you to a truer conception of things, and to appreciate our mutual position the better. Loitering on the way, does not conduce to a speedy arrival at the journey's end. And, it must strike you as a truism, that a *Price* must be paid for everything . . .<sup>8</sup>

The link that such a relationship creates will, according to these letters, have a negative effect on the Master. If all this is true and such a relationship delays the evolution of an Adept then why would they accept any disciples? In one letter it is also clearly said that they are not particularly interested in having any disciples. So why would any reasonable and logical human being, and especially somebody who has attained such a high level of realisation, accept a disciple merely to delay their own evolution? It seems completely counterintuitive.

If we reflect on what their duty and work are, we might understand a bit why any Master would accept pupils. In different texts it is said that the Mahatmas work to advance evolution and diminish the sorrow of humanity. Logically, based on this, the reason why they would accept to apparently delay their own evolution (and hence help less efficiently) would be that the possible benefit and effect that could come from guiding a disciple would be more important and far-reaching than the impact of the delay caused by having a disciple. This leads us automatically to the motivation that inspires a disciple to study and serve.

**Unselfishness as a fundamental prerequisite**

A fundamental prerequisite for all understanding is unselfishness. Mahatma M. expresses it very clearly:

It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets. He alone, such a man — will never misuse his powers, as there will be no fear that he should turn them to selfish ends. A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our *chela* — he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour.<sup>9</sup>

If one would like to truly know then one should uproot selfishness from one's heart. In another letter the Mahachohan writes:

There is hardly a theosophist in the whole Society unable to effectually help us by correcting the erroneous impressions of the outsiders if not by actually propagating himself this idea [of Brotherhood]. Oh, for the noble and unselfish man to help us effectually in India in that divine task. All our knowledge past and present would not be sufficient to repay him.<sup>10</sup>

The one who would work unselfishly could, according to the above-quoted extracts, receive all knowledge that one could wish for and probably not even imagine about. According to the letters, H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott both had many faults, but according to the Masters, they both had one quality in common: they

were both unselfish. HPB said that “Unselfishness and Altruism is Annie Besant's name”, as quoted by Countess Wachtmeister from a letter of HPB to W. Q. Judge.<sup>11</sup> It wasn't the knowledge or intelligence that they possessed that gave them the privilege to be in contact with the Masters, but the pure motivation that inspired all their actions.

There is a curious reference to what characterizes an Adept:

The white Adept is not always at first of powerful intellect. In fact, HPB had known Adepts whose intellectual powers were originally below average. It is the Adept's purity, his equal love to all, his working with Nature, with Karma, with his “Inner God”, that give him this power. Intellect by itself will make the Black Magician. For intellect alone is accompanied with pride and selfishness: it is the intellectual plus the spiritual that raises man. For spirituality prevents pride and vanity.<sup>12</sup>

It is hence not intellect or knowledge that would lead one to the state of an Adept but, first of all, purity and unselfishness in action. T. Subba Row, one of the disciples of a Master, wrote about the necessity of an unselfish motivation by saying that:

This path is eminently dangerous to those who do not hold the talisman which ensures safety; this talisman is a perfectly unselfish, self-forgetting, self-annihilating devotion to the religious good of mankind, a self-abnegation, which is not temporal, but must have no end for ever, and the object of which is the religious enlightenment of the human race.<sup>13</sup>

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Why is it that unselfishness is so important? Why not stress the importance of some other virtue? Why unselfishness? One explanation is what the Master M. said: it is only the person who has proven that they would never use the knowledge and power conferred on them for their own benefit and personal interest who is worthy to receive. Another reason is that as Mahatmas are working for the benefit of all, then anyone who receives anything from them but does not carry it on and multiply it through unselfish action would become like a “dead end” of energy and inspiration, “a stagnant pond”, to use the poetic language of *The Voice of the Silence*:

If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathāgata, those gifts and powers are not for Self.

Wouldst thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru? Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

If thou wouldst have that stream of hard-earned knowledge, of Wisdom heaven-born, remain sweet running waters, thou shouldst not leave it to become a stagnant pond.<sup>14</sup>

In another place in *The Voice of the Silence* it is said:

If sun thou canst not be, then be the humble planet. Aye, if thou art debarred from flaming like the noon-day sun upon the snow-capped mount of purity eternal, then choose, O neophyte, a humbler course.

Point out the way — however dimly [. . .] to those who tread their path in darkness.<sup>15</sup>

If we are filled with ourselves and our own little world, then the only thing that we could even dimly reflect is our little personal “I”. It is our own ego that is the biggest obstacle on the Path.

### Merit

Nilakanta Sri Ram, the fifth International President of the TS, said that “it is the direction of our progress that matters — not where we stand at present”. If the direction and the motivation are not correct, then the steps that we will take will never lead us where we wish to go. After having corrected the direction, we can start to pay more attention to where we stand at present.

Where is it where we stand? Not imagining something grander than reality and not diminishing the actual situation, but just seeing things clearly, as they are? Mahatma KH says in one of his letters:

To accept any man as a chela does not depend on my personal will. It can only be the result of one’s personal merit and exertions in that direction.<sup>16</sup>

HPB says in her article “Chelas and Lay Chelas”:

And for years we have been teaching everywhere the maxim “First deserve, then desire” intimacy with the Mahatmas.<sup>17</sup>

If anyone desires something, then the question to be asked is: “Do we deserve what we desire?” What have we done or are doing to hope to be guided? Not even by a Master, but just by somebody who could be next to us and point out the right direction? “First deserve, then desire”

could also be paraphrased as “First serve, then desire”.

In some systems of thought, earning merit has become a traditional process to receive rewards, yet true merit lies in the wholeheartedness of our action. Therefore, we do not act with the expectation of reward. Inevitably though, our actions become a testimony to our heart and our motivation.

Desiring something, even something considered higher, can become an obstacle. As suggested by Master KH:

Remember: too anxious expectation is not only tedious, but dangerous too. Each warmer and quicker throb of the heart wears so much of life away. The passions, the affections are not to be indulged in by him, who seeks *to know*; for they “wear out the earthly body with their own secret power; and he, who would gain his aim — *must be cold*.” He must not even desire too earnestly or too passionately the object he would reach: else, the very wish will prevent the possibility of its fulfilment, at best — retard and throw it back.<sup>18</sup>

T. Subba Row says something similar, when he expresses that:

It is, therefore, wiser not to seek the path of chelaship; if the man is fit for it, his Karma will lead him to it imperceptibly and infallibly; for the path of occultism seeks the chela and will not fail to find him, when the fit man presents himself.<sup>19</sup>

### To knock or not?

So, what to do, should we knock or not? And if yes, then how? I believe that we should first try to understand what all

that has been transmitted to us implies. We should reflect and analyze, and when we have come to a gist of it we should leave it all aside and use the vision reached as a basis to go even further. Seemingly, it is a paradox, but it is only so if we mix up different steps in the sequence of things. If we try to drop things before we have understood them it is a reaction of denial. If we become attached to a way of presenting things, or to one aspect of the teachings, then we freeze them in time. This results in mental crystallization, which becomes a source of suffering.

In 1961, long after Jiddu Krishnamurti had left the Theosophical Society, for some apparently unknown reason even for himself, he began to write a notebook, where he related:

There was [. . .] that peculiar sacredness, filling the room. It had great penetrating power, entering into every corner of one’s being, filling, cleansing, making everything of itself. [. . .] It’s the thing that every human being craves for and because they crave for it, it eludes them. The monk, the priest, the sannyasi torture their bodies and their character in their longing for this but it evades them. For it cannot be bought; neither sacrifice, virtue nor prayer can bring this love. This life, this love cannot be if death is the means. All seeking, all asking must wholly cease.<sup>20</sup>

H. P. Blavatsky said something similar in “Practical Occultism”, when she said that a Theosophist is one “who loves Truth, Goodness, and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer”.<sup>21</sup> ✧

## Going Beyond: Masters and the Path

### Endnotes

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**Strive, towards the Light, all of you brave warriors for the Truth, but do not let selfishness penetrate into your ranks, for it is [un]selfishness alone that throws open all the doors and windows of the inner Tabernacle and leaves them unshut. . . .**

**Nor are we especially anxious to have anyone work for us except with entire spontaneity. We want true and unselfish hearts; fearless and confiding souls.**

Master Koot Hoomi  
From *Daily Meditations*  
Compiled by Katherine Beechey

# Understanding HPB's Diagram of Meditation

MICHELE SENDER

**H.** P. BLAVATSKY'S (HPB) Diagram of Meditation offers a comprehensive spiritual practice that bridges theory and lived experience. It is more than a technique for sitting meditation, offering a complete yoga practice, a spiritual path in itself.

In Sanskrit, the word *yoga* comes from the root *yuj*, which means to yoke, connect, or unite. The Diagram may be seen as a connecting link between *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*. *The Secret Doctrine* (SD) provides the philosophical worldview — where unity is the fundamental principle of existence. *The Voice of the Silence* offers the mystical path — the way to experientially realize this unity through progressive stages of inner development. The Diagram brings both of these works into a daily practice, giving us concrete tools to live this understanding every moment. Its purpose is to shift our perception from believing we are separate, limited entities to recognizing that we are the whole — the totality experiencing life and the universe through countless different

forms. Each of us is the One Self, looking out through countless, different eyes.

## Historical Context

Edward Toronto Sturdy recorded the Diagram around 1889. He was a Sanskrit scholar, student of Hinduism and Buddhism, member of the Theosophical Society (TS) and part of the Inner Group formed by HPB.

The Diagram was published for the first time by Christmas Humphreys at the end of 1942 in his journal *Buddhism in England* (later renamed *The Middle Way*). He was a member of the TS who founded a Buddhist organization in England. In a letter written to Humphreys, in August 1942, Sturdy states: "I am also sending herewith a copy of a diagram of meditation made under HPB's direction over 50 years ago thinking it may be of use to some of your members."

## Sitting Meditation

The Diagram starts us off with a sitting meditation. This is not the entirety of the practice, but the essential foundation that prepares us to commune with our

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higher nature and to bring these insights into daily life. Understanding how to work with this opening instruction establishes the ground of Blavatsky's method:

***First conceive of unity by expansion in space and infinite in time, either with or without self-identification at first.***

This is where the Diagram begins, and every word in it matters. **Conceive** means to form an idea in the mind, but also to become pregnant with, to nurture the planting of a seed. In this meditation, the new idea we are forming is: we are not confined to this transient body, emotions, and thoughts — our true self is boundless and eternal. We achieve this **by expansion** — breaking the boundaries of identification with our self-centered consciousness and the instinctive protection of our separate identity that we unconsciously maintain.

When we think of **space** from a personal perspective, we have the sense that we are here and not there, that we are this body and nothing else. Similarly, **time** creates the illusion that we exist now and not in the past or future. However, beyond our personality, the lower quaternary, we are everywhere and at all times. The higher triad is unbound by the limitations that make us feel separate and confined to a single point in the universe. Expanding beyond the limits of the lower mind and moving from the known into the unknown, we cease to be in relation with anything we normally associate with.

The phrase **with or without self-identification** points to two approaches in this practice, applied across both **Space** and **Time**.

***With self-identification***, we become part of the expansion itself — experiencing it from within, as if we are *space* expanding, watching the universe from a central point. For *time*, we visualize ourselves moving through incarnations — past, present, and future, gaining a sense of what it means to be eternal.

***Without self-identification***, we take a bird's-eye view — encompassing, in unity, more and more *space* as if progressively zooming out. For *time*, we witness the past and future evolution of all humanity from an outside vantage point.

Both approaches serve the same purpose — to break free from the limited sense of self and access the profound truth of the universal nature. This statement and its application are the first steps where we can begin to silence the mind and still the body, for it is only in silence and stillness that we gain glimpses of our true nature.

### States of Consciousness as Stages of Meditation

The Diagram continues within the sitting practice:

***Then meditate logically and consistently on this in reference to the States of Consciousness.***

Blavatsky then instructs us to meditate **logically** — with clear and sound reasoning — and **consistently** — in a steady, regular, and reliable manner — **on this**, the truth of unity. This is to be done **in reference to the States of Consciousness** we experience, using them as a lens or framework. This is a systematic investigation into what unity looks like, feels like, and its manifestation through each

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distinct state of consciousness. Each state then becomes a doorway, allowing us to perceive different dimensions of the same eternal truth.

For this exercise, we can draw on the four states of consciousness described in Hindu philosophy as a basis:

- 1) Waking state (*jāgrat*) connected to awareness of external objects
- 2) Dream state (*svapna*) connected to awareness of internal objects
- 3) Deep sleep state (*sushupti*) connected to silent awareness
- 4) The state beyond (*turiya*)

However, for our purposes, we apply them as practical stages for our sitting meditation. For example, we can meditate on:

1) how unity appears in the external world; i.e., universal brotherhood, service to humanity, and altruistic behavior, to name a few (*jāgrat*).

2) how unity operates in our inner psychological life by self-observation of the thinking processes, emotional nature, and input from the senses (*svapna*).

3) how unity exists in profound stillness (*sushupti*).

4) and ultimately, how unity reveals itself as the underlying reality of all existence (*turiya*).

By meditating on unity **in reference to** these states, we examine the abstract truth from multiple tangible perspectives.

### Acquisitions and Deprivations

The genius of the Diagram lies in its paired structure: *Acquisitions* (eternal truths, virtues, and spiritual qualities to cultivate), and *Deprivations* (illusions,

passions, and personal limitations to recognize and release, clearing the way for the Acquisitions to take root). These are not abstract concepts to contemplate but actionable practices for daily life, so that our normal state of consciousness may be influenced by the higher nature.

We will see this in detail in the second part of this article. But before that, as part of our sitting meditation, we examine the Notes that were added to the Diagram.

### The Notes

First Note: *Acquisition is complete with the conception “I am all space and time.”*

This is a reiteration of the first part of the Diagram, where we already “conceived”, or planted, and nurtured the seed of, “I am all space and time” — holding a general notion of this abstract idea from our sitting meditation. That understanding lets us create an intention and a plan to bring this sense of spaciousness and timelessness to everyday life.

Beyond that . . . . (it cannot be said).

HPB closes this first Note with this statement, reminding us that whenever we say or think something, we are still in the field of attributes. The fourth state of consciousness, “beyond” (*turiya*), exists outside anything our concrete mind can “know”; therefore, this state transcends what can be said.

Second Note: *These deprivations are caused by the perpetual imagination — without delusion\* — of “I am without . . . . .”: the recognition of their being the source of bondage, ignorance & strife.*

The deprivations center on limita-

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tions of the lower nature that must be transcended. We continuously feed passions and desires by lending them our constant attention, and in doing so, they become the very source of our suffering. This continued focus on the personal hinders the influence of our higher nature on our daily actions. To remedy this, we must use imagination as a deliberate counter-practice. In **perpetual imagination**, we carry the reminder that within us exists a state of mind untouched by fear, sadness, anger, or frustration — a witness that stands behind the storm.

This is the practice of **I am without** .... *I am without fear; I am without anger; I am without grief*. This, however, is not done as denial, but as an act of imaginative identification with our higher nature, which is never bound by these conditions to begin with.

Psychology affirms the power of this approach. Cognitive and neurological research suggests that the brain does not fully distinguish between a vividly imagined experience and a lived one — both activate overlapping neural pathways. When we repeatedly imagine ourselves as free from a particular limitation, we are not escaping what is; we are rehearsing a deeper reality. This is the basis of visualization techniques found across therapeutic traditions — imagination, *used with intention* can reshape our consciousness, allowing the visualized truth to become embodied.

There is, however, a danger in this practice — that of producing a state of

self-delusion. The personality, left to its own devices, distorts what is before it in one of two directions: it either denies limitation altogether — a delusion of false wholeness — or collapses into the limitation, over-identifying with it until the limitation becomes all there is. The key to avoiding this pitfall is explained in a footnote that states:

***\*There is no risk of self-delusion if personality is deliberately forgotten.***

Modern spirituality can often be presented from a rather self-centered perspective. People identified with the personal self imagine that spiritual life will empower them at the personal level. We must understand clearly the difference between our higher (authentic and eternal) nature and its lower (illusory and transitory) expression, and make efforts to identify ourselves with the higher.

From this perspective, the practice is not the hollow repetition of *I am not afraid, I am not afraid*, while the personality trembles. There is an acknowledgement of the fact that the personality is afraid, sad, or angry, but also a recognition that this is based on a wrong perception. Our true self is always without these attributes, standing beyond the peaks and valleys of experience entirely. It is untouched by both the suffering and the consolations of the personality. So, this is not denial but a shift in identification. When we stop identifying with the separate self, we begin to see the limitations of the physical realm more accurately and more compassionately.

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In short, by consistently and deliberately shifting our focus from the personality to our true nature, we recognize the limitations of our lower nature without letting them cloud our perception. Then we begin to discern things as they are. Two exercises that can help:

1) J Krishnamurti gives us the practice of *not naming* what our senses bring to our consciousness — not expressing every thought, comment, or opinion. This begins to slow the constant motion of the mind, building a foundation of silence and stillness for the higher nature to come into being.

2) Geoffrey Hodson's meditation "Yoga of Light" begins by negating all personal attributes, focusing on the spiritual individuality — the higher ego, as a bridge for moving from the personal to the spiritual.

In the Diagram, however, HPB reminds us to go one step further and continue to negate all attributes, both personal and individual, to reach the universal. This is suggested in a further Note that states: ***Deprivation is completed by the meditation: "I am without attributes."***

The work with the Deprivations is **completed by** a *neti-neti* meditation: "I, as the higher self, am not the thoughts, the emotions, the sensations, memories, conditions, and so on." This names that which is not part of the higher self, working our way toward what is left — which ultimately means: **I am beyond all attributes**. And beyond all attributes is the

absolute nature of the True Self — *ātman*.

### In Daily Life

#### Acquisitions and Deprivations

After the sitting meditation comes a second and equally important aspect of the Diagram, where yoga becomes skill in action. Most of humanity is still working on its personal intentions — "I intend to do this; I intend to do that" — but the occultist works to develop skill in bringing eternal truths and virtues into action on the physical plane. Here is a call to move beyond the realm of intentions.

The Diagram presents these two complementary practices for daily life: **Acquisitions and Deprivations**. Acquisition involves cultivating in our everyday activities the eternal truths and virtues realized in meditation. Deprivation involves letting go of the known and comfortable activity of the personal mind so that eternal truths, such as unity, can emerge. It is the purposeful stripping away of mental clutter and preoccupations to achieve the emptiness necessary for spiritual receptivity.

Each Acquisition begins with the statement: ***Then the normal state of our consciousness must be molded by*** — the specific quality described. These are instructions to be lived, so that our everyday awareness may be shaped and guided by the higher nature.

Each Deprivation begins with the statement: ***A constant refusal to think the reality of*** — the personal, *separate, or incomplete* aspect of the lower nature. This is not a suppression of thought about this aspect of our being, but a realization that the personal is ultimately

not real.

As shown below, the Acquisitions and Deprivations in the Diagram seem to be paired, covering both the spiritual and personal sides of a given aspect of reality. This combined approach transforms our practice from isolated moments of contemplation in meditation into integrated living, where the insights of the eternal directly shape how we move through the world.

### **Unity and the Mind — 1st Acquisition and Deprivation**

**ACQUISITION 1:** *The normal state of our consciousness must be molded by —*

*Perpetual Presence in imagination in all Space and Time.*

*From this originates a substratum of memory which does not cease in dreaming or waking; its manifestation is courage.*

*With memory of universality all dread vanishes during the dangers and trials of life.*

This statement tells us to utilize **imagination** to move beyond the personality that only perceives the here and now. It rewires our consciousness toward unity and away from separateness. When practised systematically, it produces a **substratum of memory of universality** that is always available. The natural outcome of this is that **all dread vanishes during the dangers and trials of life** — not because difficulties disappear, but because we gain the **courage**, strength, and capacity to handle hard things well.

**DEPRIVATION 1:** *A constant refusal to*

*think the reality of —*

*Separations & Meetings*

*Association with Places, Times, & Forms*

*Futile longings. Expectations. Sad memories. Broken-heartedness.*

“A constant refusal” means continuously questioning what presents itself as real from the point of view of the separated personality — separated not by nature, but by illusion — persistently letting go of what the mind claims to know. On the inner planes, we are always together. This practice lessens the importance of **separations and meetings**, and the grip that **places, times, and forms** exert upon us, all of which takes place only on the plane of separation. The result is that **futile longings** fade, **expectations** fall away, **sad memories** soften, and **broken-heartedness** heals.

### **Equanimity and the Emotions — 2nd Acquisition and Deprivation**

**ACQUISITION 2:** *The normal state of our consciousness must be molded by —*

*Continued attempt at attitude of mind, which is neither love, hate, nor indifference, to all existing things.*

*Different in external activity to each, because in each the capacity alters. Mentally same to all.*

*Equilibrium and constant calm. Greater ease in practising the “virtues”, which are really the outcome of wisdom, for benevolence, sympathy, justice, etc., arise from the intuitive identification of the individual with others, although unknown to personality.*

This Acquisition refers to a state of

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equanimity where there is no push or pull by the pairs of opposites — likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, success and failure. This does not mean a lack of interest or concern, nor apathy; it is maintaining an inner equilibrium regardless of external circumstances, choosing the best course of action without being unduly influenced by attractions or repulsions.

This equanimity, however, does not mean treating everyone the same way. Externally, our response naturally differs from person to person, from situation to situation, since external differences call for various responses. What remains constant is not our behavior but our inner attitude — mentally, we hold the same equanimity toward all, even as our outward action adapts to what each moment requires. The result is a **constant calm**, making it easier to practice virtues such as **benevolence, sympathy, and justice**.

**DEPRIVATION 2: A constant refusal to think the reality of —**

*Distinctions Friend & Foe*

*Resulting in absence of Anger & Bias. (Replaced by judgment)*

The resistance we feel toward those we call enemies and the clinging we feel toward those we call friends are based on whether our relationship with them brings pain or pleasure. But when we rise above this level of experience, we can transcend these distinctions. The result is that **anger** and **bias** fall away; they are then replaced by fair and dependable **judgment** or discernment (*viveka*).

**Limitations and the Body —  
3rd Acquisition and 3rd, 4th, 5th  
Deprivation**

**ACQUISITION 3: The normal state of our consciousness must be molded by —  
The perception in all embodied beings of limitation only.**

*Criticism without Praise or Blame.*

Here we recognize that all things connected to **embodied beings** have **limitations** — this is simply the nature of form. Although this may look like a pessimistic view, it is in fact a liberating one: when we stop expecting the limited to be limitless, disappointment is less likely. When we become more realistic about expectations, we learn to offer and receive fair assessment, neither inflating what is before us through **praise** nor diminishing it with **blame**. This is **criticism** in its purest sense — not the harsh fault-finding of the ego, nor the hollow flattery of approval-seeking, but the clear-eyed assessment of what is.

**DEPRIVATION 3, 4, 5: A constant refusal to think the reality of —**

*Possessions → Greed. Ambition. Remorse.*

*Personality → Vanity. Selfishness.*

*Sensation → Gluttony. Lust, etc.*

At this point in evolution, humanity is still closer to the animalistic than to the spiritual nature. The instinct of the animal-Man<sup>1</sup> is survival, leading toward a self-serving mindset. This is a result of the mind (*manas*) being influenced by desire (*kāma*) rather than by wisdom (*buddhi*).

These three deprivations challenge our attachment to what we own, the mask we present to the world, and the power of sensation through which the body de-

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mands our allegiance. **With a constant refusal to think the reality of** these, we disidentify from them. The result is freedom from the sources of sorrow and unrest such as the constant desire for more, the endless craving for recognition, and the insatiable appetite for sensation.

### General Note

After a description of both the Acquisition and Deprivations, the Diagram adds a concluding statement, offering an important clarification:

*All the passions & virtues interblend with each other, therefore, the diagram gives only general hints.*

The **passions** pointed out in the Deprivations, and the **virtues** described in the Acquisitions cannot be perfectly compartmentalized, but instead flow into and influence one another. In other words, within any given virtue and truth lies the essence of all others, so that by reaching one, we gradually come closer to realizing them all.

This note also points to the possibility of developing our own personalized diagram or framework, based on our unique understanding and abilities to

practice. While spiritual development follows universal principles, it requires individual adaptation.

### The Path Forward

The Diagram of Meditation is occult work in the truest form: making proficient the ability to bring our higher nature into skillful action on the physical plane. Through persistent practice, we create a pathway to the unknown, establishing a substratum of higher consciousness that gradually transforms our entire being.

We are given both map and method for a transformational journey — from personal limitation to universal consciousness, from bias to equanimity, from concrete knowledge to spiritual wisdom. It invites each of us to undertake this sacred work, adapting its timeless framework to our individual path while holding fast to the fundamental unity of all things.

All we have to do is start. We will surely fail. We should simply start again. And we will probably fail again. Sometimes we will fail gloriously. But our success does not lie in accomplishments; it lies in starting again. ✧

### Endnotes :

1. “Man” comes from the Sanskrit *man*, from which derive the words *manas* (mind) and *manu* (the thinker), which is the central characteristic of the human kingdom.

**Meditation can help us embrace our worries, our fear, our anger;  
and that is very healing.**

Thich Nhat Hanh

# Participating in the Sacred

MEENA KAUSHIK

I HAVE been a searcher for many decades, yet the mystery of the Way continues to leave me wonderstruck and humble. Just when I think I may have some understanding of what is required of me, I am confronted with a new and deeper question that I must explore and unravel. The mysterious remains mysterious, and the searcher keeps peeling away the layers only to discover subtler levels that need to be explored and participated in.

The question that has recently appeared in my mind's eye is: *What does it mean to participate in the sacred, and how does one do so?* I ask myself whether what I do by way of practice is sufficient to say that I am endeavouring to approach and participate in the sacred. I read sacred texts, meditate, practise stillness, serve the earth and my community, join groups of fellow searchers to explore various paths, and attend work periods and webinars guided by my teachers. Will all this bring me closer to the sacred? And is it enough?

At a recent course on sacred teaching, my teacher Ravi Ravindra used the word “participation” in the context of the

teachings of Christ, suggesting that the call is for something in us to have a level of preparedness to hear and see what the teaching offers. This simple word, part of our normal parlance, suddenly took on a much deeper meaning and compelled me to inquire: *What is true participation in the sacred, and what does it entail of me?*

The etymology of the term “participation” points to the “act of sharing or partaking in common with another or others; the act or state of receiving or having a part of something” (late 14th century Middle English, *participacioun*, from the Old French word, *participacion*, in turn directly from Latin *participare* — “to participate in, share in, partake of; to make partaker, to share, impart”). To say that I am participating in the sacred, therefore, implies that I am actively partaking in, receiving, and sharing in the essence of the sacred.

Upon closer examination and contemplation, the term suggests a subtle and reciprocal relationship between the searcher and the sacred. To participate truly in the sacred, several factors need to be in a state of internal alignment within the searcher:

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## Participating in the Sacred

### 1. Level of Preparedness

The ability to hear the “Word” or perceive and partake of a subtler reality necessitates that the searcher cultivate the discipline required to prepare the body-mind to receive the sacred. It is abundantly clear that subtler spiritual truths are not accessible to us unless we remove the veils of egoism within us.

Our usual senses are outward-directed and not attuned to the signals that come from the realm of the sacred. More specifically, our ordinary self is so preoccupied with worldliness — driven by desire, fear, and egoistic control — that it cannot withstand a state of unknowing, nothingness, or the relinquishment of control.

Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion.

*The Voice of the Silence,*  
Fragment I, v. 9.

Consequently, one may either be impervious to sacred signals and energies or frightened to acknowledge anything beyond the comprehension of the ordinary mind.

Tell me who You are, so fierce of form.  
O God of gods, I bow before You; please  
bestow Your mercy on me. You, who  
existed before all creation, I wish to know  
who You are, for I do not comprehend  
Your nature and workings.

*(Bhagavadgītā, 11.31)*

Scholars such as Radhakrishnan (1948) and Zaehner (1969) emphasize that Arjuna’s inability to withstand Krishna’s cosmic form highlights a crucial theme: ordinary human perception

is insufficient to behold the Absolute without divine empowerment. Preparedness in this context is not merely moral or intellectual, it is ontological. One must receive divine grace (*divya caksuh*, “divine eye”) to endure the Lord’s universal manifestation.

### 2. Attentive Listening and Seeing

Part of spiritual preparation, therefore, is the sanctification and purification of the senses so that they may perceive subtler levels of reality. To partake of the sacred, we need divine eyes and ears. Only when our instrument is cleansed of worldliness and egoism can we truly see or hear the divine.

Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has, will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them.  
(Luke 8:18, NIV)

The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me: my eye and God’s eye are one eye, one seeing, one knowing, one love. (Meister Eckhart)

### 3. Spiritual Baptism or Being Born Again

It becomes increasingly clear that any true participation in the sacred requires a spiritual birth — a transformation of the body-mind. To receive the essence or substance of the divine, one must become an instrument free of egoism, fear, and the incessant drive of “me, me, me”.

This baptism involves sacrificing lower tendencies and compulsions so that one may experience freedom from oneself. In *The Yoga of the Christ*,

## Participating in the Sacred

Ravindra writes:

The preparation given by the baptism of John is necessary for the right metanoia — which literally means a “radical re-orientation”. . . . As John said, “I baptise you in water for the sake of metanoia, but the one who comes after me is more powerful than I. . . . He . . . will baptise you in the Holy Spirit and fire. . . . He will clear the threshing floor and gather his grain into the barn, but the chaff he will burn in unquenchable fire.” (*Matthew 3:11–12*)

Blavatsky makes a powerful statement when she suggests:

Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

*The Voice of the Silence*,  
Fragment I, v. 58

### 4. Receiving Grace, Not Grasping It

David Steindl-Rast consistently contrasts receiving grace with the human impulse to grasp or control it. He frames grace as a pure gift (*gratis*) — something that can only be welcomed, not seized.

Grace is not something we can achieve or grasp; it is a gift that can only be received. (*Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*, 1984)

We cannot grab hold of grace. The moment we try to grasp it, it slips through our fin-

gers. We can only open ourselves to receive it.

*(Music of Silence, 1995)*

Seek in the impersonal for the “Eternal Man”; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

*The Voice of the Silence*,  
Fragment II, v. 116

Thus, partaking of the sacred can only be received by a prepared, reborn body-mind willing to surrender, relinquish control, and release the sense of doership.

### 5. Being Present

Finally, true participation in the sacred can occur only if we are awake, aware, internally aligned, and open to surprise and awe. The experience is beyond the mind, beyond the known, and beyond our ability to express fully.

It requires a willingness to let go of concepts, self-will, knowledge, expectations, identifications — and to recognize that we are not merely the wave, but the ocean in its wholeness. As Blavatsky points out:

Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal Harmony.

*The Voice of the Silence*,  
Fragment III, v. 300



**The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.**

Albert Einstein



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