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Theosophical & Digest

VOLUME 38 NO. 3

**In Tune With
the Universe**

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On patience, forgiveness, and growing through
life's ebbs and flows



A Meditation on Impatience

Condensed from QUEST
ARLENE GAY LEVINE

Time for me, time for you,
Time for everything we do.
Hurry and rush are such a waste,
The magician is one who has never
known haste.

OVER many years, it gradually became clear to me that suffering served as a device to open my heart to love. Calling out in physical, mental, or emotional distress strengthened my faith muscle. When the moment was right, if I waited without expectation, more often than not my prayers would be answered. Perhaps not always in the time frame or the way I hoped, but occasionally even better than I imagined.

When I was younger, before that could happen, I remember deciding to give up something that I believed hindered my

soul's development. What would I actually fast from? A tsunami of thoughts flooding my mind prompted the creation of a complete list of issues that held me back from honoring the Beloved within. For what felt like hours (but was barely minutes), the task tortured me. Then an aha! moment crashed into my consciousness with an important insight: the impatience that plagued me since childhood would have to get the boot.

The saying "love is patient, love is kind" appears in the Bible in 1 Corinthians 13:4. The passage continues to list other characteristics of love: it does not envy, boast, or pride itself; it does not dishonor others; it is not self-seeking or easily angered; it does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth; and it always pro-

tects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

How, I wondered, could one possibly attain all these virtues quickly? Impatience is a fertile little minx; it spawns so many vices.

*Impatience is a fertile
little minx; it spawns so
many vices.*

To be fair, I did have glimmers that these frequent refusals to complete one job before dashing off to the next was not serving me or anyone else around me. There were times when a frantic impulse caused me to give up on a task, bang into objects, get snappish, or burn the meal. It often alienated people I cared about, prevented living in the now, and kept me from honoring the desire to create a meaningful life. A compulsion to rush generated mayhem, while the angels watched in dismay.

One day, searching my mind for clues to solve this dilemma, a sudden urge to declutter arose. Most of my unwanted things were sequestered in the basement. "Yes," I thought, "let me start there." The first carton I looked in was loaded with very old books. My hand grasped a slim volume and opened to a

poem by Eve Merriam, who had been one of America's most respected poets for adults and children. Instantly, changing gears from cleaning up, I began to read:

A Lazy Thought

There go the grownups

To the office,

To the store.

Subway rush,

Traffic crush;

Hurry, scurry,

Worry, flurry.

No wonder

Grown-ups

Don't grow up

Anymore.

It takes a lot

Of slow

To grow.

There in the basement (or, as I realized later, my unconscious), an epiphany occurred: "It takes a lot of slow to grow." If this Jungian moment was a teacher, what was it asking me to do? The answer seemed obvious. I would go up to my study, turn on the computer, and begin researching impatience and patience, the yin and yang of time management. The torment of hastiness had resulted in unresolved stress, anxiety, and anger from childhood.

I sat on my favorite chair and decided to probe deeper. After taking some full breaths, slowly letting go into the peace and

quiet of the moment, I felt ready to ask myself to recall memories from childhood that aroused the urge to hurry.

Most of my recollections centered around my mother, a basically kind woman who did not know the meaning of “one task at a time.” Impatiently rushing me to do one thing or another, she trained me to be just like her. This memory made me recall how stressed, anxious, and angry I always felt when I was around her. No wonder I eagerly looked forward to going to school, getting outside to be alone in nature, or hiding in the bedroom with my head in a book. These enjoyable activities were life preservers in the choppy seas of childhood.

When I became an adult, it became essential for me to forgive myself and my mother. On my new path, I would stop encouraging a negative mindset implanted years ago lest it take over my life in the present. In this case, the solution was clear: I became an acolyte of patience. A simple technique that worked

A simple technique that worked wonders was meditating on statements, often quotes I collected over time, to energize positive qualities I wished to manifest in my life.

wonders was meditating on statements, often quotes I collected over time, to energize positive qualities I wished to manifest in my life. A particular favorite on the dichotomy between the vice of impatience and the virtue of patience is these wise thoughts from the painter Georgia O’Keeffe: “Nobody sees a flower — really — it is so small it takes time — we haven’t time — and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.”

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Patience is not sitting and waiting; it is foreseeing. It is looking at the thorn and seeing the rose.

RUMI

Have patience with all things, but first of all with yourself.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES

Patience is the mark of true love. If you truly love someone, you will be more patient with that person.

THICH NHAT HANH

When we realize our true nature, we are absolutely
in tune with the universe



In Tune With the Universe

Condensed from THEOSOPHIA
RADHA BURNIER

THE subject of attunement is of vital importance to humanity. Being out of tune with other people, with the environment, and with ourselves, we have done enormous damage to mutual relationships and to our own progress. The damage we do to ourselves can at no time be separated from the damage we do to others. We are responsible for the whole. Those who are inwardly well tuned and integrated, radiate harmony and happiness wherever they go and whatever they do. On the other hand, when there is discord inside, it breeds discord outside. Further, as *The Voice of the Silence* says: “Before the soul can

see, the harmony within must be attained.” All discord blinds the vision and human progress is retarded.

The universe is not a chaos but a cosmos, so perfectly tuned that those who realize it through study and contemplation are left speechless in utter amazement. In his book, *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*, the author Sir Martin Rees writes about six numbers, some of them very small and some very large, which constitute the “recipe” for the universe. If any one of them were to be increased or decreased even minutely, there would be no stars and no life. For example, if the

existing ratio between gravity and expansion energy had been even slightly different, the universe would have collapsed long ago, or no galaxies or stars would have been formed. He asks the question: "Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence?"

According to ancient Indians, the cosmic order was called *rta*. The unimaginably high level of tuning which maintains the cosmic order relates not only to the perceivable measurable facts of which scientists take cognizance; it exists in subtle dimensions with which science does not concern itself. *Rta*, for the ancients, was all-comprehensive harmony, the ground of all phenomena in the visible and the deep invisible fields and dimensions of existence. David Bohm might have had an insight into this aspect when he wrote, in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, about undivided wholeness in flowing movement and an implicate order which "constitutes a fundamental aspect of reality."

An expert musician's ear is so sensitive that he or she becomes aware of even the slightest deviation from the harmony of sounds. A musician hears fine distinctions the listeners may not notice, and every time there is need, adjusts the string to maintain perfect accord. Every musician in an orchestra also takes care to preserve musical excellence: Even slight nuances

*Those who are inwardly
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are important, for they are integral to the whole.

The cosmic order or *rta*, on a vast, almost inscrutable scale, may be similar. There is an intelligence and creative power (the master musician) that restores the harmony of the universe, if it is disturbed in even the slightest degree. This is the working of Karma or Karma-Nemesis as Madame Blavatsky calls it in *The Secret Doctrine*. She says that "the only decree of Karma — an eternal and immutable decree — is absolute Harmony in the world of Matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we who reward or punish ourselves, according as we work with, through and along with Nature, abiding by the laws on which that harmony depends, or — breaking them" (11.368). HPB also says in this context that so long as the effect of having thrown into perturbation "even the smallest atom in the Infinite

Evolution is not merely a development from lesser to greater degrees of complexity of form, but also a blossoming of consciousness into higher levels of awareness.

World of Harmony" has not been readjusted, the "evil-doer" suffers what he thinks is retribution. He experiences what we call pain and strives to escape it, and, being ignorant of what is happening, he acts in such a way as to create further perturbation.

Ancient tradition also affirms that invisible to our perception there exist many types of beings, endowed with intelligence in varying measure, who are in a state of unconscious harmony with Nature and spontaneously carry out the "Great Work." They joyously play their own scores in the cosmic symphony. So do all the subhuman creatures that we know. For the human being alone, the question arises of how to be in tune with the universe. We, who are so out of tune, feel the misery of strife and long for peace, love, and beauty.

But fortunately, the human consciousness has the power to observe, think over, and under-

stand enough about the universe in which it finds itself to realize the responsibility of the individual in preserving the harmony. By our own effort to see and understand life, we must realize that the chaotic conditions in human society result from the contradictions within ourselves. Therefore, the remedy is in our hands. If we give attention to understanding, our consciousness may make the transition into a new level of knowledge of the universal order, its meaning and beauty.

Evolution is not merely a development from lesser to greater degrees of complexity of form, but also a blossoming of consciousness into higher levels of awareness. This awareness includes an appreciation of the fundamental energies in the cosmos; it does not necessarily refer to knowledge of details. It is a vision of the pine principles which manifest themselves in every detail as well as in the general flow. The Buddha's omniscience, tradition says, consists of the power to know everything rather than knowledge of such details as how many hairs there are on a person's head!

The flow of manifestation reveals these pine principles in varying degrees through various phenomena and functions. In the flow of a waterfall, we see a steady movement although there is constant change. The

sparkling changes against the background of a steady state cause us to experience a refreshing delight and a sense of newness at every instant. The shadow or phenomenal world is endless movement and never-ending change, but underlying the movement is immovable and everlasting Being — a paradox which is repeated in other ways. The order of the universe embraces an immense diversity of forms and patterns. The creative energy which upholds it constantly gives birth to new things. Yet amidst the astounding diversities of life, a mysterious bond exists uniting all things into a whole. The human being is like a drop in the vastness and depth of the ocean of existence, seemingly separate, but inseparable from it.

These paradoxes are all part of the music of the spheres. The great symphony of Nature is played with perse instruments, musicians, melodies, rhythms, and so on. In a Sufi parable it is related that when the hoarse cawing of a crow irritated some persons and they drove it away in anger, the Lord summoned his assistants and asked why a member of his orchestra was missing. Each particular element derives its value from enriching the whole, but it is the whole which is the “music of the spheres.” It is wonderful to be human, because we can rejoice in

The human being is like a drop in the vastness and depth of the ocean of existence, seemingly separate, but inseparable from it.

the beauty and the newness of all the different elements and also realize that they are not other than the wholeness. They are, in fact, the Whole displaying a part of its self-nature, just as Light displays the colors of the rainbow. Every unity has the potential for diversity, and all diversities merge with unity.

The human problem is that our internal contradictions have their base in the great paradox of manifestation, when the Supreme appears other than Itself. Pierre Lecomte de Nouy, in his book *Human Destiny*, as well as others have speculated on the aims underlying evolution and have suggested that they include harmony, freedom, and individuality. In the average human, the assertion of individuality destroys harmony and appears to establish freedom. The diversification of forms and species is a means to evolve more and more individual characteristics. There is a vast difference, for instance, between a mosquito and an ele-

phant, not just because of size, but because in the former there is hardly any individuality, while the latter is markedly individual in looks, behavior, and intelligence. The human being has advanced even further in this direction. But through millennia, evolution of consciousness has also been developing freedom and a sense of harmony. Organically, there have been such developments: the animal is physically freer than the plant, and humankind is even freer. Inwardly also, progress is being made towards freedom. There is, however, the seeming contradiction between the need for harmony on the one hand, and individuality on the other in the lives of most human beings. This is resolved in the earlier pre-human stages by Nature's own adjustments. But in the self-conscious human being there is conflict and struggle. He wants relationships, and yet his egoism spoils the chances of experiencing them joyfully. Assertion of individuality, (which is egoism) is the prime cause of our disharmony. Similarly, we want freedom, but we also need order — this is not only an individuality, but also a social and national dilemma.

Hence, our major problem is: Can we be free without creating chaotic and painful situations?

Can we nourish the latent uniqueness within us, without being at war? Much depends on how we understand ourselves and those values which are of the basic substance of the universe.

The universal and timeless values of the cosmos are unconnected with and independent of external things. As the poet Richard Lovelace said:

Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage.

("To Althea: From Prison")

Someone in prison is no less free than another so-called free man who is a slave to the passion of greed, anger, or envy. Similarly, true individuality is not a matter of asserting one's importance or exhibiting knowledge. What we call fundamental values — freedom, uniqueness, harmony, happiness, peace — are soul characteristics. They are not dependent on anything outside for their existence. Belief that we must find them outside by manipulating relationships, acquiring possessions, or changing circumstances is the cause of discord and suffering. These values are facets of our true nature and of universal consciousness. When we realize our true nature, we are absolutely in tune with the universe.

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Rethinking humanity's impact on the
Earth's fragile carbon balance



Breathing and Climate Change

Condensed from COMPASSIONATE SPIRIT

KEITH AKERS

DOES breathing contribute to climate change? With every breath we take, we breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas. So are we contributing to climate change just by the act of breathing?

If someone knows a bit about biology, they might respond, “No, because new plants will replace the plants we have eaten, and the new plants will take up the carbon dioxide.” The actual answer is not some glib assurance that new plants will replace the old, but “it depends.” And when you spin out what precisely it depends on, it has very

significant implications for how we address climate change.

Former US vice president and well-known climate advocate Al Gore’s response is that “we are participating in a closed cycle. That is, the carbon we breathe out comes from the food we eat, whether directly from plants, which take it in via photosynthesis, or indirectly from meat. So we get carbon from plants, breathe it out, and they take it in again.” (From Gore’s latest book, *An Inconvenient Sequel*, based on the movie of the same title, p. 234.)

Gore almost gets it. Let’s start with that last reassurance: “We get carbon from plants, breathe

The biomass of large animals is now over seven times what it was just 500 years ago. We have upset the balance of nature. . . . livestock contribute 51% of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

it out, and they take it in again.” Oh, really? To be balanced, there must be a net addition of plant life to the planet for each additional human (or additional cow). Are we doing that, do you think? Human and livestock populations have each more than tripled just in the 20th century. Have we seen a corresponding increase in plant matter?

Each additional human on the planet increases the amount of CO₂ breathed out. If this additional human goes vegan and dedicates their lives to reforestation, then the answer is yes — there will be plants there to take up that CO₂. But if this additional human decides to raze the rainforest to make a few dollars, then no — the total amount of plant matter on the planet will stay the same or even decrease.

Most of us, of course, fall in between these extremes. But if our

economy contributes to increasing cows and devastating plant life on the planet (think: meat consumption, deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion), then it has much the same effect.

Historically, humans have had a very significant negative effect on plant life. Vaclav Smil estimates that during the last two millennia, total plant phytomass on Earth has declined by 40% (and 17% just in the 20th century).

Yes, there is a cycle here, but it's not a closed cycle. We have disrupted it by destroying the plant matter on the planet, and through dramatic increases in human and livestock populations. We are not reutilizing all the CO₂ that we (and our livestock) are breathing out. The biomass of large animals is now over seven times what it was just 500 years ago. We have upset the balance of nature.

These are the kinds of considerations that led Robert Goodland and Jeff Anhang to conclude that livestock contribute 51% of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. There are some legitimate scientific questions here, and we can debate whether the figure for livestock really is 51%, and not 35% or 65% or some other figure.

Exactly how much CO₂ does each human (and each cow) breathe out? How many cattle are there in the world, in the first

place? How accurate are Smil's estimates of the decimation of plant life?

However, this is not primarily a scientific issue. It is a logical issue, and most people who minimize the impact of livestock on climate have failed to even consider the impact of livestock and human population on the biological carbon cycle.

When you multiply our net impact on the biological carbon cycle by the millions and billions of people and livestock animals on the planet, it's going to be very significant. It should really be the centerpiece of the climate

When you multiply our net impact on the biological carbon cycle by the millions and billions of people and livestock animals on the planet, it's going to be very significant.

change discussion, not just a side issue.

[HTTPS://COMPASIONATESPIRIT.COM/WPBLOG/2017/09/05/BREATHING-AND-CLIMATE](https://compasionatespirit.com/wpblog/2017/09/05/breathing-and-climate)



The first law of ecology is that everything is related to everything else.

BARRY COMMONER

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

JOHN MUIR

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

ALDO LEOPOLD

The planet cannot support billions of meat-eaters . . . If we shift toward a more plant-based diet, we can reduce our impact.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

Ecology and spirituality are fundamentally connected, because deep ecological awareness, ultimately, is spiritual awareness.

FRITJOF CAPRA

The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.

ROBERT SWAN

Aging as a transition into wisdom,
creativity, and wholeness



On the Metaphysics of Aging

Condensed from QUEST

JANET MACRAE

I recently attended a lecture on basic metaphysics at a large senior residential community. The speaker, a Theosophist, was explaining the different dimensions of subtle energies that comprise the human aura: the densest level being the vital or etheric field that interpenetrates the physical body and extends two to four inches from the surface of the skin; the emotional field, being less dense, interpenetrates the vital field and extends farther from the body; the mental field, even more rarefied, has higher and lower frequencies corresponding to abstract and concrete thought patterns.

During the speaker's explanation of the mental field, a woman raised her hand and asked an unexpected but significant question. "Is there any compensation for the memory loss that is frustrating for so many of us?"

After a few seconds of silence, a participant raised her hand and offered her personal experience of aging: "Although my memory is getting weaker — particularly my short-term memory — something inside me is getting stronger. I'm receiving more insights when I need to make decisions. Amazing coincidences are happen-

ing. And I feel I'm living more creatively now than when I was younger. This, to me, is compensation."

The speaker responded to her statements by discussing the subtle field of *buddhi*, which exists beyond the mind as we familiarly know it. It is the source of intuitive insight, wisdom, creativity, and spiritual perception. Our appreciation of beauty comes from here, as well as our sense of meaning and purpose. It is a unitive level through which we see the underlying connections among objects and events rather than their separateness.

The speaker explained that we can cultivate the buddhic consciousness in many ways, for example by artistic activity, paying attention to dreams and synchronistic events, and regularly engaging in spiritual practices such as meditation and contemplative prayer. If we are open to new insights and are willing to change our behavior in accordance with them, the inner wisdom-intuition will guide, strengthen, and enrich our lives.

Unfortunately, only an hour had been allotted for this lecture, and it was soon over. I felt a wave of frustration as people were leaving because, with more time, the speaker could have responded to the woman's question more fully. She could have discussed the cyclic journey of our consciousness and its signifi-

Buddhi . . . exists beyond the mind as we familiarly know it. It is the source of intuitive insight, wisdom, creativity, and spiritual perception.

cance for the aging process from the perspective of the Ancient Wisdom.

In the first phase of life, consciousness flows outward from its unitive source to gain experience in the material realm. In the later phase, consciousness begins its return: an inner reintegration process that continues in various stages after death.

The advantage for the aging population is that the tide of consciousness is now flowing in the direction of *buddhi*. From a metaphysical perspective, the aging phase is designed to bring us more in touch with the inner wisdom, peace, and creativity of a higher level of being. Although this dynamic design is working within us, its full actualization requires our conscious cooperation.

The Hindu concept of the four stages of life is based on the concept of the rhythmic pattern of consciousness. Huston Smith describes these stages in detail in

Smith concludes that our attitude is essential for the fulfillment of the promise of old age. . . . if spiritual wisdom and self-knowledge are one's greatest interest, the later stages can be the happiest and most fulfilling.

his excellent chapter on Hinduism in *The World's Religions*. In brief,

1. the first stage is that of the student;

2. the second, that of the householder;

3. the third is that of retirement for study and meditation; and

4. the final stage is that of the enlightened individual, whose outer personality is merged with the eternal, universal consciousness.

The number of years in each stage is not specified, as perhaps it varies with the individual.

Smith concludes that our attitude is essential for the fulfillment of the promise of old age. If physical beauty and abilities or worldly accomplishments are valued most highly, the earlier stages of life will be the most interesting and satisfying. But if spiritual wisdom and self-knowl-

edge are one's greatest interest, the later stages can be the happiest and most fulfilling.

In the Western philosophical tradition, the best-known treatise on old age is *De senectute* (*On Old Age*) by Marcus Tullius Cicero, written in 44 BC. The great Roman statesman wrote about an intrinsic natural rhythm and design to human life, in which aging has its appropriate place:

I follow nature as the best guide and obey her like a god. Since she carefully planned the other parts of the drama of life, it's unlikely that she would be a bad playwright and neglect the final act . . .

Nature has but a single path and we travel it only once. Each stage of life has its own appropriate qualities — weakness in childhood, boldness in youth, seriousness in middle age, and maturity in old age. (Freeman, 13, 69)

As with a botanical harvest, the fruits of old age, according to Cicero, require active cultivation throughout all the seasons of one's life. Nature's play has been written, but the actors have to fulfill their roles.

We can become more aware of this intrinsic rhythm of consciousness by reading biographies, for often there is a noticeable shift in attitude, a reaching beyond one's personal self, as an individual ages. This change can come through some great life challenge. It can also come, as

the Catholic priest and mystic Richard Rohr has beautifully written, from an acceptance of the “necessary suffering” that comes from being human.

In Florence Nightingale’s long life (1820-1910), this inner reorientation came through profound thought and an inner awakening. Well-known as the founder of modern nursing and a pioneer in statistical analysis, she worked tirelessly to help save lives by advocating for public health reform.

Throughout her life, her work never changed. But in midlife, she experienced a major change in attitude. She began to integrate the ideal of karma yoga as described in Sir Edwin Arnold’s translation of the Bhagavad Gita: if work is done for the sake of itself, rather than for a specific result or reward, it can become a spiritual practice.

Nightingale’s early biographer Sir Edward Cook wrote that the ideal expressed in this text helped to “set the note” of the latter part of her life. “She strove to attain, and she taught others to ensue, passivity in action — to do the utmost in their power, but to leave the result to a Higher Power” (Cook, 2:241).

The renowned clairvoyant C.W. Leadbeater wrote that in the great cycle of incarnation, the midlife point is much more important than either physical birth or death, “for it marks the

As with a botanical harvest, the fruits of old age, according to Cicero, require active cultivation throughout all the seasons of one’s life.

limit of the outgoing energy of the ego — the change, as it were, from his out-breathing to his inbreathing” (Leadbeater, 1:69).

After midlife, therefore, one should follow the dynamic plan of nature and turn one’s thought to higher things. Leadbeater emphasized the importance of gradually resolving any interpersonal difficulties so that, looking back after death, one is not weighed down by regrets. Discussing the four stages of life in the Eastern tradition, he lamented the fact that Western society is not structured in a way that is in harmony with nature. Because of this, many individuals are unaware of the true purpose of the second half of life — to gradually release attachments and expand one’s consciousness — and thus leave much of its potential unfulfilled.

The work of purification and detachment which should have begun in middle life is left until death overtakes them, and has therefore to be done upon the as-

The purpose of the later part of life is to rebalance oneself and become consciously attuned to the creative, unifying, ordering source of one's being, which (Jung) called the Self.

tral plane instead of the physical. Thus, unnecessary delay is caused, and through his ignorance of the true meaning of life the man's progress is slower than it should be. (Leadbeater, 1:71)

Although Leadbeater makes a valid point, it is also true that in Western society much help is available for the individual seeker. Modern depth psychology in particular provides valuable insights and strategies for navigating the shift in consciousness that occurs after midlife.

A good example is the theory of individuation developed by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung through an extensive study of dreams. From his perspective, the first part of life involves developing the persona, or the face we present to the world. The persona is composed of the individual personality traits with which we are comfortable: those en-

couraged by parents and teachers and sanctioned by society and our peer groups. The purpose of the later part of life is to rebalance oneself and become consciously attuned to the creative, unifying, ordering source of one's being, which he called the Self.

Jung described, in great detail, the path of inner growth during the later years of life and the challenges that must be faced. In the first place, we must come to terms with the shadow: all those characteristics we have ignored or repressed because they are inconsistent with the persona, such as our fears, resentments, nonconformist ideas, and antisocial feelings. In the second place, we must integrate the anima (the female element within the man) or the animus (the male element within the woman). For a detailed discussion of the individuation process, see the chapter in Jung's *Man and His Symbols* by Marie-Louise von Franz, a longtime associate of Jung.

Sometimes, the shadow is not intrinsically negative, but is simply unacceptable to the conscious self. It can appear in dreams, usually as a person of the same sex as the dreamer, doing something that the dreamer would never consciously do.

One of my own dreams provides a good example of the shadow. I made a film of some event that took place in New York City.

There was a stripper at this event, but I had left her out because she was too vulgar. Afterwards, a man came to me and said that I should have included her. "She was an integral part of the whole thing."

I realized that he was right. A film is a two-dimensional copy of a three-dimensional event. This may be a metaphor for the personality, which is a three-dimensional "copy" of a transcendent Self. So the dream is saying that my personality is not expressing something vitally important: the stripper, who defies the accepted mores of society with a flair. One message here is that I have been too proper, too accommodating, too concerned about the opinions of other people and with living up to their expectations.

On another level, the process of synchronizing with the inner Self could be viewed as "stripping": summoning the courage to remove worn-out ideas, unnecessary possessions, negative emotions, unhealthy relationships, and all other elements that can cover up our spiritual awareness.

In *The Cloud of Unknowing*, one of the greatest works of Christian mysticism, the unknown author writes that we must put our personal attributes under a "cloud of forgetting" and make a "naked intent to God" (John-Julian, 21, 71).

In The Cloud of Unknowing, one of the greatest works of Christian mysticism, the unknown author writes that we must put our personal attributes under a "cloud of forgetting" and make a "naked intent to God."

Unfortunately, an unacknowledged shadow can be projected onto other people, thus interfering with our relationships. From Jung's perspective, therefore, resolving interpersonal difficulties — which Leadbeater wrote was so important — involves first trying to rebalance ourselves.

Although it is unclear if Woolf (an avowed agnostic) was familiar with Jung's work, she poetically described the other great challenge of the individuation process: the integration of the *animus* in the woman and the *anima* in the man. In the following passage from *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf notes that when these elements come together, the individual is naturally creative and "incandescent."

I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul, so that in each one

An unacknowledged shadow can be projected onto other people, thus interfering with our relationships.

of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man . . . If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman must also have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties . . . He meant, perhaps, that the androgynous mind is resonant and porous; that it transmits emotion without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent, and undivided. (Woolf, 102)

The following dream from my journal illustrates the need for an integration of the male within the female. I was looking through a pile of *Life* magazines. A picture of Queen Elizabeth II, wearing her crown, was on the cover of every issue.

"This isn't right," I thought. "She shouldn't be here all the time."

Then I looked at some pictures of other people who deserved to

be on the cover. Most of them were men: a fact that I found significant. I felt drawn to one of them. He had a strong, intelligent face; he might have been a sea captain or an explorer.

"He should be on the cover," I thought.

I felt the dream was telling me that feminine qualities, symbolized by the long-reigning queen of England, had been ruling my consciousness for too many lifetimes. Now it was time for a change, time to rebalance by welcoming the sea captain into my life. I needed to express some masculine qualities: to become more assertive, even in a quiet way; to stop continually adjusting to the desires of others; to follow my own path; to be more willing to take risks. It is significant that in the previous dream about the shadow, it was a male figure who told me that the stripper should be integrated.

Marie-Louise Von Franz wrote reassuringly that when a sincere effort is made to rebalance oneself and follow the path of individuation, one eventually accesses one's organizing, creative center: "Whenever a human being genuinely turns to the inner world and tries to know himself . . . then sooner or later the Self emerges. The ego will then find an inner power that contains all the possibilities of renewal" (von Franz, 215).

In dreams, the Self can emerge in many symbolic forms: as a superior human figure such as a wise old man or priestess or divine child; as a sacred or helpful animal; as a precious stone or crystal with its ordered configuration.

In the following dream, the Self came to me in the form of a powerful lioness:

I was standing just inside a forest, looking out on an open field. A lioness appeared in the field. She saw me and immediately ran toward me. I thought that surely this would be the end of me.

When she reached me, however, she stood behind me and enveloped me with her paws in the most benevolent manner. I had the impression that she thought I needed her. But because she was so tremendous, I didn't feel completely at ease with her. I stood very still, hardly breathing.

Then the scene changed, and I was trying to tell a group of people about this extraordinary occurrence. They weren't paying much attention to me.

From the metaphysical perspective described above, the clear field represents the unified level of intuitive wisdom, while the forest represents the level of the mind which is filled with details. I stood on the boundary between these two dimensions. The dream seems to be saying

"Whenever a human being genuinely turns to the inner world and tries to know himself... then sooner or later the Self emerges." — Marie-Louise Von Franz

that help will come from the clear field of buddhi. It will be both powerful and protective, so I should not be afraid to follow the tide of consciousness as it flows on its inward journey. And there was a warning in the dream: conventional society would not appreciate that which was so significant to me.

The idea of creative insight as compensation, which the woman in the lecture hall experienced — a triumph of the human spirit over memory losses and other physical issues of aging — was beautifully expressed by Mildred Miller, my favorite early-20th-century artist. The following passage is from a diary she kept when she was codirector of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Summer School, dated July 15, 1927:

Yesterday, I was working on a hayfield, and when I painted the light on a man's hat against the loaded wagon it seemed to me that I had struck the actual appear-

*Not all of us are artists
like Mildred Miller, but
we can all touch the inner
source of creative renewal
and — in our own unique
ways — express it in the
world.*

[sic] “that I can really make my own the beautiful light that I see, that I can look at the light dripping from a horse’s flank and say “You are mine?” If I can do that I would not mind old age or being ugly, sickness or death. (Brown, 106)

Not all of us are artists like Mildred Miller, but we can all touch the inner source of creative renewal and — in our own unique ways — express it in the world.

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270, WHEATON, IL 60187-0270 USA

ance. “Can it be possible,” I thot,



A human being would certainly not grow to be 70 or 80 years old if this longevity had no meaning for the species to which he belongs. The afternoon of human life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life’s morning. CARL JUNG

Age does not make us childish, as some say; it finds us true children.
HERMANN HESSE

Eternity is in love with the productions of time. WILLIAM BLAKE

To come to possess all, desire the possession of nothing.
ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun.
KHALIL GIBRAN

Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue.
PLOTINUS

Old age, especially an honored old age, has so great authority that this is of more value than all the pleasures of youth. CICERO

Returning is the motion of the Tao. LAO TZU

Exploring Krishnamurti's vision of education as
inner awakening and liberation



Krishnamurti, Education, and Unlearning

Condensed from THE THEOSOPHIST
ANTONIO GIRARDI

THIS brief article is the product of a perspective that incorporates a number of streams through which I have experienced Jiddu Krishnamurti's message — as a beneficiary of Krishnamurti's life and teachings, a member, now President, of the Theosophical Society, and one who has recently participated in the founding of an educational institution (The Adyar Theosophical Academy) motivated by the Ageless Wisdom teachings. All of these found a powerful contemporary voice in J. Krishnamurti (K). Unless one counts his many videos, audio recordings and books, I was never

in his presence. However, I have had a sense of being with him through stories and conversations with many people who worked closely with him, sat with him and discussed, shared ideas, and recited with him his beloved mantras. The importance to me of this blended perspective is that it places K in a continuum of unfoldment. From childhood to the completion of his life, there is a dramatic unfoldment of his message and capacity to share. Being a member of the Theosophical Society roots K in a context that adds a certain richness to his message. K's first little book, widely read,

AFM was a description of a path leading “from the Unreal to the Real” involving four specific “qualifications” of mind and behavior: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct . . . and Love.

was written at the age of 14 — *At the Feet of the Master (AFM)*. Although many would say that the book was the product of a “highly evolved” young man, there is no doubt that it is the product of youth with all its advantages and limitations.

The book is a summary of things that were told to K by someone he regarded as a teacher. The teaching presented in it was not new, having been expounded by Sankaracharya in a different language more than a thousand years earlier. K’s addition to the material was the simplicity and unelaborated expression of a young mind which gave it clarity and immediacy. Essentially, it was a repetition of someone else’s thoughts, thoughts which profoundly resonated with him, but which could not be called original. *AFM* was a description of a path leading “from

the Unreal to the Real” involving four specific “qualifications” of mind and behavior: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct (also known as *shatsampatti*), and Love.

It was at this initial stage of K’s unfoldment process that many members of the Theosophical Society (TS), others around the world and I first encountered him. And it was from these youthful beginnings that an attempt has been made to follow the increasingly original and demanding nature of his message. Although later in life his sense of connection to his previous line of thought diminished, even losing the memories of that other time, the central core around which his lifetime of teaching revolved was always the movement from “the Unreal to the Real.”

To teach is to communicate in a manner that effects change. K focused on nothing less than liberation, an “unconditional freedom” that is only possible as one becomes free from obscuring emotion and thought — what the Buddhists describe as “afflictive emotion.” Freedom is not teachable, neither is liberation. But the cultivation of the observant mind that explores, questions, and is comfortable with stillness is something that can be communicated. The problem for developing educational models capable of this type of teaching is that a different approach to teaching

and learning is required — one that involves both teacher and student in a common dynamic.

In the language of Maria Montessori, we “educate the human potential.” The TS was founded with three main objects, of which the most important was, in the language of 1875, “Brotherhood,” or “Unity” and “Oneness of life.” One of the other objects relates to the investigation of “powers” latent in human beings. Frequently, these powers have been interpreted as psychic in nature, an idea which, while true at a certain level, diminishes a deeper understanding. What might be thought of as paranormal becomes completely normal for anyone who attains a certain level of insight.

Krishnamurti, though endowed with such abilities, rightly rejected the desire to place any focus on them, seeing them as yet another binding, personal distraction from a genuine understanding. The real powers, the powers worthy of an educational effort are utterly different in nature. Compassion, truthfulness, kindness, meditation, courage are the powers latent within us — powers which our relentless conditioning has relegated to the realm of “potential,” “latent,” and inactive. But what can we do about it?

The question which K. asked, and which we are asking as we begin our educational attempt, is

Compassion, truthfulness, kindness, meditation, courage are the powers latent within us — powers which our relentless conditioning has relegated to the realm of “potential,” “latent,” and inactive.

“What is education?” and the corollary question of “How do we educate?” A literal sense of what it means to educate is the direction of our effort. Most of us who have had the experience of formal education share a common background of experience. From its earliest stages, the process involves a separative approach of teacher and student in which it is the student who is to be acted upon. He is lacking in knowledge and must be filled. She is unacquainted with proper behavior and must be shaped. They must be periodically tested to ensure that their conditioning is effective. They are compared and rewarded according to the degree of their demonstrated embrace of this conditioning. Furthermore, they are trained to fear the consequences of inadequate acceptance, or “inappropriate”

The educational process from its inception should not be about pouring facts, information, and behaviors into students, but should be focused on the root meaning of the word “educate,” which is “to draw out.”

questioning of this teaching process.

By the time we arrive at the higher levels of institutional education, we have not only become fully adapted to this process, but find we have developed a certain dependence, a vested interest in furthering this approach. Our career, acceptance in the community, even our sense of self-worth become so intimately linked to the conditioned view of who we are and what is of value, that any movement in an alternative direction can be fearful. Although it is a problem faced at different stages of life, often in middle age, one starts to feel with an increasing severity that neither the training of a lifetime, nor the path on which it has placed us, has led to happiness. One starts to feel that, throughout the process, no guidelines or instruction have

been directed toward the most fundamental desire of every person, the attainment of happiness, and the search for meaning.

Krishnamurti once commented that “It is no sign of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society.” The educational process from its inception should not be about pouring facts, information, and behaviors into students, but should be focused on the root meaning of the word “educate,” which is “to draw out.” We have to draw out the hidden potentials of life and love. It is these that ennoble facts with meaning.

At a certain point, one looks at the world one inhabits and becomes acutely aware of its problems. For some, it results in despair; for others, the problems — personal, societal, environmental — can seem so overwhelming and one feels so ill-equipped, that denial is the preferred response. Others willingly embark on a process of “unlearning” — identifying and removing the obscuring imprints of a lifetime of misdirected education, so that the freshness, openness, and clear seeing of an unfettered mind can reveal itself. Modern-day education necessarily involves more than unfoldment of character, self-confidence, and movement toward happiness. Academic excellence is a requirement, as is the need to prepare

students to function in today's world — motor-skills development, conceptual awareness across disciplines, in-depth exposure to arts, sciences and sports. Most important is the need to prepare students to meet and redirect the rapidly mounting consequences of our prevailing educational approach which has pitted people against each other and against the natural world. What is unlearning?

Krishnamurti envisioned a world of psychologically free individuals — people capable of responding to life in an effortless manner, beyond the labored, thought-laden processes of a thoroughly conditioned mind. Those who found their way to his teaching normally did so long after the world and its ways had laid its heavy hand on them, requiring a tremendous effort in order to become effortless — to simply observe the flight of a bird, the smell of the rain, the movement of thought. On one oc-

Krishnamurti envisioned a world of psychologically free individuals — people capable of responding to life in an effortless manner, beyond the labored, thought-laden processes of a thoroughly conditioned mind.

casion in Saanen, Switzerland, after seeing the same faces in the audience year after year, K asked, "Why are you still here?" After hearing his message repeatedly, the question he was asking was, "Why haven't you understood it yet?" This is the dilemma of unlearning.

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The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.

MARIA MONTESSORI

The soul is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived.

PARKER J. PALMER



Quotes and Thoughts

When you understand, you cannot help but love.

THICH NHAT HANH

To be ourselves causes us to be exiled by others, and yet to comply with what others want causes us to be exiled from ourselves. CLARISSA PIKOLA ESTES

The more I go within, the more I see that I am connected with all that is. HENRI NOUWEN

The bad news is you are falling through the air. The good news is there is no ground. CHOGYAM TRUNGPA

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate. CARL JUNG

The present moment is always filled with infinite treasure. It contains more than you are capable of receiving. JEAN-PIERRE DE CAUSSADE

The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. JOHN MILTON

Whatever you think of God is not God.

ABU SA'ID ABUL-KHAYR

Within you, there is a stillness and a sanctuary. HERMAN HESSE

One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between man and nature shall not be broken. LEO TOLSTOY

Above all, do not lie to yourself. FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody. PARKER J. PALMER

Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it. BLAISE PASCAL

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Children need models rather than critics. JOSEPH JOUBERT

The strength of the human spirit beyond bodily suffering



Making the Best of the Worst

Condensed from SUNRISE

JULES VAN BERGEN

IT was a special privilege recently to spend 10 days in the company of people who, when fate struck hard and reduced their life to rubble, pieced it back together so that they could gain as much joy and satisfaction from what remains as their circumstances allow. Life is precious to them, and remains so even in the face of dramatic physical handicaps, perhaps acquired so suddenly that their world was instantly shattered. In earlier phases of my life my sense of adventure had placed me in precarious situations many a time. That sense of adventure had played a role here but, more importantly, I wanted

to help a 90-year-old woman — infirm but full of life and eager to travel — to fulfill her heart's desire to go on a real journey again. This brought me into contact with a world that, until then, had been little more than theory for me. Although I am not disabled myself, or one of their helpers, on this trip I was one of them, admitted to a realm with no false appearances and glamor, in which stark reality, fully accepted, is on display.

One sunny morning, a few hours after the summer solstice, we all set off, full of expectation, in a specially equipped coach. Our destination was the Ziller Valley in Austria, where we were

He shuffled up in a wheelchair, and sitting down was quite a task. He was a gnome-like figure, the upper part of his body bent forward 90 degrees so that he barely projected above the table.

due to arrive in 11 hours. It was a marvelous group of nearly 30 people, but for the unprepared, unsuspecting, superficial observer who sees no more than the top of the iceberg, it was a shocking sight. Those able to do so had got on the coach by themselves, but most were helped inside using the lift, sitting in their wheelchairs or other marvelous inventions which, once in position, were firmly secured, ready for the journey. With a merry, confidence-inspiring driver and the exciting adventure ahead, everyone readily slipped into a holiday mood. A nod and a smile, where appropriate, to the still unknown traveling companions, is the first step towards getting acquainted. After four hours' drive comes the first stop: Wurzburg. This means unfastening all the wheelchairs, descending with the lift, and helping everyone out of the coach — a procedure that

takes half an hour. In the 100 meters from the coach to the restaurant I got an initial impression of the disabled travelers and their helpers: a procession of wheelchairs, motorized conveyances, and supervisors on foot. The first, most urgent goal was the restroom — an operation in itself, in which nearly everyone had to be helped.

Then came the meal: a busy, colliding, searching colony of human ants in the spacious restaurant, with delicious dishes in abundance. Everyone found a table and was given something to eat; some had to be assisted. A man and a woman came and sat down at my table. She was one of those people who have “nothing wrong” with them. The same could not be said of her husband. He shuffled up in a wheelchair, and sitting down was quite a task. He was a gnome-like figure, the upper part of his body bent forward 90 degrees so that he barely projected above the table. His nose and the rest of his face were horizontal, and his open mouth was at the same level as his eyes. Later, I noticed that he had difficulty finding his mouth with his spoon or fork, and it was only logical that saliva constantly trickled from the corner of his mouth; you can't swallow all the time. I never saw his wife help him eat — he managed it himself. The same applied to getting into and out of

the coach; it seemed that she left him to muddle through. But she did help him to sit down. Being of service in the right way and at the right time is an art that you can learn only if the other person means something to you.

At the table, he told me that they had been married 56 years and that today was his 84th birthday. At the hotel that evening, we all sang to him. I was never able to see his face properly, not even during our later conversations. But that was no obstacle to befriending the person in this broken body. I was astonished that I got used to his unusual appearance so quickly. The same applied, without exception, to all the people I got to know on this trip. Their ravaged bodies are the tattered flags behind which is concealed a brave soul which knows no surrender. They have never become subservient to their bodies, they have never surrendered control over the body-soul duo, not even when the body deployed every weapon available. As a result, all pretense and pride have been eroded from their souls. The soul has become like nature: itself. No wonder you grow accustomed to an unusual appearance so quickly once you get to know the noble soul within — the image of the real self.

After the first day, the ice was broken and people got talking to one another without any ritual.

No wonder you grow accustomed to an unusual appearance so quickly once you get to know the noble soul within — the image of the real self.

Someone rolls up in a wheelchair and soon you know the most important details about his or her life. Everyone wants to tell their story; it's easier to do so to people you don't know, as they listen better. This morning, on the broad terrace with the fairytale mountain scenery before me, I had a chat with a woman who was accompanying a man in a science-fiction-like wheelchair that stood beside her. There was a strange piece of equipment on either side of his head, and there were all sorts of devices in front of his head and behind it. Moving and talking were impossible, but he could see and hear normally. The thinking and feeling person within could therefore pick up signals from the outside world and process them with his intact mind, and he was able to give a minimal response, thanks to the ingenious equipment. By making very slight movements with his head, he activated characters on a small screen in front of him. In this way, and through the look

Even though their situation seemed hopeless, they never gave up. They continued to resist what looked like blind fate and were able to save the most important thing of all: the meaning of their existence.

in his eyes, he communicated with his wife, who understood everything.

She told me how their life had changed so drastically. Seven years ago, something happened to her husband's brainstem, causing all his muscular and nervous functions to fail. He remained alive, and when his situation eventually improved slightly, she decided to take him home so that she could be with him and care for him herself as much as possible. Gradually, the limitations were accepted and they learned to be satisfied with the opportunities that remained, which were sufficient to lead a dignified existence. Their life had assumed a new form, and now they were both greatly enjoying their holiday. Inspired by love, and with will power and discipline, they have opened the next page in the book of life and

are busy writing it with fresh courage. By maintaining and caring for the battered body, the beloved soul remains within reach. In this way, both are assigned exactly the importance they deserve. The caresses to which the body is entitled were and are in fact an ode to the soul.

Their familiar world had collapsed. But even though their situation seemed hopeless, they never gave up. They continued to resist what looked like blind fate and were able to save the most important thing of all: the meaning of their existence. They didn't fall into the endless refrain of "why me?" It must have been experience rather than imagination that prompted Carlyle to write: "From the lowliest depths, there is a path to the loftiest heights." My traveling companions have found that path, and although they may not yet have reached the greatest heights, they are making fearless progress and have already abandoned a great deal of excess baggage. A tree is not dead if a new shoot emerges from the sawn-off trunk; the life of a human being is not over if he begins anew after a catastrophe. The question is how strong is our will to live, the power that decides whether we give in or hold firm. Everyone is entitled to his or her own outlook on life and receives from mother nature the appropriate lessons — and always another chance.

We all follow the path of necessity — karma. In the great scheme of nature, there is no escaping the effects of our actions. The consequences depend on how we ourselves shape them. This means we have the right and the power to create our own heaven or our own hell. As students of life, with our own mental and physical defects, are we not all disabled? Cowardly, brave, or lukewarm, we are all, in our ignorance, trying to make something of our lives. What happens as a result offers us opportunities to learn. If we make good use of them, we become worthy representatives of humanity, our ignorance lessens, we shorten our suffering, and are on the way to final liberation.

Every day, the weather was wonderful and we went on an excursion. The trip on the funicular railway to an altitude of 2,000 meters, drinking coffee there, the Alpine meadows with the beautiful gray calves — all will long remain in their memory. The two blind young men went with us of course. Although they did not see the breathtaking panorama, they experienced everything in their own way, as they said themselves. Simply being there, away from the daily grind, in the company of others — that was the main thing.

The Tyrolian festival evening, in the middle of the holiday, was one of the highlights. Parties of

This unexpected trip has taught me to look at disabled people with different eyes.

this kind hold no attraction for me: there is too much noise and outward movement. But I was unable and unwilling to miss it. In this case, my attitude proved to be a prejudice and I abandoned it as soon as the party began, once my enthusiastic companion and I had found a quiet place to sit. The people gathered here came from a world where nobody needed to keep up appearances. In their trials, they had lost their masks and showed their true faces, undisturbed. A sort of dance floor had been created in the dining hall by moving tables and chairs to one side. A musician with a guitar and one with a harmonica, with the help of their voices, brought the place to life. Everyone participated in their own way — not just a little bit but with full abandon. The music got everything and everyone moving, wheelchairs circled around, paralyzed arms were moved to and fro by helpers in time to the music, those seated were embraced and half swung round. Everybody took part — it was a wild affair!

*A battered body quickly
becomes familiar; look past
it to the soul that shines
through it and you will
make discoveries.*

The conga was performed twice: a procession of wheelchairs and people moved and hobbled through corridors and rooms, waving and singing. Then I saw the two blind young men standing beside the musicians, each playing percussion by clinking two spoons together. People in their 80s forgot their age and danced like they did in days gone by. My singing 90-year-old companion became several dozen years younger — it was an evening to remember! She was unable to stop. But eventually, it had to end. Gradually, one wheelchair after another disappeared, together with a caregiver, to take the lift upstairs, and finally my own companion did likewise and I was able to go to my room, enriched by an unforgettable experience. At what hour the lights went out I do not know.

Each of the caregivers and helpers stole my heart. With

their dedication, patience, and warm humanity, they showed that brotherhood in action is a blessing.

On the final evening, the tour leaders announced the “holiday-maker of the week” — a bit like awarding an Oscar. It could have been any of them, as they each deserved first prize. Who would it be? It was quite exciting, for the game was genuine, like everything else in their lives. The paralyzed husband and his wife won the well-earned honor. They were applauded, congratulated, kissed, and the woman wept genuine tears. That the game had become real was clear to my eyes too.

This unexpected trip has taught me to look at disabled people with different eyes. I now find that if I meet them on the street or see them on television, a spontaneous feeling of sympathy wells up inside me, a sense of familiarity, as if to say “we know each other”; the imagined remoteness has simply vanished. A battered body quickly becomes familiar; look past it to the soul that shines through it and you will make discoveries.

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Exploring self-mastery through the alignment of
our higher and lower selves



The Two Parts of the Self

Condensed from INSIGHTS ON LIFE
VICENTE HAO CHIN JR.

ONE of the most important facets of self-understanding and self-mastery is the realization that our different levels of consciousness can be divided into two groupings: (1) the lower self, consisting of our physical body (part of which is the etheric double with its *prana* or life energy), the emotional body, and the lower mind. This is called the personality. Then, we have (2) the higher or inner self, consisting of our abstract mind, our transcendent consciousness, and the universal consciousness. This is called the individuality.

These two groups are often represented by two triangles, an upper upright triangle for the higher self, and an inverted triangle for the lower self.

The lower self or personality is a product of conditioning and influences. It produces the different habits and reaction patterns. It tends to resist things that go against the habit. For example, if I don't do physical exercise, my body will resist efforts to start doing exercise. If I have the habit of smoking, the body will resist efforts to stop smoking. If I'm used to lying or exaggerating, I will have difficulties trying to be honest.

Unfortunately, not all of the habits of the lower personality are wholesome or helpful. Some of them in fact are destructive. Some go contrary to one's highest ideals or aspirations.

The higher individuality or higher triangle, on the other

The more mature a person is, the more the individuality prevails in action or decisions.

hand, is impersonal. It sees things more objectively and not on the basis of likes or dislikes. It sees that smoking is harmful or should be stopped even if the body has acquired the habit. It sees something as right or wrong, regardless of whether an action will gain or lose advantages.

Throughout our life, we face these conflicts between the higher individuality and the lower personality. This is what St. Paul was speaking about when he stated: "For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." (Rom 7:15) Helena Blavatsky similarly exhorts that it is one's duty "to control and conquer, through the Higher, the lower self" (*Key to Theosophy*).

The more mature a person is, the more the individuality prevails in action or decisions. Such actions tend to be wiser and conducive to internal harmony. On the other hand, people who allow the lower habits to prevail become prisoners of the past and

are unable to rise above their conditionings.

What can we do to start letting the Higher Self become the dominant factor in one's life?

Start with small things that are doable. Suppose you are not inclined to do 30 minutes jogging due to laziness. Then just make a small effort to do two minutes. But once you decide to do two minutes, then do so even if the body resists. Just do it. When you triumph for the first time, something is beginning to happen unconsciously. The inner will is beginning to assert itself, and the lower self is beginning to give way. Do it again another time, perhaps for three minutes or five minutes. Just do it because you say so. When you have repeated these doable decisions, you may notice that there will come a point when you will be able to assert over your laziness and do the 30-minute jogging.

This kind of self-training may make a major difference in your life. After your inner will has become strong enough, you can undertake major decisions or new behaviors that can change the direction of your life, such as writing 30 minutes every day, or reading 30 minutes every day, or playing the piano 30 minutes daily. When the higher will is strong, then one can reach one's highest potential.

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Spirituality and Service: Foundations for a Better World

Condensed from THE THEOSOPHIST

DEEPA PADHI

LIBERTY is the keynote of the soul's growth," says Annie Besant, which reminds us that freedom is not merely political — it is spiritual, intellectual, and moral. Today as we gather for the Besant Lecture, we honor that great woman, whose life was a bridge between East and West, between science and spirituality, between reform and revolution. As we reflect on Annie Besant's legacy, let us remember that her life was not about theory alone — it was all about action. The modern world today is defined by remarkable digital impact of Artificial Intelligence, technological progress, widespread access to information and

global connectivity. In spite of these material achievements, most of the people experience stress, anxiety, loneliness and social isolation. Frequent changes in jobs, shifts of social norms, and technology are constantly shaping our daily life. Today's society measures success by wealth, productivity, and status. Despite being more digitally connected than ever, many people feel emotionally insecure. It is in this context that the values of spirituality and service emerge not only as ideals but as urgent necessities. Spirituality, whether religious or non-religious has reemerged as an essential need. As we all know,

Spirituality is knowing our True Self. The physical body is not the self. Deep inside the physical form, there is the Pure Consciousness.

spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and self-reflection activate a sense of resilience and peace. They quieten the mind that helps emotional balance as well.

Spirituality addresses the questions that technology cannot answer like “Who am I,” “Why am I here?,” “What is the purpose of life?” Spirituality is knowing our True Self. The physical body is not the Self. Deep inside the physical form, there is the pure consciousness. Spirituality is about knowing: “I am not just a body; I am that Pure Consciousness.” “I am the Universal self” — *aham brahmâsmi* — as Advaita Vedanta declares. Spirituality focuses on inner transformation, self-awareness, peace, connection with the Higher Self. It is Universal.

Service is the practical expression of spirituality. It means extending kindness, support, and resources to others without expecting anything in return.

Service does not mean spending a lot of money on others while helping. It can be as simple as listening to someone in distress or as significant as providing time, effort, and resources to uplift the underprivileged.

In the present times, people have access to more comforts than ever before, yet they feel emotionally drained, spiritually bankrupt, and also socially distanced. It is in this context that the values of spirituality and service emerge not only as ideals but as urgent necessities. Together they lead to inner harmony and social wellbeing.

Spirituality and service are crucial today because of rising mental and emotional stress, increasing social inequalities, lack of moral values, and environmental crises.

Ordinarily, people confuse spirituality with religion. Religion is community-based, while spirituality is individual-based. Spirituality is the practice of connecting more deeply with one's own self, with others, and with life itself. It is about meaning of life, awareness, compassion, and inner transformation. Spirituality is derived from the word “spirit,” which means “inner self”. It is therefore, knowing about one's own self. It is very much a human experience, not a religious one. Of course, one should be aware of pseudo-spirituality which is spirituality used for sat-

isfying the ego. True spirituality removes ego while pseudo-spirituality inflates it. Theosophy as true spirituality is the practice of deepening our consciousness, thoughts, emotions, values, and the life unfolding around us. It is about finding meaning in our everyday experiences, feeling more and more connected to people and serving them. It generates compassion, empathy, love, and kindness within us

While spirituality and service are meaningful on their own, their power is multiplied when they work together. Spirituality without service can become self-centered, while service without spirituality may lead to a superiority complex. But when inner spiritual growth inspires our outward actions and outer actions reinforce inner growth, individuals transform into compassionate leaders, capable of lifting both themselves and society as well.

The world's greatest spiritualists like Annie Besant, Vivekananda, and others have always taught that inner transformation leads to outer transformation. As Sri Aurobindo had said, "All life is Yoga." Every moment is an opportunity to grow spiritually through patience, humility, honesty and love. Mahatma Gandhi expressed it beautifully. He said: "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

Service is the practical expression of spirituality. It means extending kindness, support, and resources to others without expecting anything in return.

This year's theme of the TS International Convention is "One World, One Life: The Spirit of a New Humanity." Spirituality and service are the pathways through which this spirit of new humanity can truly manifest.

Theosophy teaches that all life is one and that all humanity is spiritually interconnected. In Theosophy, spirituality means the inner realization of truth, wisdom and unity. It encourages individuals to look beyond material success and recognize their higher nature. Madame H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) explains, "Spirituality is the awakening of the inner self, the recognition of the divine essence in man." Theosophical teachings emphasize self-knowledge, moral discipline, compassion and the understanding that every human being is a spiritual soul evolving towards self-transformation. The Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society states: "To serve humanity by cultivating

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an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the Unity of All Life.”

True spirituality is living with awareness, acting with compassion, and thinking beyond one’s own self. This spiritual awareness helps individuals overcome selfishness, hatred, and ignorance — qualities that cause suffering in a society as well as in the world. Annie Besant expressed this idea by saying: “Spiritual life is not a life apart from the world, but a life lived more deeply within.” When people develop spirituality, they become more tolerant, peaceful, compassionate and understanding towards others. Annie Besant described spirituality as a “change in consciousness.”

Theosophy strongly believes that service is the practical application of spirituality. Serving others is not done for any reward or recognition but out of compassion and a sense of duty

towards humanity. Helping the poor, educating the ignorant, protecting Nature, and working for social justice are all considered sacred acts. Service purifies the mind and strengthens the feeling of Universal Brotherhood. According to Theosophy, spirituality and service are inseparable. Spirituality transforms the individual from within, while service transforms the society from without. Together, they create the moral and ethical foundation needed for a better world. By living spiritually and serving selflessly, humanity can move closer to harmony, peace and inner progress.

Theosophy teaches that all life is one and that humanity is spiritually interconnected. From this point of view, Theosophy is not limited to personal belief, but is expressed through selfless service to others. We can say, it is a way of life expressed through selfless service. As Madame Blavatsky clearly states: “Theosophy is altruism, pure and simple.”

True spiritual growth according to Theosophy, naturally leads to service and together, these two principles form the foundation of a harmonious world. In the words of Annie Besant: “The spiritual life is the life of unselfishness, of service, of devotion to humanity.”

The foundation of Theosophy is expressed in its First Object: “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, gen-

der, caste or color.” This principle if truly lived, could transform the world. Theosophy teaches that humanity is one family, not just ethically but spiritually and also according to the law of Karma. As it is said, what affects one, affects all.

HPB wrote: “The whole world is under the law of mutual interdependence.” In fact, brotherhood is a law of Nature. Students helping friends without any discrimination, communities supporting the marginalized, and so on, are examples of applied brotherhood, turning spirituality into a living reality.

Service is the natural expression of spirituality. It is not charity, but the recognition of Oneness. The well-known spiritual teaching of Mahatma Gandhi is “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Theosophical service includes sustainable living, education, respect for animals and ecological awareness. The Blue-Green center, a garden developed by the Adyar Eco Development project in the Adyar campus which focuses on experiential environmental education for students and the Adyar Theosophical Academy for providing holistic education are the bright examples. In the context of education, one remembers J. Krishnamurti’s words at the World University on December 25, 1925: “True

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education consists in training to serve, not for honors, not for self-glorification, not for recognition by the world, but for the sake of the work itself.”

One of our cherished initiatives has been to educate the poorest of the poor girls in Odisha by offering them scholarships for five years each. This is a matching grant project with Italy for almost 10 years. It is not merely a financial aid. It is an investment in human dignity, in the flowering of potential, and in the building of a better world.

Today, we rejoice in seeing the fruits of this effort. Some of these young women are now working as bankers, others as officers in the state administration. Some have joined leading companies such as Accenture and Bajaj Finance contributing to industry. Some others have become teachers, lecturers, and nurses, nurturing minds and healing bodies. And presently, two of them are medical students preparing to dedicate their lives to the service of health and humanity. Each of these lives is an example of the

Theosophy . . . teaches that the inner world shapes the outer world. Every kind thought, every selfless act, every effort to understand another human being is a step towards a better world.

transformative power of service. These young women, once marginalized, now stand as pillars of strength contributing to the progress to a better world.

This reminds us of Annie Besant who was not only a spiritual leader but a champion of women's empowerment. Her struggle reminds us that true liberation is incomplete without the empowerment of women and her legacy continues to inspire movements for equality even today.

Sometimes, the question arises: Why is service essential in Theosophy? The answer one can get from *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. The Mahatma KH wrote: "He who does not practice altruism, who does not work for others, is not a true Theosophist."

A key theosophical principle is selfless action, that is, service without desire for recognition or reward. The Bhagavad Gītā,

which is highly respected in Theosophy, teaches: "*karmanyeva adhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣhu kadāchana* — You have the right to perform your prescribed duty, but you have no right to the rewards of the action." Such service purifies our motives and strengthens inner peace.

The Law of Karma is central to Theosophy. It teaches that every thought, word, and action has its effect. HPB explains in *The Secret Doctrine*: "Karma is the ultimate law of the universe, the source, the origin and fount of all other laws." When we serve others, we create positive Karma, reduce sufferings, and accelerate our own spiritual growth. Theosophy places compassion at the center of spiritual life. Madame Blavatsky writes in *The Voice of the Silence*: "Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal harmony." This powerful statement reminds us that compassion is not weakness — it is Cosmic Law.

Compassion needs to be practiced in daily life like listening without any judgement, forgiving instead of reacting, and helping without expecting anything in return. These are small acts, but when done consistently transform relationships and societies as well.

The young generation can practice service by volunteering, promoting kindness in schools, standing against discrimination,

and helping in environmental protection. From a theosophical standpoint, youth are not “the leaders of tomorrow — they are the serving partners of today.” Theosophy teaches that age is no barrier to spiritual responsibility. It teaches that the inner world shapes the outer world. Every kind thought, every selfless act, every effort to understand another human being is a step towards a better world.

The challenges of the 21st century demand more than just technical solutions. They require a shift in consciousness. Spirituality instills these values, and service expresses them. One does not need to be a saint or a social worker to live this ideal. Each one of us can bring spirituality and service into our daily life.

Spirituality and selfless service, together stand as pillars of human progress and form the foundations of a better world — a peaceful, compassionate and

Annie Besant did not separate meditation from action, nor wisdom from service. She showed us that the true measure of spirituality is how it uplifts others.

sustainable world which is the need of the times. Annie Besant did not separate meditation from action, nor wisdom from service. She showed us that the true measure of spirituality is how it uplifts others. In the present time of division and uncertainties, her legacy calls us to build a better world — where spirituality awakens us and service transforms society.

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Love and service are inseparable. They are two sides of the same coin.

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Faith in action is love, and love in action is service.

MOTHER TERESA

When we serve others, we serve God.

LAILAH GIFTY AKITA



Veal: A Byproduct of the Cruel Dairy Industry

Condensed from PETA.ORG

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

COWS produce milk for the same reason why humans and other mammals do: to nourish their young. But the millions of cows who live on US dairy farms are forced into a vicious cycle of continuous pregnancy so that they will produce milk for human consumption. Their female calves are slaughtered immediately or used to replace their mothers in the dairy herd, and many male calves end up in veal crates – a fate characterized by confinement, darkness, malnutrition, and slaughter.

The Cow-Calf Bond. Without human intervention, calves suckle from their mothers for nearly a year. One veterinary study revealed that “during natural weaning there is never complete and abrupt abandonment of the calf by the cow. In fact, the cow and calf will maintain a life-long relationship of social contact and companionship even when a new offspring arrives.” Another study found that a cow and her calf can develop a “strong maternal bond” in as little as five minutes. But calves born on dairy farms are taken from their mothers on the same

Veal: A Byproduct of the Cruel Dairy Industry

day that they are born and fed milk replacers, including cattle blood, so that humans can have the milk instead. This forced separation causes cows and calves great distress, and cows have been known to escape enclosures and travel for miles to reunite with their young.

Small Stalls and No Exercise. Calves raised for veal are forced to spend their short lives in individual crates that are no more than six by seven feet. These crates are designed to prohibit exercise and normal muscle growth in order to produce tender “gourmet” veal. The calves are fed a milk substitute that is purposely low in iron so that they will become anemic and their flesh will stay pale.

Because of these extremely unhealthy living conditions, calves raised for veal are susceptible to a long list of diseases, including chronic pneumonia and diarrhea. A study published in the *Journal of Animal Science* found that calves who were kept in “smaller housing units” had difficulty keeping themselves clean and had trouble “extending their front legs and changing from a lying to a standing position,” which resulted in joint swelling. It was also determined that stereotypical forms of stress behaviors, such as tongue rolling and “sham-chewing” (the act of chew-

ing without food in the mouth), increase when smaller pens were used and as calves got older.

What You Can Do. Veal crates have been prohibited in European Union member countries since 2007. Ask your state legislators to follow the example of states like Arizona, California and Ohio, which have banned veal crates, by sponsoring bills that would prohibit them.

In addition to refusing to eat veal, avoid all dairy products — calves raised for veal are a “coproduct” of the dairy industry. Try fortified soy, almond, oat, and rice milks, all of which provide calcium, vitamins, iron, zinc, and protein but contain no cholesterol. They are perfect for cereal, soups, baked goods, and other recipes. Many delicious dairy alternatives — including Rice Dream, So Delicious, Purely Decadent, and Tofutti brand nondairy ice creams as well as nondairy cheeses, sour cream, and creamers — are available in health-food and grocery stores.

Veganism means eating for life — yours and animals. Go to the PETA website peta.org for great recipes, nutritional information, cooking and shopping tips, and to order a free copy of PETA’s vegetarian/vegan starter kit.

[HTTPS://WWW.PETA.ORG/ISSUES/ANIMALS-USED-FOR-FOOD/ANIMALS-USED-FOOD-FACTSHEETS/VEAL-BYPRODUCT-CRUEL-DAIRY-INDUSTRY/](https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/animals-used-for-food-factsheets/veal-byproduct-cruel-dairy-industry/)

A reflection on dissonance as teacher, mirror,
and path to deeper seeing



The Circle and the Square

Condensed from PAHINGALAY

CHIRANJIVI

IN many mystical traditions, dissonance is not an interruption of the path, but often a place where it opens into greater clarity. This means dissonance is a blessing too. For indeed, it is precisely when things feel unresolved or in discord that deeper seeing often becomes possible. After all, dissonance exposes our attachments and aversions, and invites us to encounter reality without the filters of our preferences and expectations. In this sense, it is not as much a problem as it is a doorway to deeper understanding.

Many of us have our stories to tell about different kinds of dis-

sonance in our lives and its place in our meditation or spiritual practice. Let me share one of mine.

The Circle and the Square. I couldn't recall what day of the week it was, but it was a sunny afternoon during junior high school at the University of Santo Tomas (UST). Our Religion class had begun as my classmates and I settled into our seats. At the front of the classroom stood a substitute teacher — not a regular faculty member — who was filling in while our original Religion teacher took an extended medical leave to heal and recover from surgery. She was talking

about God's foundational attributes, and had now turned to the subject of omnipotence.

"God can do anything," she pointed out, moving slowly away from the blackboard and closer to us. "But there are certain things that He can't do because it would contradict His own nature. For example, He can't make a circle a square at the same time because He would be breaking His own rules if He did."

A wave of contradiction surged through my mind — and evidently through the minds of most of my classmates, as would become apparent later on. Divine omnipotence could only mean one thing: God is capable of anything — otherwise, He isn't all-powerful at all, I thought.

With some hesitation, I raised my hand to speak. "Isn't it possible, ma'am, that a circle is already a square — and it's just that we humans can't perceive it with our ordinary minds?" I asked, choosing my words carefully, even as something told me that the two shapes might be the same or at least, connected—not in the way our eyes could see, but in a dimension of reality beyond our limited human understanding.

"No," our teacher readily replied. "God cannot act against His own nature."

Even though her certainty collided with my sense of reality, I

Looking back, I now see that what unfolded in that classroom was not merely a debate about theology or logic. It was an early encounter with dissonance — this one in the form of friction between what we are taught to accept by authority or society and what something deeper in us senses to be true.

left it at that and did not argue further. But quite unexpectedly, my classmates carried the discussion further — in fact, for the remainder of the session, and for many weeks of Religion class afterward!

I could hardly believe that my classmates could wrangle for so long while our substitute teacher — whom I later came to pity because she came across as a kind and otherwise humble person — tried her best to hold her ground. The notion that a circle is, in fact, a square must have resonated with something they, too, had sensed long before that moment in our Religion class — perhaps from noticing patterns in nature and life that pointed to an under-

I began to sense that truth might not lie in choosing one side over the other, but in something that holds both without contradiction — a kind of unity beyond the apparent opposition.

lying unity, and certainly from childhood experiences of awe and wonder where we learn that time and space aren't as structured and rigid as they normally seem, even though we tend to forget it as we grow up.

Not that we were right and she was wrong, but looking back, I now see that what unfolded in that classroom was not merely a debate about theology or logic. It was an early encounter with dissonance — this one in the form of friction between what we are taught to accept by authority or society and what something deeper in us senses to be true. Even then, that tension was already doing its work. I began to sense that truth might not lie in choosing one side over the other, but in something that holds both without contradiction — a kind of unity beyond the apparent opposition, the circle and the square holding each other.

The Circle and the Square Revisited. One question that quietly followed me through my high school years — how can life feel so fragmented when everything somehow hints at unity? — found its first real companion when I stepped into my freshman Eastern Philosophy class at UST. Prof. Alfredo Co, a bright and evidently compassionate man whose jolly demeanor might remind you of the Dalai Lama, first wrote a single symbol on the blackboard during our first day in class: a circle.

“If Western thought,” he said, “tends to imagine truth in straight lines — cause and effect, sin and salvation — Eastern wisdom often begins here.”

Like the enso of Zen that depicts wholeness and enlightenment, the circle impressed us as simple yet bottomless.

That semester changed the direction of my curiosity. After class, I found myself drifting to the Miguel de Benavides Library, UST's central library. I borrowed books on Hindu mysticism, Zen Buddhism, Taoist philosophy, and so on. I spent small portions of my meager allowance buying second-hand copies of Alan Watts, Daisetz Suzuki, and others from the bookstalls you'd find along Recto Ave. at the time. In their pages, I encountered again and again a theme that would eventually reshape my worldview: that our illusion of

separation is the real greatest heresy. Or, put another way: the circle and the square are already One.

Of course, this was only a “knowing about” and not “direct knowing” or “knowing by direct experience.” But in the long run, the square of my ordinary identity — a Filipino freshman, raised Catholic, carrying the uncertainties of youth, and so on — felt somewhat less solid. My “square-ness,” it began to seem, was only the shape my mind carved from a vaster reality — a “mental construct,” as mystics say. Beneath all appearances lies the Ineffable that we have come to call God and other names — the unbounded circle that cannot be divided any more than space can be sliced by a knife.

I remember that as I walked out of the central library onto Dapitan Street one afternoon to take a ride back home, the chaos of jeepneys and vendors felt less like noise, and more like God, Brahman, That in motion. The circle shining beneath the world of forms.

Later in Life: Dissonance at the Table and Other Places. If the question of the circle and the square first appeared to me as an idea, it would return years later, in times of practice, as a way of living. Not in the classroom this time, but at the table and in other places.

*Beneath all appearances
lies the Ineffable that we
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sliced by a knife.*

Even though I would backslide often and spend a long time on the way of the proverbial “prodigal son” now and again, there was a time when the spiritual path I kept returning to started to take on a more concrete form — nourished by a growing attraction to what I understood as the spirit of the early teachings of Jesus: simplicity, nonviolence, compassion, and so on, as natural outflows of the contemplative life that He encouraged. Among the expressions this took was a commitment to a cruelty-free vegan diet and a more deliberate way of living.

It seemed simple enough in principle. In practice, it was anything but.

Meals with family and friends — those moments that were supposed to be ones of joy and connection — sometimes became instances of tension. Well-meaning hosts would insist, “Just

Each time we notice discomfort, we may see attachment or aversion. Each time we return to the present moment, we practice freedom. Over time, this changes how we meet life.

have a taste” or look puzzled, even offended, when I declined what had been lovingly prepared. At times, I felt bad for looking ungrateful, or worse, different in a way that set me apart, simply because I followed my conscience and deepest truth.

But the dissonance did not end at the table. There were other tensions that surfaced as the path unfolded. Choosing a life of relative simplicity in a culture that often equates success with owning or having more. Embracing singlehood in a society that measures fulfillment by marriage and children. Led into foster parenting and family caregiving, and sensing how such a calling can appear impractical in a world organized around self-advancement and herd-conformity. When the opportunities came, it was hard not to open space to those in need of shelter and family, and make sacrifices that are taken for granted. Like-

wise, choosing to serve without thought of compensation, can seem almost out of step in a system where value is so often measured in monetary terms.

Indeed, there were moments when the path felt less like one that leads to clarity and more like one that is a source of friction — or dissonance. Not the dissonance of ideas, however, but of embodiment — of trying to live differently in a world that moves otherwise in many ways — not because I didn’t care, but on the contrary, because I felt one with it.

The Blessing. And yet, over time, something unexpected became apparent: the tension was working within. Each awkward moment of dissonance revealed something behind the heartfelt commitment to help alleviate suffering in our world: some measure of attachment to approval, comfort, and belonging. What seemed like an outer difficulty became an inner mirror. Practice, I began to realize, is not only about love and compassion. It is also about watching closely the movements of the conditioned mind, even in the midst of service and caring. It asked me to remember, again and again, why I choose as I do — not so much from the rigidity of a fixed view as from being fully present. The dissonance did not disappear, for sure, but it clarified and helped ground the practice.

Needless to say, tensions tend to soften through practice. Differences no longer divide as they once did. There is more space for offense without reaction, and for the recognition that beneath all forms lies a deeper Unity — whole and all-loving. And that everything is a blessing.

Dissonance will always come, for life is a school and each stage a classroom where new trials await. But it no longer feels like an obstacle when we are mindful, when we are aware. If anything, it has become a teacher. Our resistance to what is, is not outside the path; it is part of the path itself, for it reveals something worth looking at.

Meditation Practice: Meeting Dissonance. Through the years, our meditation teacher would always remind us that when dissonance arises, our practice does not ask us to resolve it at once. It asks us to sit with it. We simply notice, say, the tightening in our body, the feeling of being unsettled, the pull of mental chatter. We do not push these away or follow them; we simply observe and return gently to the breath.

*When dissonance appears,
it invites us to sit,
breathe, and allow it to
teach us. This is already
the path.*

Each time we notice discomfort, we may see attachment or aversion. Each time we return to the present moment, we practice freedom. Over time, this changes how we meet life: We pause before reacting. We listen more deeply. We no longer depend as much on approval or certainty.

Hence, dissonance becomes less threatening because we no longer try to escape it. We learn that clarity does not come from fixing difficult experience, but from seeing it as it is.

When dissonance appears, it invites us to sit, breathe, and allow it to teach us.

This is already the path.

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Where there is ruin, there is hope for a treasure.

RUMI

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

KAHLIL GIBRAN



Wisdom Overheard

Do not be afraid of your difficulties. Do not wish you could be in other circumstances than you are. For when you have made the best of an adversity, it becomes the stepping stone to a splendid opportunity. The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

The essence of spiritual awakening is seeing clearly. It is not about acquiring something new, but about letting go of what obscures what is already here. When we cling tightly to our opinions, our identities, and our fears, we lose contact with the freshness of the present moment. But when we loosen our grip, even slightly, we begin to experience a natural sense of openness and intelligence that is not dependent on conditions.

AJAHN CHAH

We are not going in circles, we are going upwards. The path is a spiral; we have already climbed many steps. You may not see it clearly from where you stand,

but if you look back, you will see that you have risen.

HERMAN HESSE

The only reason we don't open our hearts and minds to other people is that they trigger confusion in us that we don't feel brave enough or sane enough to deal with. But when we begin to stay present with difficulty instead of avoiding it, we discover that it is workable. We discover that we are not as solid or fixed as we thought, and that space and softness are always available, even in the most challenging moments.

PEMA CHODRON

At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us. It is so to speak His name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence, as our sonship. It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven.

THOMAS MERTON

The function of education is to help you from childhood not to imitate anybody, but to be yourself all the time. It is to understand life as a whole — not just one part of it. Academic excellence is necessary, but if you lose sensitivity, the awareness of beauty, the depth of feeling, then education has very little meaning

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes. The deeper we go into ecological awareness, the more we expand our sense of self.

ARNE NAESS

Fear is a natural response to moving closer to the truth. When we feel it, we often try to retreat into familiar patterns, but those patterns only reinforce our sense of separation. If instead we remain present, even when fear arises, we begin to notice that it has no fixed substance. It comes and goes like weather in the sky of awareness. In this way, fear itself becomes part of the path rather than an obstacle to it.

CHOGYAMTRUNGPA

If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them

more fairy tales. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited, but imagination encircles the world.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

The mind is like a projector, and the world is the screen. What we call reality is often just the projection of our unquestioned thoughts. When we slow down enough to inquire into those thoughts, we begin to see that we have been believing things that were never proven. And in that seeing, something very natural happens: the tension releases. Life becomes simpler, not because the world has changed, but because we are no longer resisting it.

BYRON KATIE

When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself, and his suffering is spilling over. He does not need punishment; he needs help. That's the message he is sending. If you understand this, you will not be angry at him. You will feel compassion instead.

THICH NHAT HANH

You have within you right now everything you need to deal with whatever the world can throw at you. Believe this, and you will begin to act differently. When you trust yourself, you become calm, and that calmness is your strength.

BRIAN TRACY

On awakening beyond concepts: Suzuki, Zen, and the perennial philosophy



D. T. Suzuki and Theosophy

Condensed from THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIA

IAN ELLIS-JONES

DAISETZ Teitaro Suzuki [D. T. Suzuki] (1870-1966) was one of the foremost popularizers of Zen Buddhism in the West. Among Suzuki's many published works, *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind*, *Living by Zen*, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist: The Eastern and Western Way*, and *Shin Buddhism* are of seminal importance.

Zen Buddhism. A "Zen Modernist" and "essentialist," Suzuki has been chastised by some for idealizing and detraditionalizing Zen, stripping it of much of its cultural, social and ethical contexts and its philosophical depth. Be that as it may, Suzuki captured the essence of Bud-

dhism as taught by the historical Buddha, namely, that enlightenment is a matter of "waking up":

Zen teaches nothing. It merely enables us to wake up and become aware. It does not teach; it points. The truth of Zen is the truth of life, and life means to live, to move, to act, not merely to reflect. The truth of Zen is what turns one's humdrum life, a life of monotonous, uninspiring commonplaces into one of art, full of genuine creativity.

This pragmatic approach on the part of Suzuki isn't at all surprising for, having achieved enlightenment, he received from his Zen master Soyen Shaku the new name, Daisetsu (often penned Daisetz in English),

which means “great simplicity.” It can also mean “great humility” and “greatly clumsy.”

Life and Career. Although he had been born into the samurai class to a physician father, Suzuki grew up in abject poverty, for any privileges as a member of the samurai class had been abolished by the Meiji restoration (1868-1889). From a very early age, he was a deep thinker and avid reader of works of philosophy and religion. While at university in Tokyo, Suzuki studied Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese. He would, in time, become a respected translator of works in those languages as well as Korean and Vietnamese.

In his younger years, he resided at the Engaku-ji Temple in Kamakura. Soyen Shaku, who was in charge of this renowned Rinzaï Zen temple, would later be Zen’s representative in the first World Parliament of Religions held in 1893 and was the first Zen Buddhist master to teach in the United States. Suzuki translated into English Shaku’s address to the Parliament titled “The Law of Cause and Effect, as Taught by Buddha.”

Suzuki also worked with Paul Carus, author of the influential book *The Gospel of Buddha* (1894). [8] Shaku wrote the introduction, with Suzuki translating the book into Japanese.

Suzuki captured the essence of Buddhism as taught by the historical Buddha, namely, that enlightenment is a matter of “waking up.”

A leading Buddhist scholar and academic, and a keen student of Christian mysticism, Suzuki taught in universities in Japan, Europe and the United States and wrote extensively. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1963.

Theosophy. In 1911, Suzuki married the American Theosophist and author Beatrice Erskine Lane (c.1878-1939) who had studied at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts under the influential American philosopher William James, an early member of the TS.

Nine years later, the Suzukis, along with Beatrice’s mother Dr Emma Erskine Hahn, joined the Tokyo International Lodge of the TS. Their names appear on the list of TS members sent to Adyar on 12 May 1920. D. T. Suzuki served as president of the Tokyo International Lodge while Beatrice, herself a Buddhist, also held numerous official positions in the lodge and was a sometime head of the TS in Japan, playing

*It is perhaps revealing that Dr. Suzuki's first gift to his wife was a copy of **The Voice of the Silence**, in which we read, "The mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the slayer."*

an important role in Japanese Theosophy.

In 1924, having moved to Kyoto, the Suzukis founded a new Theosophical lodge, the Mahayana Lodge, which had a more explicitly Buddhist focus. They were the central members of that lodge.

In 1937, C. Jinarâjadâsa, who would later become the 4th international president of the Theosophical Society, read two lectures in Tokyo which were translated into Japanese by D. T. Suzuki. Beatrice Lane Suzuki was more interested in theosophy than D. T. Suzuki, but her husband was nevertheless well read in the Ancient Wisdom and modern Theosophy and was a great admirer of the works of H.

P. Blavatsky. He wrote this about HPB's book *The Voice of the Silence* (1889):

Undoubtedly, Madame Blavatsky had in some way been initiated into the deeper side of Mahayana teaching and then gave out what she deemed wise to the Western world . . . Here is the real Mahayana Buddhism.

The 'Mind of No-Mind.' It is perhaps revealing that Dr. Suzuki's first gift to his wife was a copy of *The Voice of the Silence*, in which we read, "The mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the slayer." In a similar vein, Suzuki, in *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind*, writes:

The highest act of our consciousness is indeed to penetrate through all the conceptual deposits and read the bedrock of Prajñā the Unconscious.

D. T. Suzuki saw Zen as something universal but still Buddhist. He wrote:

Zen is the ultimate fact of all philosophy and religion . . . Every religious faith must spring from it if it has to prove at all efficiently and livingly workable in our active life.

The same can truly be said of Theosophy.

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Form is emptiness; emptiness is form.

HEART SUTRA

Returning to innocence as a way of awakening deeper awareness



As Little Children

Condensed from SUNRISE
JAMES LONG

IN the Christian scriptures, we read that the Master Jesus said: "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" – a statement so simple that for years and years, we have failed to give it the attention it should have. To whom was Jesus speaking when he made that statement? Not to children, or those just come of age. He was speaking to older people, men and women who had had many problems, both material and spiritual, and who had come to the Master for what help he might be able to give them. He saw their problems, both inner and outer, and saw how they were trying to solve them. I don't doubt that he saw in their faces exactly what

anyone may see today in the faces of people throughout the world.

In times of stress and crisis, we often become so involved in the immediate situation that we lose sight of the fact that it is only one point in a long series of situations, the culmination of years, perhaps lifetimes. Because we do not recognize that fact, we lose perspective and cut ourselves off almost completely from the valuable experiences we have had leading up to the present which, if understood, would help us resolve our current problem. Not being able to make the connection between our circumstances and what we have done in the past to bring them about, we begin to think that we are being im-

Spiritual teachers have ever reminded us that the heart-doctrine is to be preferred to the eye-doctrine.

posed upon by life and start to blame everyone — our family, close friends, business associates, neighbors, the government, the world, anything — but ourselves. That is what Jesus must have seen in the eyes of those to whom he spoke those words: how completely clouded was their immediate consciousness, how many thick veils they had allowed to be built between what they were when the Master saw them, and what they were as little children.

All of us have made our lives difficult and complicated beyond any necessity. We may pride ourselves on our learning, our erudition, our understanding of truth. And yet spiritual teachers have ever reminded us that the heart-doctrine is to be preferred to the eye-doctrine: the learning that is native to the heart, the intuition, the spiritual will, rather than the learning that is purely intellectual and motivated by the human will. We should have sufficient discernment to realize that the problems of life are solved not by reason, but by intuition;

not by sentimentality, but by judgment.

Those of us who love children are astounded at times at the intuition they express, amazed at their clear perception. We know, if we watch them at play, that they have pure judgment despite their few years of experience, and that sentimentality does not influence them very much. Children ask us questions, astonishing questions sometimes, that go right to the core of basic issues that often confound the world's philosophers. We have great difficulty in giving them an answer that will satisfy them if we appeal to their reason or sentiment alone. But how their eyes sparkle when we appeal to their innate intuition and judgment!

Why did the Master urge his followers to become as little ones if they would attain the kingdom of heaven? He was appealing to that quality within each one of us which is like the little child. Let us look at ourselves today. What happens to us as we grow up? We go through school, perhaps university if we are fortunate. Then we enter all the vicissitudes of life and as we progress, we begin to feel as though we were learning a great deal. But what do we do with that learning, whether it is scholastic or practical, religious or scientific? In many cases, I'm afraid, we take what has been given us as if it were so many spoken or written words, and merely file it

away in our minds for possible use later on. This process goes on for years and, as a result, when we are confronted with a difficult situation, we attempt to draw on our knowledge and make every effort to pull out of that file in our mind those things which will help us solve our problem, but so often it is not solved satisfactorily. Now why? Here again is what the Master Jesus was driving at. I wonder what would have happened if, instead of merely absorbing each thing we had learned with our brain and filing it away in our minds, we had taken the knowledge or experience to ourselves and said: Now what does this mean to me insofar as my immediate situation is concerned, and how can I utilize it in making myself more valuable to the world? After thinking it over and over, we may find some application by which it has value. When we do that, we file it away in our heart, in the permanent part of our consciousness. If that process be followed, then when we are brought face to face with serious problems, the mind will not be in the way. Instead of trying to worry out the answers mentally, we would discover that the heart would quite naturally attract us to the answer. The intuition would have become our guide, and the mind its obedient servant, the implementor of its directives — not its master.

The intuition would have become our guide, and the mind its obedient servant, the implementor of its directives — not its master.

On the face of it, it might seem a most difficult task for those of us who are older and have made many mistakes, perhaps even grave ones, to become in a short time like little children. But that is not the case. The Master Jesus knew it was not difficult or he would not have admonished the people of his day to do just that. And especially is this true once a person has determined to try to be of service to his fellow men.

Let us ask ourselves this simple question: what is the foundation in the child's consciousness that allows his intuition and judgment to operate so beautifully? He is freshly arrived from another shore. At his tender age, he is unencumbered by an awareness of his past or his future, so that he has a truly virgin consciousness with which to prepare for the experiences ahead. He has come into life, as Wordsworth so graphically phrased it, "trailing clouds of glory." What does the child bring with him, most of all? It is trust — that gen-

I have said that it is simple to become as little children. There is a natural way of doing this, which may not appeal to us because we are human. . . . Man, know thyself!

uine foundation upon which the spiritual growth of the world must be built. What human being who has any love in his heart cannot recognize that implicit trust in the eyes of a child who newly looks upon a world and those around him as something greater than himself, something that he hopes to become? But as he goes through life, he finds less and less trust in the hearts of those around him. As a result, he becomes confused, maybe even bitter.

I have said that it is simple to become as little children. There is a natural way of doing this, which may not appeal to us because we are human. But it has been the same all down the ages: Man, know thyself! That injunction is timeless, as potent today as when first enunciated. The

only way we can know ourselves is to each search our consciousness and face ourself. If we can do this honestly, we will stop blaming others for our trials. But because we are so cluttered up with our filing system of mental facts, which we are so fond of, we cannot break through to our hearts where intuition and help reside.

We may begin this process of self-knowledge and character building by acknowledging that we are not always right, but are probably wrong more than we are right. In time, we may realize that no one of us is any better than the worst among us, nor any worse than the best among us. This is the basis of true brotherhood. Once we grasp that fact literally, and allow its truth and significance to soak into our consciousness, we will have an example of such dynamic spiritual value to offer to the world that ultimately its force will turn all nations in the direction of true harmony and peace. And if each of us will contribute even one tiny drop to the world's reservoir of spiritual strength, we will be fulfilling our responsibilities as helpers of mankind.

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Wisdom begins in wonder.

SOCRATES

Building bridges across faiths in response to
polarization and fear in society



Religion and Democratic Values

Condensed from THEOSOPHY NORTHWEST VIEW
EDITORIAL TEAM

WITH political speech having reached poisonous levels of hatred, fear, and mean-spiritedness, members of the interfaith community in the Seattle area have responded by organizing a series of monthly meetings: Standing Together: for Human Dignity, Justice, Compassion, Wisdom. 150 people attended the first meeting, held at Bear Creek Methodist/Congregation Kol Ami in Woodinville. One of the organizers, Phil Gerson, introduced the series, explaining how lack of respectful civic discussion and listening, and increased expression of prejudice and violence in the public arena, sparked this exploration of the wisdom and virtues, fostered by all religions, that are

necessary to support a free, pluralistic, democratic society. He pointed to the great value placed by the Founding Fathers on civic virtue and learning. Through these dialogues, those taking part seek to promote self-awareness, social responsibility and a deepening commitment to embody the core wisdom one's own faith.

For the first half of the meeting, a panel discussed how faiths interact with and support a democratic society. Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg of Congregation Kol Ami quoted 1st-century BCE Rabbi Hillel. Asked to expound the whole Torah while standing on one leg, he replied: "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. All the rest is

“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. All the rest is commentary.” – Torah

commentary. Go and study.” The meaning of neighbor has broadened, especially in the last century. All too often, people of different religions, races, and classes who lived in one place had nothing to do with each other – they didn’t consider each other neighbors. Today, as a Jew, the Rabbi feels an obligation to all the people in her community and to all her fellow countrymen.

The Rev. Meredith Dodd of Bear Creek Methodist highlighted the parable of the Good Samaritan, the outsider and stranger. It’s the person who acts, who stops to help, who is the neighbor, not necessarily those of one’s ethnic or religious group. She also spoke about righteousness in the context of John 3:10: “whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” We are all children of God and through righteousness can become more like our divine parent, who has a very inclusive view of who a neighbor is. But we must be willing to take unpopular stands for the least among us

– the poor, suffering, homeless, displaced, oppressed, or ostracized.

Muslim Aneelah Afzali, Esq., quoted the Qur’an on how the most righteous person was the most honored by God, and how those who do good deeds for others and improve things are considered the most privileged among mankind. She cited passages in which the Qur’an supports tolerance and pluralism, justice and truth. The panel then took questions. As to why violence is done in the name of the Abrahamic religions if a shared core teaching is respect for all, panelists responded that all groups have extremists, who are by definition outliers. Their violence indicates the brokenness of human nature rather than whatever religion they may use as a tool. Unfortunately, popular spirituality too often is at odds with its religion’s core teachings, resulting in violence in the home and in the world. In Islam, for example, Muhammad’s example is too often disconnected from the interpretation of verses taken in isolation. It’s important to help believers and the wider public understand the various religions and to stand together to counter violence as a solution to people’s very real problems. As to how to handle extremism, the Rabbi advised that the vast majority – moderate people – need to be loud, to make them-

selves heard and set a public example. Ms Afzali pointed out that even though most people are doing positive things, the good is marginalized and largely ignored in the media. Rev. Dodd mentioned how one congregant phoned her representative supporting immigrants and was told that she was the only person identifying themselves as Christian who called on that side of the issue. More religious people need to identify themselves as such and make their voices heard.

After a break for Muslims to perform their evening prayers, the session continued with small groups discussing what one step each person might be willing to take to make a positive change. Members of one group brought out how they knew many people of goodwill who wouldn't attend such an event because they were afraid, the implication being of Muslims. It was suggested that

Muslim Aneelab Afzali, Esq. . . . cited passages in which the Qur'an supports tolerance and pluralism, justice and truth.

fear of the "other" might lessen through telling stories, perhaps about one's positive experiences with these others, since people relate more to stories than to lectures or arguments. Several attendees mentioned to me that they had never been to a mosque and were looking forward to having that opportunity at the next Standing Together meeting at the Muslim Association of Puget Sound in Redmond.

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Truth is one; sages call it by various names.

RIG VEDA

In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

RUPERTUS MELDENIUS

The lamps are different but the Light is the same.

RUMI

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

ISAIAH 56:7

All this is for the sake of the Self.

BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

Psychic abilities, intelligence agencies, and the moral questions they raise

Psychic Powers and Ethics

Condensed from EXPLORING
THEOSOPHY
DAVID PRATT

SCIENTIFIC investigation of paranormal phenomena has been conducted since the rise of the spiritualist movement in the mid-19th century, and a vast body of peer-reviewed evidence for the reality of psychic phenomena now exists (Cardena et al., 2015). Since at least the Second World War, psychic powers have also been researched and applied by the armed forces and intelligence agencies of many countries, mainly the USSR/Russia and the USA.

In the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and military intelligence sponsored a highly classified, \$20 million dollar, ESP research pro-



gram from 1972 to 1995. It is popularly known by its last code name, Stargate; earlier names included SCANATE, Gondola Wish, Fish Fry, Sun Streak, Center Lane, Grill Flame and Quantum Leap. It was founded by laser physicists Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ; from 1985, it was directed by nuclear physicist Edwin May. It consisted of a civilian-staffed research effort based in California, first at Stanford Research Institute (later known as SRI-International) and then at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), and a military-staffed operational program based at Fort Meade, Maryland. Stargate focused on the use of remote viewing (clairvoyance) to gather information about enemy military installations.

In the Soviet Union and — after its collapse in 1991 — the Russian Federation, parapsychology was extensively researched and applied by several agencies. The KGB (Soviet security agency) worked with psychics on a more or less sporadic basis, usually to fight crime rather than for military operations or espionage. In the late 1980s a top secret directorate of the General Staff, known as Military Unit 10003, headed by Lieutenant General Alexei Savin, was set up to investigate extraordinary human potential, including psi. Its annual research budget was about \$4

Stargate focused on the use of remote viewing (clairvoyance) to gather information about enemy military installations.

million. By 2000, it had a staff of over 50 people, half of them civilians, including many talented psychics. It was closed in 2003.

Psychic Research and Ethics. Former Stargate contract director Edwin May says that some people are still angry with him and his colleagues for working for the US intelligence community — “the bad guys.” He comments: “[T]he Robert Ludlum/Ian Fleming kind of spies and agents are the rarity. Not every spy is James Bond, or a KGB assassin. Not everything such agencies do makes them the ‘bad guys.’” He says that there can be “bad guys” in any government agency or private business, but that Stargate ‘was credible and even ethical work’ because the missions carried out were not directed at any offensive goal (May et al., 2015, 355-6).

Hal Puthoff, founder of the SRI program, writes:

I have on occasion been challenged as to why I would agree to cooperate with the CIA or other elements of the intelligence community in this work. My answer is simply

***In the Soviet Union and
– after its collapse in
1991 – the Russian
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parapsychology was
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and applied by several
agencies.***

that as a result of my own previous exposure to this community I became persuaded that war can almost always be traced to a failure in intelligence, and that therefore the strongest weapon for peace is good intelligence. (1996, 65)

Many of those involved in the ESP program, either as psychics or as researchers, have commented on the transformative effect. General Sham writes:

[I]n the process of seeking the mechanisms of how extraordinary capacities arise, and in the course of their development and operative use, we saw that the individuals who engaged in this research were transformed, their values were changed, and their cultural and intellectual levels improved” (May et al., 2015, 4).

May et al. write:

[I]t seems that working to use ESP for war had an impact on the practitioners, pushing them to use such developments to end war” (283).

After leaving SRI in 1982, Russell Targ organized Delphi Associates with two business partners. For their first project, the team of psychics and investors investigated whether psychic abilities could be used to make money in the marketplace. The aim was to buy or sell silver futures contracts by determining whether, in a week’s time, the price of silver would be up a little, up a lot, down a little/unchanged, or down a lot. Because reading numbers or letters psychically is exceptionally difficult, they adopted a protocol called associative remote viewing. Each week one of the team members assigned the four possible price developments to four very different objects (e.g. a light bulb, a book, a teddy bear, and a flower). The remote viewer was not told what the four objects were. He was simply asked to describe his impressions of the object he would be shown in a week’s time, when the price was known. Using this method, nine correct forecasts were made and the group earned \$120,000, which was split between Delphi and their investor.

Targ adds:

In the following year, we were not successful in our silver forecasting, possibly because our investor wanted to accelerate the trial rate to twice a week; therefore, the viewer did not receive timely feedback from the previous trial. My personal belief is that we lost our

spiritual and scientific focus and [became] overwrought with the thought of limitless wealth . . . (2012, 135)

In 1996, they were again successful at silver forecasting, but this time no money was involved. Targ says that the main application of associative remote viewing today is betting on sporting events at Las Vegas, and that several people in the International Remote Viewing Association claim to be supporting themselves with this activity.

As Targ points out, “Most ancient sacred teachings emphasize the seductive distraction of psychic abilities, because they entice us to stray off the spiritual path with thoughts of using them to enhance our individual power or prestige” (2012, 256). He sets out his own position as follows:

One might well consider that using these abilities to spy on the Russians or to make money in the commodity market is a trivialization of a sacred gift. The reason I continue to give workshops to awaken [students’] awareness of their psychological abilities is that those who are ready will remain awake and excited by their new potential, while the others who are not ready will simply go back to sleep – no harm done. However, as with everything else in the world, there is no doubt that some individuals will attempt to use their newfound abilities for personal or antisocial purposes. (252-3)

Theosophy recognizes that psychic abilities are latent in each one of us and are just as natural and normal as our ordinary mental powers.

We believe that the study of psi offers us insight into our spiritual nature as well as into the nonlocal dimension of consciousness uniting us all. It also offers us the opportunity to evaluate the same issues of integrity and responsibility that we confront in other aspects of our lives. (254-5)

As we discover more and more ways to apply our psychic abilities to real-world tasks, we will all have many opportunities to choose and choose again which of those applications of psi are ethical and appropriate for us. (256-7)

Psychic Powers and Ethics. Theosophy recognizes that psychic abilities are latent in each one of us and are just as natural and normal as our ordinary mental powers. At the same time, it warns of the dangers of forcing the development of paranormal powers prematurely, because this can produce imbalances in our inner constitution and lead to ill-health and mental instability. In addition, most people find it hard enough to control their

existing mental powers their thoughts, emotions and desires — and the development of lower psychic powers while we're still burdened with our egocentric personalities merely places extra temptations in our way.

G. de Purucker writes:

This does not mean that such faculties and powers are evil or are not natural parts of the human constitution; nor that they are useless. The meaning is that they are very hazardous to one without spiritual vision and the power of intellect and spiritual will to guide and control the psychical nature in which these faculties inhere. . . .

Powers as such, whether spiritual, intellectual, or psychic, will develop in due course and in a perfectly natural way as we progress, provided that we have the unflinching determination to achieve, and, above all, that our heart is forever brightened and filled with compassionate love . . . (*Fountain-Source of Occultism*, 10)

There's a great contrast between ordinary mediums and psychics on the one hand and trained adepts or spiritual masters on the other. Mediums are often the passive playthings of lower astral beings, and their

powers are largely involuntary, erratic and uncontrolled. Spiritual adepts, on the other hand, have attained control over their higher psychic, mental and spiritual powers, and have risen far above the temptations and delusions of the physical and lower astral worlds.

As humanity's evolution continues, more and more people are likely to be born with some degree of psychic ability. In a letter to American theosophists in 1891, H.P. Blavatsky wrote:

Psychism, with all its allurements, and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the psychic outruns the manasic [intellectual] and spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction. Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period so that it may finally work for good and not for evil . . . (*Collected Writings*, 13:173)

[HTTPS://WWW.DAVIDPRATT.INFO/PSI.HTM#6](https://www.davidpratt.info/psi.htm#6)



If one seeks miracles, one loses the path.

MILAREPA

The miracle is not to walk on water, but to walk on the earth.

LINJI YIXUAN

Mind mastery as the key to spiritual and
psychological transformation



Mastering Your Thoughts

Condensed from THEOSOPHY NORTHWEST VIEW
GOTTFRIED DE PURUCKER

ALL physical maladies have their ultimate origin in a faulty outlook on life, in a faulty direction taken by the individual will. All diseases therefore ultimately, not as they exist when once they exist in the physical body and wreak their work of suffering and pain, but as they exist in their origin, have this origin in the mind — in this or another life. Weakness of will, the giving way to bad habits breeding seeds of thought which leave thought-deposits in the mind, enfeeble the character. An evil or false thought manifests in a body and ultimately ruins it by bad habits. And criticism, pessimism, and the habit of making complaints and fault-finding are

diseases of the mind in very truth.

Every sage and seer has taught the same thing: cleanse the temple of the Holy Spirit, drive out the demons of the lower nature. What are these demons? One's own thoughts.

When the thoughts chase through the mind as unruly steeds do not struggle and waste your force. Picture to yourself the things opposite to those you hate. Picture the things that you really inwardly love, really love in your heart, and which you know are helpful. The secret is inner visualization: therefore visualize.

If you find yourself gloomy, if you are ashamed of thoughts that are in your mind, do not

*Every sage and seer has
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cleanse the temple of the
Holy Spirit, drive out the
demons of the lower
nature.*

struggle with them, do not fight them, forget them. They are only ghosts rising out of your own past. But turn your head to the East and watch the rising sun. Paint the visions in glory. Watch the mountaintops of your nature where rosy-fingered Aurora of the inner dawn weaves the web of her splendorous magic before your eyes.

Forget the evil thoughts and do not give them an artificial life by visualizing them and then fighting them. Do not waste your energies in fighting bogies, the phantoms and ghosts of your imagination. These are only the phantasms of your own imagination, and have no reality outside of yourself. Yet these phantoms and ghosts can at times overcome you and become a temporary reality because you have given them the framework and power of thought. You incarnate these things in thoughts, and thoughts will govern your body. Visualize the other thing. Make

pictures of beauty and strength in your mind. If you are obsessed by these uglinesses, picture to yourself scenes of beauty. It is far more fascinating. It is a delightful pastime, and it always works. See things of a high and noble character and visualize them forcefully. Visualize to yourself a success in fine things. Visualize things of beauty, of inward splendor.

Silence your thoughts: this does not mean to stop thinking, but to control your thoughts, be the master of them. Do not be the slave of the vagrant mental tramps that run through your mind. Give birth to thoughts and rule these your children, and when they become naughty put the dampers on. Silence them.

Examine your own mental processes, and see how much time you waste in merely thinking thoughts, useless thoughts most of them, and neglect to drink of those sublime fountains of knowledge and wisdom and consciousness that you have within you, the sources of inspiration and genius to drink of the genial springs, of those Pierian founts, whence flows all that makes life worthwhile.

There is a test by which one can make certain whether something that springs into the mind comes from the higher self, or whether it is merely from some desire or colored by some desire. Here is your test, and an easy

one. The higher self is impersonal; it is self-forgetful; it is kind; it is loving; it is pitiful; it is compassionate; it has sublime inspirations. The lower nature is selfish, ingathering, acquisitive for self, hateful often, unforgiving, violent.

If what comes wandering into your mind, or is brought thither by your own will power and aspiration, is such as urges you to do good to your fellow men, gives you inner peace and comfort, makes you kindlier and more thoughtful of others, it is from the higher part. This higher impulse may be a desire, but it is not a desire for the personality; it is a desire of the spirit, a desire to grow greater, to be more, to help others, to love, to forget injury, to forgive.

Silence your thoughts: this does not mean to stop thinking, but to control your thoughts, be the master of them.

A kindly thought sent out towards some other human being is a protection to that other, and it is a beautiful thing to do. It is a human thing, a truly human thing, and one that every normal human being loves to do.

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The first condition of Self-Realization is to be free from the domination of the mind.

AUROBINDO

Control the mind. You will control everything.

SWAMI SIVANANDA

Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of things.

EPICTETUS

The mind turned inward is the Self. Turned outward, it becomes the ego and all the world.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

The mind is restless and difficult to control. The wise one straightens it as a fletcher straightens an arrow.

THE BUDDHA

Ponder on These

Inside you is greed. I would let it flower; not in action but let it flower, the feeling of it. Let it bloom completely. There is no need for the expression of it. I don't suppress it, I don't control it, I don't alter it; I let it. Like a seed growing, I let it, and it will die of itself if there is no interference. JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

The great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences. When love and hate are both absent, everything becomes clear and undisguised. Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart. XINXIN MING

Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. KAHLIL GIBRAN

Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened. ANATOLE FRANCE

Do not seek the truth. Only cease to cherish your opinions. SENG CAN

Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. SIMONE WEILL

It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

What you seek is seeking you. RUMI

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Compassion is the radicalism of our time. DALAI LAMA

The more I read, the more I acquire, and the more certain I am that I know nothing. VOLTAIRE

From materialism to holism: shifting scientific views
on mind and matter



Science and Holistic Consciousness

Condensed from THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIA
BRIAN HARDING

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, David Bohm and David Peat wrote (2011):

Science today . . . is beset with serious difficulties. One of the most pervasive of these involves its fragmentary approach to nature and reality . . . this fragmentary approach can never resolve the deeper problems that now face our world.

This fragmentation persists in many aspects of our society, for example, in the continued exploitation of natural resources or the way western medicine is practised. However, in leading edge science today, I think we have moved a little towards addressing the fragmentation Bohm and Peat talked about. At the same time, there has been an increasing

interest in consciousness and how it may enter into our science. This interest arose, perhaps, with the development of quantum theory when it became more difficult to separate the conscious observer from the observed. Over the years, there have been an increasing number of hints that consciousness, whatever it is, has an important role to play in the scheme of things.

As early as 1930, Sir James Jeans wrote, "The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine." In E. Lester Smith's book (1990) we read,

As early as 1930, Sir James Jeans wrote, "The universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine."

"Intelligence is distinct from the physical organism; it is associated with consciousness and exists free in its own domain." Lester Smith concludes: "There is some evidence that it survives death and that a general ocean of intelligence exists."

Ervin Laszlo (2007) says: "Through the ages, mystics and seers have affirmed that consciousness is fundamental in the universe," and he quotes Islamic scholars, Indian mystics and western scientists.

Finally, from another perspective, neuroscientist Paul Nunez (2010) suggests that consciousness may be "a fundamental property of the universe."

However, what I want to focus on here, in the space available, is the tendency on the part of some to suggest that quantum physics itself (the Copenhagen version, that is) demonstrates the influence of consciousness on matter; that it somehow forms the bridge between the subjective and the objective. They then go on to suggest that quantum physics can

be used to "prove" the existence of a Universal Consciousness and thence of "God." In my view, such speculation is premature, for reasons we will come to. First let's think a bit more about what "consciousness" is.

What is Consciousness? I read somewhere that there have been over 80 attempts to define "consciousness." Furthermore, the words "consciousness," "awareness," and even "intelligence" have been used interchangeably, leading to some confusion. In serious research, though, it seems usual nowadays to use "consciousness," as I have been doing in this article.

Australian David Chalmers is a well-known researcher in this field and currently is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Center for Consciousness at the Australian National University. He says (2010), "Consciousness poses the most baffling problems in the science of the mind. There is nothing we know more intimately than conscious experience, but there is nothing that is harder to explain." Fred Kuttner and Bruce Rosenblum point out (2011), that "One can know of the existence of consciousness in no other way than through our first-person feeling of awareness, or the second person reports of others."

Two diametrically opposed views of consciousness are represented by Chalmers and the

late Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the DNA double helix.

Chalmers (1996) says explaining consciousness purely in terms of brain function is impossible. Neuroscience may tell us something about the physical role consciousness plays, but it can't tell us how consciousness arises. Chalmers suggests that a theory of consciousness should take experience as a primary entity alongside mass, charge and space-time.

Crick, on the other hand, wrote (1995):

You, your joys and sorrows, your memories and ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.

Subjective feelings thus supposedly emerge from the electrochemistry of neurons. Such a view sees consciousness as an “epiphenomenon” of the brain.

The Place of Consciousness in the Universe. Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff (2011) have given three general possibilities regarding the origin and place of consciousness in the universe:

A) Consciousness is not an independent quality but arose as a natural evolutionary consequence of the biological adaptation of brains and nervous systems. This is the ‘epiphenome-

*Ervin Laszlo (2007) says:
“Through the ages,
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universe.”*

nal’ view expressed by Crick (op. cit.), Dennett (1991) and others.

B) Precursors of consciousness have always been in the universe. Biology evolved a mechanism to convert these precursors to actual consciousness. This is the view taken by Penrose and Hameroff, and David Chalmers.

It’s a kind of halfway house.

C) However, there’s also a third view, namely, that consciousness is a quality that has always been in the universe (e.g., Lester Smith, op. cit.). Spiritual and religious approaches assume consciousness has always been present as “the ground of being.” Idealists even contend that consciousness is all there is — the material world is an illusion.

It’s apparent from what I’ve said that the question of what consciousness is and how it arises is controversial and much research remains to be done. But here I would like to pick up my comment about the relationship, if any, between Bohr’s quantum

physics and consciousness. In particular, does consciousness have anything to do with what is called “the collapse of the quantum wave function,” as some have claimed? To discuss this, I need to look briefly at the basics of quantum physics.

Consciousness and Quantum Basics. Here I will simply list the three pillars of quantum physics. These are, I suggest, Bohr’s Principle of Complementarity which states that wave and particle models of either matter or radiation complement each other; the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle which puts a limit on the certainty to which pairs of particle properties can be measured (for example, position and momentum); and the Schrödinger Wave Equation which describes by means of the wave function, $\psi(x,y,z,t)$, how matter waves change in space and time.

Now classical physics was based on the notion of complete objectivity. But as quantum physics developed, it began to dawn on scientists that this objectivity was not sustainable. The conscious experimenter is closely involved in all three pillars, but most important is the apparent effect of conscious observation on so-called wave function collapse. It suggests a conscious human observer is needed to bring probability into actuality. This process is basic to

Bohr’s Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum theory. Remember, the wave function ψ (actually the absolute square of the wave function) gives us the probability of finding a particle at a given place at the time of observation. Until observation, the particle can’t be pinned down — there are only probabilities that it exists somewhere. It seems that, at the moment of observation, all the many quantum possibilities collapse into the single actuality seen by the observer.

Taken to its limit, you could say that the universe didn’t exist until humans arrived to observe it, a somewhat arrogant conclusion, I feel. Indeed, this was one objection of several that Einstein had to quantum theory as proposed by Bohr — “I like to think that the moon is there even when I’m not looking at it,” he said (quoted in Kuttner and Rosenblum, 2011). And it is this collapse of the wave function which has been the basis of speculation that quantum physics explains how subjective human consciousness is linked to the objective physical world and, further, taps into a universal sea of consciousness, which may perhaps be called God.

While this picture, painted by Amit Goswami (2008) and others, is appealing, I believe it’s a step too far. As eminent physicist Brian Greene points out (2004), no one understands how

or even whether the so-called collapse really happens. So to jump immediately to invoke here a role for consciousness is at least premature if not unscientific.

Again, I quote 1993 Nobel Prize winner, Anthony Leggett (1991) who said:

It may be somewhat dangerous to explain something one does not understand very well [that is, the quantum measurement problem] by invoking something [namely consciousness] one does not understand at all.

As it turns out, there may be no such thing as wave function collapse. First, in the view of physicist Michael Nauenberg (2011), an associate of the great John Bell, the quantum measurement problem arises from early misunderstandings of what the wave function is. The wave function, say Nauenberg and Bell, is a mathematical symbol; it isn't a physical object. So there isn't any mystery that its mathematical form should change abruptly after a measurement, yielding additional information, has been made.

But there is more. So-called wave function collapse emerges from the Copenhagen Interpretation, and this interpretation, prevailing for 70 years, has been challenged, especially over the last 15 years or so. There are theories that work without having to invoke wave function collapse

Neuroscience may tell us something about the physical role consciousness plays, but it can't tell us how consciousness arises.

at all, and hence consciousness doesn't come into it.

Alternatives to Copenhagen. Decoherence was first proposed by David Bohm in 1952, but it was largely ignored until taken up by German physicist Dieter Zeh and later others, notably Wojciech Zurek of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. It refers to the process by which a quantum system interacts with its macroscopic environment. You could say, loosely, that the quantum nature of the system leaks away to the environment and we finish up with something that obeys classical physics. Because decoherence happens many times faster than anything we can measure, it only gives the impression of wave function collapse. By the way, decoherence destroys quantum entanglement, so we need to be cautious when glibly talking of particles being entangled across the universe.

Another alternative to Bohr is the Many Worlds interpretation,

introduced by Hugh Everett in 1957 when discussing the possibility of a wave function for the entire universe. It asserts the reality of such a universal wave function, but denies wave function collapse. All possible alternative histories and futures are real, each representing an actual universe. So the Many Worlds Interpretation is one of several multiverse theories.

Finally, another proposal, again by David Bohm, has been taken up in recent times by Sheldon Goldstein of Rutgers University in New Jersey, among others (see Buchanan, 2008). Like Einstein and others, Bohm was deeply concerned about reality and what quantum theory really meant. He criticized the majority of scientists who were content to go along with the Bohr theory simply because its mathematics gave predictions that proved to be correct. In a sense, their attitude was “|as long as it works, why do we need to understand it?”

There isn't space here to go into the details of Bohm's theory but he points out that quantum theory itself can be understood without reference to consciousness. However, it's important to note he is not saying that there is no link between quantum physics and consciousness. Indeed, he suggests that quantum theory and consciousness are linked, but not through any doubtful

“collapse of the wave function,” rather because they both arise out of a new kind of order, a deeper order underlying all things, which he calls the “implicate order.” Through this, he writes (2003) “it is possible to understand the universe as a unique and independent reality, which includes both observer and observed” and “one thus obtains a yet deeper understanding of the undivided wholeness of the universe . . . ” Bohm's work is summarized in his book, *The Undivided Universe*.

Concluding Remarks. Consciousness has been a hot topic for study over a period of some thirty years by scientists from many disciplines. There are a number of theories about what consciousness is, how it arises and its role in the universe.

As for the role of quantum physics and the collapse of the wave function, we might accept the view that it arises from early misunderstandings. On the other hand, it seems progress is being made in developing alternatives to the Copenhagen Interpretation that don't require the collapse of the wave function at all, notably David Bohm's theory. This last theory should be of particular interest to theosophists in that it leads to holism and an undivided universe.

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Self-integration as a path to spiritual wholeness



On Integrity

Condensed from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
EDITORIAL TEAM

INTEGRITY means wholeness. Every part of a system works with the other parts as one whole. A machine does this. It is made up of hundreds of parts. Each part must perform its own dharma, but as a part of the whole. The human being is a machine of many parts. How is it to work as one whole? The Universe is a machine of many parts. How can it work as a whole? There is One Life, one Harmony, one Law. Yet there is chaos in the world of men. Only when Life is withdrawn once again from the parts into the Whole will cosmos take the place of chaos. Yet, among the many parts, some parts will have learnt how to be inte-

grated in themselves as parts of a larger unit, as parts of the unit of the One Life. We today — i.e., humanity as it is — are at the turning-point where the individual human units must either learn how to become integrated in their own nature and to become parts of the Whole or fall into disunity within themselves and with the Whole, leading to final destruction.

With this in mind, what shall we do now? Put simply, we have been told that our head, heart and hands must work as a unit; mind, feeling, action must be directed to one Goal. The link between these three aspects, which will bring integrity, is motive “that on which the heart is set.” This mo-

Put simply, we have been told that our head, heart and hands must work as a unit; mind, feeling, action must be directed to one Goal.

tive may be good or it may be bad, rooted in harmony or in disharmony. Our heart may be drawn towards good, our mind plead against it, and the hands, from either lack of control or wasted effort, fail to follow the heart or the mind. What is that which moves all three? Will, spirit in action. Lack of will power means passivity, leading to stagnation.

What are the outer signs of integrity? How shall we look for it in ourselves and in others? Let us ask ourselves: Can we be trusted at all times and under all circumstances to deal with everything from the point of view of what is good for the work we have in hand, which, in theory at any rate should be our motive? Do we at times let a hint of our personal likes and dislikes, pride or vanity, sloth or overriding enthusiasm, color our motive, our heart (love for others), our mind (clarity of understanding)?

Are we faithful transmitters or coldly mechanistic? Have we un-

derstood with the heart or solely with the head? Do we act Theosophically? Do we speak of Reincarnation and Karma and yet complain of things, people, events, life? Do we speak of Masters — and then ignore Them in our life? Do we say one thing and mean another? Do we balance pros and cons, the central pivot being our own belief? Or do we search the philosophy to find what it says? Do we say, Brotherhood is a fact; we must have unity; only personalities clash — and, saying this, do we try to alter our personality so that it does not hurt or upset or clash with the personality of another?

Integrity means that the mental recognition of brotherhood reveals itself in our feelings and actions. Integrity shows itself when our heart responds in devotion to the Masters and our mind learns and passes on Their teachings, and our actions are in accordance with what They have given out for our benefit. Integrity means that whatever comes to us, we try to understand it mentally, try to purify the heart and to perform right action, accepting all karmic precipitations gladly and taking the attitude, “This is just what I desired,” in order to learn.

To sum up, integrity means full appreciation of all things, the capacity to harmonize all things, to listen carefully both to the spoken word and to the unspoken

feeling, and to understand others, so that our actions, feelings, words are in harmony. It means that, at all times, we take the trouble to “come to the center” within and act according to what we honestly decide is the best we know, watching for events to show us if we were right and willing to change our attitude when we see that we were wrong. Integrity means control of speech, while heart and mind decide what we will say. It means control of actions, while we let heart and mind decide whether what we are doing is right. It means control of the heart, while we let our mind and hands adjudge our

Integrity means that the mental recognition of brotherhood reveals itself in our feelings and actions.

feelings. The heart may say, “I must help,” but the mind may not know how to help, and the hands may be incapable of rendering any help.

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Integrity is a life where your beliefs and intentions are aligned with your words and actions.

STEPHEN LOVEGROVE

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted in important affairs.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Integrity gives you real freedom because you have nothing to fear since you have nothing to hide.

ZIG ZIGLAR

It is important, when going after a goal, to never lose sight of the integrity of the journey.

ANDY GARCIA

A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make touch decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR



Yoga as the path toward divine union

Yoga

Condensed from THEOSOPEDIA
PHILIP S. HARRIS AND
RICHARD W. BROOKS

YOGA is a Sanskrit word, derived from the root *yuj* ("join," "unite," "fix the mind on," etc.), meaning, among other things, "union" and, by extension, the discipline leading to union with one's higher Self or the Divine. It is cognate with the English word "yoke." It entered the English language about 1820 and is now popularly associated in the West with the discipline involving various bodily postures called *Hatha Yoga*. However, there are several quite different systems of yoga:

1. *Rāja Yoga*, the "kingly" discipline which is based on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali and involves a type of meditation designed to

control the movements (*vruttis*) of the mind (*citta*) and realization of the Self.

2. *Jñâna Yoga*, a discipline which focuses on analysis of the constituents of the world and oneself, such as is described in chapters 13-17 of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ. The word *jñâna* means "knowledge."

3. *Karma Yoga*, a discipline which emphasizes action (*karma*) with renunciation of any desire to see the results (*phala*, lit. "fruit"), work without attachment; this is described in chapters 2-7 of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ.

4. *Bhakti Yoga*, a discipline which focuses on total devotion to the Divine, such as is described by Ūri Ramakrishna or chapters 9-12 of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ.

5. *Japa Yoga*, a practice that uses repetition of a mantra, such as a spiritual passage or the name of a deity. It is sometimes used as an adjunct to Bhakti Yoga. The word *japa* literally means "muttering" in Sanskrit.

6. *Hatha Yoga*, a practice in involving a variety of bodily postures (*âsanas*) said to enhance both health and Self-realization. It, too, is often used as an adjunct to other forms of yoga. The word *hatha* literally means "force," "persistence," "oppression," etc. in Sanskrit.

7. *Kundalinî Yoga*, a technique which is designed to raise the Kundalinî (Sk. "serpentine") en-

Yoga is . . . the discipline leading to union with one's higher Self or the Divine.

ergy said normally to lie dormant at the base of the spine. Its awakening vivifies the chakra centers in one's body, enabling one to attain certain psychic powers (*siddhis*) and, eventually, Self-realization.

Yoga permeates all the religious and mystical philosophies of India. Although it has mutated from its original form, its essential theme and objective as enshrined in the teaching of Patañjali have remained intact: the union of individual consciousness with the Divine.

Helena P. Blavatsky offers an interesting definition of yoga in the first issue of the magazine *The Theosophist* where she writes, "The whole object of the Hindu yoga is to bring into activity his interior power, to make himself ruler over physical self and over everything else besides. That the developed yogi can influence, sometimes control, the operations of vegetable and animal life, proves that the soul within his body has an intimate relationship with the soul of all other things" (pp. 29-30). This is

a deceptively simple statement which conceals a profound philosophy, namely, the essential unity of all things at a certain subtle level.

It is necessary to bear in mind that Blavatsky wrote at a time when knowledge of the various yogas was negligible in the West and that there was very little literature available in English. When asked, "Is the practice of concentration beneficent?" Blavatsky replied, "Genuine concentration and meditation, conscious and cautious, upon one's lower self in the light of the inner divine man and the Pâramitâs (highest ideals of spiritual perfection) is an excellent thing. But to 'sit for yoga,' with only a superficial and often distorted knowledge of the real practice, is almost invariably fatal; for ten to one the student will either develop mediumistic powers in himself or lose time and get disgusted with both practice and theory" (CW XII:603-04). It is obvious from the context that Blavatsky did not mean that the word "fatal" should be taken literally.

In her *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky writes, "The Ha'ha so called was and still is discounted by the Arhats. It is injurious to the health and alone can never develop into Raja Yoga" (I:95). Since she wrote this in 1888, there has been a very great

increase in the practice of Ha'ha Yoga in the West, with many organizations training Hatha Yoga teachers to a high standard of proficiency. The beneficial results achieved have been demonstrated beyond question and many medical practitioners suggest that patients "take up yoga." Many branches of the Theosophical Society (TS) now offer regular classes in Hatha Yoga.

Blavatsky frequently mentions Râja Yoga in approving terms, but does not, in her writings, go into detail regarding the teachings of Patañjali, possibly because she held to the view that a superficial treatment of the subject is undesirable and even harmful. In her *Practical Occultism* (TPH, Adyar, 1959 ed., pp. 8-9), she writes of, "... the enormous, almost limitless, responsibility assumed by the teacher for the sake of the pupil ... 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" (pp. 8-9).

<https://www.theosophyforward.com/occult-life-in-ordinary-moments-%E2%80%93-letter-1-family-duties>Yoga

On the mount as a symbol of
higher spiritual consciousness



The Mount

Condensed from MYSTICAL CHRISTIANITY
GEOFFREY HODSON

THE Mount is an oft-recurring Biblical symbol. Many of the great happenings in the Bible occurred “on the Mount.” Elijah heard the still, small voice (I Kgs. 19:11), Abraham rose to his greatest heights of sacrifice (Gen. 22:1), Moses received the Commandments (Deut. 5:4), and Christ preached His greatest sermon (Matt. 5:1) and was transfigured (Matt. 17:1) “on the Mount.” This is a symbol of the higher consciousness in human beings, those levels beyond the analytical mind, of the synthetic intellect, of intuition and spiritual vision. The process of self-exaltation on to the Mount and into communion

with the God within is beautifully described in the story of Elijah. First came the command: “Go forth and stand upon the Mount before the Lord” (I Kgs. 19:11). Elijah obeyed, and rising above the physical, the emotional and the mental aspects of his nature, entered the presence of God. First, came the earthquake — symbol of the physical body — and the Lord was not in the earthquake: then the rushing wind — symbol of the emotions — and the Lord was not in the wind: then the fire — symbol of the mind — and the Lord was not in the fire. After the earthquake, the wind and the fire, si-

“... the Mount”... is a symbol of the higher consciousness in human beings, those levels beyond the analytical mind, of the synthetic intellect, of intuition and spiritual vision.

lence, and in the silence the still, small voice of the Lord.

Goethe said: “The best government is that which teaches us to govern ourselves.” Similarly, the best form of religion is that which leads us to the discovery of God. This Christianity does, and in this story of Elijah we are shown in detail the way to the mountain top and into the presence of the God within. It is trodden by raising the level of consciousness successively above the flesh, the feelings and the thoughts on to the Mount of the higher consciousness, there to hear the “still, small voice.” To reverse the metaphor, we must descend into the innermost

depths of our nature, the cave which Elijah entered, and in the silence which there reigns hear the voice of the silence, the voice of the God within.

Only in the mountain could Moses, symbol of every human being, particularly of the leaders of humanity, receive the commandments of the Lord — divine guidance for his people and his time. To those who refuse to ascend, deliberately remaining in the vale, divine inspiration is unobtainable. The hidden truth and wisdom is marred, distorted — symbolically the tablets are broken — before reaching the minds of those who remain in the vale. Here again we have an accurate picture of the condition of the world today.

Western humanity, encouraged one fears by many of its leaders, not only remains in the vale whence selfishness, cruelty, exploitation, oppression and sensuality rule, but also persists in the worship of the golden calf of purely temporal possessions and powers.

MYSTICAL CHRISTIANITY BY GEOFFREY HODSON.
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The mountain path is the way to the summit of the Self.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

The mountain is within you.

DAISETZ T. SUZUKI



Managing the Passion of Anger

Condensed from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
EDITORIAL TEAM

ANGER is a general term for a wide range of passions or emotions implicit in human nature, such as wrath, vengeance, hatred, annoyance, indignation, an impulse to hurt another, and so on. Anger arises from desire-Kama. Unfulfilled desires, wounded vanity, and pride provoke anger.

Arjuna asks Krishna, "What is it that makes one sin against one's good sense as if impelled by an impalpable secret force?" Krishna answers that it is lust and anger (*kama* and *krodha*) that arise from the quality of *rajas* (passion, restlessness, desire), and that they are enemies

of man on earth, raging like fire, difficult to control because their empire is not only over senses, emotions and mind, but it also envelops the discriminating faculty by which it deludes the soul. Krishna says that this enemy in us is to be destroyed by the practice of self-control through discriminative knowledge of, and reliance on, the true Self. (Gita, Ch. III)

So insidious is this animal passion in human nature that even sages have succumbed to it and lost all knowledge and powers they had achieved by severe austerities — *Tapas*. What crime has not been committed

Krishna says that this enemy in us (anger) is to be destroyed by the practice of self-control through discriminative knowledge of, and reliance on, the true Self.

by man in a paroxysm of anger! An episode is narrated in the Vishnu Purana on the loss one incurs by giving in to anger and the imperative need to abjure it.

Sage Parasara narrates to his disciple Maitreya that once he had embarked on the performance of a magical sacrifice (*yajna*) to destroy demons in a spirit of vengeance when he heard that they had killed his father in the past. When the sacrifice was on its way, Vasishta, his grandfather, appeared and asked Parasara to stop the sacrifice and showed him the injustice and sin of killing the demons and the great harm that comes to the one who gives in to anger and revenge. The sage advice of Vasishta must be meditated upon. The wise cherish it.

Says the sage Vasishta:

Let thy wrath be appeased. Rakshasas are not culpable; thy father's death was the work of Karma. Anger is the passion of fools; it becometh not a wise man.

By whom, it may be asked, is any one killed? Every man reaps the consequences of his own acts. Anger, my son, is the destruction of all that man obtains . . . and prevents the attainment of emancipation. The sages shun wrath, Be not thou, my child, subject to its influence. Let not these unoffending spirits of darkness be consumed; let thy sacrifice cease. Mercy is the might of righteous. (*Vishnu Purana*, Book I, Chapter 1)

“Do not stir fire with sword” is a maxim of Pythagoras. It is also a popular superstition among peoples widely scattered on the globe. Tartars (Mongolian tribes) will not consent to stick a knife into the fire for fear of “cutting the head of the fire.” Similar is the belief among Kalmucks. Max Muller shows that this “superstition” has a valid psychological basis. It means exercising prudence in the face of an angry encounter and maintaining calm.

Says Heraclitus:

It is difficult to fight with anger, for whatever is necessary to be done redeems the soul . . . For many, by gratifying anger have changed the condition of their soul, and have made death preferable to life. But by governing the tongue and being quiet, friendship is produced from strife, the fire of anger being extinguished, and you yourself will not appear to be destitute of intellect. (*Isis*, I, 248)

Controlling anger is difficult but not impossible. Gandhiji shows the way:

Managing the Passion of Anger

It is not that I do not get angry. I do not give vent to anger. I cultivate the quality of patience as angerlessness, and generally speaking, I succeed. How I find it possible to control it would be a useless question, for it is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice. (*Living the Life* by B. P. Wadia, pp. 111-112)

Horace says, “Anger is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you.” The Bible says, “A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous (harsh) words stir up anger” (Proverbs, 15). The Gita advises, “He who, while living in this

Horace says, “Anger is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you.”

world and before the liberation of the soul from the body, can resist the impulse arising from desire and anger is a devotee and blessed” (XVI, 21-23).

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The ego is never satisfied. The more it has, the more it wants. Its constant companion is either fear or anger. PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Where there is anger, there is always pain underneath.

ECHART TOLLE

He who angers you conquers you.

ELIZABETH KENNY

Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host.

MAYA ANGELOU

When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself.

THICH NHAT HANH

Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.

AMBROSE BIERCE

When anger arises, think of the consequences.

CONFUCIUS



WORLDWATCH

Synthetic Human Embryo Models Created

Scientists have achieved a major breakthrough by creating synthetic human embryo models using stem cells — without the need for egg, sperm, or a womb. Developed by researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science, these structures mimic key stages of early human development, including the formation of cells that would normally become the embryo, placenta, and yolk sac. The advance offers an unprecedented window into the earliest phases of human life, allowing scientists to study the causes of miscarriage, congenital disorders, and developmental failure in ways previously impossible. Researchers emphasize that these models are not viable embryos and cannot develop into living beings, a distinction that addresses both ethical and legal concerns. Even so, the work raises profound questions about the boundaries of scientific intervention. (*Reuters*)

Child Labor Surges Amid Economic Instability

Child labor is once again on the rise globally, reversing years of gradual progress. According to recent findings from the International Labor Organization and UNICEF, millions more children have been pushed into work due to economic hardship, conflict, and climate-related disruptions. Families facing rising costs of living and loss of income are increasingly relying on children to contribute financially, often at the expense of education and well-being. Many are employed in hazardous sectors such as agriculture, mining, and domestic labor, where they are exposed to exploitation and long-term health risks. Experts warn that without stronger social protections, access to education, and targeted poverty alleviation programs, the trend could worsen. This highlights how economic instability continues to erode the most basic rights of the world's most vulnerable. (*UNICEF*)

First Biological Computer Using Brain Cells

A new frontier in computing has emerged with the unveiling of the first biological computer powered by human brain cells. Developed by the Australian company Cortical Labs, the system — known as CL1 — integrates lab-grown human neurons with silicon hardware, creating a hybrid platform capable of learning and adapting in ways conventional computers cannot. Unlike traditional AI, which relies on programmed algorithms, this “biocomputer” uses living neural networks that respond dynamically to stimuli, mimicking aspects of human cognition. Researchers say the technology could revolutionize fields such as drug discovery, disease modeling, and advanced AI, while consuming far less energy. Each unit contains hundreds of thousands of living brain cells sustained by a life-support system that regulates nutrients, temperature, and waste. While the innovation marks a major milestone, it also raises profound ethical questions about the nature of intelligence and the status of living neural tissue. As science moves closer to merging biology and machine, the line between the organic and the artificial continues to blur. (*Al Jazeera*)

Climate Migration Displacing Millions Annually

Climate change is increasingly driving human displacement, with millions forced to leave their homes each year due to extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and environmental degradation. Reports from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center show that floods, droughts, storms, and wildfires are now among the leading causes of internal migration worldwide. Unlike traditional migration, climate displacement often occurs suddenly and repeatedly, leaving communities with little time to recover before the next crisis strikes. Vulnerable regions — particularly in parts of Africa, South Asia, and island nations — are more affected, as livelihoods tied to land and natural resources become increasingly unsustainable. While most climate migrants remain within their own countries, the long-term implications are global, placing pressure on urban centers, infrastructure, and social services. Experts stress the urgent need for international responses, including climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and legal frameworks to protect those displaced. (*ABC*)

Book Section:



Practical Mysticism

Condensed from the book

EVELYN UNDERHILL

Practical Mysticism

EVELYN UNDERHILL

MYSTICISM is the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or less degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment.

It is not expected that the inquirer will find great comfort in this sentence when first it meets his eye. The ultimate question, "What is Reality?" — a question, perhaps, which never occurred to him before — is already forming in his mind; and he knows that it will cause him infinite distress. Only a mystic can answer it: and he, in terms which other mystics alone will understand. Therefore, for the time being, the practical man may put it on one side. All that he is asked to consider now is this: that the word "union" represents not so much a rare and unimaginable operation, as something which he is doing, in a vague, imperfect fashion, at every moment of his conscious life; and doing with intensity and thoroughness in all the more valid moments of that life. We know a thing only by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by an interpenetration of it and our-

selves. It gives itself to us, just in so far as we give ourselves to it; and it is because our outflow towards things is usually so perfunctory and so languid, that our comprehension of things is so perfunctory and languid too. The great Sufi who said that "Pilgrimage to the place of the wise, is to escape the flame of separation" spoke the literal truth. Wisdom is the fruit of communion; ignorance the inevitable portion of those who "keep themselves to themselves," and stand apart, judging, analyzing the things which they have never truly known. It is notorious that the operations of the average human consciousness unite the self, not with things as they really are, but with images, notions, aspects of things. He is happy enough "understanding," garnishing, assimilating the carcass from which the principle of life and growth has been ejected, and whereof only the most digestible portions have been retained. He is not "mystical."

Because mystery is horrible to us, we have agreed for the most part to live in a world of labels; to make of them the current coin of

We simply do not attempt to unite with Reality. But now and then, that symbolic character is suddenly brought home to us.

experience, and ignore their merely symbolic character, the infinite gradation of values which they misrepresent. We simply do not attempt to unite with Reality. But now and then, that symbolic character is suddenly brought home to us. Some great emotion, some devastating visitation of beauty, love, or pain, lifts us to another level of consciousness; and we are aware for a moment of the difference between the neat collection of discrete objects and experiences which we call the world, and the height, the depth, the breadth of that living, growing, changing Fact, of which thought, life, and energy are parts, and in which we “live and move and have our being.” Then we realize that our whole life is enmeshed in great and living forces; terrible because unknown. Even the power which lurks in every coal-scuttle, shines in the electric lamp, pants in the motor- omnibus, declares itself in the ineffable wonders of reproduction and growth, is

supersensual. We do but perceive its results. The more sacred plane of life and energy which seems to be manifested in the forces we call “spiritual” and “emotional” — in love, anguish, ecstasy, adoration — is hidden from us too. Symptoms, appearances, are all that our intellects can discern: sudden irresistible inroads from it, all that our hearts can apprehend. The material for a more intense life, a wider, sharper consciousness, a more profound understanding of our own existence, lies at our gates. But we are separated from it, we cannot assimilate it; except in abnormal moments, we hardly know that it is. We now begin to attach at least a fragmentary meaning to the statement that “mysticism is the art of union with Reality.” We see that the claim of such a poet as Whitman to be a mystic lies in the fact that he has achieved a passionate communion with deeper levels of life than those with which we usually deal — has thrust past the current notion to the Fact: that the claim of such a saint as Teresa is bound up with her declaration that she has achieved union with the Divine Essence itself. The visionary is a mystic when his vision mediates to him an actuality beyond the reach of the senses. The philosopher is a mystic when he passes beyond thought to the pure apprehension of truth. The active

man is a mystic when he knows his actions to be a part of a greater activity. Blake, Plotinus, Joan of Arc, and John of the Cross — there is a link which binds all these together: but if he is to make use of it, the inquirer must find that link for himself.

As the beautiful does not exist for the artist and poet alone — though these can find in it more poignant depths of meaning than other men — so the world of Reality exists for all; and all may participate in it, unite with it, according to their measure and to the strength and purity of their desire.

The World Of Reality. The practical man may justly observe at this point that the world of single vision is the only world he knows: that it appears to him to be real, solid, and self-consistent: and that until the existence — at least, the probability — of other planes of reality is made clear to him, all talk of uniting with them is mere moonshine, which confirms his opinion of mysticism as a game fit only for idle women and inferior poets. Plainly, then, it is the first business of the missionary to create, if he can, some feeling of dissatisfaction with the world within which the practical man has always lived and acted; to suggest something of its fragmentary and subjective character. We turn back therefore to a further examination of the truism that

*If the doors of perception
were cleansed, said Blake,
everything would appear
to man as it is — Infinite.*

man dwells, under normal conditions, in a world of imagination rather than a world of facts; that the universe in which he lives and at which he looks is but a construction which the mind has made from some few among the wealth of materials at its disposal.

If the doors of perception were cleansed, said Blake, everything would appear to man as it is — Infinite. But the doors of perception are hung with the cobwebs of thought; prejudice, cowardice, sloth. Eternity is with us, inviting our contemplation perpetually, but we are too frightened, lazy, and suspicious to respond: too arrogant to still our thought, and let divine sensation have its way. It needs industry and goodwill if we would make that transition: for the process involves a veritable spring-cleaning of the soul, a turning-out and rearrangement of our mental furniture, a wide opening of closed windows, that the notes of the wild birds beyond our garden may come to us fully charged with wonder and freshness, and

drown with their music the noise of the grammophone within. Those who do this, discover that they have lived in a stuffy world, whilst their inheritance was a world of morning-glory; where every tit-mouse is a celestial messenger, and every thrusting bud is charged with the full significance of life.

There will be many who feel a certain skepticism as to the possibility of the undertaking here suggested to them; a prudent unwillingness to sacrifice their old comfortably upholstered universe, on the mere promise that they will receive a new heaven and a new earth in exchange. These careful ones may like to remind themselves that the vision of the world presented to us by all the great artists and poets — those creatures whose very existence would seem so strange to us, were we not accustomed to them — perpetually demonstrates the many-graded character of human consciousness; the new worlds which await it, once it frees itself from the tyranny of those labor-saving contrivances with which it usually works. Leaving on one side the more subtle apprehensions which we call "spiritual," even the pictures of the old Chinese draughtsmen and the modern impressionists, of Watteau and of Turner, of Manet, Degas, and Cezanne; the poems of Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Whitman — these, and

countless others, assure you that their creators have enjoyed direct communion, not with some vague world of fancy, but with a visible natural order which you have never known.

What is it, then, which distinguishes the outlook of great poets and artists from the arrogant subjectivism of common sense? Innocence and humility distinguish it. These persons prejudge nothing, criticize nothing. To some extent, their attitude to the universe is that of children: and because this is so, they participate to that extent in the Heaven of Reality.

The greater the artist is, the wider and deeper is the range of this pure sensation: the more sharply he is aware of the torrent of life and loveliness, the rich profusion of possible beauties and shapes. He always wants to press deeper and deeper, to let the span of his perception spread wider and wider; till he unites with the whole of that Reality which he feels all about him, and of which his own life is a part. He is always tending, in fact, to pass over from the artistic to the mystical state. In artistic experience, then, in the artist's perennial effort to actualize the ideal which Keats expressed, we may find a point of departure for our exploration of the contemplative life.

What would it mean for a soul that truly captured it; this life in which the emphasis should lie on

the immediate percepts, the messages the world pours in on us, instead of on the sophisticated universe into which our clever brains transmute them? Plainly, it would mean the achievement of a new universe, a new order of reality: escape from the terrible museum-like world of daily life, where everything is classified and labelled, and all the graded fluid facts which have no label are ignored. It would mean an innocence of eye and innocence of ear impossible for us to conceive; the impassioned contemplation of pure form, freed from all the meanings with which the mind has draped and disguised it; the recapturing of the lost mysteries of touch and fragrance, most wonderful among the avenues of sense. It would mean the exchanging of the neat conceptual world our thoughts build up, fenced in by the solid ramparts of the possible, for the inconceivable richness of that unwallled world from which we have subtracted it.

The Preparation of the Mystic. Here, the practical man will naturally say: And pray how am I going to do this? How shall I detach myself from the artificial world to which I am accustomed? Where is the brake that shall stop the wheel of my image-making mind?

I answer: You are going to do it by an educative process; a drill, of which the first stages will, in-

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deed, be hard enough. You have already acknowledged the need of such mental drill, such deliberate selective acts, in respect to the smaller matters of life. You willingly spend time and money over that narrowing and sharpening of attention which you call a "business training," a "legal education," the "acquirement of a scientific method." But this new undertaking will involve the development and the training of a layer of your consciousness which has lain fallow in the past; the acquirement of a method you have never used before. It is reasonable, even reassuring, that hard work and discipline should be needed for this: that it should demand of you, if not the renunciation of the cloister, at least the virtues of the golf course.

The education of the mystical sense begins in self-simplifica-

The essence of mystical contemplation is summed in these two experiences — union with the flux of life, and union with the Whole.

tion. The feeling, willing, seeing self is to move from the various and the analytic to the simple and the synthetic: a sentence which may cause hard breathing and mopping of the brows on the part of the practical man. Yet it is to you, practical man, reading these pages as you rush through the tube to the practical work of rearranging unimportant fragments of your universe, that this message so needed by your time — or rather, by your want of time — is addressed. To you, unconscious analyst, so busy reading the advertisements upon the carriage wall, that you hardly observe the stages of your unceasing flight: so anxiously acquisitive of the crumbs that you never lift your eyes to the loaf. The essence of mystical contemplation is summed in these two experiences — union with the flux of life, and union with the Whole in which all lesser realities are resumed — and these experiences are well within

your reach. Though it is likely that the accusation will annoy you, you are already in fact a potential contemplative: for this act, as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, is proper to all men — is, indeed, the characteristic human activity.

More, it is probable that you are, or have been, an actual contemplative too. Has it never happened to you to lose yourself for a moment in a swift and satisfying experience for which you found no name? When the world took on a strangeness, and you rushed out to meet it, in a mood at once exultant and ashamed? Was there not an instant when you took the lady who now orders your dinner into your arms, and she suddenly interpreted to you the whole of the universe? a universe so great, charged with so terrible an intensity, that you have hardly dared to think of it since. Do you remember that horrid moment at the concert, when you became wholly unaware of your comfortable seven-and-sixpenny seat? Those were onsets of involuntary contemplation; sudden partings of the conceptual veil.

Now that simplifying act, which is the preliminary of all mystical experience, that gathering of the scattered bits of personality into the one which is really you — into the “unity of your spirit,” as the mystics say — the great forces of love, beauty, wonder, grief, may do for you now and again. These

lift you perforce from the consideration of the details to the contemplation of the All: turn you from the tidy world of image to the ineffable world of fact. But they are fleeting and ungovernable experiences, descending with dreadful violence on the soul. Are you willing that your participation in Reality shall depend wholly on these incalculable visitations: on the sudden wind and rain that wash your windows, and let in the vision of the landscape at your gates? You can, if you like, keep those windows clear. You can, if you choose to turn your attention that way, learn to look out of them. These are the two great phases in the education of every contemplative: and they are called in the language of the mystics the *purification of the senses* and the *purification of the will*.

Those who are so fortunate as to experience in one of its many forms the crisis which is called "conversion" are seized, as it seems to them, by some power stronger than themselves and turned perforce in the right direction. They find that this irresistible power has cleansed the windows of their homely coat of grime; and they look out, literally, upon a new heaven and new earth. The long quiet work of adjustment which others must undertake before any certitude rewards them is for these concen-

trated into one violent shattering and rearranging of the self, which can now begin its true career of correspondence with the Reality it has perceived. To persons of this type, I do not address myself: but rather to the ordinary plodding scholar of life, who must reach the same goal by a more gradual road.

What is it that smears the windows of the senses? Thought, convention, self-interest. We throw a mist of thought between ourselves and the external world: and through this we discern, as in a glass darkly, that which we have arranged to see. We see it in the way in which our neighbors see it; sometimes through a pink veil, sometimes through a gray. Religion, indigestion, priggishness, or discontent may drape the panes. The prismatic colors of a fashionable school of art may stain them. Inevitably, too, we see the narrow world our windows show us, not "in itself," but in relation to our own needs, moods, and preferences; which exercise a selective control upon those few aspects of the whole which penetrate to the field of consciousness and dictate the order in which we arrange them, for the universe of the natural man is strictly egocentric. We continue to name the living creatures with all the placid assurance of Adam: and whatsoever we call them, that is the name thereof. Unless we happen

These are the two great phases in the education of every contemplative: and they are called in the language of the mystics the purification of the senses and the purification of the will.

to be artists — and then but rarely — we never know the “thing seen” in its purity; never, from birth to death, look at it with disinterested eyes. Our vision and understanding of it are governed by all that we bring with us, and mix with it, to form an amalgam with which the mind can deal. To “purify” the senses is to release them, so far as human beings may, from the tyranny of egocentric judgments; to make of them the organs of direct perception. This means that we must crush our deep-seated passion for classification and correspondences; ignore the instinctive, selfish question, “What does it mean to me?” learn to dip ourselves in the universe at our gates, and know it, not from without by comprehension, but from within by self-emergence.

Richard of St. Victor has said, that the essence of all purifica-

tion is self-simplification; the doing away of the unnecessary and unreal, the tangles and complications of consciousness; and we must remember that when these masters of the spiritual life speak of purity, they have in their minds no thin, abstract notion of a rule of conduct stripped of all color and compounded chiefly of refusals, such as a more modern, more arid asceticism set up. Their purity is an affirmative state; something strong, clean, and crystalline, capable of a wholeness of adjustment to the wholeness of a God-inhabited world. The pure soul is like a lens from which all irrelevancies and excrescences, all the beams and motes of egotism and prejudice, have been removed; so that it may reflect a clear image of the one Transcendent Fact within which all others facts are held.

This universe, these possibilities, are far richer, yet far simpler than you have supposed. Seen from the true center of being, instead of the usual angle of self-interest, their scattered parts arrange themselves in order: you begin to perceive those graduated levels of Reality with which a purified and intensified consciousness can unite. So, too, the road is more logically planned, falls into more comprehensible stages, than those who dwell in a world of single vision are willing to believe.

Now it is a paradox of human life, often observed even by the most concrete and unimaginative of philosophers, that man seems to be poised between two contradictory orders of Reality. Two planes of existence — or, perhaps, two ways of apprehending existence — lie within the possible span of his consciousness. That great pair of opposites which metaphysicians call Being and Becoming, Eternity and Time, Unity and Multiplicity, and others mean, when they speak of the Spiritual and the Natural Worlds, represents the two extreme forms under which the universe can be realized by him. The greatest men, those whose consciousness is extended to full span, can grasp, be aware of, both. They know themselves to live, both in the discrete, manifested, ever-changeful parts and appearances, and also in the Whole Fact. They react fully to both: for them there is no conflict between the parochial and the patriotic sense. More than this, a deep instinct sometimes assures them that the inner spring or secret of that Whole Fact is also the inner spring and secret of their individual lives: and that here, in this third factor, the disharmonies between the part and the whole are resolved. As they know themselves to dwell in the world of time and yet to be capable of transcending it, so the Ultimate Reality, they think, inhabits yet

Seen from the true center of being . . . you begin to perceive those graduated levels of Reality with which a purified and intensified consciousness can unite.

inconceivably exceeds all that they know to be — as the soul of the musician controls and exceeds not merely each note of the flowing melody, but also the whole of that symphony in which these cadences must play their part. That invulnerable spark of vivid life, that “inward light” which these men find at their own center when they seek for it, is for them an earnest of the Uncreated Light, the ineffable splendor of God, dwelling at, and energizing within the heart of things: for this spark is at once one with the Universal Soul.

Meditation and Recollection. Recollection, the art which the practical man is now invited to learn, is in essence no more and no less than the subjection of the attention to the control of the will. It is not, therefore, a purely mystical activity. In one form or another, it is demanded of all who would get control of their own mental processes; and does or should represent the first

great step in the education of the human consciousness. So slothful, however, is man in all that concerns his higher faculties, that few deliberately undertake this education at all. They are content to make their contacts with things by a vague, unregulated power, ever apt to play truant, ever apt to fail them. Unless they be spurred to it by that passion for ultimate things which expresses itself in religion, philosophy, or art, they seldom learn the secret of a voluntary concentration of the mind.

The method, in its earlier stages, must be the same; whether we call the Reality which is the object of our quest aesthetic, cosmic, or divine. The athlete must develop much the same muscles, endure much the same discipline, whatever be the game he means to play.

So we will go straight to St. Teresa, and inquire of her what was the method by which she taught her daughters to gather themselves together, to capture and hold the attitude most favorable to communion with the spiritual world. She tells us—and here she accords with the great tradition of the Christian contemplatives, a tradition which was evolved under the pressure of long experience — that the process is a gradual one. The method to be employed is a slow, patient training of material which the licence of years has

made intractable; not the sudden easy turning of the mind in a new direction, that it may minister to a new fancy for “the mystical view of things.” Recollection begins, she says, in the deliberate and regular practice of meditation; a perfectly natural form of mental exercise, though at first a hard one.

Now meditation is a half-way house between thinking and contemplating: and as a discipline, it derives its chief value from this transitional character. The real mystical life, which is the truly practical life, begins at the beginning; not with supernatural acts and ecstatic apprehensions, but with the normal faculties of the normal man. “I do not require of you,” says Teresa to her pupils in meditation, “to form great and curious considerations in your understanding: I require of you no more than to look.”

It might be thought that such looking at the spiritual world, simply, intensely, without cleverness — such an opening of the Eye of Eternity — was the essence of contemplation itself: and indeed one of the best definitions has described that art as a “loving-sight,” a “peering into heaven with the ghostly eye.” But the self who is yet at this early stage of the pathway to Reality is not asked to look at anything new, to peer into the deeps of things: only to gaze with a new and

cleansed vision on the ordinary intellectual images, the labels and the formula, the "objects" and ideas—even the external symbols—among which it has always dwelt. It is not yet advanced to the seeing of fresh landscapes: it is only able to re-examine the furniture of its home, and obtain from this exercise a skill, and a control of the attention, which shall afterwards be applied to greater purposes. Its task is here to consider that furniture, as the Victorines called this preliminary training: to take, that is, a more starry view of it: standing back from the whirl of the earth, and observing the process of things.

Take, then, an idea, an object, from among the common stock, and hold it before your mind. The selection is large enough: all sentient beings may find subjects of meditation to their taste, for there lies a universal behind every particular of thought, however concrete it may appear, and within the most rational propositions the meditative eye may glimpse a dream.

"Reason has moons, but moons not hers
Lie mirror'd on her sea,

Confounding her astronomers
But, O delighting me."

Even those objects which minister to our sense-life may well be used to nourish our spirits too. Who has not watched the intent meditations of a comfortable cat brooding upon the Absolute

The real mystical life, which is the truly practical life, begins at the beginning; not with supernatural acts and ecstatic apprehensions, but with the normal faculties of the normal man.

Mouse? You, if you have a philosophic twist, may transcend such relative views of Reality, and try to meditate on Time, Succession, even Being itself: or again on human intercourse, birth, growth, and death, on a flower, a river, the various tapestries of the sky.

Even your own emotional life will provide you with the ideas of love, joy, peace, mercy, conflict, desire. You may range, with Kant, from the stars to the moral law. If your turn be to religion, the richest and most evocative of fields is open to your choice: from the plaster image to the mysteries of Faith.

But, the choice made, it must be held and defended during the time of meditation against all invasions from without, however insidious their encroachments, however "spiritual" their disguise. It must be brooded upon, gazed at, seized again and again, as distractions seem to snatch it

By this voluntary act of concentration . . . you have to some extent withdrawn yourself from that union with unrealities, with notions and concepts, which has hitherto contented you.

from your grasp. A restless boredom, a dreary conviction of your own incapacity, will presently attack you. This, too, must be resisted at sword-point. The first quarter of an hour thus spent in attempted meditation will be, indeed, a time of warfare; which should at least convince you how unruly, how ill-educated is your attention, how miserably ineffective your will, how far away you are from the captaincy of your own soul.

Never before has the stream flowed so slowly, or 15 minutes taken so long to pass. Consciousness has been lifted to a longer, slower rhythm, and is not yet adjusted to its solemn march.

But, striving for this new poise, intent on the achievement of it, presently it will happen to you to find that you have indeed — though how you know not — entered upon a fresh plane of per-

ception, altered your relation with things.

First, the subject of your meditation begins, as you surrender to its influence, to exhibit unsuspected meaning, beauty, power. A perpetual growth of significance keeps pace with the increase of attention which you bring to bear on it; that attention which is the one agent of all your apprehensions, physical and mental alike. It ceases to be thin and abstract. You sink as it were into the deeps of it, rest in it, “unite” with it; and learn, in this still, intent communion, something of its depth and breadth and height, as we learn by direct intercourse to know our friends.

Moreover, as your meditation becomes deeper, it will defend you from the perpetual assaults of the outer world. You will hear the busy hum of that world as a distant exterior melody, and know yourself to be in some sort withdrawn from it. You have set a ring of silence between you and it; and behold! within that silence you are free. You will look at the coloured scene, and it will seem to you thin and papery: only one among countless possible images of a deeper life as yet beyond your reach. And gradually, you will come to be aware of an entity, a You, who can thus hold at arm’s length, be aware of, look at, an idea — a universe — other than itself. By this voluntary act of concentration, this

first step upon the ladder which goes — as the mystics would say — from “multiplicity to unity,” you have to some extent withdrawn yourself from that union with unrealities, with notions and concepts, which has hitherto contented you; and at once all the values of existence are changed. “The road to a Yea lies through a Nay.” You, in this preliminary movement of recollection, are saying your first deliberate No to the claim which the world of appearance makes to a total possession of your consciousness: and are thus making possible some contact between that consciousness and Reality.

Now turn this new purified and universalized gaze back upon yourself. Observe your own being in a fresh relation with things, and surrender yourself willingly to the moods of astonishment, humility, joy — perhaps of deep shame or sudden love — which invade your heart as you look. So doing patiently, day after day, constantly recapturing the vagrant attention, ever renewing the struggle for simplicity of sight, you will at last discover that there is something within you — something behind the fractious, conflicting life of desire — which you can recollect, gather up, make effective for new life. You will, in fact, know your own soul for the first time: and learn that there is a sense in which this real You is within.

When you do not merely believe this but know it; when you have achieved this power of withdrawing yourself, of making this first crude distinction between appearance and reality, the initial stage of the contemplative life has been won. It is not much more of an achievement than that first proud effort in which the baby stands upright for a moment and then relapses to the more natural and convenient crawl: but it holds within it the same earnest of future development.

Self-Adjustment. So, in a measure, you have found yourself: have retreated behind all that flowing appearance, that busy, unstable consciousness with its moods and obsessions, its feverish alternations of interest and apathy, its conflicts and irrational impulses, which even the psychologists mistake for You. Thanks to this recollective act, you have discovered in your inmost sanctuary a being not wholly practical, who refuses to be satisfied by your busy life of correspondences with the world of normal men, and hungers for communion with a spiritual universe. And this thing so foreign to your surface consciousness, yet familiar to it and continuous with it, you recognize as the true Self whose existence you always took for granted, but whom you have only known hitherto in its

When you have achieved this power of withdrawing yourself, of making this first crude distinction between appearance and reality, the initial stage of the contemplative life has been won.

scattered manifestations. "That art thou."

This climb up the mountain of self-knowledge, said the Victorine mystics, is the necessary prelude to all illumination. Only at its summit do we discover, as Dante did, the beginning of the pathway to Reality. It is a lonely and an arduous excursion, a sufficient test of courage and sincerity: for most men prefer to dwell in comfortable ignorance upon the lower slopes, and there to make of their more obvious characteristics a drapery which shall veil the naked truth. True and complete self-knowledge, indeed, is the privilege of the strongest alone. Few can bear to contemplate themselves face to face; for the vision is strange and terrible, and brings awe and contrition in its wake. The life of the seer is changed by it for ever. He is converted, in the deepest and

most drastic sense; is forced to take up a new attitude towards himself and all other things. Likely enough, if you really knew yourself — saw your own dim character, perpetually at the mercy of its environment; your true motives, stripped for inspection and measured against eternal values; your unacknowledged self-indulgences; your irrational loves and hates — you would be compelled to remodel your whole existence, and become for the first time a practical man.

But you have done what you can in this direction; have at last discovered your own deeper being, your eternal spark, the agent of all your contacts with Reality. You have often read about it. Now you have met it; know for a fact that it is there. What next? What changes, what readjustments will this self-revelation involve for you?

You will have noticed, as with practice your familiarity with the state of Recollection has increased, that the kind of consciousness which it brings with it, the sort of attitude which it demands of you, conflict sharply with the consciousness and the attitude which you have found so appropriate to your ordinary life in the past. They make this old attitude appear childish, unworthy, at last absurd. By this first deliberate effort to attend to Reality you are at once brought face

to face with that dreadful revelation of disharmony, unreality, and interior muddle which the blunt moralists call "conviction of sin." Never again need those moralists point out to you the inherent silliness of your earnest pursuit of impermanent things: your solemn concentration upon the game of getting on. None the less, this attitude persists.

Again and again, you swing back to it. Something more than realization is needed if you are to adjust yourself to your new vision of the world. This game which you have played so long has formed and conditioned you, developing certain qualities and perceptions, leaving the rest in abeyance: so that now, suddenly asked to play another, which demands fresh movements, alertness of a different sort, your mental muscles are intractable, your attention refuses to respond. Nothing less will serve you here than that drastic remodeling of character which the mystics call "*purgation*," the second stage in the training of the human consciousness for participation in Reality.

It is not merely that your intellect has assimilated, united with a superficial and unreal view of the world. Far worse: your will, your desire, the sum total of your energy, has been turned the wrong way, harnessed to the wrong machine. You have become accustomed to the idea that

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you want, or ought to want, certain valueless things, certain specific positions. For years, your treasure has been in the Stock Exchange, or the House of Commons, or the Salon, or the reviews that "really count" (if they still exist), or the drawing-rooms of Mayfair; and thither your heart perpetually tends to stray. Habit has you in its chains. You are not free. The awakening, then, of your deeper self, which knows not habit and desires nothing but free correspondence with the Real, awakens you at once to the fact of a disharmony between the simple but inexorable longings and instincts of the buried spirit, now beginning to assert themselves in your hours of meditation — pushing out, as it were, towards the light — and the various changeful, but insistent longings and instincts of the surface-self.

*The “higher life” was
always tending towards
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towards the gathering of
itself up into One.*

Between these two no peace is possible: they conflict at every turn. It becomes apparent to you that the declaration of Plotinus, accepted or repeated by all the mystics, concerning a “higher” and a “lower” life, and the cleavage that exists between them, has a certain justification even in the experience of the ordinary man.

That great thinker and ecstatic said, that all human personality was thus two-fold: thus capable of correspondence with two orders of existence. The “higher life” was always tending towards union with Reality; towards the gathering of itself up into One. The “lower life,” framed for correspondence with the outward world of multiplicity, was always tending to fall downwards, and fritter the powers of the self among external things.

You begin to feel and know in every fiber of your being the mystical need of “union with Reality.” But you cannot, until you have steadied yourself, found a poise, and begun to resist some

among the innumerable claims which the world of appearance perpetually makes upon your attention and your desire, make much use of the new power which Recollection has disclosed to you; and this Recollection itself, so long as it remains merely a matter of attention and does not involve the heart, is no better than a psychic trick. You are committed therefore, as the fruit of your first attempts at self-knowledge, to a deliberate – probably a difficult – rearrangement of your character; to the stern course of self-discipline, the voluntary acts of choice on the one hand and of rejection on the other, which ascetic writers describe under the formidable names of Detachment and Mortification. By Detachment, they mean the eviction of the limpet from its crevice; the refusal to anchor yourself to material things, to regard existence from the personal standpoint, or confuse custom with necessity. By Mortification, they mean the resolving of the turbulent whirlpools and currents of your own conflicting passions, interests, desires; the killing out of all those tendencies which the peaceful vision of Recollection would condemn, and which create the fundamental opposition between your interior and exterior life.

How often in each day do you deliberately revert to an attitude

of disinterested adoration? Yet this is the only attitude in which true communion with the universe is possible. The very mainspring of your activity is a demand, either for a continued possession of that which you have, or for something which as yet you have not: wealth, honor, success, social position, love, friendship, comfort, amusement. You feel that you have a right to some of these things: to a certain recognition of your powers, a certain immunity from failure or humiliation. You resent anything which opposes you in these matters. You become restless when you see other selves more skillful in the game of acquisition than yourself. You hold tight against all comers your own share of the spoils. You are rather inclined to shirk boring responsibilities and unattractive, unremunerative toil; are greedy of pleasure and excitement, devoted to the art of having a good time. If you possess a social sense, you demand these things not only for yourself but for your tribe – the domestic or racial group to which you belong. These dispositions, so ordinary that they almost pass unnoticed, were named by our blunt forefathers the Seven Deadly Sins of Pride, Anger, Envy, Avarice, Sloth, Gluttony, and Lust. Perhaps you would rather call them – as indeed they are – the seven common forms of egotism. They

represent the natural reactions to life of the self-centred human consciousness, enslaved by the “world of multiplicity”; and constitute absolute barriers to its attainment of Reality. So long as these dispositions govern character we can never see or feel things as they are; but only as they affect ourselves, our family, our party, our business, our church, our empire – the I, the Me, the Mine, in its narrower or wider manifestations. Only the detached and purified heart can view all things – the irrational cruelty of circumstance, the tortures of war, the apparent injustice of life, the acts and beliefs of enemy and friend – in true proportion; and reckon with calm mind the sum of evil and good. Therefore the mystics tell us perpetually that “selfhood must be killed” before Reality can be attained.

Love And Will. This steady effort towards the simplifying of your tangled character, its gradual emancipation from the fetters of the unreal, is not to dispense you from that other special training of the attention which the diligent practice of meditation and recollection effects. Your pursuit of the one must never involve neglect of the other; for these are the two sides – one moral, the other mental – of that unique process of self-conquest which Ruysbroeck calls “the gathering of the forces of the

soul into the unity of the spirit": the welding together of all your powers, the focusing of them upon one point. Hence, they should never, either in theory or practice, be separated. Only the act of recollection, the constantly renewed retreat to the quiet center of the spirit, gives that assurance of a Reality, a calmer and more valid life attainable by us, which supports the stress and pain of self-simplification and permits us to hope on, even in the teeth of the world's cruelty, indifference, degeneracy; while diligent character-building alone, with its perpetual untiring efforts at self-adjustment, its bracing, purging discipline, checks the human tendency to relapse into and react to the obvious, and makes possible the further development of the contemplative power.

So it is through and by these two great changes in your attitude towards things – first, the change of attention, which enables you to perceive a truer universe; next, the deliberate rearrangement of your ideas, energies, and desires in harmony with that which you have seen – that a progressive uniformity of life and experience is secured to you, and you are defended against the dangers of an indolent and useless mysticality. Only the real, say the mystics, can know Reality, for "we behold that which we are," the universe

which we see is conditioned by the character of the mind that sees it; and this realness – since that which you seek is no mere glimpse of Eternal Life, but complete possession of it – must apply to every aspect of your being, the rich totality of character, all the "forces of the soul," not to some thin and isolated "spiritual sense" alone. This is why recollection and self-simplification – perception of, and adaptation to, the Spiritual World in which we dwell – are the essential preparations for the mystical life, and neither can exist in a wholesome and well-balanced form without the other. By them the mind, the will, the heart, which so long had dissipated their energies over a thousand scattered notions, wants, and loves, are gradually detached from their old exclusive preoccupation with the ephemeral interests of the self, or of the group to which the self belongs.

You have become, as the mystics would say, "free from inordinate attachments," the "heat of having" does not scorch you any more; and because of this you possess great inward liberty, a sense of spaciousness and peace. Released from the obsessions which so long had governed them, will, heart, and mind are now all bent to the purposes of your deepest being: "gathered in the unity of the spirit," they have fused to become an agent with which it can act.

As all scattered thinking was cut off in recollection, as all va- grant and unworthy desires have been killed by the exercises of detachment; so now all scat- tered willing, all hesitations be- tween the indrawing and outflowing instincts of the soul, shall be checked and resolved. You are to push with all your power: not to absorb ideas, but to pour forth will and love. With this "conative act," as the psy- chologists would call it, the true contemplative life begins. Con- templation, you see, is the in- tense effort of vision, the pas- sionate and self-forgetful act of communion.

The dynamic power of love and will, the fact that the heart's de- sire – if it be intense and indus- trious – is a better earnest of pos- sible fulfilment than the most el- egant theories of the spiritual world; this is the perpetual theme of all the Christian mys- tics. By such love, they think, the worlds themselves were made. By an eager outstretching to- wards Reality, they tell us, we tend to move towards Reality, to enter into its rhythm: by a hum- ble and unquestioning surrender to it we permit its entrance into our souls. This twofold act, in which we find the double char- acter of all true love – which both gives and takes, yields and de- mands – is assured, if we be pa- tient and single-hearted, of ulti- mate success. At last our igno-

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rance shall be done away; and we shall "apprehend" the real and the eternal, as we apprehend the sunshine when the sky is free from cloud. Therefore "Smite upon that thick cloud of unknow- ing with a sharp dart of longing love" – and suddenly it shall part, and disclose the blue.

To "look with the eyes of love" seems a vague and sentimental recommendation: yet the whole art of spiritual communion is summed in it, and exact and im- portant results flow from this ex- ercise. The attitude which it in- volves is an attitude of complete humility and of receptiveness; without criticism, without clever analysis of the thing seen. When you look thus, you surrender your I-hood; see things at last as the artist does, for their sake, not for your own. The fundamental unity that is in you reaches out to the unity that is in them: and you achieve the "Simple Vision" of the poet and the mystic – that synthetic and undistorted appre- hension of things which is the antithesis of the single vision of practical men. The doors of per- ception are cleansed, and every-

Contemplation . . . shall only be truly yours when it impels you to action: when the double movement of Transcendent Love is realized in you.

thing appears as it is. The disfiguring results of hate, rivalry, prejudice, vanish away. Into that silent place to which recollection has brought you, new music, new color, new light, are poured from the outward world. The conscious love which achieves this vision may, indeed must, fluctuate. But the will which that love has enkindled can hold attention in the right direction. It can refuse to relapse to unreal and egoistic correspondences; and continue, even in darkness, and in the suffering which such darkness brings to the awakened spirit, its appointed task, cutting a way into new levels of Reality.

The Mystical Life. The great mystics tell us that the “vision of God in His own light” – the direct contact of the soul’s substance with the Absolute – to which awful experience you drew as near as the quality of your spirit would permit in the highest degree of contemplation, is the prelude, not to a further revelation

of the eternal order given to you, but to an utter change, a vivid life springing up within you, which they sometimes call the “transforming union” or the “birth of the Son in the soul.” By this, they mean that the spark of spiritual stuff, that high special power or character of human nature, by which you first desired, then tended to, then achieved contact with Reality, is as it were fertilized by this profound communion with its origin; becomes strong and vigorous, invades and transmutes the whole personality, and makes of it, not a “dreamy mystic” but an active and impassioned servant of the Eternal Wisdom.

So that when these full-grown, fully vital mystics try to tell us about the life they have achieved, it is always an intensely active life that they describe. They say, not that they “dwell in restful fruition,” though the deep and joyous knowledge of this, perhaps too the perpetual longing for an utter self-loss in it, is always possessed by them — but that they “go up and down the ladder of contemplation.” They stretch up towards the Point, the unique Reality to which all the intricate and many-colored lines of life flow, and in which they are merged; and rush out towards those various lives in a passion of active love and service. This double activity, this swinging be-

tween rest and work — this alone, they say, is truly the life of man; because this alone represents on human levels something of that inexhaustibly rich yet simple life, “ever active yet ever at rest,” which they find in God. When he gets to this, then man has indeed actualized his union with Reality; because then he is a part of the perpetual creative act, the eternal generation of the Divine thought and love. Therefore, contemplation, even at its highest, is not to be for you an end in itself. It shall only be truly yours when it impels you to action: when the double movement of Transcendent Love is realized in you. You are to be a living, ardent tool with which the Supreme Artist works: one of the instruments of His self-manifestation, the perpetual process by which His Reality is brought into concrete expression.

Now the expression of vision, of reality, of beauty, at an artist’s hands — the creation of new life in all forms — has two factors: the living molding creative spirit, and the material in which it works. Between these two there is inevitably a difference of tension. The material is at best inert, and merely patient of the informing idea; at worst, directly recalcitrant to it.

Hence, according to the balance of these two factors, the amount of resistance offered by stuff to tool, a greater or less energy

must be expended, greater or less perfection of result will be achieved. You, accepting the wide deep universe of the mystic, and the responsibilities that go with it, have by this act taken sides once for all with creative spirit: with the higher tension, the unrelaxed effort, the passion for a better, more intense, and more significant life. The adoration to which you are vowed is not an affair of red hassocks and authorized hymn books; but a burning and consuming fire. You will find, then, that the world, going its own gait, busily occupied with its own system of correspondences — yielding to every gust of passion, intent on the satisfaction of greed, the struggle for comfort or for power — will oppose your new eagerness; perhaps with violence, but more probably with the exasperating calmness of a heavy animal which refuses to get up. If your new life is worth anything, it will flame to sharper power when it strikes against this dogged inertness of things: for you need resistances on which to act.

Further, you will observe more and more clearly, that the stuff of your external world, the method and machinery of the common life, is not merely passively but actively inconsistent with your sharp interior vision of truth. The heavy animal is diseased as well as indolent. All man’s perverse ways of seeing

his universe, all the perverse and hideous acts which have sprung from them — these have set up reactions, have produced deep disorders in the world of things. Man is free, and holds the keys of hell as well as the keys of heaven. Within the love-driven universe which you have learned to see as a whole, you will therefore find egotism, rebellion, meanness, brutality, squalor: the work of separated selves whose energies are set athwart the stream. But every aspect of life, however falsely imagined, can still be “saved,” turned to the purposes of Reality: for “all-thing hath the being by the love of God.” Its oppositions are no part of its realness; and therefore they can be overcome.

To “bring Eternity into Time,” the “invisible into concrete expression”; to “be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man” — these are the plainly expressed desires of all the great mystics. One and all, they demand earnest and deliberate action, the insertion of the purified and ardent will into the world of things. The mystics are artists; and the stuff in which they work is most often human life. They want to heal the disharmony between the actual and the real: and since, in the white-hot radiance of that faith, hope, and charity which burns in them, they discern such a reconciliation to be possible, they are able

to work for it with a singleness of purpose and an invincible optimism denied to other men. This was the instinct which drove St. Francis of Assisi to the practical experience of that poverty which he recognized as the highest wisdom; St. Catherine of Siena from contemplation to politics; Joan of Arc to the salvation of France; St. Teresa to the formation of an ideal religious family; Fox to the proclaiming of a world-religion in which all men should be guided by the Inner Light; Florence Nightingale to battle with officials, vermin, dirt, and disease in the soldiers’ hospitals.

All these have felt sure that a great part in the drama of creation has been given to the free spirit of man: that bit by bit, through and by him, the scattered worlds of love and thought and action shall be realized again as one. It is for those who have found the thread on which those worlds are strung, to bring this knowledge out of the hiddenness; to use it, as the old alchemists declared that they could use their tincture, to transmute all baser; metals into gold.

So here is your vocation set out: a vocation so various in its opportunities, that you can hardly fail to find something to do. It is your business to actualize within the world of time and space — perhaps by great endeavors in the field of heroic action, perhaps only by small ones in field and

market, tram and tube, office and drawing-room, in the perpetual give-and-take of the common life — that more real life, that holy creative energy, which this world manifests as a whole but indifferently. You shall work for mercy, order, beauty, significance: shall mend where you find things broken, make where you find the need. “*Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,*” said St. Thomas in his great mystical hymn: and the practical side of that adoration consists in the bringing of the Real Presence from its hiddenness, and exhibiting it before the eyes of other men. Hitherto you have not been very active in this matter: yet it is the purpose for which you exist, and your contemplative consciousness, if you educate it, will soon make this fact clear to you. The teeming life of nature has yielded up to your loving attention many sacramental images of Reality: seen in the light of charity, it is far more sacred and significant than you supposed. What about your life? Is that a theophany too? “Each oak doth cry I AM,” says Vaughan. Do you proclaim by your existence the grandeur, the beauty, the intensity, the living wonder of that Eternal Reality within which, at this moment, you stand? Do your hours of contemplation and of action harmonize?

If they did harmonize — if everybody’s did — then, by these

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you about, shaking
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faith and hope, are yet
parts and aspects of one
Ocean.*

individual adjustments the complete group-consciousness of humanity would be changed, brought back into conformity with the Transcendent; and the spiritual world would be actualised within the temporal order at last.

Then, that world of false imagination, senseless conflicts, and sham values, into which our children are now born, would be annihilated. The whole race, not merely a few of its noblest, most clear-sighted spirits, would be “in union with God”; and men, transfused by His light and heat, direct and willing agents of His Pure Activity, would achieve that completeness of life which the mystics dare to call “deification.” This is the substance of that redemption of the world, which all religions proclaim or demand: the consummation which is crudely imagined in the Apocalyptic dreams of the prophets and seers. It is the true incarnation of the Divine Wisdom: and you must learn to see with

It is enough, that once it showed you its heart. A link of love now binds you to it for evermore; : in spite of derelictions, in spite of darkness and suffering, your will is harmonized with the Will that informs the Whole.

Paul the pains and disorders of creation — your own pains, efforts, and difficulties too — as incidents in the travail of that royal birth. Patriots have sometimes been asked to “think imperially.” Mystics are asked to think celestially; and this, not when considering the things usually called spiritual, but when dealing with the concrete accidents, the evil and sadness, the cruelty, failure, and degeneration of life.

So, what is being offered to you is not merely a choice among new states of consciousness, new emotional experiences — though these are indeed involved in it — but, above all else, a larger and intenser life, a career, a total consecration to the interests of the Real. This life shall not be abstract and dreamy, made up, as some imagine, of negations. It shall be violently practical and

affirmative; giving scope for a limitless activity of will, heart, and mind working within the rhythms of the Divine Idea. It shall cost much, making perpetual demands on your loyalty, trust, and self-sacrifice: proving now the need and the worth of that training in renunciation which was forced on you at the beginning of your interior life. It shall be both deep and wide, embracing in its span all those aspects of Reality which the gradual extension of your contemplative powers has disclosed to you: making “the inner and outer worlds to be indivisibly One.” And because the emphasis is now for ever shifted from the accidents to the substance of life, it will matter little where and how this career is actualized — whether in convent or factory, study or battlefield, multitude or solitude, sickness or strength. These fluctuations of circumstance will no longer dominate you; since “it is Love that payeth for all.”

Yet by all this it is not meant that the opening up of the universe, the vivid consciousness of a living Reality and your relation with it, which came to you in contemplation, will necessarily be a constant or a governable feature of your experience. Even under the most favorable circumstances, you shall and must move easily and frequently between that spiritual fruition and

active work in the world of men. Often enough it will slip from you utterly; often your most diligent effort will fail to recapture it, and only its fragrance will remain. The more intense those contacts have been, the more terrible will be your hunger and desolation when they are thus withdrawn: for increase of susceptibility means more pain as well as more pleasure, as every artist knows. But you will find in all that happens to you, all that opposes and grieves you — even in those inevitable hours of darkness when the doors of true perception seem to close, and the cruel tangles of the world are all that you can discern — an inward sense of security which will never cease. All the waves that buffet you about, shaking sometimes the strongest faith and hope, are yet parts and aspects of one Ocean. Did they wreck you utterly, that Ocean would receive you; and there you would find, overwhelming and transfusing you, the unfathomable Substance of all life and joy. Whether you realize it in its personal or impersonal manifestation, the universe is now friendly to you; and as he is a suspicious and unworthy lover who asks every day for renewed demonstrations of love, so you do not demand from it perpetual reassurances. It is enough, that once it showed you its heart. A link of

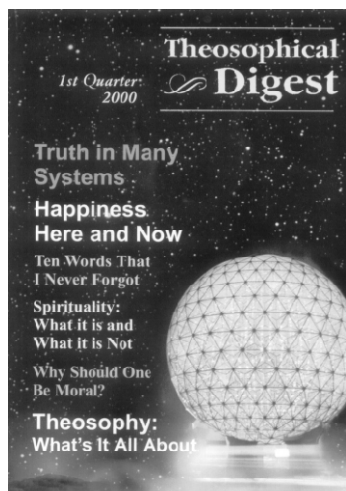
love now binds you to it for evermore: in spite of derelictions, in spite of darkness and suffering, your will is harmonized with the Will that informs the Whole.

We said, at the beginning of this discussion, that mysticism was the art of union with Reality: that it was a Science of Love. Hence, the condition to which it looks forward and towards which the soul of the contemplative has been stretching out, is a condition of being, not of seeing. As the bodily senses have been produced under pressure of man's physical environment, and their true aim is not the enhancement of his pleasure or his knowledge, but a perfecting of his adjustment to those aspects of the natural world which concern him — so the use and meaning of the spiritual senses are strictly practical too. These, when developed by a suitable training, reveal to man a certain measure of Reality: not in order that he may gaze upon it, but in order that he may react to it, learn to live in, with, and for it; growing and stretching into more perfect harmony with the Eternal Order, until at last, like the blessed ones of Dante's vision, the clearness of his flame responds to the unspeakable radiance of the Enkindling Light.

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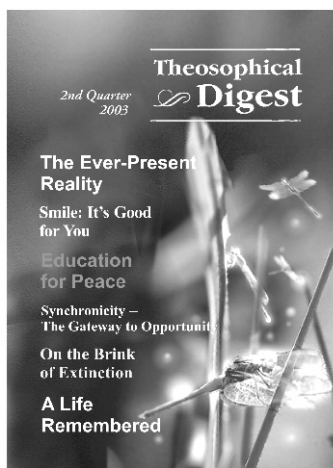
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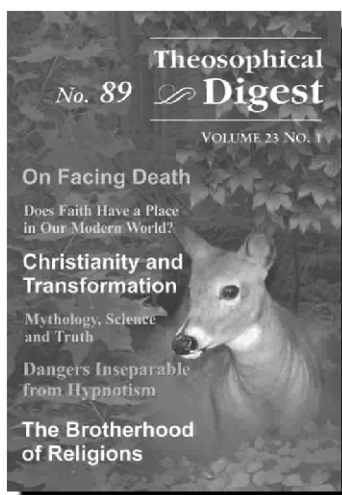
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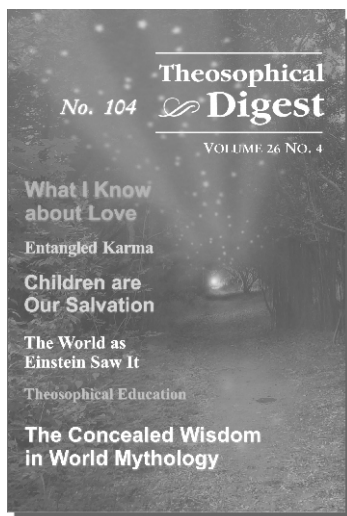
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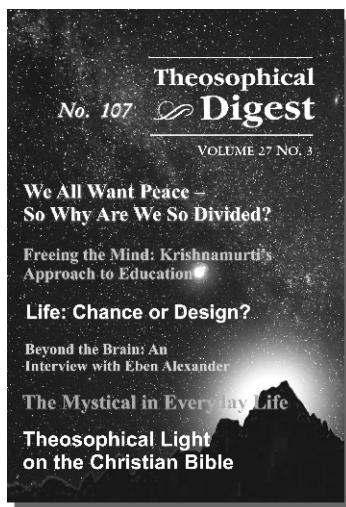
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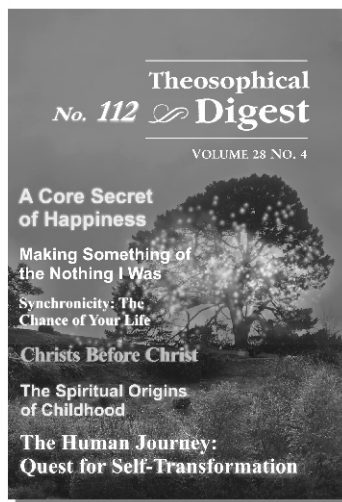
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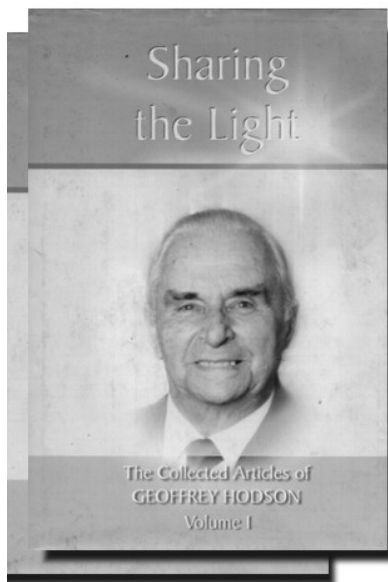
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