

the Light-bringer

# Lucifer<sup>®</sup>

*For seekers of Truth*

*Current topics viewed in the light of the Ancient Wisdom or Theo-sophia — the common source of all great world religions, philosophies and sciences*

Unity calls: how do we answer?

Compassion in different traditions

Gandhi on Theosophy and social reform

The inner causes behind "gravity"

The Masters of Wisdom and Compassion



Cover photo:

*These fishes move rapidly as one group, yet keep a certain distance from each other. Like everywhere in the Universe, their movements are governed by attraction and repulsion. The result is a dynamic equilibrium.*

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Recently, researchers seemed to have measured gravitational waves. This was great news in the scientific world, and in fact in the whole world. In this article we will study the theosophical explanation of the causes of the phenomenon “gravity”.

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# Editorial

This first issue of *Lucifer the Light-bringer* of the year 2017 has been realized for an important part due to the cooperation of different theosophical groups. One of the reasons we started in 2013 with the English *Lucifer* is to create a forum for exchanging ideas with Theosophists all over the world.

If you look at the state of the world, it is clear that cooperation between all Theosophists is urgently needed. We have to work hard, unselfishly and cooperatively in order to give Theosophy its rightful place in the world.

We have the idea that *Lucifer* can play a significant role in this work. Not only because our readership is expanding, but also because our readers may use the articles in this magazine as a source of inspiration for *their* promulgation work.

At the International Theosophical Conference (I.T.C.) in Naarden, in 2014, the term cross-pollination was coined in theosophical fields. Theosophists can learn from each other. They can help each other.

Well, this issue of *Lucifer* is for an important part the result of cross-pollination. That pleased us greatly. After all, by working together the theosophical light will shine brighter in the world

Two contributions in this *Lucifer* are lectures held at an Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society Adyar. The first is a lecture from 2016 by the vice-president of the TS Adyar. The thoughts in this lecture are so important that we gladly offer it to our readers.

In 2017, for the second time a representative of the Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse gave a talk in Adyar. In this lecture the keys are given how to make unity a living power in your life, and in your theosophical work.

In this *Lucifer* you will also find a lecture on Gandhi by an associate of the United Lodge of Theosophists, which was held during the ITC 2016 in Santa Barbara. Theosophy was probably Gandhi's fundamental source of inspiration.

Finally, we have included a very interesting article about the causal factors behind gravity, a subject that evokes a lot scientific interest, but it certainly will not only be appreciated by scientists.

As always, your comments are very welcome.



# Beyond illusion – a call for unity

## Unity calls – How do we answer?

The 141st International Convention of the Theosophical Society Adyar took place from 31 December 2016 till 5 January 2017.<sup>(1)</sup> Last year Herman C. Vermeulen, leader of the T.S. Point Loma Blavatskyhouse, was invited to give a talk. This year another representative of the T.S. Point Loma was asked to give a lecture.

We consider this a memorable fact, because it shows that the barriers between the different theosophical organizations are increasingly removed. Therefore, we gladly publish the lecture Barend Voorham gave on 2nd January in Adyar, India.

### Key thoughts

- » Something is true as long as the perceiving consciousness lends it truth.
- » The only Absolute REALITY is the Wholeness of Everything — the Eternal, Omnipresent and Boundless Principle.
- » Every being will have to live according to the same patterns.
- » The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity.
- » We are all the Boundless, so we are all One.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

This is the second time that a representative of the Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse has been invited by you to share some thoughts. In this respect, we have made at least one step beyond illusion, because of course all Theosophists are one, they are all the result of the powerful impulse from the Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion; an impulse that should awaken the spiritual aspirations of humanity.

In this great work, we cannot be separated from each other. Every form of separateness is an illusion. We are therefore very happy and grateful to be here today. We hope that this contribution will help a bit to clarify the nature of illusion and reality, so that we will be more of unity.

### Illusion: cause of suffering

Well, all the answers to our questions, the solutions to the mysteries of nature and therefore also the issue of reality and illusion, are present in our consciousness.

One of the great paradoxes of human consciousness however, is that we don't want to quit living in illusion, although in the depth of our hearts we know that illusion can never bring lasting happiness. We are like a woman who knows her husband is cheating on her, but she refuses to recognize it.

We take — consciously or unconsciously — illusions for reality and have illusory goals in life. That is the main reason for the suffering in the world.

We live in the belief that luxury, power and prestige bring happiness.



But all material things, from our aging physical body to the buildings we admire, are perishable. We consider these things as goals and not as means.

Even worse are the collective illusions; considering your religion, culture or country as superior to those of others. Well, the reason any theosophical organization exists, is to eliminate suffering by pointing to the enduring Reality in life. If we want to do this with cogency, we must really know what is reality and illusion, so that we can live according to the truth, and inspire and teach our fellow humans to do the same. Therefore we first have to examine what illusion actually is.

### Objective idealism

There are philosophical schools, which assert that illusion means that the phenomenal world does not exist. But if it doesn't exist, why is it possible to perceive it? We therefore don't agree with that vision. Illusion, in our view, means that something does exist, but due to something else that is working behind or through it. Just like a shadow exists, but it doesn't exist by itself, but because there is a light source and an object that casts it.

The manifested world is, as Plato puts it, a world of shadows. It is a projection of a working force; not a blind force, but an intelligent force that we may call consciousness.

Consciousness is a generic term. There are many forms of consciousness. We state – and you may call this the theosophical hypothesis – that behind all appearances, all phenomena, from a galaxy to an atom, from a divinity to a mineral, hides consciousness, or is consciousness at work. There are therefore many forms or degrees of consciousness. Consciousness itself is in its core boundless and has many layers.

What we perceive of that force behind the phenomena, corresponds to what we have developed in ourselves. So if you realize, albeit vaguely, that there must be something more than this outer world, you begin to understand something of the illusory side of nature. And the more you are spiritually developed, the more you become aware of the Reality. But when you deny the force behind things, you take illusions as a reality.

The Sanskrit word *Māyā* expresses this idea of illusion well. *Māyā* comes from the root *Ma*, that means measuring. Anything that can be measured, so everything that has a form, has dimensions, is an illusion, because it exists thanks to something else: consciousness.

But a lot of people don't accept or perceive the conscious-

ness behind the phenomena and judge the outer world wrongly. They don't see the true nature of it. A philosophical concept, which explains this excellently, is objective idealism. This states that something is true as long as the perceiving consciousness lends it truth, so believes it to be true.

This vision is clearly illustrated by a story from the Vedas. At twilight, a man returns home. He is startled by a snake. But when he takes a closer look, he sees that it is not a snake but a coiled up rope. His fear, however, was as real to him as if it would have been a real snake.

In the same way, we are inclined to grant reality to the phenomenal world. But due to the fact that the phenomenal world exists because of the operating force which is working within it, that outer world is an illusion. So we attribute reality to illusions. For example, look at the value that people assign to money. It is only paper. Or sometimes it's not even that. It is just a few numbers in a computer. And yet sometimes the happiness of an entire nation depends on it and so many humans are willing to do a lot, if not everything, for it.

### Feeling of separateness

Because we don't perceive the consciousness behind phenomena, we interpret them as isolated things. We don't see the common source and relationship between, for instance, different humans and humans and animals. We live in a sense of separateness.

The world today is, for the most part, characterized by separateness in thinking, which results in animosity between specific cultures or religions, great differences in welfare among humans etc. The circumstances, however, are never caused by outer factors, but always by our consciousness. Even if we don't like them, those circumstances do exist because we grant reality to them. So if you live in a tyranny, it is because of the fact that people assign authority to a dictator.

### Overcoming illusions

But there is no doom. The model of objective idealism implies that we can overcome illusion. By judging the external world on the driving force behind it, it is possible to recognize the illusory character of the phenomenal world. So a better world does not depend on the political situation, but on the state of mind of people. When we don't lend the reality of leadership to kings or presidents who we don't like, they immediately lose their power. When we deny the legitimacy of political or economic systems,

they will fade away.

A good example of this fact is the fall of Ceausescu, dictator of Romania. In 1989 he organized a meeting and held a speech in front of a large crowd. Suddenly one man started booing, and after a while the whole crowd was booing. A few days later, Ceausescu was no longer president. The people saw that the snake was a coiled rope. Another example is the famous salt march organized by Mahatma Gandhi. The British law forbade Indians to produce or sell salt. But thanks to the non-violent action of Gandhi, the majority of Indians didn't grant any validity to this law and therefore it ceased *de facto* to exist.

Generally, the process to grasp the real nature of phenomena takes years or even centuries.

### How do we recognize illusion – or how to reach truth?

What is the best method to perceive the external world in order to reach truth? First of all, you have to ask yourself questions. Philosophy begins with wonderment. Do not settle for platitudes and sham answers. Nourish yourself with questions. This state of consciousness of wonder is really very important. You feel there must be a hidden truth behind a phenomenon. If you have the discipline to search for this hidden truth, you will reach ever more truth. You can examine the phenomena intellectually. Then they are a reality for you. You count them, measure them, but you do not realize that they are a manifestation of something else.

But when you use your *buddhic* faculty and try to approach them *philosophically*, then you know that the outer world is a projection of consciousness working behind it. You start to understand the interrelationship between all phenomena.

If you examine them *religiously*, you see the divine nature of everything, knowing that all phenomena come from the divine Source. When you have developed this highest vision, you know that although the phenomena are an illusion, because they come and go and exist because of a force working in them, they are nevertheless divine as well, because they come forth from the same divine Source and are integral parts of the Cosmic Unity. That is the great paradox of trying to understand the underlying truth of everything. Phenomena are illusions and yet they are in their core divine.

We live in illusory world, when we neglect the divine force behind all beings; and we live in a divine world, when we perceive the *real* state of beings. It all depends on our

view on life, on our state of mind.

We don't need to withdraw from the world to achieve this state of consciousness. For although real Theosophists are a part of this outer world, they don't belong to it. The outer world is a learning place, the best school to live up to the unity of life. Lord Buddha left his palace, went into the world to find the truth and even after he had found it under the Bodhi-tree, he went back to the human world to teach humanity, although he never belonged to the outer world. It is this Middle Way – living in the world but not belonging to it, avoiding extremities – that we have to walk, if we want to live according to Reality.

### Unity

You may ask yourself: is a human being ever able to perceive unity? This is a very difficult question and the answer depends on the definition of unity. Nobody is able to grasp the idea of Kosmic Unity *completely*. It is incomprehensible to humans; it implies wholeness, homogeneity, uniformity, indivisibility. The only Absolute REALITY is the Wholeness of Everything — the Eternal, Omnipresent and Boundless Principle, of which H.P.B. speaks in *The Secret Doctrine*. We cannot comprehend such wholeness. We, limited beings, cannot fully understand the Boundless and therefore cannot fully understand the Absolute UNITY. But we can understand *something*. Everyone can develop a *certain* notion of unity, although some have a greater notion than others. Our sense of unity stems from the Ātmic aspect of our mind. Ātman is the core of every being, so every being can sense unity. But there may always be a greater sense of unity. Our perception of unity is never complete. Therefore we should realize there should be no dogmatism whatsoever.

### To live unity

The entire issue of unity is a matter of conception and awareness. Unity exists. It is the cornerstone of the Universe, of every being. We don't need to strive for it. When you strive for it, you think that it doesn't exist and that you have to create it. Then you say: “when there is a new government or a new president, or when my neighbor would behave better, or when that other country would stop to treat people badly’ ... then there will be unity in the world.” But you should not put unity outside of you, it is within you. Don't long or strive for unity, *live* it.

All beings come from the same root and are in their heart of their hearts One. We have to realize that. If one thing is clear in the theosophical teachings, then it is this.

Considering the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* – the boundless – you can only conclude that all life is essentially ONE. We are all the Boundless, so we are One. Unity always calls us. It appeals to us. Our inner nature never stops to give impulses in order that we realize that we are – to use biblical terms – bone of each other's bones and flesh of each other's flesh. So brotherhood is a fact in nature.

### How to answer the call of unity?

Do we answer the call of unity? And how do we do it? If we answer it, we work along with nature and perceive the interconnectedness of all beings. Working against nature is to cherish isolation.

The tendency of evolution on an upward arc is towards unity; on a downward arc, towards diversity and separateness; and both tendencies are active in the human being. A human is a composite being, built up of different elements. We all know that. Very simply stated: there is a higher and lower nature of man. And those higher, more spiritual aspects in us make use of the more material aspects in us, the personal ego or personality and the body. The word 'personal', derived from the Greek 'persona', means mask. It is the vehicle of which the real man makes use of in order to manifest himself in these earthly spheres.

So there are two tendencies in man: we may live in our higher self, above illusion, knowing that the outer man – the personal ego – is just a fleeting illusion. But like the man who granted the coiled rope the value of a snake, we may grant our personal ego and the world in which it lives, the value of reality. And then it is reality, *for us*. Then we just see diversity and interpret that diversity as reality. If we live in our higher nature (Ātman-Buddhi), we are 'whole' ourselves.

That means that we don't make any essential difference in our mind between ourselves and others. But also: that we don't make difference between nationalities, cultures, religions, castes. These are all 'coiled ropes disguised as a snake' as long as you don't see them as parts of a bigger whole.

### Theosophical teachings sustain the idea of unity

Here again the theosophical teachings are priceless, because they lift the idea of unity above mere sentiment or blind faith; they substantiate them with logic and consistency. First of all, according to the second proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, we know that evolution goes in cycles.

Every being will manifest itself again and again in this outer, illusory field. Again and again we get the opportunity to develop our consciousness. So this cyclic process is not without purpose, as we learn in the third fundamental proposition, which speaks of the obligatory pilgrimage of every being. So the cyclic movement has as a goal that we may grow.

Cycles are not circles. We go in circles, but just like a winding staircase we go in circles upwards. The entire evolution has as purpose that we will become more and more aware of the overall unity.

The third proposition is another very important teaching: *the fundamental identity of all souls with the Universal Over-Soul*. There can be no doubt about the Oneness of all beings, because all souls are a spark of the Universal Over-Soul. Now please don't think that the Universal Over-Soul is an absolute god. It is the top of our hierarchy, but there are many interwoven hierarchies in endless Space. There are therefore innumerable Over-Souls.

We, humans, are an Over-Soul as well. We are the Over-Soul for the billions of atoms and cells which compose our body and for the millions of thoughts we think and which belong to us. All those beings – for atoms and thoughts are also living beings – live in us. We are their Cosmos, in which they are born, live, move, grow, die and are reborn.

If you want to have more understanding about the universal patterns in nature, then you should try to make a picture in your mind of an Over-Soul, who emanates living beings, who, in their turn, emanate less developed beings, and so on. Just like a Sun which sends out sunbeams, the Over-Soul pours out the entire cosmos of which we are an integrated part of. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*:

I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate.<sup>(2)</sup>

The top remains the top, but it pours the universe out of itself. Nevertheless, the lower – the less developed – is not separate from the summit; the lower resonates at the keynote of that summit. Compare it with a tone – an A for example – which is the same in different octaves, and yet in every octave it is different. If you strike the A-string on a guitar or sitar, then other A-strings, even when they are in a higher or lower octave, will vibrate too. Thus every being in a hierarchy is tuned in the same keynote, the one that the top of the hierarchy strikes. Every being in the universe has the same background.



## As above, so below

Another important conclusion we may draw from this doctrine is that the same patterns, the same habits are everywhere. As above, so below. There is consistency in nature. Those habits we call universal laws. But don't think that a law of nature is a kind of mechanistic process, for it is not. Laws of nature are the habits of living beings, just like our habits are laws for the millions of beings who compose our body.

There are seven main Laws, the *sapta ratnāṇi*, the Seven Jewels of Wisdom: reincarnation, karma, the hierarchical structure, Swabhāva or self-becoming, progressive evolution, the two Paths and Ātma-Vidyā, the knowledge of the Self. These seven laws are the elaboration of the three Fundamental Propositions and form the core of all theosophical teachings.

The inspiring Idea is that every being, high or low, from the simplest firefly to a supreme divinity, will have to live according to the same patterns. Every being will live and die and will be reborn again, sowing causes and harvesting consequences according to karma and therefore takes its place in the hierarchy of which it is a part; always becoming itself, becoming what it has made of itself.

This process will never end. Every being will grow, evolve. And then, perceiving increasingly more of unity, it may choose for compassion, knowing that all those beings, following the same path to the top of the Hierarchy, to the Over-Soul who emanated them, are in fact parts of himself, drops in the same Ocean of Life.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that we can draw from this teachings is, that we should never hamper each other. We all have the same goal – to return to where we've come from – and we can never achieve that goal without others. We need each other. There cannot be separateness when everything is interwoven and forms a big Web of Destiny. All beings belong to each other, and they are stuck to each other by Universal Love. "For love," Gottfried de Purucker said in his priceless little book *Golden Precepts of the Esoteric Philosophy*, "is the cement of the Universe." The purpose of every being is to reach that Source, where we all came from, the Over-Soul, who is our common Fountain Source. Knowing that Source is knowing your Self, Ātman, your inner Divinity.

You see, unity exists and it is, so to speak, waiting for us. It is calling us, day and night, 24 hours a day. Do we perceive the nature of Life? Do we want to live in our higher nature and make compassion and universal love the driving forces in our lives, so that we can cooperate

with nature? Do we develop that awareness that we are in our core One?

## How do I develop the sense of unity?

You may ask, how do I develop that awareness? Our simple answer is: you have to imagine it. We should imagine a picture of unity. It is very easy to say what is wrong in the world, but we have to build up a positive image of a spiritual world, where men live like brothers in a dynamic, harmonic world.

Create an ideal of the most harmonious world you can imagine. And live to it. The circumstances in which you live may be bad and sad, still you can live up to your Ideal. *Be* the change you want to see. We all live in the material world, but we need not to be a part of it.

## We are One and we are different

Now you will discover that in an ideal world people are not all the same. Awareness of Universal Brotherhood does not mean that we all must have the same opinions. The fourth Jewel of Wisdom, Swabhāva or Self-becoming, teaches us that, although we are all One, in our manifestation we are all different.

How could it be otherwise? We have an eternity behind us. Each of us has made himself the unique being that he is. No two beings are exactly the same, otherwise they were not two beings but only one.

The manifested world therefore consists of different beings. Harmony arises from differences. Just like a chord consists of different tones, a harmonious society is composed of all kinds of people.

Harmony is not a static situation, where nothing changes. On the contrary. Therefore we are used to speaking of a dynamic harmony, where all beings interact with each other. By means of mutual influence all reach a higher level. So difference of opinion does not matter, at least as long as you do not begrudge your fellowman his own vision, or condemn it. In fact, a larger vision can arise from different views. If we learn to listen to each other and assume that another person may have a part of the truth as well, then we are not like those notorious blind men who all touched a different part of the elephant and cherished that part as the unique, absolute truth. Honest opinions may differ from one another. It is by sincerely exchanging these differences, that we can achieve a higher image of truth.

Living the truth is the best way to conquer illusion. Have confidence in your own higher, impersonal qualities. How

can you be a positive force in the world, if you do not have confidence in your own Higher Self?

If you lose confidence in your spiritual aspects, then you don't trust your fellowmen anymore. If you don't trust your fellowmen, you lose your ideals. You will live in the illusion of the outer world and you will see snakes everywhere, which are in fact nothing more than coiled ropes. And you will think that you should fight these coiled ropes. But don't do that, rise above them. Don't fight with illusions, with problems or difficulties. They are not worth the fight.

It seems odd, but there are many people who are attached to their illusions. Those illusions give them guidance in life. They fear to be disillusioned if they give up their certainties. But these are false certainties. Why should you be afraid of disillusion? Each disillusion is a truth found. And it is ultimately the truth that brings lasting happiness.

### Be a living example

As soon as you have found the truth within yourself, you are a living example for others. Sooner or later they will recognize that. The more you find that Oneness in yourself, the better you can show others the way to Reality. For we don't want to conquer illusion and find the Universal truth only to cherish that truth and keep it for ourselves. If we do that, we are like a foolish Pratyeka Buddha, perched on his high tower, noted by no-one but himself.

There is no doubt whatsoever about the goal of the T.S. Read the so-called letter of the Maha-Chohan. Read what Master Koothoomi wrote to Sinnett:

... the chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men.<sup>(3)</sup>

This matches with what H.P.B. writes in *The Voice of the Silence*: Reaching Nirvana is not the goal, but to encourage others to become a Buddha of Compassion. Real sense of unity awakens compassion. Compassion is the Law of Laws, Alaya's Self, the essence of the Cosmos.

### Duty as human and as Theosophist

Therefore: how to answer the call of compassion and unity? As human beings we have to do our utmost best to work for a better society, by trying to establish justice, harmony and peace in the world. The words of H.P.B. in her *Letter to the second American Convention* are still very valid.

Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the conditions of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor.<sup>(4)</sup>

In this way we have to, as humans, as citizens of our country, our town, our village, answer the call of unity. But my friends, that is not enough. For we are here together as *Theosophists* and Theosophists have a far greater duty. Or, in the words of H.P.B.:

... as theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. (...) The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, (...) Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.<sup>(5)</sup>

### Live and teach Theosophy

So the best answer to the call of unity is to live and spread Theosophy. Our only concern should be: what is the best way to teach and spread Theosophy among our fellow humans. That task the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion have placed upon our shoulders, when they took the initiative to found the T.S. and send H.P.B. into the world. But they gave us plenty of tutorials to get this job done. To begin with: the three basic ideas of *The Secret Doctrine*: boundlessness, cyclicity and evolution. These three ideas are tremendously logical and appeal to one's intuition. Only by prejudice, emotional resistance or laziness are they rejected.

These ideas can only be understood by the concept of unity. In fact, all theosophical teachings can only be understood by considering the concept of unity. This concept is always the core of any theosophical teaching. The Laws of nature, the seven Jewels of Wisdom, they all exist because unity is at the basis of manifestation. Take for instance the Law of Karma; if there were no interconnectedness of all beings there could not have been cause and consequence. It is like the Master wrote: Karma is Ātman.

All the theosophical teachings are arguments for unity.

Therefore, practicing Theosophy is proceeding from the idea of unity. Practice what you preach, for as you probably know: theosophist is who Theosophy does. So real Theosophists will always practice unity and compassion. When we have discovered the basis of unity inside and outside ourselves, then we can, while exchanging ideas with Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Moslems, Parsees, go to the core of anyone's religion and perceive the Golden Light of unity. In his talk at the Convention of last year in Adyar – a talk we gladly published in our Dutch magazine *Lucifer, the Light-bringer* – Chittaranjan Satapathy showed that compassion is the core of all spiritual traditions.<sup>(6)</sup> Thanks to Theosophy we can help our brothers to find the essence of their religion. But we can do more: we can show the atheist that unity and boundlessness in all its facets is the most logical and scientific of all doctrines. Teaching Theosophy is stimulating our brothers to walk the upward road. Teaching is inspiring them to develop their higher qualities. We have to do this in all the variations that exist, but especially by inspiring them to change their mind.

In this noblest work we may not be hindered by personal ambitions or pettiness. You can try to do it on your own, but working together is much more effective. So we have to cooperate like chelas of one Master, like the fingers of one hand.

### Theosophists should be united

The question may raise why we were not able to spread Theosophy more. 141 years after the foundation of the T.S. there are still millions of people who don't even know the word Theosophy. And only a very few people try to practice Theosophy. Compassion in our world is still as rare as flowers in the desert. Was the mission the Masters gave us too heavy?

I don't think that those wise and holy men would give us an infeasible task, a mission impossible. No, there is another reason and H.P.B., with sharp foresight, warned of it in her last letter to the American Convention, where she makes reference to the old parable of the bundle of sticks: divided, they will inevitably be broken, one by one; united, there is no force on Earth able to destroy the T.S.<sup>(7)</sup> All the disasters in the 20th century – the first and second world war, the war of the former colonies against their motherland, the environmental disasters – had all the mental separateness as origin. All contemporary issues, such as poverty, injustice, violence, war, refugees, nationalism, with the sad trend of so many countries to erect walls to

prevent others from coming into their country — all have the feeling of separateness as a cause.

If Theosophists would have been better able to work together and changed more effectively the thought atmosphere of Planet Earth, the accumulated karma of the past would have been worked out more harmoniously and we would live in a different world today. Although there have been many Theosophists who worked hard for Theosophy, we were not able to work together. And we must be united to fulfill our task, not necessarily by organization, but *mentally* and *spiritually*. Only united in mind and heart we may be a useful instrument for the Masters. If we are divided, we are of no use for them. So my friends, changing the world is not a dream, is not an illusion, it is a reality. Did not H.P.B. write at the end of *The Key to Theosophy* that if the T.S. survives and lives true to its mission, the twenty-first century would be a heaven in comparison with the 19th?

### Cooperation

The attempts in recent years to achieve a better cooperation between the various theosophical organizations – such as those by International Theosophical Conferences, I.T.C. – are very encouraging. Thanks to I.T.C. I myself got to know many Theosophists from other organizations and other countries – from Brazil, the United States, India and many countries in Europe – as loyal workers for the Cause. Without I.T.C. I would not have been here in Adyar today. So there is no need for pessimism. We are just getting started. The Theosophical Society was not founded for the short term, but for many centuries. We have to go on with the work. Keep on keeping on. Success or failure is in our hands.

The first thing we all have to do now, in my opinion, is to build up an Ideal of the most perfect Theosophical Cooperation you can imagine. See it before you spiritual eye. A powerful international, yes, universal Cooperation of good willing men and women working for the benefit of all beings. All officials should be the first to demonstrate it. Yes, we can unite and give Theosophy its rightful place in the world. How much more influence we could pursue in the world, if we studied and responded to the world events together. It is our responsibility to do so.

Not everybody needs to be a Theosophist, of course we respect the free will of every being. But at least every person on this earth should know that Theosophy exists and has access to it. Access doesn't mean that all our literature is on the web, but that every person on earth who craves



for more knowledge can talk with a Theosophist and to him or her will be explained and demonstrated the golden teachings of the Wisdom Doctrine.

If we are the living example of unity and practical brotherhood, we form a nucleus and will attract and collect others. Our unselfish intention, the will to work hard for humanity and to cooperate, will be the magnet that attracts ever more people to the theosophical influence. Once the nucleus is firm, the gathering can begin.

That nucleus will be an authority in the world for all those who yearn for light. It will have a strong influence on science, philosophy, religion, yes, on all parts of society. There will be a free exchange of ideas.

### AHAM ASMI PARABRAHMA

Dear friends, this lofty image will be realized one day, because it is nothing more than a human reflection of Cosmic Reality. And coming forth from that Reality, every being will someday understand that beautiful thought which is thus expressed in Sanskrit: AHAM ASMI PARABRAHMA.

In 1942, at the peak of the cruelties of World War II, Gottfried de Purucker, one of the former leaders of the T.S. Point Loma, in his last public lecture spoke of this sublime thought: We quote:

AHAM ASMI PARABRAHMA (...): I am the Boundless, I myself am Parabrahma, for the life that pulses in me and gives me existence is the life of the divinest of the divine. (...)

I believe that you will find this teaching of Divinity in every one of the great systems to which the genius of mankind has given birth. Religion is it; Philosophy was born from it; Science is now aspiring towards it, and is beginning to get adumbrations of what it means. Think even in our own small human affairs — small when compared with the vast cosmic majesty which holds us in its sheltering care — think, if every man and woman on earth were thoroughly convinced of the utter reality of this cosmic truth! Never again would the hand of man be raised against man. Always it would be the extended hands of succor and brotherhood. For I am my brother — in our inmost *we are one*.<sup>(8)</sup>

My friends, we play an important role in this world. We can open men's hearts to unity and compassion. It is hard work, but there is in the infinite Cosmos no work which is more beautiful than this.



More photos and videos: <http://www.ts-adyar.org/event/141st-international-convention-2016>

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Statue of Buddha, whose left hand symbolizes compassion (“varada mudra”). In stone, Bali.

# Compassion in different spiritual traditions

**On the 140th International Convention of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, Chittaranjan Satapathy gave this lecture. In our time, in which adherents of religions so often oppose each other, it is good to focus on the core of every religion.**

## Key thoughts

- » Compassion plays a central role in every great tradition and religion.
- » Compassion signifies the realization of being one with the other. It arises from a sense of equality and mutual solidarity.
- » Compassion is something else than pity.
- » By being compassionate, we express our noblest and loftiest powers.
- » In fact, wisdom and compassion go together. It is through wisdom that one understands the suffering of others and through compassion one helps to dispel that suffering.

Compassion is a virtue in every major tradition and is also central to each religion. Compassion implies a feeling of oneness with the other, not merely feeling pity for somebody. In Hindu and Buddhist traditions, compassion is equated with *karuna*. A different expression *daya* is used to imply mercy, kindness and sometimes pity. Some of these expressions are often used interchangeably due to lack of clarity and deeper understanding. Theosophical teachings greatly value the virtue of compassion for spiritual growth and enlightenment. In *The Voice of The Silence*, which is a great and final gift of H.P.B. to all of us, it is said that Compassion is no attribute that can be destroyed. Compassion is the Law of Laws – eternal Harmony – the law of Love eternal.<sup>(1)</sup> In *The Laws of the Higher Life*, Dr Besant says: “Every scripture declares that the Heart of the Divine Life is Infinite Compassion. Compassionate, then, must be the spiritual man.”<sup>(2)</sup> In view of the importance accorded

to compassion, we are examining the same in the context of different traditions and religions.

## Hinduism

In classical Hindu literature, compassion is recognized as a great virtue and is expressed in different terms, the most common ones being *karuna*, *daya* and *anukampa*.

*Karuna* particularly implies an effort to understand others from their perspective. Words like “*karuna sindhu*” (ocean of compassion) and “*karuna nidhana*” (abode of compassion) are the names given to the important Hindu deities Krishna and Rama. As you know, Buddha came to be recognized subsequently as one of the 10 avatars (incarnations) of the Hindu deity Vishnu. The *Dasavatara Stotra* (Hymn to 10 Avatars) eulogizes his compassion and the steps he took to stop animal sacrifice. These examples amply demonstrate that *karuna* as a virtue is given the highest importance in Hinduism. The vedic texts enjoin

extending compassion not only to human beings but to every living being.

Compassion is a state in which one sees all living beings as part of one's own self and every one's suffering is seen as one's own suffering. It is extended to all, including those who are strangers and even those who may be inimical.

*Daya* (mercy) is defined in the *Padma Purana* as the virtuous desire to mitigate sorrow and difficulties of others by putting forth whatever efforts are necessary.

*Anukampa*, a similar expression, refers to one's state after one has observed and understood the pain and suffering in others. Therefore, compassion is not pity ("kripa") as the former implies feeling of oneness with the sufferer whereas pity may be out of merely feeling sorry for him accompanied by condescension. One may feel pity for someone who might have done a wrong thing or committed a crime.

An ancient Hindu Tamil text, *Thirukkural*, which is very popular in South India says:

Find and follow the good path and be ruled by compassion.  
For if the various ways are examined, compassion will prove  
the means to liberation.<sup>(3)</sup>

Patanjali in his *Yoga-sutras* highlights the importance of compassion (karuna) along with the other 3 virtues namely maitri, mudita and upeksha.

## Sikhism

Sikhism equally considers compassion to be a great virtue. *Guru Granth Sahib* goes on to say:

You have no compassion; the Lord's Light does not shine in you. You are drowned, drowned in worldly entanglements.<sup>(4)</sup>

A Sikh is enjoined to feel the pain and suffering of other people involved in any tragedy and compassion is considered to be a divine quality. In the Sikh scripture, the God is called "Mahadail (super compassionate) Daia Pati", Lord of compassion, and "Daial Dev" (merciful God).

## Jainism

Jainism emphasizes observance of verbal and mental compassion in addition to compassion for all living beings. Lord Mahavira adopted supreme compassion in his life even towards poisonous snakes. The Jain tenet "ahimsa paramo dharma" stems from compassion for all which enjoins living beings to render service to one and another.

## Christianity

The Hebrew and Greek words translated as "compassion" in the Bible mean to feel sympathy, to have mercy and to have pity. The Bible describes God as compassionate and gracious abounding in love, and his compassion is described as unfailing, infinite and eternal. Compassion is said to arise within us when we are confronted with those who suffer and it produces action to alleviate their suffering. In Christian literature to be compassionate is also equated with to be tender hearted and to act kindly. God's compassion is given freely and tenderly like the mother's compassion for a child. God's compassion is characterized by acts of kindness and concern for human suffering. Duty towards God in Christian literature includes compassionate care for people including neighbours. Christ is considered to be the Father of Compassion characterized by notions of tenderness and affection, and the believers are required to be imitators of Christ to live a life of love and care for others.

## Islam

Islam is much misunderstood today because of the horrendous acts of terrorism by some. Many people, both non-muslims as well as muslims, wrongly think that the concept of *jihad* is central to Islam. However, this is not true. Firstly, *jihad* literally means striving to serve the purposes of God. It is understood that *jihad* encompasses religious duties to maintain the religion as well as inner spiritual struggle, the latter being more important.

Secondly, it is compassion which represents the true spirit of Islam as in the case of other spiritual traditions. In the Islamic tradition, Allah is referred to as the Merciful and Compassionate. In the Arabic language in which the Quran is written, the words used are *Rahman* and *Rahim*. One hundred and thirteen chapters of the Quran out of one hundred and fourteen begin with the verse "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful". The Muslims are urged in their scriptures to show compassion towards everyone including the poor, the widows, the orphans and even the captives. They pay *zakat* (mandatory giving as against *sadaqa*, voluntary giving) which goes to help the poor and the needy. When they fast during the month of Ramadan, it helps them to empathize with the hunger pangs of the less fortunate and it enhances their sensitivity to the suffering of others. Prophet Mohammad is referred to as the "Mercy of the World". He is quoted as saying: "God is more loving and kind than a mother to her dear child".<sup>(5)</sup>

As in the case of other traditions, in the Islamic tradition also, compassion which implies suffering with others, is considered to be a virtue. It is said in the Quran that God has created man in His image, and amongst all His divine qualities, compassion and mercy are considered the highest. Therefore for a Muslim compassion and mercy become highest ideals to be realized. There is no doubt that compassion occupies a central place in Islam along with the virtues of loving, caring and showing mercy towards everyone in God's creation. The Quran particularly emphasizes compassion to parents, children, spouse, relatives, orphans, sick and suffering, neighbours and wayfarers. The Sufis lay great importance on compassion and their very fundamental doctrine is called "Sulh-i-kul" i.e. peace with all, which in other words means no violence and no aggressiveness.

## Judaism

In the Jewish tradition, God is invoked as the Father of compassion and hence is referred to as Compassionate or *Rahmana*. The Rabbis speak of the 13 attributes of compassion. The conception of compassion is likened to a feeling of the parent for the child. The word Rihim comes from the Hebrew word "Rehem", the mother. In Judaism compassion includes sorrow and pity for one in distress, creating a desire to relieve; and lack of compassion is characterized as cruelty. Judaism uses words like compassion, empathy, altruism and love interchangeably. However, in depth examination makes it clear that compassion is more than simply a human emotion. Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition puts it this way: "Kindness gives to another. Compassion knows no other." It is also said that compassion is the basis of love.

## Buddhism

Compassion or *karuna* is at the very heart of Buddha's teachings. When he was asked by Ananda as to whether cultivation of loving kindness and compassion is a part of our practice, Buddha replied in the negative. He said cultivation of loving kindness and compassion is not part of our practice but is all of our practice. It is said that the ultimate wish of the Buddha was to relieve the suffering of all living beings everywhere. The Dalai Lama says, "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion".<sup>(6)</sup>

In Buddhism, loving kindness (*metta* or *maitri*) and compassion are complimentary virtues — the first one has the characteristic of wishing for the happiness and welfare

of others, whereas compassion has the characteristic of wishing others be free from suffering, which is extended to all living beings.

## Conclusion

In most traditions, compassion is differentiated from pity. While pity may be condescending, compassion arises from a sense of equality and interconnectedness of life. Compassion presupposes respect for dignity of life — ours as well as others. As such, compassion has little to do with sentimentality or mere pity. Pity, which springs from emotion and sentimentality, alone cannot relieve suffering and bring joy. On the other hand, compassion belongs to a higher spiritual level which arises from *prajña* or wisdom. In fact wisdom and compassion go together and you cannot have one without the other. It is through wisdom, understanding, *prajña*, that one understands the suffering of others and through compassion one helps to remove that suffering. The enlightened ones remain with us as teachers and liberators because of their immense compassion, *karuna*. The Great Ones can truly be described as Compassion embodied.

We are told that the quickest way to spiritual growth is the path of compassion. And the reason why this is so is not difficult to guess. Through compassion we put to use our noblest and loftiest and most divine faculties, we assume responsibility towards one and all, universal responsibility if you wish, and that leads to the end of separateness. A state of non-separateness, identification with all, is a sure indication of wisdom. Compassion, universal responsibility, non-separateness and wisdom are multiple facets of spiritual life. That is why, Theosophy, as also spiritual traditions without exception, enjoin us to be compassionate.

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# Gandhi on Theosophy, modern civilization and social reform

Who tries to practice Universal Brotherhood, will discover that Gandhi's ideas about this subject are extremely valuable. About these ideas James Tepfer held a clear lecture at the International Theosophical Conference 2016 in Santa Barbara. He is an associate of the *United Lodge of Theosophists*. The editors of *Lucifer* gladly offer this lecture to our readers.

## Key thoughts

» The root cause for selfishness and for a lot of suffering in the world, is, according to Gandhi, the fact that many live under the spell of the material life.

» Gandhi was convinced that self-reform and social reform are intertwined, and that the key lies in the radical "change of heart": living in recognition of the omnipresent divinity.

Let me begin this morning, by honoring the noble and ancient practice of saluting those who have made this talk possible. I have drawn inspiration for my talk principally from Gandhi's own candid autobiography, his fiery tract, *Hind Swaraj*, and from his voluminous personal correspondence spanning decades. I have also benefitted from Louis Fischer's sparkling and insightful biography, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*.<sup>(1)</sup> Lastly, I have immensely benefitted from the brilliant, wise and seminal elucidation of Gandhian thought by Shri Raghavan Iyer in his book, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*.<sup>(2)</sup>

## Introduction

It is truly a privilege to share some reflections on M.K. Gandhi, the most eminent social revolutionary of the Twentieth Century and perhaps one of the paradigms of the Aquarian man and woman of the

coming centuries. Gandhi, as we know, was an unusual individual. Like the American revolutionary Tom Paine, Gandhi was equally a lover of God and a lover of man. He was, as a consequence, both a deep thinker and a courageous man of action. As an earnest thinker, Gandhi's thought was invariably rational, lucid, insightful and utterly without guile. As a *karma yogin*, his actions were purposeful, fearless, discerning, and fundamentally heart-based. As a person, Gandhi was a Theophilanthropist, a lover of God and man and, most especially, a lover of God-in-man. He was honest to a fault, full of love for friends and strangers alike and was blessed with abundant good humor and a sparkling wit. The fount of his many resplendent virtues was perhaps the fact that his consciousness could readily renew itself by entering into the oceanic and regenerative waters of humanity as a





Gandhi interacting with students at the Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences in Allahabad, in 1929. The institute was founded to improve the economic status of the rural population.

whole. No doubt, Albert Einstein spoke for peoples across the globe when he said: “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this, ever, in flesh and blood, walked upon this earth.”<sup>(3)</sup>

Gandhi’s beneficent influence has been global, spanning geography and generations alike. He was the forerunner and inspiration to a Nelson Mandela in South Africa, a Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King in America, a Václav Havel of Czechoslovakia and, of course, the intrepid Malala of Pakistan. Each of these exemplary individuals has, in turn, become an inspirational prototype in our own times and will undoubtedly continue to affect generations to come.

### Absolute and relative truth

As a thinker and a committed social reformer, Gandhi held that truth, non-violence and self-suffering are equally vital to universal human uplift. Truth, to Gandhi, is at the core of our being and of all existence. Truth is *satya* or that which is real, abiding and self-existent. Truth is all-comprehensive and, most importantly to Gandhi, an absolute value. It sustains us as well as illuminates us. Truth, then, involves the whole person and encompasses thought, word and deed. Truth, to be truth, is also relevant to every sphere of human life – public as well as personal. Finally, and most significantly for man, Truth or God is embodied in the world as the Law of Interdependence. The latter is the scientific basis of morality and of all religious and secular ethics.

As pointed out in *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* by Shri Raghavan Iyer, Gandhi made

a critical distinction between Absolute and relative truth. Absolute truth is ever beyond us while relative truth functions as our immediate guide through the labyrinth of daily life. Absolute Truth is like the limitless light of the sun. Relative truth is like an effulgent ray. The ray participates in the sun’s radiance and in its boundless potential for growth. Because of this, Gandhi believed that relative truth has its own innate dignity and is to be respected in every man and woman of whatever persuasion, class or condition.

The philosophical distinction between Absolute and relative truth is, as Gandhi admitted, psychologically challenging to observe in social and political life. Nonetheless, it is crucial to all human growth – spiritual, intellectual and moral. It is in fact essential to the path of spiritual realization as well as to the harmonics of a thriving, democratic society. The spiritual seeker, for example, must always maintain a healthy agnosticism about any particular degree of God-realization he or she may have attained. Spiritual epiphanies and flashes of noetic insight can be intoxicating as well as illuminating, leading to a false sense of finality. There is always more beyond.

Gandhi believed that the inability of even genuinely open-minded thinkers, religionists and committed revolutionaries to clearly separate Absolute and relative truth in their own consciousness creates historical tragedies. So many activists, he observed, fall prey to the tenacious tendency to “absolutize the relative”, to take an idea, an insight or a revered truth and to treat it as final, as ultimate, as the only possible interpretation, as the only viable practical application. This inveterate ignorance spawns the world’s political “isms”. It likewise reduces the noble, unifying spirit of religion into one of competing sects that not only divide devotees of a particular religion from each other – and, from their illustrious founder – but, more significantly, separates them from the inclusive divine, itself. Paradoxically, when we acknowledge the truths imbedded in the perspectives, beliefs and practices of others, we relativize our own absolutizing tendencies and move closer to the Absolute Truth, to the synthesizing and transcendent One.

### Non-violence and suffering

To Gandhi, non-violence is the self-transforming path to realizing Truth. It is the surest means of realizing the soul-satisfying goal of “living in the Divine”. For this reason, true worship is not simply the inner feeling of love for God or the ritualistic offering of prayer. True worship

is action worthy of the divine presence. Non-violent action becomes the mental and moral fulcrum to progressively awakening the divine within the human.

Non-violence is action without the will to do harm. It is rooted in the mind and heart of the actor. It is the conscious negation of self-assertion, of pushiness, of arrogance and of the desire to impose oneself on others. Non-violence is, as Gandhi perceptively pointed out, the conscious ability to reduce one's ego to a zero. From a theosophical perspective, we might say that non-violence is the conscious negation of the asuric\* will, of atavistic Atlantean\*\* pride and of the willful misuse of higher creative powers. If this is so, then non-violent, egoless action is that moral conduct that honors perceived truths by negating the personalizing will and releasing the latent, Gangetic waters of pure love.

Intrinsic to Gandhi's theory and practice of non-violence is that of "creative suffering". Voluntary suffering is a necessary ingredient of all non-violent truth-acts and especially so when it comes to dealing with seemingly intractable social and institutional injustices. Self-suffering is really the alchemical hyphen that connects truth and non-violence. It ignites the moral chemistry that releases the light within truth and the energy within unconditional love. This is intrinsic to the life of the undaunted and benevolent social reformer.

Truth, non-violence and creative suffering are vitally important to the earnest student of the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky. However ardent our study of the Theosophical philosophy and however sincere our attempts to weave their universal principles into the warp and woof of our daily lives, our understanding and practice are necessarily relative. There is always room for expanding and enriching our intellectual understanding, always room for purifying our aspirations and motives, always room for gaining skill in action and always room for progressing up the ladder of self-discovery.

## Theosophy

*Theosophy is the brotherhood of man.* – (Gandhi)<sup>(4)</sup>

There was a golden current of Theosophical influence that continually sustained the spiritual arc of Gandhi's

life. That current entered his life, explicitly, in November of 1889 at the age of twenty in London, England and continued as a vibrant, tempering influence until January 30th, 1948 — the day of his assassination. The "seminal moment" that occurred in November of 1889 was when Gandhi met two Theosophists who introduced him to the *Bhagavad Gītā* and, more significantly, took him to a meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge. There he met H.P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant. As a result of his fortuitous encounter with H.P.B. and other Theosophists, Gandhi studied *The Key to Theosophy*, as well as intensified his study of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. He later read *The Light of Asia*, the *Old Testament* and the *Sermon on the Mount*. *The Key to Theosophy* made Gandhi keenly aware of the philosophical richness and spiritual potency of Hinduism. The *Bhagavad Gītā*'s sublime teaching eventually became his life guide and his book of daily counsel. And, *The Light of Asia* awoke in Gandhi the recognition that the Buddha made a profound contribution to Hinduism and to spiritual life in general.

Shortly before his return to India in 1891, Pyarelal Nayyar, his personal secretary in his later years, tells us in his biography on Gandhi that: "He (Gandhi) read Mme. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, and on March 26, 1891, was enrolled as an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge."<sup>(5)</sup>

Apparently, the cumulative effect of Gandhi's fortuitous encounter with H.P.B. and his subsequent study of Theosophical teachings is that it helped him to spiritually self-ignite; it kindled and fed what became an all-consuming fire of spiritual aspiration, an ardent search to experience God-consciousness.

Later on, in South Africa, Gandhi continued his study of the *Gītā* and took up the study of selected Theosophical writings with like-minded friends. In addition, he contributed substantially to the activities of the Theosophical Society of Southern Africa — Johannesburg Lodge. While he apparently never became an official member of that Society, he did give several engaging talks there on the major religions of India.

Gandhi's association with Theosophists continued in India from 1915 until his death in 1948. He interacted frequently with Theosophists in the pursuit of Indian Independence and often collaborated with Shri B.P. Wadia,

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\* The old Hinduist term "asuric" can refer to several things. One is: "what is directed to the non-divine, the manifestation, the personality". See reference 24. [Eds.]

\*\* The Atlantic phase is an already completed stage in the evolution of mankind. The strong material tendencies that characterized the Atlantic development phase, are still active in our time. [Eds.]

an eminent Theosophist and Labor Union spokesman. Gandhi freely acknowledged the historical fact that one of the co-founders of the Indian National Congress, A.O. Hume, was a Theosophist. He later repeated his recognition of Theosophy's seminal contribution to the Indian Independence Movement when he said: "In the beginning, the top Indian National Congress leaders were Theosophists."<sup>(6)</sup>

## Universal Brotherhood

In a wider sense, we might say that Gandhi implicitly embraced the three objects of the Theosophical Movement (but with specific reservations about the third object). As we know, the *first object* of the Movement is to form the nucleus of a universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color. Gandhi's whole adult life could be seen as an attempt to embody the living spirit of this aim. It was the root inspiration of his fertile spiritual life and his numerous "experiments with truth". Brotherhood was also the universal constant in his solution to the complex algebra of the religious communal issues that plagued India — and which the British so cleverly exploited. As Indian independence neared and violent disagreements intensified between Muslim and Hindu Congressmen, Gandhi saw his hopes for a politically unified India wane. In an interview with Louis Fischer in June of 1946, Gandhi lamented the patent smugness of many Hindus toward Muslim members of the Indian National Congress. He equally lamented the devolution of the Muslim belief in the brotherhood of man into the brotherhood of Muslims only. In light of this sad, dual realization, Gandhi made the following unequivocal declaration to Louis Fischer: "Theosophy is the teaching of Madame Blavatsky (...) Theosophy is the brotherhood of man."<sup>(7)</sup>

Gandhi was, in effect, making it clear that H.P. Blavatsky was the only true voice of Theosophy and that its essential message of brotherhood was what both Hindu and Muslim proponents were sorely lacking. In the end, the lack of brotherly feeling in the Indian National Congress led to the devastating division of a unified Aryavartna into the separate nation states of Pakistan and India. What a tragedy — especially to poor, hapless Pakistan!

## Investigation of religions, philosophies and science

The *second object* of the Theosophical Movement is to encourage the comparative study of religions, philosophies

and sciences. Gandhi was a Hindu — by choice as well as by birth. He was also an ardent student of the world's major religions. Since he came to recognize that each religious tradition embodies a distinctive but profound set of spiritual truths, he declared that "Truth alone is God." This statement parallels the Theosophical motto taken from the Maharaja of Benares: "There is no religion higher than Truth."

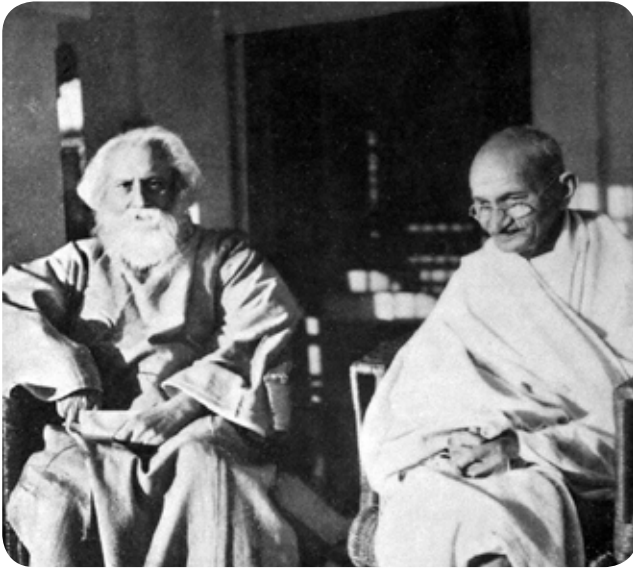
It is not surprising then that since Truth alone is God, Gandhi believed fundamentally in;

... the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which continually purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself ...<sup>(8)</sup>

This notion of a "para-religion" of sorts was compatible with, and supportive of, a diversity of religious teachings. Like the full moon simultaneously mirrored in many different lakes, each authentic religious teaching reflects some portion of Absolute Truth. This calls for not only tolerance of multiple religious traditions but a willingness to search for underlying truths beneath constricting dogmas and rituals. It is not surprising then, that Gandhi admired the universal and universalizing spirit of Theosophy. This appreciation was aptly and simply expressed in his Foreword to Sophia Wadia's book, *The Brotherhood of Religions*: "And understanding of and respect for the great faiths of the world is the foundation of true Theosophy."<sup>(9)</sup> In this respect, Gandhi also noted that true religion, the *Sanatana Dharma*, not only transcends all formal religions, but also unifies them without destroying their fundamental, discrete integrity. This dialectical outlook is compatible with true *Theosophia*, is it not?

## Study of the hidden laws of nature

The *third object* of the Theosophical Movement is to investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man. In scanning the writings of Gandhi, it is evident that he believed in the "invisible" since he accepted the Vedanta belief that God is essentially formless (*Nirguna Brahman*) and yet present in every form (*Saguna Brahman*). Gandhi also deeply believed in karma and reincarnation. Furthermore, he recognized that the moral law was impersonal, subtle and many-layered. In the human kingdom, this means that karma works principally



Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Gandhi.

through the agency of the mind. This understanding of the karma-generating power of thought sometimes created peculiar problems for Gandhi. Take, for example, his reaction to the Bihar earthquake of 1934. After the earthquake, Gandhi publically commented that, in his view, the earthquake was caused by the sin of untouchability practiced by most caste Hindus. Rationalists everywhere were thunder-struck and dismayed by this statement and so was Gandhi's close friend, Rabindranath Tagore. The latter publically chastised Gandhi and stated: "... physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combinations of physical facts."<sup>(10)</sup>

Gandhi's retort to Tagore and his critics alike was: "To me, the earthquake was no caprice of God nor a result of the meeting of mere blind forces. We do not know all the laws of God (*karma*) nor their working."<sup>(11)</sup> It is interesting, is it not, that Gandhi's view on the earthquake parallels Aphorism #30 in William Q. Judge's "Aphorisms on Karma" (communicated to Judge by H.P.B.) Aphorism #30 reads:

Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through the mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought.<sup>(12)</sup>

While Gandhi recognized the reality of occult laws, he felt that it was often an unhealthy diversion for mystics, Hindus and Theosophists to focus on hidden and as yet

undeveloped psychic powers. Gandhi's concern, as we know, echoes a serious point made in *The Great Master's Letter* in which the aim of universal brotherhood is fervently upheld and the fascination with occult powers strongly criticized. As the Great Master unequivocally states:

... perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its hapless Founders, than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of Occultism!<sup>(13)</sup>

In the last issue of Gandhi's journal, "Harijan", ironically published on the day of his assassination (January 30th, 1948), Gandhi wrote the following:

There are many admirable works in Theosophical literature which one may read with the greatest profit; but it appears to me that too much stress has been laid upon (...) intellectual studies, upon the development of occult powers, and that the central idea of Theosophy, the brotherhood of man and the moral growth of man, has been lost sight of.<sup>(14)</sup>

In the final analysis, Gandhi believed that the identity of all life with God and the derivative principle of brotherhood were the keys to the fullest possible life for all. This is certainly compatible with the presiding and moving spirit of *Theosophia*, Divine Wisdom.

## Modern civilization

... Piety will decrease until the world will be wholly depraved. Property alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification. *Vishnu Purāna* (on the coming of *Kali Yuga*)<sup>(15)</sup>

To Gandhi, the real enemy in our turbulent, violent age is not simply the evil actions of individuals, the inertia of social institutions or the corrupting tendency of power politics. At a more causal level, the subtler and more subversive enemy of man is "modern civilization". "Modern civilization" can be characterized as a pervasive state of mind in which we are hypnotized by the glamor and glitter of materiality — a point that is compellingly made by H.P.B. in her article "Civilization: the Death of Art and Beauty".<sup>(16)</sup>



Gandhi believed that, at its root, modern civilization corrupts consciousness by denying the reality of the spiritual and the needs of the human soul. Our topsy-turvy age encourages the multiplication of bodily satisfactions over the deeper needs of soul expression. It inverts and subverts true morality and the dignity of the human quest. Most of all, modern civilization rationalizes evil actions in the name of the good — both worldly and other worldly.

### Vows and dedicated service

Gandhi believed that the solution to “modern civilization” is to deliberately deglamorize materialized notions of progress and restore the primacy of spiritual values in all domains of private and public life. This Herculean challenge to the descending tropism of the modern age calls for a kind of secular monasticism, a courageous commitment by the few to take unconditional vows to constructively serve society — especially the disenfranchised. Indifference to the suffering of others is not acceptable to men and women who seek God. As *The Voice of the Silence* tells us, the isolated splendor of forest-dwelling yogis and sheltered monastics is simply the “sweet but selfish rest of quiet wilds”. Direct, intelligently rendered service to the victims of greed and injustice is the clarion call of men and women of true religion and social conscience. In this regard, Gandhi’s ashrams were moral training grounds for committed social reformers to enact religious values in living communal contexts. Ashram vows and activities were prologue to constructive village work and to inaugurating civil disobedience to the unjust laws of the British Raj.

As can be seen, what we have called “secular monasticism” is really the marriage of religious vows with dedicated social service. To Gandhi, the motive power which makes any moral ideal vibrant in society is unconditional commitment. Intellectual conviction is often weak and impotent in the face of trying circumstances. Good intentions may likewise be blind or foolish. What binds reason and aspiration into a powerful vector for social uplift is a solemn resolve made before the court of one’s conscience. Vows provide not only moral direction but make self-restraint more natural. This is put insightfully and succinctly by Shri Raghavan Iyer:

The social and political reformer needs self-discipline if he is to be dependable and if he is to promote the habits of reliability and self-restraint in society, and he must take vows that commit him completely. Vows are thus a sign of



In this photo, Gandhi and his followers harvest sand to boil for salt, in violation of British law. The Salt March, starting April 1930, inspired civil disobedience throughout India. It also created sympathy around the world for the cause of Indian nationalism

fullness, intensity and authenticity of personal commitment to chosen ideals and social ends.<sup>(17)</sup>

### Social Reform

*You change your life by changing your heart.* — (Gandhi).<sup>(18)</sup>

To Gandhi, our human interdependence makes society necessary. Society is a living set of structured, but not necessarily static, human relationships. The complex geometry of “social relating” in diverse societies across the globe can only be mastered through the skillful performance of *dharma* or duty. The truthful and non-violent performance of our responsibilities to our families, communities, countries and mankind as a whole is the only way to become truly worthy of the divine. Why? Because, man is God in miniature. To serve others intelligently and whole-heartedly is to progressively realize the Divine Presence. In this sense, we discover God when we look “outside” as well as when we turn “within”.

### Duties and Rights

Clearly, in Gandhi’s view, duties are primary and rights secondary. Our only real right is our right to freely and intelligently actualize our multiple responsibilities. Nowhere is the primacy of duty over rights more evident than in Gandhi’s response to the English novelist, H.G. Wells. In 1940, Wells drew up a concise document entitled, “The Rights of Man” — a precursor to the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” adopted by the United Nations in 1948. He sent his carefully crafted statement on universal rights to Gandhi via cable and asked for his comments.



In 1931, during a stay in England, Gandhi was invited to visit the city Darwen, Lancashire, to see what conditions were like in the cotton mills of England. This industry had been decimated by the Indian independence movement's boycott of British goods. Gandhi had very friendly meetings with the cotton workers. He explained to this community the reasons behind the boycott, and tried to sketch the poverty in India – which was incomparably worse than in England.

Gandhi immediately responded – via cable – and stated:

Received your cable. Have carefully read your five articles. You will permit me to say you are on the wrong track. I feel sure that I can draw up a better charter of rights than you have drawn up. But of what good would it be? Who would become its guardian? If you mean propaganda or popular education you have begun at the wrong end. I suggest the right way. Begin with a Charter of Duties of Man and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter. I write from experience. As a young man I began life by seeking to assert my rights and I soon discovered I had none ... So I began by discovering and performing my duty to my wife, my children, friends, companions and society. I find today that I have greater rights, perhaps, than any living man I know.<sup>(19)</sup>

To Gandhi, duty is more than the “coherence factor” that integrates and sustains a community of moral individuals. *Dharma* can be a revolutionary force as well. In an ever-changing universe, societies are always tilting, always in some form of dynamic disequilibrium. This is particularly true in our own times. As modern civilization becomes increasingly ubiquitous, poisoning as it does almost every culture East and West and disconnecting them from their traditional values, only a strong sense of felt responsibility to the “God-in-man” can non-violently right social injustices, heal historical grievances, span racial

divides, purify religious excrescences and deglamorize every form of government. Truthful and benevolent action is the vital, ever-revolutionary corrective to the moral inversions of *Kali Yuga* — even if such a corrective comes at a high cost to the intrepid few who dare to be set the example.

### Ideal images

Gandhi was inspired throughout his life by the personal sacrifices of many men and women for the cause of human justice. He also held up before his mind's eye, ideal models of historical and legendary heroes. Interestingly enough to us in the West, one of his historical heroes was Socrates. Gandhi apparently read some of Plato's early dialogues. For a certainty, he read Plato's *Apology*. Gandhi was deeply impressed by the character of Socrates. The latter was a sterling example of one who non-violently suffered for the sake of truth and right. Socrates was, to Gandhi, a true *satyagrahi*, a solitary Prometheus who held on to truth for the sake of lifting up his fellow man. Gandhi's admiration for Socrates was so great that he published his own translation-summary of Plato's *Apology* in Gujarati as a means of galvanizing the Indian community in South Africa to engage in civil disobedience. His rendition of the *Apology* (which means “defense” in Greek) appeared in his periodical, *Indian Opinion* in 1908. It was later distributed in pamphlet form in Bombay, India and was promptly banned by the British Viceroy.

Gandhi, himself, initiated many religious and social reforms over his lifetime due to his unconditional commitment to truth and non-violence. For example, he sought to purify Hinduism by removing the stains of untouchability, child marriage and animal sacrifice. He sought to restore the dignity of womanhood by insisting on a widow's right to remarry and by making women the equal partners of men in all of life's endeavors. He sought to reform education by integrating the head, heart and hand in all the progressive stages of learning. He initiated the radical notion of non-violent civil disobedience to unjust laws and likewise set forth the revolutionary ideal of non-violent socialism, with the village as the primary socio-political unit.

### Change of heart and non-violent suffering

Theosophically speaking, what is most important is that Gandhi believed that self-reform and social reform are interlaced and that the key to both is experiencing a radical “change of heart”. (In this connection, the Buddha said that the greatest magic is that which affects a permanent

change in the heart of another human being for the good.) To the extent that a committed social reformer is non-violent, he minimizes potential harm to others and thereby generates less undesirable karma. Non-violent action also makes the truth of a particular injustice potentially more transparent to its perpetrators. Furthermore, the reformer's own suffering can awaken the hearts of his opponents and make atonement and self-correction on their part more likely. But, quite tellingly, Gandhi also believed that non-violent suffering for a worthy cause makes the social activist more likely to see his own possible errors and mistakes, and, like his opponents, engage in acts of self-correction and contrition when called for.

As we can see, both the reformer and the need-to-be-reformed usually experience suffering. The social reformer experiences creative *tapas* by attempting to bring about constructive social change through constructive, non-violent action. The need-to-be-reformed experiences the fire of *tapas* through the eventual pain brought about by his unjust acts and by the sobering recognition that conscientiously "righting wrongs" is a painful and arduous process, as is shown e.g., by the Buddhist story of the bandit Angulimala, who suffered greatly in his attempts to serve villagers that he had previously terrorized.

## Trusteeship

To Gandhi, the pivotal lever for long-term social and economic reform is the principle of trusteeship. Each person is the custodian of his talents, knowledge and skills. He must voluntarily use them for the betterment of society in whatever way his natural *dharma* suggests. The entrepreneur, for example, who skillfully amasses wealth is morally obligated to find creative ways to re-distribute his income for needed social services. However, he should not be coerced to do so by the state. To forcibly deprive a successful businessman of his wealth is unjust. Without his own will, without a gradual change of heart, all coercive change for a worthy social goal turns to dust and creates an eventual reaction that cannot be easily avoided.

## Final Thoughts

*My life is my message.* – (Gandhi)<sup>(20)</sup>

What might we learn from Gandhi that could enhance our ability to walk the Bodhisattvic Path? What we might extract from Gandhi's life and teachings is that the most virulent problem facing humanity at this critical hour is

not so much ignorance or physical violence as it is "perversity of will". This deeply entrenched mental perversity is really the refusal to learn and this kind of refusal warps and disfigures our personality. In a sense, the "perverted will" is really the long shadow of Atlantean pride that obscures our recognition of and obeisance to the God-in-man and the God-in-Nature.

What then is the cure for this long abiding Atlantean malady, this disease of the will? Gandhi's medicine is very hard for people to swallow in our troubled, irreverent times. His spiritual remedy for human perversity is to consciously cultivate an all-pervasive sense of reverence for the omnipresent divine, for what is deeply sacred. The mental posture of reverence for God, man and Nature can alone humble pride and leaven the bitter lump of perversity. There is, as Gandhi exemplified, a transfiguring power in true reverence. Its radiant presence is healing not only to the humble possessor of its purifying power, but to all who come within the perimeter of its divine efflux.

But, to be absolutely clear, real reverence is not for the meek, the passive, the conventionally religious or for the obsequious. Reverence is vibrantly spiritual and calls for a standup attitude of the heart, a daring affirmation of the inherent wisdom and immortality of the human soul. To inwardly bow before each and all – even down to the dog-eater as Krishna says – is to initiate a war within the breast. But it is a holy war and every victory is a blessing and every failure a "learning moment". Ultimately, inner reverence invokes the god above and ostracizes the demon within. It progressively renders truth transparent and makes non-violent action as natural as breathing.

Theosophically speaking, Gandhi's curative for the soul (reverence) makes perfect sense. Are we not taught by H.P. Blavatsky that when humanity was lit up over eighteen million years ago, that human beings felt a natural reverence for the divine within their progenitors, for the divine within their fellow human beings and for the divine within themselves? Did not the luminous, spiritual teacher Pythagoras declare to all wisdom-seekers in his mini-community in Crotona that mental obeisance to what is holy and sacred is fundamental to the spiritual life, to wholesome living? Did not Pythagoras state in his *Golden Verses* that one should revere the immortal gods, reverence the oath and likewise revere the heroes who are "full of goodness and light"?<sup>(21)</sup>

In fact, we might well ask, are truthful and loving actions even possible without reverence for our parents, our teachers, our friends, our benefactors, and even our

enemies? Isn't everyone our teacher? In an age of rapid disillusionment with every form of authority, we should not let ourselves slip into the sleep of spiritual forgetfulness. We should remind ourselves daily that reverence for the soul as well as respect for the virtues and limitations of each and all is the key to learning, is the key to happiness and is the key to moral and spiritual growth. Reverence for the sacred can alone restore a lost but recoverable spiritual innocence and make us all once again, "children of light who go forth into the world to render gentle service to all that lives."<sup>(22)</sup>

If all this is true, then we might venture to say that true reverence is the Lemurian cure for Atlantean illnesses still mutating in our Fifth Root Race as we rapidly approach many crucial "moments of choice" in the 21st Century and beyond.

I will end my comments on Gandhi by reading a stanza from a poem by the 19th Century Poet laureate of Great Britain, Alfred, Lord Tennyson:

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before, but vaster.<sup>(23)</sup>

This is Gandhian, through and through.

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# What are the inner causes behind “gravity”?

## Key thoughts

- » Gravity is an external phenomenon of underlying consciousness.
- » When a being is attracted to the sphere of a greater being, it generates its own psychomagnetic field.
- » Depending on the degree to which two characters correspond with each other, there is repulsion or attraction.
- » Because of this the consciousness takes a (dynamically changing) position within the overall field, according to its characteristics.
- » Compassion is the universal binding force. It is an inner Law with an external phenomenon: gravity.

Recently, researchers seemed to have measured gravitational waves. This was great news in the scientific world, and in fact in the whole world. In this article we will study the theosophical explanation of the causes of the phenomenon “gravity”.

First, we will introduce a few theosophical fundamental principles; otherwise gravity cannot be understood from our perspective. We are fully aware that this theosophical viewpoint is a major step for science in their way of thinking. But just as every scientist needs time to understand discoveries in his field, we need time to take these theosophical principles to heart. A scientist goes through several steps to get from one hypothesis to another by observation, measuring and interpreting. We similarly need time to investigate the theosophical principles, and to examine and check them to build up a comprehensive understanding.

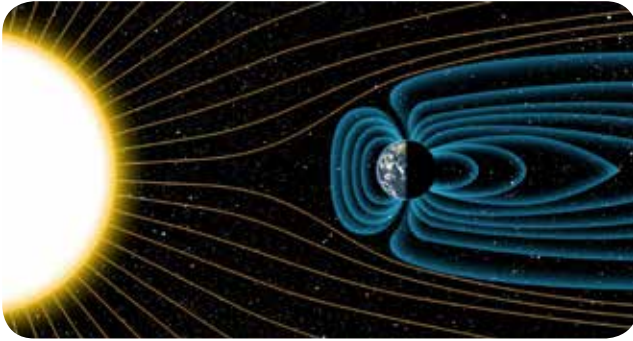
## Three principles

Our view is based on three theosophical principles, three fundamental principles of Theosophy, three fundamental hypotheses that everyone can experience and explore for oneself. These are:  
*Boundlessness*: an omnipresent, eter-

nal and immutable PRINCIPLE from which everything rises and to which everything returns; a boundlessness to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away.

*Cyclicity*: a continuous coming and going, birth and death, time and time again, of all beings in infinity.

*The fundamental equality* of all in that infinity. By fundamental equality we do not mean absolute equality. All beings are equal in essence, but each being has its own evolutionary path for progression in order to express this fundamental equality. While progressing each being continuously works together with all other beings. Every being, every consciousness is therefore in its own specific stage of development and hence has its own specific form. It also has its specific composite nature that comes into manifestation at different levels, such as power, energy and matter. These are various states of the one individual *being*.



The magnetic field of the Earth within the larger field of the Sun.

## Their meaning

From these principles, we draw a few important conclusions. First: the profound Universality of all existence: as above, so below. Second: one all-comprehensive Life expressing itself in (an infinite number of) individual centers of consciousness, which are the same in essence but are in different states of consciousness.

Furthermore the unity of all things implies that everything is connected with each other. Therefore all beings, all consciousnesses, influence each other at the different levels of being. A continuous influence is exerted on every element, also called “influence at distance”, and that influence is always two-sided: attraction and repulsion, and all shades in between. Attraction and repulsion are two sides of one and the same. They are equally important. If only attraction would exist, we cannot be who we are. Then everything would be clustered together. The influence of attraction and repulsion depends on our individual character, whether we feel attracted to something or not. And that character we have built up ourselves in the past, by our own will.

## Former visions on “influence at a distance”

In the western traditions the case of mutual influence at distance goes back to the time of Aristotle. Ever since the question has not been out of our minds, including the last valuable contribution by Einstein, an important update on the law of Newton.

When we look at what happened in that period of time, it is most remarkable that from Aristotle on, solving this problem was not solely attempted from a scientific point of view, but always in relation to the bigger picture, in the light of our connection with the divine. The case of mutual influence was and is only possible to solve by the combination of religion, philosophy and science.

The insight of the researchers, that the case could only

be understood when they would include the domain of the divine (religion), brought accompanying difficulties with it. After all, religious and philosophical aspects were at that time reserved for the church only. To take such topics upon oneself was not without risk; this was proven out by Galileo, and Giordano Bruno who ended up on a pyre, as well as René Descartes and even Newton. It was the dogmatic theologians who pushed science in the materialistic corner. The scientists could only bring out their way of thinking to the outside world without risking their lives, when there was no conflict with the dominant theological view. Due to this they confined themselves to a physical description, which remained beyond the reach of the theological views.

The ridicule result was that over time, the reasoning became reversed. Today if we don't back up our ideas with physical evidence and mathematical equations (by which is meant, in fact, the material including magnetic and electric fields, charge and energy) they are disqualified by science. But let's look what we can say about the phenomenon gravity from the theosophical perspective.

## Gravity does not exist

Gravity as a separate force that exerts an influence on all matter, creating a mutual attraction, does not exist according to Theosophia. Gravity is an external phenomenon of underlying consciousnesses. Furthermore, the attraction is only one side of the story, as we said before. Throughout the entire universe, including all its layers, there is attraction and repulsion. These two are inextricably connected, because they are one and the same thing with two sides. To be able to understand this well we have to visualize an image of the Kosmos, the universal cooperative whole of which we and our Solar system are part of. We shall use the inspiring description of G. de Purucker in *The Esoteric Tradition*:

One of the most important axioms, postulates, or fundamental conceptions, of the Esoteric Philosophy or Tradition is that the Universe and all in it, great and small and all things intermediate, is builded in and upon and guided from within outwards as well as from without inwards by CONSCIOUSNESS, which includes in its qualities or attributes or characteristics those other phases of Cosmic Being which men call Life, Mind, Substance. Yet it must be remembered that this term Consciousness, when applied to the Universe, is a generalizing term only, an abstraction, and that it is equally proper, and to many minds incomparably

more accurate because more descriptive, to speak of the Cosmic Universe as being infilled with Consciousnesses, existing in structural hierarchies, and as being, distributively speaking, infinite in number.

These consciousnesses exist, or rather are, in virtually innumerable grades or degrees or stages of evolutionary development, and are structurally arranged according to Hierarchical Families. Thus it is that everything in the Universe, considered as an individual expression of an indwelling and self-expressing Monad, is not only a point or individualized atom of the Boundless, but in its inmost essence is philosophically to be considered as identic with the Universe itself.

All space, infinitesimal and cosmic, is filled full of forces and substances in all-various grades and degrees of substantiality, of ethereality, and of spirituality. Such relatively physical force-substances as electricity and light may be cited as entitative examples or instances in point. For what are electricity and light, and indeed any other force-substance? They are, without exception, emanations from entities of cosmic magnitude: emanations — and the word is repeated for emphasis: in other words, the Boundless as above stated, is full of Cosmic Entities, each one of which has its own Universe acting as its own individual “bearer” or “carrier”; and the vital forces or energies in any such Cosmic Entity are the identical forces, the energies, the substances, which infill that Universe, and therefore, because substantially of the nature of consciousness, direct it, guide it, control it, and are in fact that inner and eternal urge behind all the outer seeming, the outer phenomenal appearances.<sup>(1)</sup>

### What is waving ...?

We now return to the recent measures that seem to show the existence of gravitational waves. One of the first questions that come to mind when we discuss waves is: what is it that waves? In the sea it's the water, in the case of sound waves it's air. But what is waving in the case of gravity? Well, the Universe is not void. We cannot simply assume that what we cannot see or measure does not exist. However, many assumptions in science are based on this concept and are solely founded on perceivable phenomena. The infinity of which we are a part of, is full: full of an infinite amount of beings on an unlimited number of levels of manifestation, as pointed out by G. de Purucker. Therefore everywhere is substance (consciousnesses) that can wave or move, yet it is beyond *our* perception. This is not a new idea. In ancient times there was discus-

sion about aether, the intermediate substance. Newton also referred to an intermediate substance between the celestial bodies, that should be present in order to transfer gravitational force. It's only a matter of time and science will discover something similar to aether. Just think of the pursuit of new kinds of particles with their exotic characteristics, such as the Higgs particle, which seems to give inertia to other particles. Currently attempts are being made to find the “chameleon particle” which, as the name suggests, adapts to its environment. It is a hypothetical particle that is considered as a possible explanation of dark matter. Depending on the environment it takes on a varying mass to exert a greater or lesser attraction on matter. When the density of the surrounding is low, the particles acquire small mass and are able to transfer “their” force over long distances. When the density of the surrounding is high, the particles are heavy and their force range decreases.

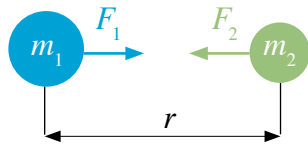
### Interaction at distance?

To solve the case of gravity, we must realize that there is a constant attraction and repulsion between all beings. Newton himself wrote:

It is inconceivable that inanimate brute matter should (without the mediation of something else which is not material) operate upon and affect other matter, without mutual contact, as it must if gravitation in the sense of Epicurus be essential and inherent in it. (...) That gravity should be innate, inherent and essential to matter, so that one body may act upon another at a distance through a vacuum, without the mediation of anything else by and through which their action or force may be conveyed from one to another, is to me so great an absurdity that I believe no man who has in philosophical matters any competent faculty of thinking can ever fall into it. Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws, but whether this agent be material or immaterial is a question I have left to the consideration of my readers.<sup>(2)</sup>

Gravity as a separate force that exerts an influence on all matter, creating a mutual attraction, does not exist. Gravity is an external phenomenon of underlying consciousnesses. Depending on the degree to which two characters correspond with each other or differ, there is repulsion or attraction. Of this phenomenon many examples can be found.

If we take Newton's formula as a starting point, which is solely based on attraction, four parameters must be taken into account:



$$F = G \cdot \frac{m_1 \cdot m_2}{r^2}$$

Newton's formula

a gravitational field  $G$ , mass 1, mass 2 and the distance  $r$ . This formula is a strong simplification of interaction at distance, because in this equation, the principle of rejection is not taken into account — unless we would take negative mass as a synonym for rejection. Therefore Newton supposes a simultaneous attraction between all objects and particles.

If we want to explain Newton's equation from a theosophical perspective, there are a few questions to answer. Firstly: what is this gravitational field, that affects the motion of everything in it? The theosophical answer is simple: this field is generated *by the interaction with the greater consciousness of which all smaller consciousnesses are part of*. This is an example of emanation, of small life within greater life, such as we human beings live within the larger sphere of this Earth, the Earth in its turn lives within the sphere of our Solar System, which lives in our Galaxy, and so on.

But so are we the greater life for all of our organs, cells, molecules and atoms: all beings, consciousnesses, that we attract to cooperate with us. Simultaneously we also reject a lot of those beings, because they do not belong to us. Think of pathogens, and also of all the building blocks that we reject in our digestive system because they cannot take place in our body. Or on the mental plane, the thoughts we forget, or the ones we do not understand because they do not correspond to our thinking sphere. In short, attraction and repulsion take place continuously.

### Our spiritual, mental and vehicular “mass”

Now let us describe this interaction between beings in a more technical way. A being, a consciousness, continuously radiates a sphere. This sphere encompasses many planes of existence, from physical and electromagnetic to mental and spiritual, of which the latter two are not recognized by physical science. When another being enters this sphere of

influence, enters this field, it generates a psycho-magnetic field emanating from its own character, which responds to the field of that greater consciousness. Depending on the degree to which both characters (“polarities”) correspond to or differ from each other, this results in an effect: repulsion or attraction.

Gravity is an expression of beings that attract and repel each other. We can see that Newton's formula of gravity has the same structure and is basically constructed with the same building blocks as Coulomb's formula of the attracting force between two electrical charges.

In Newton's formula:  $F = G \cdot \frac{m_1 \cdot m_2}{r^2}$

- $F$  is the gravitational force between two objects;
- $m_1$  and  $m_2$  are the masses of the two objects;
- $r$  is the distance between the centers of gravity of those objects;
- $G$  is the gravitational constant.

In Coulomb's formula:  $F_c = k \cdot \frac{Q_1 \cdot Q_2}{r^2}$

- $F_c$  is the force that the charges exert on each other;
- $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  are the two charges;
- $r$  is the distance between the two charges;
- $k$  is the constant of Coulomb.

Many examples can be found of this phenomenon. One of these is a well-known physics experiment with an electric conductor (a metal wire, e.g. a copper wire) in a magnetic field. When the conductor is moved in the magnetic field, an electric current starts flowing through the conductor. But it works also the other way around: when a current passes through a conductor, it creates its *own* magnetic field around that conductor.

This law also applies to a consciousness that enters the field of a greater consciousness. A reaction force arises, and depending on the characteristics of the two consciousnesses, there will be attraction or repulsion. Those who are familiar with electrical science, know this phenomenon as “counter EMF”, where the so-called left- or right-hand rule can be applied to determine the direction of the force, and whether there is attraction or repulsion. An important conclusion is that we, based on the character of the sphere in which we arrive or stay, develop a field ourselves that is either in harmony or disharmony with that sphere. And



A being emanates a sphere. This sphere encompasses many planes of existence, from electromagnetic to mental and spiritual. When another being is attracted to this sphere, this field, and enters it, it generates its own psycho-magnetic field according to its own character, which is either in harmony or disharmony with that sphere. Because of this, the last consciousness takes in a specific place or position within the total field, which subsequently shows what it is.

it is always the combination of attraction and repulsion (which takes place simultaneously) which leads to a certain *equilibrium point*. Hence we have a certain mass (“inertia”). We become “heavier” or “lighter”. This works on all levels of our consciousness, from electromagnetic to mental and spiritual. Because of this we take on a specific place, a specific position in the overall field, that subsequently shows what we are. In this case it is thus that a human being can be regarded as a conductor within the sphere of influence of the Earth. Within that Earth sphere we create a field of our own including an equilibrium point which – because of corresponding characteristics – draws us towards Earth. The properties “lighter” and “heavier”

get a completely different meaning in this context: it basically means that there is more or less *affinity* with the larger sphere of consciousness in which we reside.

Now, with this theosophical picture in mind, think of the scientific theory of the hypothetical “chameleon particle” that, depending on its environment, can take on a varying mass. Replace “particle” and “environment” by *consciousness*, and see how this description is in line with the approach above! The particle (the smaller consciousness) takes on a specific mass depending on the environment (the greater consciousness) in which it resides: it has more or less affinity with it. This example of attraction and repulsion between a being and a greater, overarching consciousness also applies between two beings of more or less the same level. After all, to some extent, there is always some difference between two beings.

### Life within life, beings within beings

It is clear now that the expression “interaction at distance” is not correct. Perhaps it may seem like action at distance at the physical plane, however it is interaction with something *in which* we reside as part of a larger whole. Consciousness within consciousness.

The place we take in changes by the constant changes in our spiritual, mental and physical affinity (“mass”)



Many birds species breed in colonies, such as the Imperial Shag. For them, such a colony is very attractive; nevertheless, the birds constantly ensure that the minimum distance between the nests is not exceeded. Attraction and repulsion always work simultaneously.

within the whole of which we are part of. The many fluctuations that we go through in our minds show us how dynamic is our relationship with that larger whole. For example, think of the change of affinity with parties, the party scene etc., of a young person, to an attraction to Theosophy later in life. Or, when we move from one job to another, the change of the work sphere we are in. To the question “what is waving by all this mutual attraction and repulsion”, we must reply: *we are, as consciousnesses*. Because of our dynamic behaviour, caused by the changes in our interest, the spiritual and mental strength that binds us to the corresponding place, subsequently changes. As a consequence of these changes we reposition ourselves. Imagine a sale that attracts a large number of people, or love at first sight. There are many examples to be found on spiritual and mental planes.

On the material plane we are slightly slower, but again a physical force is exerted between human beings, as well as between human beings and the planet Earth. That the latter force, between human beings and the Earth, is many times greater, is something we already knew of course.

### Compassion: the universal binding force

From what we have pointed out you can conclude that matter does not exist by itself, but that what we call matter consists of *consciousnesses that are in a certain stage of evolution* and therefore appear to us to be of a material nature. If you take the effort to delve into Theosophy, a very new, highly dynamic world will open up to you. Everywhere we see “consciousnesses within consciousnesses”, that influence and cooperate with each other, and we always see the *combination* of attraction and repulsion within a large dynamic whole, in other words, interaction. From a theosophical perspective, we are always part of a greater whole, all the way to infinity. For there is a boundless unity of which we are all part of and in which all beings are interconnected. This last fundamental idea forms the core of compassion. Compassion, also known as the Law of laws, Love with a capital L, is the universal binding force which G. de Purucker describes, in expressive language, as the “cement of the Universe”, an inner Law with a physical appearance: gravity.<sup>(3)</sup>

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# Questions & Answers

## The Masters of Wisdom and Compassion

I have understood that the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion are the origin of each spiritual impulse that is given. Is that true?

### Answer

Certainly. They have made a holy vow to serve and guide mankind during their evolutionary pilgrimage. That's why they take the initiative over and over again, at cyclically determined moments, attempting to inspire humanity, to awaken all men to a spiritual and compassionate life.

### Question

In your lecture you said that J.K. Rowlings, the author of the Harry Potter books, may have got help from the Masters. If that is true, does this impair her free will?

### Answer

Her free will is still there. A Master, in fact each representative of the Hierarchy of Compassion, will never overpower the free will of any person. W.Q. Judge tells us that Shakespeare received help from the Masters too. They presented mental images to him, which he subsequently worked out in his plays, by using his own creative capacities and literary talent. Why couldn't that also be the case with Rowlings? Her books have stimulated ten thousands of people to think about very essential questions. Presenting a mental image is something

quite different from forcing an idea down someone's throat. For instance, the I.S.I.S. Foundation publishes a lot of books, but no theosophist will ever force someone to read one of these books. You have free will. And when you have read these books, it is up to you to decide what you are going to do with it. No theosophist will ask you whether you have applied these theosophical ideas. That is your own responsibility, your own free will.

So, if it is really true that some mental images were presented to Rowlings, then that happened in the first place because she was open to a spiritual vision. Next, it was her own choice to do something with these ideas.

### Question

What should we think about people who say that they get messages from the Masters?

### Answer

We would say: investigate that message. Does it contain truth or wisdom? If so, you can benefit from it. But if the message is not so wise, what is the use of it? What would it matter then if it had come from your neighbour or from some supposedly highly spiritual Master?

In other words, the importance of a message does not depend on its source, but on the quality of the message itself. The message should derive its value from its inherent wisdom, and not because a Master or Angel or God is bringing it. Never believe a person on grounds of his title, his erudition, his beautiful words or a real or false claim on higher

powers. If a message is logical, if it gives you insight, showing you the underlying relationships between all things, then that message has some value, also when it is given by an illiterate person who has never heard about the Masters. So, when I would get a message from the highest imaginable divinity, but I cannot find one grain of wisdom in it, then I would prefer the honest advise of my neighbour. When once H.P. Blavatsky was asked what one needs to study Theosophy, she said: "common sense". In other words: a calm, sober perspective. Examine the thoughts, analyse the ideas, and think about it. Are these ideas in accordance with everything you experienced to be true? So, do not think something is true because someone tells you that he has received it from a Master — which by the way no one can check.

### Question

The Masters of Wisdom and Compassion have written a number of books. Why didn't they write a story that everyone can understand? By giving the message in symbolic language, they only created confusion.

### Answer

Firstly, the Masters did not write any books themselves: they were the inspirers of some books. That is not a trivial detail.

Secondly, you cannot convey theosophical ideas into the minds of other people by writing a book. If it would work that way, then indeed the Masters would only have to write a book that would be read at all schools, and



within one generation we would have created a theosophically minded humanity and a harmonious, just society. But new thoughts are not born so easily. That is often a difficult, laborious process in which the individual man, using his free will, has to test the new ideas, and then must incorporate them into his own mentality.

Moreover, for some spiritual conceptions we simply lack the appropriate words in our languages. If you live in a tropical country and have never seen snow, it would cost me a lot of effort to explain to you what snow is. For that reason, very often symbols were used instead of words.

We find these symbols for instance in countless myths. But those myths did not come directly from the Masters. Their followers gave the – in their view highly abstract – teachings a form, and wrote them down. Later generations often added all kinds of fantasies to it. Yes, sometimes they made up so many things, that the real message was totally lost sight of. It is generally known that a message may become greatly distorted when it passes orally from man to man. In other words: the original message is very often anthropomorphized. People are inclined to take only that part as true, that they could understand themselves. In this way, over time the knowledge shrinks away. And finally other views are not tolerated any more.

Yet if you brush the dust from these myths, you will discover a universal message. That is what H.P. Blavatsky did in her books. She showed that all these myths and legends, all these symbols, are based on a universal system of ideas.

### Question

But why does the symbology of countries often differ greatly?

### Answer

That is not the case. The greatest symbols are always universal, like the circle, the snake, the tree of life, et cetera. Differences only arise when people interpret these symbols on the basis of their limited views.

### Question

Are these differences not due to the fact that everyone understands this symbology in a different way?

### Answer

True, but that is the responsibility of the person who interprets these symbols, and not of the person who gives the teaching. You must realize that the teachings had to be given in a symbolic form, to prevent misuse. Furthermore, symbolic language often stimulates independent thought. People start to wonder what is *behind* that strange story, or *behind* that glyph. In this way they discover certain truths by themselves: truths which, when given directly, probably would have been understood wrongly or partly wrong.

We wish to add this: when truths are formulated in lofty language, people will not understand them without explanations. The Stanza's from The Secret Doctrine are very abstract ideas for most of us. If you 'translate' these texts into more common language, you would impair them greatly. The best thing to do is to keep the original words, and – if you are able to – to add comments. That is what madame Blavatsky did.

### Question

Why did the Masters need H.P. Blavatsky? Couldn't they fulfill the task themselves?

### Answer

That is a good question. We think that

they could have done it themselves, but that would have prevented them to do many other things that they are now occupied with. They would have had to commit themselves to a great number of things which now were done voluntarily by Mrs. Blavatsky.

In *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* you read that it sometimes requires great effort for a Master to enter into a sphere which is, compared to his own world, so coarse and polluted, that they only do that when necessary. They would take upon themselves a great amount of karmic effects that would prevent them from doing other, even more lofty work. Compare this to someone who had to become active in a criminal environment. That would also take a lot of effort, especially when you do not want to become soiled by that sphere. Imagine that such a person had many other tasks to fulfill for the well-being of humanity. Then he could, if possible, send a somewhat less evolved human being to that sphere to bring some light and hope there.

In short, the Masters would not be able to perform a lot of their duties on their own level, if they were obliged to be directly involved in our world. And remember: what they are doing in their world is much more important for us than what they possibly could have done if they would make direct contact with us. This unseen work also greatly enhances our spiritual well-being. Just as a king will not occupy himself with for instance ploughing, because he deals with things that concern all sectors of the country. Besides, a Master could only work in our world, if his authority would really be accepted.

Fortunately, there are always unselfish people prepared to take on the task, and become a link between the Masters and the world. And as long as mankind still indulges in selfishness and materialism,



these links, these messengers, will be needed. But as mankind develops spiritually, the contacts with the Masters will become more direct. That has also been the case in the past. Look at ancient Egypt or ancient China, and probably this was also the case with native Americans, where god-kings were accepted by the masses. That refers to a period in which the Masters were the natural leaders of nations. Their wisdom was recognized and accepted. In our days that is no longer the case. As long as many people believe in nothing else than physical matter, they will not easily accept the authority of someone who considers matter to be an illusion. And the Masters cannot, and do not want to use violence or manipulation to force other people to accept their authority. So, what else can they do than withdraw, and inspire and teach only those individuals who are open to spiritual ideas? Because wherever someone in the world practices compassion, then there the influence of the Masters is present.

Master Koothoomi describes this beautifully. He says: compare our position to a mountaineer high on a mountaintop: one who has a permanent view over the valley. He will notice each light. In the same way, the Masters will notice the Tathagāta light wherever it is — that is what he calls the buddhic light of self-sacrifice, of compassion, of love.<sup>(1)</sup> And, the Master adds, it is our law to foster and kindle that Light, whoever the person who spreads it is: Christian, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, Hindu, Humanist, it does not matter. Everywhere where humans are willing to cooperate to benefit the whole, there is always a certain inspiration from the Order of Wisdom and Compassion.

### Question

Is it right to worship the Masters as gods?

### Answer

No, because they are not gods. They are men. Yet we think that they deserve all imaginable reverence, because they are, at least in our perspective, almost divine. But we do not revere them by worshiping sculptures of Masters. Neither do we direct prayers to them. We prove our greatest respect for them by our deeds. We should follow the advice they gave to humanity.

The Masters are averse to all kinds of hero worship. We do not think that they would appreciate it if people would hang garlands around photos, or things like that. If that would happen from a feeling of inner devotion, it would not be wrong as such, if at the same time — and first and foremost — the laws, instructions, ideas and teachings of the Masters are practiced in daily life. Then it would not matter to them at all whether they would be worshiped or not.

### Question

But such worshiping does take place on a large scale ...

### Answer

It is a natural reaction of each human being who has not fully learned to control his instincts. If you get to know a great man, it is a natural reaction to worship him. For instance, if you read about Mahātma Gandhi's achievements in India, then naturally you will admire his work, as you realize that it is very noble. So it is quite normal to have a certain respect for it. But the point is to try to incorporate that respect, that devotion in your own life. The best way to honor Gandhi is by following his example of *Ahimsa*. So, never respond to evil with evil, and try to realize your ideals always in a non-violent way. That is the kind of worship that will eventually bear fruit.

### Question

It is said that Masters and chelas are part of the guardian wall. Is that true? As a matter of fact, they often are victims.

### Answer

You mean that sometimes they are killed or persecuted?

That has to do with the fact that many people are not easily willing to accept other, broader ideas. In his famous allegory, Plato described that the people living in the cave, and holding the shadows on the cave wall for real, tried to kill the person who told them that they were looking at mere shadows.

Yet, not all messengers, not all chelas were persecuted or killed. Certainly not. The Buddha lived eighty years — or according to the esoteric tradition even one hundred years. Other teachers also taught their whole life, and reached old age.

We think that each Master or chela knows that compassion will connect you to certain conditions, creating consequences that are not agreeable for the personal consciousness. But if you live in and from your spiritual nature, this personal suffering is a side-issue, as you are concerned with the totality. You are concerned with the great orphan, as the Master calls humanity. The Masters, the chelas, yes, each unselfish human being is part of the *guardian wall*, that symbolic wall that protects mankind. By its influence, it shifts the focus from the material, the struggle for existence and the accompanying selfishness, and often cruelty, towards the softer forces of the spirit. If you are really compassionate, you accept the unpleasant consequences, whatever these may be.

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1. *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, Letter 45. Several editions.

# Activities

## English lectures Blavatskyhouse, The Hague

### Do groups, nations and cultures reincarnate?

**Sunday 12 February 2017**

What is a culture, a nation, from the viewpoint of reincarnation? The key to the answers lies in the theosophical teachings on the spiritual unity of humanity. Understanding the spiritual heart and outer characteristics of all "human groups" will show us inspiring opportunities to solve the present world problems. The Theosophia is up-to-date applicable just because it is so fundamental.

### Great Sages on great ideas

**Sunday 12 March 2017**

In this lecture we investigate the essence of the great ideas of spiritual Teachers like Gautama the Buddha, Lao-Tzu, Nāgārjuna, Jesus, and Tsongkhapa. They all brought suitable parts of the Theosophia, Universal Wisdom, to their fellow men, adapted to the culture and time in which they lived. They responded to the great need for more insight in God or Gods, virtue, the purpose of life and compassion. Their teaching was not just theoretical; they also showed how to apply it, and greatly influenced global moral ideas like human rights.

**Location:** Blavatskyhouse -  
De Ruijterstraat 74, The Hague

**Start lecture:** 14:00 hours, doors open at 13:30 hours.

*Opportunity for Q&A. Admission is free, donations are welcome.*

### Plato: founder of a Mystery School

*His significance for our present day and age*

**Sunday 9 April 2017**

As spiritual teacher, Plato could not speak openly about all he knew as initiate of a Mystery School. In his dialogues we read about Socrates' search for answers to questions like: Can truth be found? Does universal goodness and justice exist? Can we get an understanding of the origin and destination of humanity?

Since The Theosophical Society started its work in 1875, many formerly esoteric clues were given to us, which open up great insights when we apply them to the metaphors and myths Plato used. In this lecture we will directly connect Plato's wisdom to current issues, varying from politics to education, from love to justice, from knowledge to virtue.

### Evolving gods, men and animals

**Sunday 14 May 2017**

Evolving means the outer expression of all the forces and potencies that are inherent in our consciousness. Many highly interesting questions rise: Do all beings evolve? If so, what is the aim or destination of their evolution? Is the evolution of animals, men and gods interconnected? A greater understanding of our place within our living Planet, will point the way to a completely different cooperation with our fellow beings, than now is usual.

*All talks are recorded to be posted on the website <http://www.blavatskyhouse.org> one week later.*

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1. The essential unity of all that exists.
2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
5. To support the developing of everyone's own view of life and its application in daily practice.



## Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

Each culture in the East and West has his bringers of light: inspiring individuals who give the initial impulse to spiritual growth and social reform. They stimulate independent thinking and living with a profound awareness of brotherhood.

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“... the title chosen for our magazine is as much associated with divine ideas as with the supposed rebellion of the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ...

We work for true Religion and Science, in the interest of fact as against fiction and prejudice. It is our duty – as it is that of physical Science – to throw light on facts in Nature hitherto surrounded by the darkness of ignorance ... But natural Sciences are only one aspect of SCIENCE and TRUTH. Psychological and moral Sciences, or theosophy, the knowledge of divine truth, are still more important ...”

(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)