



OPEN & ALIVE - Edition 4

Redemption of Humanity

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This short piece below comes from the book *On The Watch Tower*, (1966, ch. 30, pp. 425-426) which contains a compilation of N. Sri Ram's notes he wrote for the monthly Theosophical Society's international journal—*The Theosophist*. You will find a link to freely download this monthly journal in our useful links at the bottom of this email. The chapter itself is entitled Theosophy—Practical Theosophy and it contains many fascinating short notes written by N. Sri Ram which can help us gain a greater understanding of what theosophy is and how we can apply it in a more practical way within our lives. Book-learning is after all useless if you cannot apply it to life and bring benefit to yourself and others.

Perhaps the one way in which all of us can most effectively help our fellow-human beings and strengthen this instrument of the Theosophical Society, which is designed for the redemption of humanity, is for ourselves to enter ever more deeply into the spirit of Theosophy. A new humanity must ever arise from new individuals. There is such a possibility of newness in man as a conscious being, as does not exist in other less conscious things in Nature. If we make a new beginning in our own lives, that will influence others, and we shall be sowing the seeds of a new culture.

When we look at humanity today, we see that it has advanced and is advancing in many different directions. The modern man considers himself to be so far ahead of his forbears that he is apt to look down upon anything described as ancient. We like to think we have arrived at an exalted stage of our development. But are we at such a stage, or have we yet to come out of our uncertainties to a sure and constructive beginning?

Every section of humanity can well do with some of that Wisdom which has been called the ancient Wisdom but is really ageless, which the very conflicts of our times have put outside its purview. It is because this is a time of "mental increase and spiritual decrease", as H.P.B. described it, that we find all kinds of inventions, achievements and wonders piling up around us, yet at heart we are empty and discontented, unable to find just that something which is needed for happiness, tranquility and good relations with our fellow-human beings.

Theosophy, as we understand it, or the essence of it, in some simple, suggestive form, is really what is more needed by humanity than anything else. Our minds are identified with the dry bones and dust of matter on one side, and the limitations of mechanics on the other. What is lacking is that vital elixir for which we seek the substitutes of artificial stimulants. Life is becoming more and more a vast desert of material expanse with little encouragement in it for those qualities of the Spirit which are the blossoming.

Rosanna Sheridan
Vice President, Blavatsky Lodge

The Theosophical Society's international magazine, produced at Adyar, Chennai, India:
<https://www.ts-adyar.org/theosophist/volume-141-oct-2019-sep-2020>

The Ascending Soul

Excerpt from: The Purity of Desire - a 100 poems of RUMI, by Daniel Ladinsky & Nancy Owen Barton.

I died as mineral and became a plant, I died as a plant and rose to animal,
I died as creatures on hoofs and with feathers and look, look ...I became a beautiful woman, I became a beautiful man.
What should we fear, darlings? When were we ever less by dying?
Though, once again, I will know the demise of my senses
and thoughts, so as to mingle more with angel ways.
Yet, even from these heavenly realms we must pass on, for all except God does perish.
When I have relinquished every aspect of self, I shall become what the mind cannot conceive.
Oh, let me not exist in any form that is limited by names!
There is a divine non-existence that proclaims, in exquisite organ tones,
back to the source of the Immaculate we shall return, back to the cause of every god....we are.

Narelle Johnson
Executive Committee Member, Blavatsky Lodge



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Accepting the Challenge of Change

'Nothing endures but change.' These are the wise words of the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, circa 500BC, who taught that the universe is not static, but ruled by change and flow, everything in nature being in a state of constant flux. Life flows like a river, complete with eddies and whirlpools to be negotiated before resuming its tranquil state.

This philosophy is consistent with an important tenet of theosophy, the law of periodicity or cyclic law of nature, obvious in the movement of the planets, the seasons, the phases of the moon, night and day, the weather. Humans are born, live, die, theosophists believing that they are later reincarnated to repeat the process with a new purpose. The same cycles exist in the plant and animal worlds. Within these large cycles are series of smaller ones. The wise person accepts the inevitability of these concentric cycles of change, and adapts to them.

Seneca, a stoic Roman philosopher of the early first century, affirmed: 'Man is affected not by events, but by the view he takes of them.' – a poignant message for us all today, as we find ourselves challenged by the changes necessitated by the current pandemic. The curtailment of our overly busy, materialistic lifestyle affords us the opportunity to reflect upon and reassess our values, and make responsible choices for the future. We have the power to do so. Collectively we can seize the opportunity to make a better world. The onus is on us!

Pamela Peterson

Secretary, Blavatsky Lodge Executive Committee

Mass Marketing the Divine Wisdom

The third objective of the Theosophical Society has always had the greatest appeal to me. 'To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being' reveals two important ideas.

Not only are there mysteries and abilities beyond our current comprehension but in order to discover them the will of the individual must be concentrated in the effort of investigation.

It is this search for truth that can be classified as one of man's noblest attributes. It is the internal curiosity, the eagerness to explore, the desire to know and the disdain for ignorance that elevates us beyond our baser nature.

However, in modern society it is disheartening to witness vast numbers of people who deem the search for the unknown as completely irrelevant. Living their lives on autopilot whilst preoccupying themselves with materialism and television, it appears that for them the search for these eternal truths is inconsequential.

Although it is not a requisite that all should be interested, it is important to recognise that the divine spark of life exists within all men and women, "The Kingdom of God is within" (Luke 17:21)

Why can't the processes of theurgy (the practice of activating these powers) be standardised, brought down from their esoteric pedestals and distributed to the masses?

Rather than remaining the exclusive domain of the initiated alchemists and those whose individual flames have empowered their own spirit of investigation, why can't those who have ventured beyond the veil return from their Nirvanas and impart their wisdom in easy to obtain formats?

If we truly seek to form a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, surely the ascension of the collective consciousness is a fine place to start.

Sam Hansen

Blavatsky Lodge Member



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A New Understanding

From the Archives: N Sri Ram

Brotherhood has become a very worn word—cheap currency—so that we do not know what this term really signifies.

But perhaps the most important thing we can do is to create a sense of the spirit of true brotherhood, which is not just a superficiality, not sentimentality, not emotionalism, which does not consist in merely calling another brother. We have to come down to the deep meaning of the word. If there were such a spirit today in the world, the world would become a paradise. There would be no war; there would not be all the crimes, the exploitation, the stories of torture and things of that sort.

Even in a family true brotherhood is rare.

But I think that brotherhood has a more beautiful meaning. If you can cooperate just out of affection, out of friendly feeling, then I think that cooperation is something which is far truer than merely an alliance for some common object. If there were real brotherhood, affection, kinship (whatever term you like), there would be an understanding of each other's thoughts or feelings and their needs.

In this Society, there has to be that quality in the very texture of our thought and in our relations with one another. Words do not matter. It is really a question of how you think about another and the way you act.

I feel that if there is brotherhood in the Society, there can be no attempt to advance oneself, envy of another, or personal ambition which aims at placing oneself in a position of dominance. Now if the Society is free from all this, then it surely stands for universal brotherhood—not if it merely proclaims it.

Openness does not mean that we have to be so neutral that we cannot distinguish the true from the false. It does not mean that, even when you see something as truth, you must somehow force yourself to doubt it in order to be open to another idea and so force yourself into a state of agitation, doubt, and conflict.

All these seem to me to be a complete misunderstanding of that kind of openness which is needed for the perception of truth and also for the realisation of our brotherhood, our kinship with others.

May we all know and understand what true Brotherhood is.

Narelle Johnson

Executive Committee Member, Blavatsky Lodge

Call to the Heights

Excerpt from *The Call to the Heights*, Geoffrey Hodson (1975), Chapter 5:

For long ages bodily life continues in obedience to the custom of providing the necessities for maintaining existence. Increasing comforts, subjective and objective pleasures, love in all its aspects, and, of course, the means of obtaining food, all hold a superior place in man's external life and activities.

Gradually, a change occurs. According to temperament, the personal expressions of feeling and thought begin, slowly at first, to become more refined, more deeply psychological and intellectual and -most important- increasingly reciprocal. Mental activities, emotional experiences, and their physical expressions begin to be less and less limited to oneself alone. The 'other' becomes more important than the self. Sharing becomes the gospel of life, a personal religion. More deeply interior changes are also occurring, are in fact the source of the external alterations in the conduct of life.

As evolutionary time passes, the capacity to hear the inward call and respond to it steadily, increases. It is this human development that eventually leads a man or woman to forsake the more human ways and motives for living, in order to reach the next rung of the great ladder.

That which at first is conceived as an ideal - imaged from the example of others but more and more deeply known to be the only way for oneself- eventually becomes an impelling necessity. The voice can no longer be ignored, the call no longer disregarded. The call sounds forth, the voice chants on, both becoming louder as life follows life in the succession of rebirths.

Eleana Papagiannopoulou
Blavatsky Lodge Member

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Those who changed the spiritual and political face of India in the late 1800's

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
1831-1891

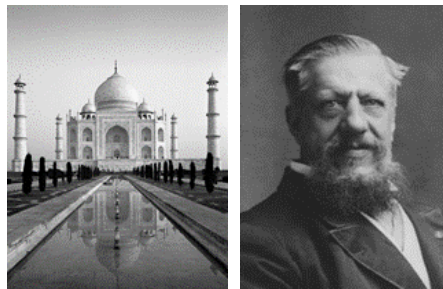


Madam Blavatsky needs no introduction to the members of the world-wide organisation with its headquarters in Adyar, India.

Blavatsky's formation of the Theosophical Society along with her voluminous writings and great body of work are a great legacy now and in the future, linking forever the ancient wisdom of the East and West, throwing light on the nature of Spiritualism and evolving through many genres, even reaching into Astronomical cosmology. Early Theosophists greeted the publication of *The Light of Asia* in July, 1879 with glowing reviews. Madame Blavatsky herself wrote at length in the first issue of the Theosophical Society's journal *The Theosophist* in October, 1879. Other reviews, analyses, and quotations followed.

Her life and work are definitely something to celebrate on White Lotus Day

Sir Edwin Arnold
1832-1904



Edwin Arnold knew Helena P. Blavatsky well and expressed his admiration for her extraordinary mental attainments.

When Arnold was asked in an interview, "Are Esoteric Buddhists and Theosophists the same?", he answered:

"That depends upon what you mean by Theosophists. If you mean the Theosophists of the school of Blavatsky, Sinnett and Olcott, I will say that they are so closely connected with Buddhism that the Buddhist Scriptures ought to be their text-books, and I don't see how you can do this without a knowledge of Sanskrit. I knew Madame Blavatsky very well and am acquainted with Col. Olcott and A. P. Sinnett, and I believe there is no doubt that the Theosophical movement has had an excellent effect upon humanity. It has made a large number of people understand what all India always understood, and that is the importance of invisible things. The real universe is that which you do not see, and the commonest Indian peasant knows that to be true by inheritance. The Theosophists have impressed upon the present generation the necessity of admitting the existence of the invisible. The senses are very limited, and everybody ought to know that behind them lies an illimitable field of development".^[4]

4. Boris de Zirkoff, "Arnold, Sr. Edwin," *Collected Writings Volume 12*

Queen Victoria
1819-1891



Reigned over a commonwealth comprised of 20 nations and became Empress of India in 1888.

Queen Victoria took her duties as Empress very seriously, and for her Golden Jubilee in 1887 she made every effort to showcase her 'jewel in the crown of the British Empire'. She hosted lavish banquets for Indian princes and European nobility and rode in procession accompanied by the Colonial Indian Cavalry. Indian attendants were also brought to the royal household to assist. Victoria took a particular liking to one of her new servants, Abdul Karim, who soon went from just waiting on the Queen to teaching her to read, write and speak Urdu. The Queen wanted to know everything about India, a place where she ruled but could never visit.

Sir Edwin Arnold received the degree of Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire and fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and the Royal Geographic Society.

In 1785 the British East India Company published the Bhagavad Gita before becoming formally incorporated into the British Empire in 1857.

In 1879 Sir Edwin Arnold published his book 'Light of Asia', recommended reading on White Lotus day at the request of Madam Blavatsky.

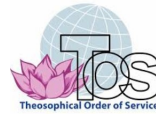
Among them, they changed the political and spiritual landscape of a country and left an indelible mark on history.

Graham Shannon,
Blavatsky Lodge Member



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The Theosophical Order of Service



FUNDRAISING APPEAL FOR THE EXODUS FOUNDATION.

Through TOS Sydney and TOS Australia Facebook pages some members have been sending out healing thoughts and uplifting vibrations during this difficult time for our planet and all citizens around the world.

Sydney, although privileged health wise in many ways, has also seen an incredible increase of our brothers and sisters in need through homelessness, job loss, domestic violence and other causes.

Reverend Bill Crews through the Exodus Foundation has been paramount in helping all those of our human family particularly in feeding the less fortunate and he needs our help. <https://www.exodusfoundation.org.au/>

All donations will be gratefully received by TOS Sydney and redirected in full to the Exodus Foundation by our volunteers.

Let us share some of our wealth and help us help.

Please make your donations noting; To The Exodus Foundation from (add your name).

Our Bank account details in the Commonwealth Bank are:

Name: The Theosophical Order of Service

BSB: 062 021

Account: 0080 2319

"Compassion is no attribute, it is the Law of Laws" (H.P. Blavatsky, the Voice of the Silence)

Lucille Crocker TOS

Executive Committee Member, Blavatsky Lodge

Useful resources/ Links

Below are links to other articles and pieces that you might find of interest:

- Music for Body, Mind & Spirit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IAdQv0m-B4>
- https://www.instagram.com/p/B3JVOK0nCeV/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet
- The American Theosophical Society - Exciting New Online Programs, Free Resources, and More!
<https://www.theosophical.org/programs/webinars>

If you are unable to open the articles by clicking on the link please copy and paste the link into your browser.

Contributions to our Newsletter

If you would like to contribute anything to future editions of this newsletter, please send your articles, poems etc. in word or soft copy format via e-mail to adyar@tssydney.org.au for consideration.

The deadline for submissions for our next edition of the newsletter is **4:30pm on Friday 5th June**.

Anything received after this time will not be included.

Disclaimer: *opinions expressed by individual members do not necessarily reflect the teachings of the Theosophical Society.*