

# THE LIGHT OF LUXOR

SECOND EDITION



INDEPENDENT THEOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE



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Independent Theosophical Magazine



## Theosophy

We often speak of Theosophy as not in itself a religion, but the truth, which lies behind all religions alike. That is so; yet, from another point of view, we may surely say that it is at once a philosophy, a religion and a science.

C.W.Leadbeater

## The Society

"The Theosophical Society was organized for the purpose of promulgating the Theosophical doctrines, and for the promotion of the Theosophic life. The present Theosophical Society is not the first of its kind."

H.P.Blavatsky

## Its Objects

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

## Annie Besant on Karma

EVERY thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world, and becomes an active entity by associating itself, coalescing we might term it, with an elemental—that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus a good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses and passions; a current which reacts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes in contact with it, in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls it his "Skandha"; the Hindu gives it the name of "Karma". The Adept evolves these shapes consciously; other men throw them off unconsciously.

# Editors Note

Neo-Platonism was a Greco-Roman school of thought that flourished from the 3rd century CE to the 7th Century CE. The term itself is a modern nomenclature attributed to philosophers of that period who considered themselves Platonists, but that as later scholars discovered had platonic ideas but with different interpretations of platonic thought, therefore Neo-Platonism was attributed to them. Neo-Platonism emerged during the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire. During this period the Mediterranean was a centre of exchange of religious, cultural, and philosophic ideas. In that era Alexandria was still a hub of world education. Scholars from across the globe would travel to study philosophy and the sciences at the Serapeum in the Alexandrian Library.<sup>1</sup> Plotinus is said to have been the first Neo-Platonist, he was born in Alexandria and founded his school of philosophy in Rome where his most famous disciple Porphyry continued his work.<sup>2</sup> However, Plotinus was a student of Ammonius Saccas, Saccas was an Alexandrian philosopher, of the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries CE. In the Key to Theosophy, Blavatsky mentions that Saccas was the first philosopher to mention the word Theosophy to explain his ideas, he used the word Theosophy to call his school the Eclectic Theosophical system.<sup>3</sup> Saccas was born a Christian but having lived in Alexandria, he was exposed to other religions and philosophies which made him a devotee of the Ancient Wisdom, some argue that his teachings had influences from as far as India.<sup>4</sup> Other famous Neo-Platonists were Porphyry, Iamblichus of Syria, Plutarch of Athens, Proclus and Hypatia, Christian Fathers such as Origen, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus also studied Neo-Platonism. Since Neo-Platonism was contemporary to Christianity, many Christian scholars studied Neo-Platonism until its schools ceased to exist in the 7th century. Muslim scholars like Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi and Avicenna were also influenced by Neo-Platonism.<sup>5</sup>

In her book Isis Unveiled Blavatsky said the following about Neo-Platonism:

*“Never did the Neo-Platonic school reach such a height of philosophy as when nearest its end. Uniting the mystic Theosophy of old Egypt with the refined philosophy of the Greeks; nearer to the ancient Mysteries of Thebes and Memphis than they had been for centuries; versed in the science of soothsaying and divination as in the art of the Therapeutists; friendly with the acutest men of the Jewish nation, who were deeply imbued with Zoroastrian ideas, the Neo-Platonists tended to amalgamate the old wisdom of the Oriental Kabala with the more refined conceptions of the Occidental Theosophists.”<sup>6</sup>*

Neo-Platonism was also studied by Marcilio Ficino who in the 15th century CE translated several platonic and hermetic texts.

In this issue of the Light of Luxor Phillip Carter presents the life of Hypatia the last Neo-Platonist who Blavatsky called the young, the learned and the innocent Hypatia.

Julian Ochoa.:

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1. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (2016) “Neoplatonism” Stanford, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/neoplatonism/> , 2021.
2. Ibid.
3. Blavatsky, H.P. (1888) “Key to Theosophy,” The Theosophical Publishing Company, 1987, pages 1-2.
4. Wikipedia, “Neoplatonism”, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoplatonism> (2021).
5. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (2016) “Neoplatonism” Stanford, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/neoplatonism/> , 2021.
6. Blavatsky, H.P. (1877) “Isis Unveiled“ The Theosophy Company, Los Angeles 1982, Book II page 41.

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# Hypatia (370 – 415)

Philip Carter

*Well has it been said of Hypatia  
That she was the brightest star  
In the whole constellation of Neo-  
Platonism  
And the most touching figure  
In the Alexandrian epoch of Philosophy.  
(Manly Palmer Hall)*

## Introduction

Hypatia embodied the wisdom, integrity and virtue of the ancient world. Her Genius encompassed all of the seven liberal arts and sciences, especially mathematics, mechanics, astronomy and philosophy. To communicate with her, one only needed to address letters to "The Philosopher" (Thus she was the definitive philosopher of her day).

Because she was so widely consulted by dignitaries, magistrates and scholars, her name later came to mean 'consulate'. However, 'Hypatia' literally means 'the

most high'. Appropriately, she held the highest position at the theosophical, Neo-Platonic school of Alexandria.

As the martyred, last, public head of the school, Hypatia was to it was Jacques de Molay was to the Knights Templar, (as supported by the circumstances leading to their deaths and the corresponding principles for which they died).

A further analogy can be drawn between Hypatia's fate and that of the library, in the Alexandrian Temple of the Muses (the Museum). Hypatia, (herself a learned muse, inspiring scholars from throughout the ancient world), personified the library and shared its tragic fate.

## Context

An understanding of the cultural, political and philosophical, historical context in which Hypatia lived is a prerequisite to understanding her life. This context includes Graeco-Roman Egypt, Alexandria, its library and its school.

## GRAECO-ROMAN EGYPT

The Egyptians considered theirs to be the most ancient of all civilisations, (except that of the Phrygians). Thus, they considered the recently civilised Greeks to be like children in comparison with themselves.

After the defeat of Nectanebo II, (the last indigenous Pharaoh), in the Fourth Century B.C.E., Egypt became again a province of Persia and was administered by despotic governors. The Egyptians greatly resented the Persians harsh rule and, later that century, welcomed Alexander the Great as a liberator and mythologised him as a god. Alexander had strived to unite the world in a universal brotherhood. After his death and the murder of his heirs, the empire was divided among his generals, one of whom, Ptolemy, acquired Egypt.

Ptolemy I (known as 'Soter, meaning 'saviour') also acquired the goodwill with which the Egyptians had regarded Alexander, (he helped orchestrate this association by seizing Alexander's mortal relics and entombing them at Alexandria, and by marrying a daughter of Nectanebo II).

Ptolemy and his Macedonian heirs fostered further goodwill by outwardly supporting, imitating and manipulating Egyptian Myths, traditions and institutions. In particular, the Ptolemaic dynasty shrewdly cultivated the indebtedness of the Egyptian priesthood. In return, the priesthood

bestowed upon them the titles, rights and responsibilities of Pharaoh, ( a privilege formerly limited to the children or consorts of Egypt's indigenous, matrilineal royal family). While the priesthood remained loyal to the Ptolemies, the general populace soon became disillusioned with their increasingly brutal excess and exploitations.

The dynasty ended with an elegant flourish in the First Century B.C.E., with Cleopatra, the last of the Pharaohs. Of her nativity chapel, Alan Bowman, in Egypt After the Pharaohs, wrote :

*"The Caesareum was one of the great buildings which survived long after its original function became obsolete, (until the early tenth century). The emperor Constantine dedicated it as a Church of St Michael and in the middle of the fourth century it became the official seat of the patriarch of Alexandria; it was damaged in riots between pagans and Christians in 366, restored in 368; in 415 it witnessed a brutal Christian attack on a female teacher of pagan philosophy named Hypatia..."*

Cleopatra, unlike most of her brutal, decadent and hedonistic Ptolemaic predecessors and contrary to defamatory accounts by her Roman enemies, was a woman of considerable virtue and a respected scholar. "To Al-Masudi, the tenth century arab historian, she was the last wise ones of Greece". Cleopatra strived to preserve Egypt's relative independence and, with Marc Antony,

she almost succeeded in dominating the entire Graeco-Roman World.

Upon Cleopatra's death, Egypt became the personal property of Caesar Augustus and later became a province of the Roman Empire. However, until the Byzantine period, Rome showed little interest in the province, (beyond ensuring that it continued to serve as the empire's fertile granary). This neglect can be traced to its wars with Greece, Carthage, and Egypt, following which, Rome found a focus for its suspicion of oriental influences, (onto unto which it projected much of the blame for its own decadence, and which may have originally derived from their early attempts to distinguish itself from the neighbouring Etruscans). Thus, Egypt retained much of its peculiar blend of Egypt and Hellenistic cultures throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods, until the Arab conquest, when many of the indigenous, Coptic Egyptians were dispossessed.

#### ALEXANDRIA, "QUEEN OF THE MEDITERRANEAN"

The Spur of land, on the Nile Delta, which was to become site of Egypt's principal port city of Alexandria had been, since time immemorial, the cultic centre of Imhotep, the deified architect of Pharaoh Zoser's famous step pyramid. It was also the site from which the god-king Osiris was traditionally said to have been cast adrift upon the waters, after being encased within a pillar by his evil brother Set.

Alexander the great founded several cities named Alexandria. Probably because of the above associations, Alexander selected the most famous of these cities, (the outward appearance of which, at first, resembled little more than that of a humble fishing village), to be the capital of his empire. He envisaged it becoming the political, cultural, and intellectual centre of the world. Sadly, he did not live to see realisation of that vision. Ptolemy, made Alexandria his capital and it soon grew to be the cosmopolitan hub of trade and commodities and ideas between Africa, the Levant, Asia and Europe, (the precinct of the original village remained the population centre of the indigenous inhabitants). In describing the development of the city, John McLeish observed:-Within a century it had a million inhabitants and had replaced Athens as the cultural centre of the Hellenes.

Ptolemy's successor, Ptolemy II, (known as 'Philadelphus, meaning 'brotherly love'), is described in the early constitutions of Freemasonry as being one of the traditional protectors of the 'Royal Art'. He is best remembered for having commissioned the architect Sostratus to build the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria, on the small island of Pharos. To ships at sea, the lighthouse guided them with a pillar of smoke by day and with a pillar of fire by night. This monument, built in the Third Century Before the Common Era, is included among the Seven Wonders of The Ancient World, (in which context, it represents the torch of knowledge).

## LIBRARY

This 'torch of knowledge', is seen to be specially symbolic of Alexandria when we consider Alexandria's famous library, founded by Ptolemy I. As the library grew, it became the most extensive ever to be made generally available to scholars and it soon fulfilled Alexander's vision of making Alexandria the intellectual centre of the ancient world.

The library consisted of around half a million scrolls (most containing multiple works). It was mainly housed in the Temple of the Muses, (called Museum), and partly in the Temple of Jupiter Serapis, (called the Serapeum).

The acquisition of works was incredibly aggressive and audacious. For instance, Ptolemy III (known as 'Euergetes, meaning 'benefactor') ordered the confiscation of all books, scrolls or maps brought by visitors to Alexandria. Works which the library already had were returned, those it lacked were retained and the owner given a certified copy. Another stratagem used was to borrow original, classic works from other libraries, return certified copies and accept the forfeiture of deposits in excess of their estimated value. The library was further expanded by Marks Anthony's gift to Cleopatra of around 200,000 scrolls being spoils of war from the Royal Library of Pergamum.

In the first century B.C.E., during Julius Caesar siege of the city, a fire which destroyed the Egyptian fleet spread to the

harbour and then to the Museum, where about 40,000 scrolls were destroyed. The emperor Aurelian was blamed for the destruction of further scrolls towards the close of the Third Century C.E., when Alexandria was ravaged by civil war.

Towards the close of the Fourth Century, a new and more appalling phase of book burning began when Christian fanatics, (acting on the orders of Bishop Theophilos, Patriarch of Alexandria), deliberately destroyed the Serapeum and all the scrolls therein.

The Christians' ire was aroused because some scrolls contained expressions of respect for pre-Christian religious beliefs, while others demonstrated exhaustive evidence that, rather being a totally new revelation, Christianity contained little more than shallow variations on extremely ancient, profound themes; ( please bear in mind that much of the appeal of Christianity was its apparently fresh and comprehensive message to a jaded world, desperately longing for a new age and seeking an inspirational new vision).

The vandalism was completed after the arab conquest in the Seventh century, when Islamic fanatics, aroused by similar, intolerant and irrational motives (acting on the orders of the Calip Umar I), destroyed the remaining scrolls. Their rationale is said to have been that if, in any work, there was information already contained in the Koran, then that work was superfluous duplication, and if, in any work, there was information not contained in the Koran,

then that work was false or idolatrous.

Thus was the greatest treasure of antiquity burnt to ashes because of knowledge it contained. Now we have little more than hints as to what may have been lost, including medical cures; the techniques by which the pyramids were built; and the ancient geometry and astrophysics, whereby the earth was known to be a sphere (with their calculation of its diameter similar to ours), rotating around the sun.

Alas, with the wisdom of hindsight, we can lament the policy of compiling all these priceless works in one place and we can respect the secrecy and caution now exercised by the custodians of other ancient civilisations.

According to John McLeish:-

*"In 640 the city of Alexandria was invaded by the Arabs and what remained of the great library was destroyed. Scholars, alchemists, and astrologers fled westwards to avoid the conquerors. They carried off many of the precious manuscripts which were subsequently lost forever. The Arabs recued what was left. Under the enlightened leadership of some Caliphs, they carried out a massive programme of translation and development of Western science. While Christian Europe sank into intellectual chaos and barbarism, the Arabs, using all the available resources of Greek Jewish and Christian scholarship, fostered a scientific renaissance."*

The fate of those who fled to the West is melodramatically told by Charles Kingsley a Victorian, professor of history at Cambridge and Edinburgh, in his novel, Hypatia –

*"The last scene of their tragedy is not without a touch of pathos... In the year of 529, Justinian finally closed, by imperial edit, the schools of Athens...All that was left for them was to take care of their own souls; and fancying that they saw something like Plato's ideal republic in the pure monotheism of the Guebres, their philosophic emperor the Khozroo, and his holy cast of Magi, seven of them set off to Persia, to forget the fateful existence of Christianity in that idealised ideal....( They retuenrd disenchanted. ) Peace be to their ashes! ... They are gone to their own place."*

## SCHOOL

The library was the property of the school of Alexandria, established by Ptolemy I. The school taught the seven liberal arts and sciences, together with an eclectic blend of symbolic teachings from the Ancient Mysteries Schools, including those of the Hermetic Copts, Magi, Druids, Brahmins, Buddhists and Rabbis. In particular, the school expounded what we now call Neo-Platonism, a synthesis of the teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and Stoicism.

A rudimentary legacy of the school may have survived in the form of modern freemasonry. In his Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry, Albert Mackey (one of

the most influential Masonic scholars), claimed that the form and content of this school became the body and soul of Freemasonry, saying: -

*From this school we derive Gnosticism and the Kabbala and above all the system of symbolism and allegory which lay at the foundation of the masonic philosophy. To no ancient sect, indeed, except perhaps to the Pythagoreans, have the Masonic teachers been so much indebted for the substance of their doctrines, as well as the esoteric method of communicating them, as that of the School of Alexandria.*

Ptolemy began the school by sponsoring a colony of learned Rabbis. The, and the library encouraged many scholars to attend the school, while others were drawn to Alexandria by the promise of free board and lodgings and tax exemption. The resultant cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary exchange and scrutiny of ideas was a unique intellectual phenomenon, (their real and imagined, intense quibbling over obscure philosophical distinctions was a standard joke throughout the ancient world).

Athens subsequently established its own Neo-Platonic school and there was some rivalry between the two. The school at Athens continued in decline for some years after the collapse of the school at Alexandria.

The Alexandrian school's first head is thought to have been Euclid. A later head, Ammonius Saccas, established what was to

become the school's Neo-Platonic focus. Of Saccas, Dianne Hames ("Theosophy in Australia", Vol. 49, No 3) wrote:-

*"Ammonius Saccas although respecting what was good in Christianity, was unable to recognize its superiority over the older religions, and in consequence he abandoned it very early in favour of Platonic and Eastern philosophy."*

His philosophy was developed by his student Plotinus, and in turn, by his student Porphyry, the author of *Against the Christians*, (which included his claim that the life of Christ had been confused with the life of Pythagoras). Other scholars included Iamblichus, who introduced explicitly theosophical concepts to Neo-Platonism; Sallustius, who recorded their religious practices; and Proclus, who applied Aristotelian logic to Neo-Platonism, to systematize the philosophy. The school's last head was Hypatia, of whom, the *Encyclopaedia Americana* says:- ....she became probably the most important figure in the Neoplatonic school in Alexandria.

Dianne Hames said of the school:-

*"The school had taught all the ancient arts and sciences, and in her pattern of all schools of the Mysteries, was divided into two sections; the more profound Mysteries being given only to those students whom Ammonius referred to as Persons duly instructed and disciplined."*

*The neo-Platonic system had three distinct*

*divisions, which were purely Vedantic. It postulated...*

*Firstly: A Supreme essence – One and Universal.*

*Secondly: The eternity and indivisibility of the human spirit.*

*Thirdly: Theurgy – which was introduced later by the great Iamblichus – the understanding of, and ability to use, the law of nature.*

became identical with those forces at whose hands its founder and early martyrs had died and at whose hands countless Arabs, Jews, witches and heretics would be slaughtered, ( all in the name of He who advocated tolerance, peace and love). These dark forces have only been quelled by stripping the churches of their secular authority and by the decreased support of their increasingly disillusioned congregations.

## AGE OF TRANSITION

Hypatia lived during an age of transition. For intellectuals generally and Neo-Platonists in particular the cusp of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries was an especially dangerous time. The school's famous library had already been virtually destroyed by the ravages of war and bigoted, book burning, Christian fanatic, (prior to their final destruction by Islamic fanatics, following the Arab conquest of Egypt).

The Christians, having forsaken their Gnosticism and mysteries, were, by then official sanctioned, (following the first Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E.) Then in 390 C.E., their religion became mandatory throughout the Roman Empire. Ironically, while the early Christians had earned sympathy and respect because of their courageous endurance of persecution, the new Christians showed little hesitation in becoming the new persecutors.

Christianity had reversed the innocent and selfless virtue which had remained its saving grace. This perverted Christianity

Their particular target in Alexandria was the Neo-Platonists, (whose tolerant and eclectic interpretation of all religions, including Christianity, was considered heretical). Thus, Hypatia, as the head of the school, was hated as particularly dangerous enemy of this fledgling religion. Moreover, these latter day Christians had forgotten the role of women in the early church and were scandalised by the spectacle of a woman who presumed to teach them.

Hypatia's life coincided with the last gasp of the Golden Ages of Pericles and her death corresponded with the commencement of the Dark Ages, in which mathematics, science, and philosophy were regarded with suspicion and ignorance was considered a virtue, (confusing it with innocence). In Hypatia's Heritage, Margaret Alic wrote about this, saying:-

When Hypatia was born in AD 370, the intellectual life of Alexandria was in a state of dangerous confusion. The Roman Empire was converting to Christianity and

more often than not Christian zealots saw only heresy and evil in mathematics and science "mathematicians" were to be torn by beasts or else burnt alive. Some of the Christian fathers revived the theories that the earth was flat and the universe shaped like a tabernacle. Violent among pagans, Jews and Christians were spurred on by Theophilos, Patriarch of Alexandria. It was not a propitious era in which to become a scientist, or a philosopher.

## HYPATIA – ALL GLORY TO THE MOST HIGH'

### HER LIFE

Hypatia, whose name means 'The Most High', was begotten of God, (her father was Theon, whose name means 'Of God'). Compare how Athena, (the Goddess of Wisdom and patron of artificers), was born of her father Zeus, ( the Patriarch of the Greek Pantheon ). In this respect and in others, Hypatia's life and death personified and fulfilled much of the religious mythology of antiquity.

Theon was a Neo-Platonist and a Neo-Pythagorean, who taught mathematics and astronomy at the School of Alexandria and became head of the school after Hypatia's birth. Her was also known as a 'geometrician'. Sadly history has characteristically forgotten her mother's name.

In an age where scholastic women were often considered unfeminine and the education of daughters neglected, Theon ensured Hypatia received a complete

education. He personally taught her such subjects as mathematics, philosophy and rhetoric. As the Greeks placed great emphasis on physical fitness, (considering the body to be the 'Temple of the Soul'), her daily routine also included physical activity, such as rowing swimming, riding and hiking.

In Hypatia's Heritage, Margaret Alic writes:-

*"Theon revised and improved upon Euclid's Elements of geometry and it is his edition that is still in use today. Hypatia probably worked with him on this revision. Later she co-authored with him at least one treatise on Euclid. Hypatia also wrote at least one book of Theon's work on Ptolemy ... Hypatia's tables for the movements of the heavenly bodies, the Astronomical canon, may have been part of Theon's commentary on Ptolemy, or a separate work."*

In her teens, Hypatia was sent abroad, and elsewhere, to study. She was a brilliant student in Athens, her reputation as a distinguished scholar was soon established. Of this period Margaret Alic writes:-

*"Although Hypatia may have studied at the neoplatonic school of Plutarch the Younger and his daughter Asclepigenia in Athens, with the Athens school emphasising magic and the occult. But to the Christians, all platonists were dangerous heretics."*

Hypatia's researched conics sections,

( which were later found to be useful in describing the form of planetary orbits and other dynamic systems ), and indeterminate and quadratic equations. She wrote a thirteen-volume, definitive study of algebra, entitled Arimethica, it together with most of her writings were destroyed along with the library and we know of them only through references and attributions in secondary sources. The two that survived intact are On the Conics of Apollonius and On the Astronomical Canon of Diophantus.

In Mothers of Invention, Ethlie Vare and Greg Ptacek wrote:-

*"Practical technology was Hypatia's main interest, which led to her invention of the plane astrolabe, used to measure the positions of the sun and stars and to calculate the ascendant sign of the zodiac. It consisted of a pair of rotating discs made of open work-metal, rotating one on top of the other around a removable peg. Hypatia perfected the device to the point where it could accurately solve problems in spherical astronomy. She also invented a devise for measuring the level of water and another system for distillation, as well as the hydrometer. The hydrometer – or hydroscope – was a sealed tube about the size of a flute, weighted at one end. The depth to which the hydrometer sunk in a particular liquid gave a reading on the substance specific gravity."*

Hypatia often initiated philosophical dialogues with strangers she met. Scholars

from all around the world were drawn to her classes and her home became a centre of intellectual activity. Although she is rumoured to have had several affairs, Hypatia never committed herself to one man, claiming instead to be 'wedded to the truth'.

According to John McLeish, ... *"reports of her beauty were supported by tales of how she lectured from behind a screen which concealed her beauty from her auditors and saved them from distraction.. Beautiful she may have been, but such tales need to be understood from their context. For instance, Manly Palmer Hall cryptically informs us .. 'it has been held against Pythagoras that he delivered his discourses from behind a curtain'. The explanation in bith cases is that this was the peculiar manner mandated for the transmission of certain mysteries!"*

As Manly Palmer Hall Observed:-

*"A number of writers have credited the teachings of Hypatia with being Christian in spirit; in fact she removed the veil of mystery in which the new cult had enshrouded itself, discoursing with such clarity upon its most involved principles that many newly converted to the Christian faith deserted it to become her disciples. Hypatia not only proved conclusively the pagan origin of the Christian faith but also exposed the purported miracles then advanced by the Christians as tokens of divine preference by demonstrating the natural laws controlling the phenomena."*

While Hypatia was not exclusively Christian, her eclecticism encompassed their religion and, when classes usually catered separately for students of particular religions, she welcomed students of all religions; including her friend Synesios, a Christian of Cyrene, who became the Bishop of Ptolemais and who fondly and faithfully defended her memory. Hypatia was not idle philosopher. She is said to have supported Orestes, the Roman Prefect of Egypt in his political opposition to Bishop Cyril, (Patriarch of Alexandria).

Margaret Alic described how:-

*"Soon after taking power, Cyril began persecuting Jews, driving thousands of them from the city. Then, despite the vehement opposition of Orestes, he turned his attention to ridding the city of neoplatonists. Ignoring Orestes' pleadings, Hypatia refused to abandon her ideals and convert to Christianity."*

#### HER DEATH

The manner of her death was as follows:-

In March of the year 415 C.E., fanatical monks, (described by the Christian historian, Socrates Scholasticus as 'cockbrains' and by Vicky Leon as .... A Hell's Angels band of unthinking, uncultured, unwashed Egyptian monks, incited by Cyril and led by Peter the Reader, stopped her chariot in the street and dragged her into Cyril's church.

They set upon her like wild beasts, clubbed her to death, tore her limb from limb, quartered her body, scraped the flesh from her bones, burnt her remains to ashes on the Cindron ( a place of sacrifice ) and finally cast her ashes from a pier, through the air, into the sea. As Manly Palmer Hall states...

*"Thus perished in A.D. 415 the greatest woman initiate of the ancient world, and with her fell also the Neo-Platonic School of Alexandria."*

Adding insult to injury, Cyril was later canonised, ( for defending the trinitarian doctrine) and the Catholic Church appears to have perverted Hypatia's memory in the guise of St. Catherine of Alexandria. According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Saints*:- *The legend of this saint is one of the most famous and most preposterous of its kind.* St. Catherine is alleged to have been martyred by pagans, angered by her faith. St. Catherine's connection with Hypatia is obvious from her association with Alexandria; from the contrary debate with fifty philosophers, (who were burnt to ashes for failing to defeat her Christian arguments); from the attempt to break or burn her body on the centre of a spiked wheel (after which the Catherine Wheel is named and which may allude to the Cindron); from her name; which derives from Greek words meaning 'torture' and 'pure', and from the renowned library of ancient manuscripts in the care of the Orthodox monastery of St. Catherine.

## POSTSCRIPT

Ironically, these brutal Christians murdered Hypatia in a so-called 'pagan' manner, incorporating each of the elements of earth, air, fire and water. It also paralleled several of the traditional methods prescribed for sacrifices to the very gods they abhorred.

Later degraded as penalties, atoning for crimes which were considered to particularly affront those gods (or aspects of God) to whom such sacrifices had been made, these methods of execution were originally honours, bestowed on worthy victims, willing to sacrifice self for the good of all. Whether or not these sacrifices were in vain, we cannot quibble about the

conviction, courage and charity of their willing victims.

Hypatia, Like Christ, may be considered a willing sacrifice because without regarding life lightly, both she and he had deliberately chosen to adhere to a mortally dangerous course of action, in defence of moral principles.

Her death was not totally in vain. Its savage and sensational nature has helped to preserve the memory of who she was, what she achieved and what she stood for; despite generations of historians who conventionally minimalised or disregarded feminine achievement.

*Published with permission from the author, this article was first printed in Hypatia Magazine, from the Newcastle Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Australia, (1996).*

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# ZOROASTRIAN TEMPLE, THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR



# Reincarnation of Human as Animal

Shikar Agnihotri

There is a very common belief in many of the religions and traditions around the world that a human being can reborn/reincarnate as an animal due to his/her bad karma in the present life. This implies that a soul can reborn in an animal form after being born in the human form. Generally, this logic is used to prevent people, especially children from doing something wrong, by sowing a seed of fear, but how far is this correct, it cannot be said.

So, let us try to explore this subject with an OPEN MIND taking the help of Brahma Vidya or Theosophy and try to understand our Beliefs / Religion / Tradition in the light of Theosophy.

Based upon the Theosophical Studies and Logic we have the following understanding:

1) EVOLUTION : This world or Manifestation is not merely a coincidence that happened in Space and Time. Instead there is an Intelligence guiding it and it has a Plan which is called Divine Plan and that Divine

Plan is Evolution. And evolution means moving forward & upwards and not backwards & downwards. And we have been travelling through Mineral, Plant, Animal Kingdoms and now in Human Kingdom, so it is quite illogical to go back to the milestone that we have already passed in our journey. And this fact is well established by the evolution of foetus in a mother's womb. It passes through all the earlier stages of evolution. So, once becoming a human being it is not logical (as per Divine Plan) to go back to animal kingdom because we all have this intuition that Divinity is Compassion / Love / Law and a Natural Law cannot be unreasonable, so as to send an individualized soul back to animal stage.

2) CAUSAL BODY & GROUP SOUL : Apart from the visible difference between animals and humans, one definitive technical advancement that takes place from animal stage to human stage is the formation of Causal Body (Karana Sarira), which becomes the reservoir of all our individual Karmas. In animal kingdom this

work is performed by the Group Soul. And to some extent it is due to this Group Soul that the Morphic Resonance concept of Rupert Sheldrake can be explained that how when some change in habits occur in a particular species of animal on one continent, the same habits also begin to show in the same species of animals in the other continent although they have never met. As you can see in the image. For example, once a student reaches High School after regular studies, even if he/she fails the high school exam, he remains in high school and not demoted to lower standards and even if there are disciplinary actions the student may be expelled from the school but demoting to a lower standard will not serve any purpose in the evolution of the student and we all are students in the school of life.

**3) KARMA & EXPERIENCE OF SUFFERING:** Normally it is believed that due to the bad karma one has to take birth as an animal to feel the suffering. So, a natural question arises that who experiences the suffering in us. With a little bit of introspection we understand that the experience of suffering/pleasure is more a function of a developed mind and not the body, which is why a person would really feel the suffering for one's karma in taking birth as a human again and feeling the sorrow with a lot more intensity than as an animal who has a mind but not with complex functions. It will feel the pain but not as much the suffering as a human being generates by the use of power of the mind.

**4) But yes, the consciousness may pass**

again through other kingdoms when there is a shift in the evolution process from one CHAIN to another, where the consciousness has to acclimatize itself with the matter of the new CHAIN. For example, if I have completed my highest degree in English language, I do not have to start studying English again if I go to a different country or school or college but if I want to learn a new language then I have to start from the basics and therefore I have to go through all the process again to learn a new language which is not the punishment for my bad karma but a part of evolution.

**5) ALLEGORIES / SYMBOLISM :** The confusion arises due to the mentioning of stories in scriptures/traditions about how a human took birth as an animal due to bad karma or due to attachment with the animals. But such instances are often allegorical in nature and to be studied with care. The reason for this is:

I) Upon the death of a person, when the physical body is destroyed (by whatever means) the atoms that are freed, follow the law of attraction and, are attracted towards the bodies with similar vibrations and magnetism. So, if a person has lead a life of animalistic passions/approach/nature, the atoms will be attracted towards the animals with similar tendencies and hence in a way the person is reborn as an animal (Resurrection of atoms).

II) Upon the death of a person, the astral body/kamic/desire elements takes form and gets attracted towards the similar

vibration (Humans and animals) as it has created while alive on the physical plane Or if the person has formed a strong link of attachment (Not Love) to a particular type of animal by vicious appetites. And in this way takes a birth as an animal but not in the real sense of the term and this creates obstacles in the further journey of the soul.

With the above discussion it is highly improbable that the consciousness moves backwards in evolution. Although the exceptions may exist about which we do not know yet, but they only indicate that there is a general rule about this process and it is not a matter of coincidence.

Best wishes and regards. Take Care. Enjoy. Namastey!!!

Shrikar Agnihotri: a member of the Theosophical Society from the Indian Section he has lectured nationally and internationally.

"Those Who believe in Karma have to believe in Destiny which, from birth to death, every man weaves thread by thread around himself, as a spider his web; and this Destiny is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible Prototype outside of us, or by more intimate astral, or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called man. Both these lead on the outward man, but one of them must prevail; and from the very beginning of the invisible affray the stern and implacable Law of Compensation steps in and takes its course, faithfully following the fluctuations of the fight. When the last strand is woven, and man is seemingly enwrapped in the network of his own doing, then he finds himself completely under the empire of this self-made destiny. It then neither fixes him like the inert shell against the immovable rock, or carries him away like a feather in a whirlwind raised by his own actions, and this is – KARMA."

(Blavatsky, H.P. S.D., 1, pg:700)

# Vril Force; The Introduction (Part 1)

Bruna R. Carvalho

The Vril-ya and the force of Vril have been an obsessive topic I have had for almost 5 years now. I can say that it has thousands of layers to discover and the dots I have made until now are not even half of what we still have to discover within this topic. Since this topic is huge, I will be doing a series of posts on the matter.

The term Vril might be confusing and somewhat unknown for some people. However, the term itself is just another xenonym given to a force that many wish to master or understand. A force that could either bring enlightenment or destruction upon ourselves and those around us. Some call it Chi, Reiki, Chakras, Magnetism, Or-gone energy, Odic force, X Force, Prana energy, Zero-point field, lightning, Vital energy, Fibonacci sequence, and so on...

The first mention of the term Vril-ya was in 1871, written in the book "Vril-ya: The coming race" by Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

In his book, Mr. Lytton mentions a race called the Vril-ya with a name deriving

from the Sanskrit word Vril-II meaning, "like God". A "like God", civilization/Race. It mentioned that this civilization mastered the power of Vril like no other race on earth. One could almost say that this race, could be hinting at the so-called; the lost civilization of Atlantis, ancient masters, the protectors of the holy "grail", Mayan science, or even the serpent race.

As I stated above Vril is just one of the thousands of names, made throughout the years to what we call now scientifically Antimatter. A force that can't be fully explained yet it is believed to be that which created our world and humanity. The fingerprints and part of the essence of the creator which enabled our existence.

Believe it or not, our ancestors, were not foolish. In fact, they probably knew more about this force than what we at this very moment know of. I believe that they wrote it in a way that would be harder to understand for the purpose of protecting that information from being fully destroyed and stolen. They used a

language, symbology, so that those who wish to know the secrets of the universe would be able to acknowledge it and follow the right path to discover even more.

Vril is not as unknown as you might have thought. It is illustrated in Egypt, Hindu culture, Norse mythology, Mayan culture, Chinese culture, Christian beliefs, Jewish beliefs, and probably in all existing cultures/religions/beliefs. However, it has also been a big interest among people with bad intentions such as Hitler. For the purpose of power and wealth.

#### What is Antimatter (Vril)?

To start off let us use the name we now call instead of Vril, which is Antimatter.

According to scientists, the Universe is filled with Matter and Antimatter. Matter being all which we can see, what we call in esotericism as the physical world. While Antimatter is that which we cannot see, the spiritual realm. That which is infinite and eternal.

It has been proven that our universe only possesses 5% of matter, while 95% is antimatter. This means that in this very moment we are only aware of 5% of existence.

The book of Bulwer Lytton also describes this same fact and I quote:

*These subterranean philosophers assert that, by one operation of vril, which Faraday would perhaps call 'atmospheric magnetism,' they can influence the variations of temperature—in plain words, the weather;*

*that by other operations, akin to those ascribed to mesmerism, electro-biology, odic force, &c., but applied scientifically through vril conductors, they can exercise influence over minds, and bodies animal and vegetable, to an extent not surpassed in the romances of our mystics. To all such agencies they give the common name of vril.*

(Page 43, The Coming Race)

It can destroy like the flash of lightning; yet, differently applied, it can replenish or invigorate life, heal, and preserve, and on it they chiefly rely for the cure of disease, or rather for enabling the physical organisation to re-establish the due equilibrium of its natural powers, and thereby to cure itself

(Page 51, The Coming Race)

In today's time, scientists have claimed that by one operation of antimatter its destructive power would be equal to 4 nuclear bombs.

On November 7th of 2013, Ruggero Maria Santilli made a great discovery. He managed to create a telescope (now known as the Santilli's telescope) that is capable of seeing Antimatter thanks to Concave lenses. In order to understand the lens better we need to know what kind of lenses normal telescopes use. The Galileos Telescope uses an objective lens which is similar to the way we see things, it breaks down the light (aka Prisma) however it only captures Matter Light, which is what our eyes also see. Concave lenses,

on the other hand, curve inwardly. It is a diverging lens, that spreads out light rays that have been refracted through it, being able to capture Antimatter light.

According to the Research Index "The only way to focus any light with negative index of refraction is via concave lenses, namely, lenses that are conjugated with respect to the conventional convex lenses used to focus ordinary matter light and illustrated in Figure" (I will do a further post explaining Antimatter light and Matter light soon).

This created speculations and the rise of theories, one of them being the old speculation that antimatter evolves backward in time, what is known in Magnetism as Diamagnetic Energy, representing the annihilation of Matter and Antimatter when in contact with each other. Diamagnetic magnetism, with an anticlockwise spin, therefore "evolving backward" occurs when the elements, electrons are in balance. Their magnetic field, however, is only created when an external force is applied. Relating with the Feminine. When applied, this energy reproduces a repelling force. It might seem subtle but it is there. Materials composed by this repelling force are usually sticky, receptive, and hold energy. Energy generators.

While Matter has positive energy, also known in magnetism as Para/Ferromagnetic, which evolves forward in time with respect to positive units of energy and time. In Paramagnetic Magnetism, the electrons are out of balance. When an external field is applied, they attract and align with the

same fields as the external source. This force has a clockwise spin, therefore, "evolving forward" relative to being Masculine. It is often depicted as either missing electrons or having extra ones. Meaning that it either produces Negative or Positive Ions when the external magnetic field is applied.

If we think this through, we will realize that this sequence, this fate exists everywhere. Where the masculine is able to join with the feminine and out of it derives either a positive (masculine) or negative (feminine) Ion (creation, child). When we say negative or positive, it is not meant as good or bad. Rather we could see it as the moon and the sun. Both different, yet both are essential in order for our earth to function.

However, it is not just in us that we can see this "law" of nature, we can also look at it and question our perception of time, here in this world. You see, if we imagine a clock spinning clockwise and if we have another clock on top of that same clock spinning anticlockwise where does that leave us in relation to time? How does that affect our minds, our lifespan, the lifespan of the earth...etc A clock constantly reversing up to the time when we were born and another clock speeding up until our last breath on earth, could that affect how we age? Is that what allows us to even exist?

Now that you have a clearer view into what vril is and the relation it has with the material world, we can come to the conclusion that it is indeed a force that cures and a force that also destroys everything including itself. It has been believed that

antimatter does not exist at a large scale of structure in the universe and that it solely exists at the particle level when scientists (such as Cern and Nasa) produce it in their laboratories. However, other scientists stick up to the claim that the world since its beginning has been constantly devastated by antimatter asteroids, such as in 1908 the Tunguska explosion in Siberia. Which had equivalent energy of one thousand Hiroshima atomic bombs. This has scared many scientists, fearing that it could happen again at any time on a much larger scale. Which could annihilate the current humanity.

However, there seems to be some sort of life inside antimatter, everything which has been made of it is different compared to all the material things we humans have created. Which could mean that this force could be that which our souls are made of.

### The Race of Vril-ya

According to the book of Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Vril-ya the coming Race, The vril-ya are a subterranean race waiting for the right time to emerge. Their appearance is described as a figure with black eyes, wings unto their knees, red man's color, and face like a sphinx. Which reminded me of the Sumerian gods called the Annunaki. The Annunaki were giants with wings unto their knees, red-skinned like, black-eyed and powerful. They were claimed to be the ones who gave knowledge to the Sumerian people. Apparently, the Annunaki were believed to have come from the 9th planet known as Nibiru and that they have crea-

ted humanity for the purpose of slavery.

According to mainstream media, the Sumerians are the very first civilization on this planet. They were known for giving us many things that we still use today such as the calendar (the solar calendar), the zodiac system for measurements, canal systems, and much more. Whether they truly were the first civilization, is another topic. I will be mentioning them in the further series of posts and how they too connect to Vril.

### The involvement of Nazis

According to some sources out there, it was believed that Hitler was involved and helped to create the secret societies known as The Vril Society, Thule society, and The Brotherhood of the snake. However, this cannot be fully proven, whether the claims are true or false. It is true however that they used to use their castle, The Wewelsburg castle for rituals and drug abuse in order to reach more "realms". In that specific castle, we can also see a specific room, known as the Ballroom with a black sun symbol painted on the ground and 12 pillars around the room. Some historians also believe that the northern tower of the castle was used to be the location of the most important Ritual room, used to worship Northern Gods.

Some theories claim that Nazis believed that the sacrifice of children would allow them to obtain more Vril than any other type of sacrifice or practice such as sex magick. That they believed that the vril-ya lived in the Northern South Pole, that

they were the White Knights Templars (belonging to the north), and that those Knights were the ancestors of the Nazis.

While all of this sounds like a conspiracy theory, I do believe that they were searching for something. Their trips to Tibet and Antarctica, just to mention a few, along with the manipulation of the Tibetan symbol, the swastika, the Templars cross, their numerous attempts to steal/manipulate ancient teachings into their own liking, and their belief in creating an Aryan race, do raise eyebrows.

This can show us, how harmful it could be

if everyone had access to ancient knowledge with evil materialistic intentions. By materialistic, I mean all those intentions that do not go hand in hand with what is pure and respectful with the law of nature. However, as we saw with the Nazis, because their intentions were so dark it only led them to their own insanity and destruction.

In part two, I will be presenting the different references of Vril throughout our ancient history, which will hopefully help us understand even more, the importance and significance of this force. We will also try to understand the symbols chosen to identify with that force.

SIKH TEMPLE,  
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR



# The Ritual Dimension of Theosophy – some forgotten endeavours

Kevin Tingay

## Introduction

The late Ninian Smart<sup>1</sup> suggested that one of the fundamental dimensions of a religion is ritual. The various groups that have made up the modern Theosophical Movement have generally denied that Theosophy is a religion. However Theosophists have, over the years, energetically taken part not only in ritual activity, but have demonstrated that all of Smart's dimensions appear in one way or another throughout Theosophical history.

In the discussions amongst the founders of the TS on the nature of the proposed society, and in its early years, some thought was given to its establishment as a secret initiatory body.<sup>2</sup> Olcott was a Freemason, as was Charles Sotheran, another of the founder members. But it was decided to present a bold public face to the world and the main activities of the Society were public lectures, the publication of books, pamphlets and periodicals, and the establishment of branches where members could study together. But most local bran-

ches of the Society are called lodges – an echo of masonic practice. Apart from the normal formality of public meetings there was no ritual aspect to the public face of Theosophy in the late 19th century. Individual members, however, were entrusted with signs and passwords, but this practice fell into disuse as the movement grew.

The initiatory element did manifest itself in the establishment of the Esoteric Section, later the Esoteric School. This group, though not secret, has conducted its affairs in private. The proceedings of ES meetings, though formally structured, did not involve ceremonial.

After the death of Madame Blavatsky in 1891 the effective leadership of the movement in the UK and India passed to Mrs Annie Besant, though significant numbers in the USA followed other leaders. In 1908 she was elected to the International Presidency of the parent Society. It was Mrs Besant's enthusiasm for the exploration and expression of Theosophical teachings in all areas of life that led to the involve-

ment of many members of the Society in organisations that fostered ceremonial work. The Co-Masonic Order and the Liberal Catholic Church are the most enduring and well known. I note their establishment here only to provide background context for the other groups I shall describe.

### The Order of International Co-Freemasonry<sup>3</sup>

In 1902 Mrs Besant was initiated in Paris into a lodge of a masonic order that had admitted women to membership.<sup>3</sup> The order followed French non-theistic practice but Mrs Besant obtained an agreement to establish it in the UK and the English speaking world following English and Scottish masonic law and practice (with the obvious exception of the initiation of women). In France the Order described itself as Maçonnérie Mixte but was generally known by its sub-title *Le Droit Humain*. In England the Order was called Universal (later International) Co-Freemasonry, or Co-Masonry for short. Lodges were established for the craft and higher degrees over the whole of the UK recruiting initially from amongst Mrs Besant Theosophical followers, but also attracted members from a wider constituency. Those campaigning for the rights of women were amongst the most energetic of them. By the 1930s there were over 50 lodges and associated bodies for the higher degrees in the UK. Lodges were also established in India and other parts of the British Empire, and in the United States. Membership seems to have been about 2/3 female and 1/3 male. Some women who joined in

the early years before WW1 who were not from a theosophical background did not apparently appreciate the opportunity to learn of the Theosophical interpretation of the mysteries of freemasonry. They broke away to set up an order for women only which continues to the present day and has a larger membership than the original Co-Masons. Mrs Besant continued as leader of the Order in the British Empire until her death in 1933. Her successors as President of the Theosophical Society have all held high rank in the Order, but non-Theosophists have also, and it is administratively quite separate from the Theosophical Society.

### The Liberal Catholic Church<sup>4</sup>

In 1908 a small mission of the Old Catholic Church of Holland was established in London. Number of Theosophists were attracted to membership as it seemed to offer a more liberal approach to Christianity than that offered by other churches. Under the erratic leadership of Bishop A H Matthew it broke with its Dutch parent. A number of Theosophists, including James I Wedgwood, were ordained priest, and in 1916 he was consecrated as a bishop. He in turn consecrated other Theosophists and the name of the movement was changed to 'The Liberal Catholic Church'. An elaborate liturgy in English was produced and the Church enjoyed some success in the 1920's. Like the Co-Masonic Order leadership was largely in Theosophical hands and a small proportion of its membership came from outside the movement. Despite its liberal outlook it did not go so far as

to ordain women to the priesthood. It too has suffered from decline in numbers and schism since the 1930's.

These two organisations were and remain separate bodies from the Theosophical Society, but other groups maintained closer links in that membership of the Theosophical Society was a requirement for membership of them.

#### The International Order of the Round Table<sup>5</sup>

This group was an educational and ceremonial order for children and young people associated with the Theosophical Society. Leadership was in the hands of TS members and Theosophical principle were taught. The ceremonies were based on the Arthurian myths. There was a grade structure of Page, Companion, Squire, and Knight. The Order still continues in some countries.

#### The Temple of the Rosy Cross<sup>6</sup>

In the journal of the Theosophical Society in England, *The Vahan*, in 1912 there was announced the establishment of this new ceremonial order for members. It was proclaimed as a revival of the ancient mysteries, with the added factor of the expectation of the arrival of a World Teacher for a New Age. This echoed the foundation in India by George Arundale of the Order of the Star in the East, which also looked to such a coming (implicitly in the person of the young Krishnamurti). Arundale, then Principal of the Central Hindu College, had

established within the college an Order of the Rising Sun in January 1911. By the end of that year it had metamorphosed into the OSE with the enthusiastic encouragement of Mrs Besant. The first issue of *The Herald of the Star* was published in January 1912. The progress and end of the Order has been well documented in biographies of Mrs Besant and Krishnamurti.

The original article in *The Vahan* stated: In the Theosophical Society there are many who find the fittest expression of their highest spiritual emotions in stately and rhythmical ceremonial, men and women who in past lives trod the mystic measures of the solemn planetary dance, filed in long procession through the Temples of the Gods, studied the symbolism of the Egyptian and Chaldean Mysteries and are haunted by memories of that past.<sup>7</sup>

The articles were over the three initials H, H, and L enclosed in a triangle. They stood for Herakles (Mrs Besant), Helios (Mrs Marie Russak), and Lomia (James Wedgwood).

The conditions of membership included:

1. Belief in the existence of the Masters of the Wisdom, and recognition of Master Rakoczi as Head of the ceremonial line of evolution.
2. Belief in the near Coming of a World Teacher.
3. Loyal allegiance to the Outer Head (Mrs Besant) of the Order of the temple of the Rosy Cross.
4. A vow of secrecy will be required as regards all the ceremonies and workings of the Order. Full acceptance of the ideals

and methods of the Order as laid down in the accompanying statement.

5. Fellows of the Theosophical Society, in good standing, alone are eligible. Members of other secret occult or

Mystic Orders (the E.S. and masonry excepted) are not admitted.<sup>7</sup>

The ritual, a copy of which is in the writer's collection, is an elaborate and somewhat ponderous drama, which lasted up to three hours. It rehearsed the stories of previous 'World Teachers' – Vyasa, Tahuti/ Thoth, Zarathustra, Orpheus, the Buddha, Shri Krishna, and Jesus. Candles were solemnly lit in honour of these beings, and the ceremony came to a climax with the lifting up of a larger candle which remained unlit in anticipation of the Teacher who was to come. Robes, head-dresses, and swords were worn by the participants in this rite which was accompanied by solemn music.

In 1914, however, the TRC was closed down. No reason was publicly given, but Leadbeater's biographer states that he was instrumental in persuading Mrs Besant to do this as he (Leadbeater) did not approve. Working as was in continental Europe he had no role in the establishment of the TRC in London.<sup>8</sup> But in a pamphlet on the Ritual of the Mystic Star Mr. Jinarajadasa, writing in 1951, states that:

On August 15, 1915, the Chohan of the Seventh Ray, the Master R., intimated certain defects in the organisation of the Temple of the Rosy Cross. First, that it had taken the name of one of His great degrees in Freemasonry. He gave certain other rea-

sons why, though he acknowledged the deep devotion of all those who worked the ritual, He could not however do much with it. Brother Besant then completely suspended the organisation, and I was commissioned to write a more suitable ritual. Whilst the ritual of the temple of the Rosy Cross was strictly private, my instructions were to create a ritual for public use.<sup>9</sup>

### The Krotona Drama

Whatever the feelings of C.W. Leadbeater were towards the Temple of the Rosy Cross in 1914 they seem to have been transformed by 1921 when his help was acknowledged in the preparation of another ritual activity, this time in the USA. A.P. Warrington, one of the leading Theosophists in America, published in 1921 (and reprinted in 1925) a booklet entitled The Krotona Drama – A non-sectarian ceremonial proclaiming the near coming of the Divine World Teacher. In the foreword he echoes the sentiments of the founders of the TRC on the value of ritual, and states that 'The Krotona Service' had been performed at the Krotona Theosophical Centre in Hollywood since 1911. The Centre had moved to Ojai, north of Los Angeles, in 1922. The rite is a simplified version of the TRC ritual, and is offered as a public rather than a private ceremony. Warrington suggests in a letter to Jinarajadasa<sup>10</sup> in 1913 that the TRC was for the few and well-to-do. The fact that the booklet was reprinted in 1925 would suggest that the Drama continued to be used through the 1920's, but I have been unable to trace any usage outside the USA. After 1929 it had been replaced

by the modified Ritual of the Mystic Star at some meetings of the TS in America.

### The Ritual of the Mystic Star

A rather longer lasting ceremonial expression of Theosophical ideas is to be found in the Ritual of the Mystic Star. This was the replacement for the TRC referred to above written by C.Jinarajadasa as a public ritual and published in several editions. In the edition of 1945 there is an explanatory preface and detailed ceremonial instructions.. The central theme of the TRC, the honouring of seven great spiritual teachers, remains, but with the difference that 'the candle dedicated to the Great Teacher who is to come is also lit in the course of the ceremony of the Mystic Star, as a symbol that the Great Teacher is already present in mystic ways in the world today, and is working through various channels.'<sup>11</sup> It may be deduced that this modification was made after the interest in the imminent return of the World Teacher waned after 1929

The introduction goes on to say that a new idea was added to the original ritual in that all human professions and activities should be considered as offerings to God. Included in the ritual were officiants who represented the callings of Judge, Scientist, Servant, Craftsman, and Healer; and the qualities of Joy, Beauty, Love, Wisdom, and Power. The drama is less prolix than those described above and enjoyed some popularity in Theosophical circles up to the 1950's when it began to be discontin-

ued. It is still used in India but seems to have now ceased to be used in most other countries.

### The Temple of the Motherhood of God.

This activity seems to have come into existence in Australia in the 1920's in connection with the World Mother movement and according to information passed to the writer by a Theosophist was devised by Dr.Mary Rocke, a physician, who was active in the circle around C.W.Leadbeater. A typescript ritual in the writer's collection is headed Temple of the Motherhood of God. It is subtitled For the worship of God under the feminine aspect. Explanatory notes in the text explain that the particular temple is:

Dedicated to Pallas Athene and certain other great Angels, who in the past and present watch over the worship of GOD, when He is approached through His Feminine Aspect, presenting our devotion and our service before the Throne of God and acting as channels for GOD'S force to us.

It goes on to list seven 'angels' corresponding to the sevenfold enumeration which recurs through Theosophical literature. Six of them are named as Pallas Athene, Hera, Aphrodite, Artemis. Demeter, Hestia, and the seventh (oddly enough) the Blessed Virgin Mary. A rather wordy ceremonial order is prescribed. The directions imply that adult participants in the rite are all to be female, but some roles are open to 'chil-

dren or young girls'.

My informant told me that the rite did not prove satisfactory and did not develop further than some experimental enactments in Australia and perhaps in England. Dr. Mary Rocke died in a shipboard accident in 1927 and this foray into feminist ritual did not continue after her death.

The same theme was continued by another endeavour to honour the feminine principle under the title of the World Mother. It did not major on ceremonial but a number of ritual activities did take place. An example was a 'Service for the Mother of All Men' produced at Adyar by C.Jinara-jadasa in 1948.

#### Other rites

In 1922 the Astrological Lodge of the Theosophical Society in England produced 'The Rite of the Planets' which continues to be enacted from time to time, though the Lodge has been separated from the Society for some years. There are other rites still in use whose participants wish to remain private but I suspect that there may have been others now discontinued. Texts may yet come to light. I have discovered a typescript of a text entitled 'The Seven Rays – a Sun Ceremonial' undated and unattributed but bearing all the signs of being of the same inter-war vintage as some of the rituals I have described. There may well have been original compositions in languages other than English produced in other parts of the world. In India there is a Theosophical Hindu rite – the Bhara-

ta Samaj Puja. Other Theosophical groups not 'in communion' with the parent Society at Adyar have also indulged in ritual and dramatic activities. Katherine Tingley's Society at Point Loma, and the Temple of the People are two examples.

#### Conclusion

The establishment, growth, and decline of the groups I have described took place in a period when the Theosophical movement was in its heyday. At the start of a new century the enthusiasm and idealism of many who sought new spiritual understandings both from the religions of the East, and from the esoteric traditions of the West, found in Theosophy many opportunities for the expression of their quests. The charismatic leadership of Annie Besant was a decisive factor in attracting recruits from all sections of society. The movement had always been attractive to women and in the period after the First World War the significant contribution of educated and professional single women to leadership within the movement is clearly discernible. The ceremonial groups were only one adjunct of the work but seem to have provided ritualistic and devotional forms for expression of the universalising and syncretistic spirituality of Theosophy. They also offered status and exotic titles that could exist behind the egalitarian public face of the movement.

Reasons for the decline of the Theosophical movement and its satellite activities are difficult to disentangle, but in hindsight it seems perhaps inevitable that the heady

enthusiasm of the 1920s could not be sustained. Jiddu Krishnamurti dissolved the Order of the Star in 1929, suggesting to his followers that spiritual truths could not be understood through any religious or philosophical organisation, nor though the acquisition of esoteric knowledge, nor though initiatory rituals of any sort. In that same year the Wall Street Crash and the following economic depression effected the incomes of many of the upper middle class supporters of Theosophy. Their ability to continue to maintain the relatively leisured lifestyle necessary to attend the constant round of meetings demanded by membership of many or all of the groups I have described was drastically cut back. The parent Theosophical Society itself lost about one third of its membership. Membership figures from the related ritual and other organisations are not publicly available but information in periodical literature would suggest that a corresponding loss occurred from those groups. The Second World War and its aftermath did nothing to increase recruitment in the western world.

From the 1960's onward the connections between Theosophical Society, and the Co-Masonic Order and the Liberal Catholic Church have become more tenuous and both the latter movements have suffered from internal disputes and schisms.

The investigation of the ritually based groups I have described reveals an inherent tension within movements that lay claim to both embody and communicate esoteric traditions. Blavatsky and her

successors aspired to reveal to humanity spiritual truths that would transform the lives of individuals and release them from the thraldom of organised religion. Annie Besant and other Theosophical leaders encouraged their followers to apply the ancient wisdom to the social and political situations of their day. But much of the appeal of the occult tradition was its gnostic character. In the initiations and grade ceremonies of the co-masonic lodges, and the sanctuaries and temples of the other rites and orders, the hidden knowledge was often communicated with portentous secrecy and under solemn obligations. The more radical political and social views espoused by Annie Besant were not proclaimed with the same enthusiasm after her death.

The rise of the New Age movement from the 1960's onward was generally marked by a spirit of openness and a distrust of spiritual hierarchies . Nevertheless the New Age and Pagan communities have also seen the exploration of spirituality through ritual. Connections with masonic and other ritual traditions continue to emerge, and no doubt continue to develop both in and out of the public eye. The ancient mysteries continue to be a source of inspiration at the start of the 21st century as they did to the Theosophists at the beginning of the 20th.

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LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ADYAR



# HPB in Tibet

Pedro Oliveira

Among the many mysteries in H.P. Blavatsky's (HPB) life the central one is who she really was. Scholars of different persuasions have referred to her as an adventurous traveller, a strong-willed woman, a Russian writer who dabbled in the

'occult', a psychic and a medium, plus much less kind descriptions. A multifaceted life like hers provoked equally different perceptions of her, who indeed was a strongly independent woman travelling around the world, sometimes to forbidden places like Tibet.

But it is her Teachers' description of her that really matters in order to understand her real work in the world: the herald for the rebirth of the Esoteric Tradition in the western world. For them she was Upasika, an initiated Chela.

Even in her own lifetime people would play with the word 'initiation' to attract attention, followers, power and money. In today's world it has become a brand – a corporate logo that is used by many self-

aggrandizing individuals to build around themselves a 'spiritual' empire, constantly selling the message that the 'Guru/Initiate/Avatar' has reached the summit of spiritual enlightenment and that all we have to do is to follow him or her, for a price.

Unlike such individuals, HPB undertook, voluntarily, to live a life of complete self-sacrifice in order to prepare herself to the work that was assigned to her by the Masters. In doing so she attracted the world's contempt and opposition, she had to face betrayal and ignominy, and was the subject of a relentless campaign of character-assassination and malice. For a profoundly spiritually sensitive individual, who underwent a serious process of inner, spiritual transformation, to be at the receiving end of the world's vilest currents must have been an unspeakable ordeal.

The passages below present, sometimes in detail, the unique process that HPB went through. It goes without saying that only a highly resourceful individual would have been able to face it like she did, without any

allurement of personal gain whatsoever.

Below is the Mahatmas description of the challenging process that leads a candidate to the state of Chelaship, which HPB achieved:

*Every human being contains within himself vast potentialities, and it is the duty of the adepts to surround the would-be chela with circumstances which shall enable him to take the "right-hand path," — if he have the ability in him. We are no more at liberty to withhold the chance from a postulant than we are to guide and direct him into the proper course. At best, we can only show him after his probation period was successfully terminated — that if he does this he will go right; if the other, wrong. But until he has passed that period, we leave him to fight out his battles as best he may; and have to do so occasionally with higher and initiated chelas such as H.P.B., once they are allowed to work in the world, that all of us more or less avoid.*

*(The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, Letter 92, chronological edition.)*

In the next passages Mahatma K.H. points out how the Adepts' chiefs searched for a long time to find someone like HPB as well as how the formation of the TS was conceived by the Brotherhood of Adepts:

*After nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European body upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and*

*our own.*

*(Letter 22, chronological edition)*

*On the 17th of November next the Septenary term of trial given the Society at its foundation in which to discreetly "preach us" will expire. One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionnally, that the occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others — wiser as it would now seem — held differently, but consent was given for the trial. It was stipulated, however, that the experiment should be made independently of our personal management; that there should be no abnormal interference by ourselves. So casting about we found in America the man to stand as leader — a man of great moral courage, unselfish, and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best, but (as Mr. Hume speaks in HPB's case) — he was the best one available. With him we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them she had strong personal defects, but just as she was, there was no second to her living fit for this work. We sent her to America, brought them together — and the trial began.*

*(Letter 45, chronological edition)*

The above mentioned passages strongly imply that the success of the new venture — the Theosophical Society and the dissemination of Theosophy — was based in no small measure on HPB's occult training in Tibet. It becomes apparent that such training could not be conducted in any

other country but required her physical presence in that secluded country where her Teachers lived.

Geoffrey Barborka, in his insightful book H.P. Blavatsky, Tibet and Tulku (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1966) presents important evidence not only of her travels to Tibet but also some passing glimpses of the inner training she was undergoing under the direction of the Mahatmas. Barborka quotes the following letter from HPB to A.P. Sinnett:

*"I say . . . to the world: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am in your hands and subject and subordinate to the world's jury, only since I founded the T.S. Between H. P. Blavatsky from 1875 and H.P.B. from 1830 to that date, is a veil drawn and you are in no way concerned with what took place behind it, before I appeared as a public character.....'"*  
*"... The whole of my life except the weeks and months I passed with the Masters in Egypt or in Tibet, is so inextricably full of events with whose secrets and real actuality the dead and the living are concerned, and I made only responsible for their outward appearance..."* (op. cit. p. 116)

In the next passage, HPB replies to a critic, Arthur Lillie, regarding her travels in Tibet:

*"I will tell him [Arthur Lillie] also that I have lived at different periods in Little Tibet as in Great Tibet, and that these combined periods form more than seven years. Yet,*

*I have never stated either verbally or over my signature that I had passed seven consecutive years in a convent. What I have said, and repeat now, is, that I have stopped in Lamaistic convents; that I have visited Tzi-gadze, the Tashi- Lhünpo territory and its neighbourhood, and that I have been further in, and in such places of Tibet as have never been visited by any other European, and that he can ever hope to visit."* (op. cit. p. 121)

In the same reply to Lillie, HPB recounts having met her Teachers near the border of Tibet:

*"Only years back, as I can prove by numerous witnesses, when journeying from Chandernagor to Darjeeling, instead of proceeding to it direct, I left the train half way, was met by friends with a conveyance, and passed with them into the territory of Sikkim, where I found my Master and Mahatma Koot Hoomi. Thence five miles across the old borderland of Tibet."* (op. cit., p. 123)

In a letter to Sinnett, HPB recalls a brief but significant visit to her Teachers' Ashrama:

*The fact is that had I not left Bombay in the greatest secrecy — even some Theosophists who visit us believing me at home but busy and invisible as usual — had I not gone incognito so to say till I reached the hills and turned off the railway to enter Sikkim I would have never been allowed to enter it unmolested, and would not have seen M. and K.H. in their bodies both. Lord, I would have been*

*dead by this time. Oh the blessed blessed two days! It was like the old times when the bear paid me a visit. The same kind of wooden hut, a box divided into three compartments for rooms, and standing in a jungle on four pelican's legs; the same yellow chelas gliding noiselessly; the same eternal "gul-gulgul" sound of my Boss's inextinguishable chelum pipe; the old familiar sweet voice of your K. H. (whose voice is still sweeter and face still thinner and more transparent) the same entourage for furniture — skins, and yak-tail stuffed pillows and dishes for salt tea etc.*

(The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, London, 1925, letter 19)

The passage below, from Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky by Mary K. Neff (London: Rider & Co. Paternoster House, E.C., 1937) refers to one of the periods of spiritual training that HPB underwent in Tibet, with her Masters:

*In the Master's Ashrama at Last Of H.P.B.'s life in the home of her Master, we catch but few glimpses. One of the most intimate of these is contained in the following reminiscence written by her in 1886: "I was again (a scene of years back) in Mahatma K. H.'s house. I was sitting in a corner on a mat, and he was walking about the room in his riding dress, and Master [M.] was talking to someone behind the door.*

*"I remind can't" — I pronounced in answer to a question of His about a dead aunt. He smiled and said: 'Funny English you use.'*

*Then I felt ashamed, hurt in my vanity, and began thinking (mind you, in my dream or vision which was the exact reproduction of what had taken place word for word sixteen years ago). 'Now I am here and speaking nothing but English in verbal phonetic language, I can perhaps learn to speak better with Him.'*

*"To make it clear: with Master I also used English, which whether bad or good was the same for Him, as He does not speak it but understands every word I say out of my head, and I am made to understand Him — how I could never tell or explain if I were killed but I do. With D.(jwal) K.(ul) I also speak English, he speaking it better even than Mah. K. H.*

*"Then in my dream still, three months after, as I was made to feel in that vision — I was standing before Mah. K. H., near the old building taken down He was looking at; and as Master was not at home, I took to Him a few sentences I was studying in Senzar in His sister's room, and asked Him to tell me if I had translated them correctly and gave Him a slip of paper with these sentences written in English.*

*"He took and read them, and correcting the interpretation read them over, and said: 'Now your English is becoming better. Try to pick out of my head even the little I know of it.' And He put His hand on my forehead in the region of memory and squeezed His fingers on it (and I felt even the same trifling pain in it as then, and the cold shiver I had experienced); and since that day He did so with my head daily, for*

about two months.

*"Again the scene changes, and I am going away with Master who is sending me off back to Europe. I am bidding good-bye to His sister and her child, and all the chelas. I listen to what the Masters tell me. And then come the parting words of Mah. K. H., laughing at me as He always did ..." (p. 147)*

In the following passage of a letter from Mahatma K.H. to both A.P. Sinnett and A.O. Hume, an attempt is made by the Master to explain one of the mysteries of HPB's personality, which was at times misunderstood by both English gentlemen:

*"I am painfully aware of the fact that the habitual incoherence of her statements – especially when excited—and her strange ways make her in your opinion a very undesirable transmitter of our messages. Nevertheless, kind Brothers, once that you have learned the truth; once told, that this unbalanced mind, the seeming incongruity of her speeches and ideas, her nervous excitement, all that in short, which is so calculated to upset the feelings of sober minded people, whose notions of reserve and manners are shocked by such strange outbursts of what they regard as her temper, and which so revolt you,—once that you know that nothing of it is due to any fault of hers, you may, perchance, be led to regard her in quite a different light. Notwithstanding that the time is not quite ripe to let you entirely into the secret; and that you are hardly yet prepared to*

*understand the great Mystery, even if told of it, owing to the great injustice and wrong done, I am empowered to allow you a glimpse behind the veil. This state of hers is intimately connected with her occult training in Tibet, and due to her being sent out alone into the world to gradually prepare the way for others. After nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European body upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own. You do not understand? Of course not. Please then, remember, what she tried to explain, and what you gathered tolerably well from her, namely the fact of the seven principles in the complete human being. Now, no man or woman, unless he be an initiate of the 'fifth circle,' can leave the precincts of Bod-Las [Tibet] return back into the world in his integral whole—if I may use the expression. One, at least of his seven satellites has to remain behind for two reasons: the first to form the necessary connecting link, the wire transmission—the second as the safest warrantee that certain things will never be divulged. She is no exception to the rule, and you have seen another exemplar—a highly intellectual man—who had to leave one of his skins behind; hence, is considered highly eccentric. The bearing and status of the remaining six depend upon the inherent qualities, the especially upon the idiosyncrasies transmitted by what modern science call, atavism. Acting in accordance with my wishes, my brother M. made to you through her a certain offer, if you remember. You had but to*

*accept it, and at any time you liked, you would have had for an hour or more, the real baitchooly to converse with, instead the psychological cripple you generally have to deal with now."*

*(The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, Letter 22, chronological edition.)*

HPB knew, much before she published The Voice of the Silence in 1889, one of the cardinal truths of the spiritual Path: 'Nay, O thou candidate for Nature's hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathāgata, those gifts and powers are not for Self.' (Fragment Three) In a world that daily glorifies selfishness and self-centredness her example shines like a star in a profoundly dark sky. Her example becomes itself a teaching: forget self in the service of all that lives.

When she lay dying in her house in London, in May 1891, her last words to

Isabel Cooper-Oakley were: "Keep the link unbroken! Do not let my last incarnation be a failure." She was the living link with the world of the Adepts, the Masters of the Wisdom and Compassion, a world of perfect altruism, of peace and renunciation of everything that pertains to self. Cynics maintained that the link was broken on her death. But they failed to see that it continued to be alive in every theosophist that continued to aspire to be of service, to probe deeper, to cleanse their hearts, to purify their minds, to forget themselves. The link is a spiritual revolution that cannot be stopped.

The link with the Wise Ones, which HPB embodied, did not die. It illuminated many lives, it comforted many souls and energized a global movement. She lives amongst us as the soul of Theosophy made practical.

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## On Pythagoras

"Heraclides of Pontus says that Pythagoras used to say about himself that he had once been born as Aethalides and was regarded as a son of Hermes. Hermes told him that he could choose anything he wanted except immortality, and he asked to be able to retain, both alive and dead, the memory of things that has happened. He therefore remembered everything during his lifetimes, and when dead he still preserved the same memories. Later he entered into Euphorbus and was wounded by Menelaus. Euphorbus use to say that he had formerly been born as Aethalides and had received the gift from Hermes, and use to tell the journeying of his soul and all its migrations, recount all the plants and creatures to which it had belonged, and describe everything he had experienced in Hades and the experiences undergone by the rest of the souls there. When Euphorbus died, his soul moved into Hermotimus, who also wanted to prove the point, so he went to Branchidae, entered the sanctuary of Apollo, and pointed out the shield which Menelaus had dedicated there... When Hermotimus died, he became Pyrrhus, the fisherman from Delos, and again remembered everything, how he had formerly been Aethalides, then Euphorbus, then Hermotimus then Pyrrhus. And when Pyrrhus died, he became Pythagoras and remembered everything that has just been mentioned." (Heraclides of Pontus in Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers)

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# The Celtic Mysteries and the Tale of Taliesyn

Dianne Kynaston

The Celtic Mystery Tradition flourished in the British Isles and France and possibly in other areas of Europe during the pre-Roman times and can still be seen to have had a presence up until late medieval times in Britain. There appear to have been two distinct aspects to this tradition – the Lower Mysteries which deal with the daily cycles of life such as the seasons, fertility and planting and harvesting, with the modern day Wicca possibly being a reflection of this aspect; and the Higher Mysteries as found in the community of the Druids who were the bards and the teachers of deeper Spiritual Truths.

In *Anthropogenesis* (part two of The Secret Doctrine), H.P. Blavatsky makes the following statement:

*"The hierophants, moreover, of Egypt, as of Babylon, generally styled themselves the Sons of the Serpent God or Sons of the Dragon (during the mysteries). "The Assyrian priest bore always the name of his god," says Movers. The Druids of the Celto-Brittanic regions also called themselves snakes. "I am a serpent; I am a Druid" says*

*Taliesyn."* (Pages 379-380)

The hierophants can be seen as the communicators of the Ancient Wisdom, and the serpent (which HPB also calls "the dragon") was the symbol for both the transmission and the transmitters of this knowledge.

The Mysteries were rituals and ceremonies of instruction through allegorical experience. The word 'mysteries' is derived from the Greek *muo*, "to close the mouth", which reflects the secrecy that came with entering into such instruction. In The *Theosophical Glossary* HPB, under the heading of the "Mysteries", explains them as "...Greek *teletai* or finishings, celebrations of initiation or the Mysteries." They were observances, generally kept secret from the profane and uninitiated, in which were taught, by dramatic representation and other methods, the origin of things, the nature of the human spirit, its relation to the body, and the method of its purification and restoration to higher life. Further on HPB states:

*"The Mysteries were in every country a series of dramatic performances, in which*

*the mysteries of cosmogony and nature in general, were personified by the priests and neophytes, who enacted the part of various gods and goddesses, repeating supposed scenes (allegories) from their respective lives. These were explained in their hidden meaning to the candidates for initiation and incorporated into philosophical doctrines."*

The Druids did not commit any of their teachings to writing but passed them on via the spoken word and the allegories of their rituals. However, like other Mystery Traditions one can glean some of their ideas and teachings through the myths and legends found in the folklore of the British Isles. One such example is the collection of stories that surround the Welsh bard, Taliesyn. There is an ancient Triad which states:

The three principal bards of the Island of Britain  
 Merlin Ambrosius  
 Merlin, Son of morvan  
 And Taliesyn, the Chief of the Bards.

Taliesyn was considered for a long time to be a mythical bard, being a central character in the Welsh writings known as the Mabinogion, and he also appeared in some of the Arthurian writings as a bard at the court of King Arthur. However, he is now considered to have been an historical person who lived between 520 and 570 CE, though some accounts have him living until 610 or 640 CE.

In the Iolo manuscript Thomas Hopkins gives his genealogy, starting with

Taliesyn, chief of the Bards of the West, son of saint Hewg of Caerleon upon Usk and he ends with: "...Taliesyn became chief Bard of the West from having been appointed to preside over the Chair of the Round Table at Caerleon upon Usk."

In some biographies it is stated that he was an orphan, and was found in a coracle floating upon weir on May Eve by Elfin, son of King Gwyddno, who thus raised him. This point has been incorporated into the legend that surrounds Taliesyn, an example how legends and historical facts are often intertwined. Some writings have him as a bard at the court of the valiant warrior chieftain, Urien, who held sovereignty in the area of Rheged during the sixth century.

Taliesyn is said to have spoken and written in Welsh, but no records remain of his writings, and his poems were most likely transmitted orally, as was the system of the Druids. The earliest written copies of his poems first appeared in the ninth century, and the versions we have today come from the Middle Ages.

The book of Taliesyn contains poems of an historical as well as mythological and mystical nature, and certainly present him as a Druid. One poem state:

*I am a clear singer, I am a tower, I am a Druid.*

*I am a serpent, I am love.*

*I am the cell, I am the opening chasm.*

*I am the repository of the Mysteries.*

*I am the source of re-animation.*

*I love the tops of trees, with their tops well joined.*

*I am the bard who composes and does not merit reproof.*

*I love him who delights not in strife.*

*He who despairs the adept shall not enjoy the mead.*

The legend that concerns Taliesyn has many variations, but principally it relates his encounter with the Celtic goddess, Cerridwen, who is the Great Mother in the Celtic mythology, and is equal to the Egyptian goddess, Isis, or Diana of Ephesus, all three being associated with the process of initiation into the mysteries.

The legend commences with Cerridwen as the wife of a noble man Tegid Voel (meaning blind serenity), and they had three children, the third of whom was badly deformed. Cerridwen knows that her son's deformity will give him little chance of being accepted by the nobility unless he has some special qualities, so she decides to prepare the Cauldron of Awn Gwybodau (water of inspiration and sciences). The brew has to continually boil for a year and a day to produce three drops of divine essence, and by drinking these drops her son would acquire great wisdom. In some Arthurian stories this cauldron is sought for and found by King Arthur, and was possibly later Christianised into the holy grail.

Cerridwen left the cauldron in the care of a blind man named Mordu and a young boy named Gwion who tended the fire beneath it. The completion of the period of brewing was close at hand, but Cerridwen

was busy and did not notice that the three drops were ready. They flew out of the cauldron and Gwion caught them on his finger. They, of course, burned, and so he put his finger to his mouth and thus swallowed the divine drops. Immediately he acquired great knowledge, but the first piece of knowledge impressed on his mind was that Cerridwen would be very angry indeed, so he fled.

Cerridwen soon realised what had happened, and quickly pursued him. Gwion then went through a series of shape-changing. Firstly, he became a hare and she became a greyhound; he dived into the stream as a fish and she became an otter; he flew into the air as a sparrow and she became a hawk; he fell onto the floor of a mill as a grain of wheat and she became a hen, scratched him out and swallowed him. She then resumed her human form, only to find that the grain had impregnated her, nine months later she gave birth to a son.

She no longer had the heart to kill him, so she placed him in a covered coracle upon a weir where he floated for many a day, and at last he came to the shore where he was found by Elfin, son of the local King, Gwyddno. On opening the coracle his companion said to Elfin: "Behold Taliesyn – the Radiant Brow." The babe was carried to the court, and presented to the king, whereupon the babe uttered such wisdom that he confounded all the bards present, ending with these words:

*"Thrice have I been born. I know how to meditate. It is a pity that men will not*

*come to seek all the wisdom of the world which is treasured in my bosom, for I know all that has been, and all that will be hereafter."*

Thus we see that Taliesyn has had three births or progressed through three stages:

- Firstly, he is Gwion the little, the mortal human who gives himself in service to the goddess, tending the flame that purifies – that burns away the weeds of the personality.
- Secondly, he goes through a series of shape-changing. In an Arthurian story Merlin teaches the young Arthur by changing him into various animals. This can be interpreted as a period of learning about the essential nature of life through experience, ending with the period within the womb of the goddess.
- Thirdly, there is the period within the dark cell, floating upon the waters – alone and unaided. Knowledge, whether from books or teachers, can only take us so far – the last transformation must come from beyond the mind, and this we must do on our own.

Gwion finally emerges from the coracle of Taliesyn – the Radiant Brow. The Light of his spiritual nature shines forth in all its glory.

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These three stages or births can also be likened to the Three Halls of HPBs book, *The Voice of the Silence*. She begins with the words "Three halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils," which she then lists as the Hall of ignorance – Avidya, the Hall of Learning and the Hall of Wisdom. HPB ends that passage with:

*"Seek for him who is to thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom, the hall which lies beyond wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory."*

So here again we find three stages through which the pilgrim or neophyte must pass in order to reach that state wherein he radiates light.

Reaching the stage of illumination does not end the legend of Taliesyn, for there are many tales of his further adventures. For now, as all great teachers do, he works to serve the King and all mankind.

The story of Taliesyn can thus be seen as a powerful presentation of Celtic Mysteries, an allegory of Druidic initiation, and a guide for our own soul in its treading the Path of Life.



ZOROASTRIAN TEMPLE,  
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR

# Giordano Bruno, Defender of Truth

Catalina Isaza Cantor

On this Adyar day, we gather to celebrate the lives of true messengers of the theosophical teachings:: Giordano Bruno, Leadbeater, Krishnamurti and Olcott, apostles of truth whose life and work showed integrity, free thought in a Krishnamurtian sense and who wanted to spread that Truth to their contemporaries. They were those who became torches of light for a humanity that still lives in the shadow of ignorance and attachment to the illusion of the transient. I have always been fascinated by the figure of Giordano Bruno and his work and what better than this Adyar day to share something on the life of this remarkable man who dedicated most of his life to proclaim a message that continues to resonate to this day, one of true religiosity.

The word religion comes from the Latin *religare*, to bind with the sacred. The motto of the TS says: "There is no religion higher than truth", the search for truth is what should inspire the religious man. However, few human beings are truly religious and go beyond what the dominant religious

or scientific doctrine of their time teaches. Few seek to remove the veils behind which Eternal Wisdom hides. Giordano Bruno was one such man, a spirit of true love for science and religion. He became a Dominican priest at an early age and was later excommunicated by the church. And, as ironic as it may seem, it was the Catholic Church, in charge of protecting religion and dictating the limits of science at the time, that, through its so called holy Inquisition, condemned our hero to the stake. He was even persecuted by the Calvinist Protestants, showing that, despite trying to be reformers of certain principles of Christianity; Protestant became an equally dogmatic Church and closed to deeply revealing ideas such as those of Bruno.

Giordano Bruno, born in Nola, Italy, in 1548, was burned to death in the Piazza di Fiori in Rome, after a long trial that lasted the last 8 years of his life, and after spending most of his life fleeing from one European city to another. In fact Bruno said: "All the earth is a homeland for a true philosopher".

He died on February 17, 1600 and, before dying, he pronounced before his judges the following words, "Perhaps your fear of passing judgment is greater than my fear of receiving it."

He did not fear death because he understood that life transcends the momentary matter, he was aware of the unity of life, he knew that the body is only a vehicle of the high spirit and that the true purpose of human existence is evolution and its ultimate goal is union with the source. Bruno affirmed that the Universe is infinite, that God is in all things, that there are innumerable worlds with other forms of life. He also denied the core of Catholic doctrines and spoke openly about reincarnation. In *Isis Unveiled* (Volume 1) HPB says about him:

*His philosophy, inherited from Pythagoras, expresses similar ideas to those of the Upanishads (...) The Eternal is the Spirit of Fire, which stirs up and fructifies and develops into a concrete form everything that is born of water or the primordial earth, evolved out of Brahma; but the universe is itself Brahma, and he is the universe. God is an Entity totally *per se*, an Infinite Spirit, and the only Being utterly free and independent of either effects or other causes; who, through that same Will which produced all things and gave the first impulse to every cosmic law, perpetually keeps in existence and order everything in the universe (pp. 92-94).*

And, in fact, Pythagorean ideas were very close to him, not only because of

their affinity, but also because Nola, his homeland, was at the time of Pythagoras the centre where the philosopher taught. It is even said that in a previous life, Bruno was part of the group of close disciples to Pythagoras.

Due to his philosophy, he was persecuted and accused of being a heretic and an atheist, like the Indian *swâbhâvikas*. Bruno imparted his teachings and expressed his beliefs publicly, and these were opposed to those of his time. And although he often had the favour of kings and scholars, he never had rest, for he never agreed to retract his ideas, to silence his voice and his restless mind. Possessing a profoundly open mind, an eager intellect, a brilliant intelligence, eloquence and natural disposition for debate, he always questioned and examined in depth all the teachings of his time, exposing the scientific and philosophical backwardness.

Bruno was an apostle of truth. His life was a living example of that brave declaration of principles of HPB's Golden Stairs: "Fear, falsehood and baseness are the real evils of life. Only a noble life is useful. Dishonour is worse than death, it stains the life, while death does nothing but break the form," he said. Never, not even when he was asked to attend Mass and reaffirm his faith in the Church in exchange of teaching at the University of Paris, not even during the eight years he spent in a cell while his trial took place, not even during the eight days before his death in which the religious authorities offered to spare his life if he publicly recanted his statements, never

he betrayed his principles and the call of his soul. In his texts we read: "There are still ideals which are worth martyrdom; there is still a service which demands the sacrifice of all the world holds dear." And those ideals were the same ideals of the service of the Masters for the progress of man.

Bruno's path can be compared to that of the *Bodhisattva*: he embarked on a quest for universal truths, for knowledge of the eternal, and strove, throughout his life, not only to defend these truths but to spread them, to awaken minds. His quest was not for his own benefit but for the benefit of all, like the *Bodhisattva*, who seeks not only individual but collective salvation, he was motivated by compassion and commitment to the religion of truth. Bruno identified himself as an "awakener of slumbering souls".

HPB dedicates fragments of her *Isis Unveiled and Collected Writings* to explain his ideas. Annie Besant deeply admired Giordano Bruno and wrote extensively about him, she called him "the apostle of theosophy". In fact, it is even said that she was Bruno's reincarnation. We do not know clearly about that, but what we can say for sure is that the message that Bruno proclaimed in the 16th century resonates in the world in the 21st century, he brought to the Western world of his time the message of Theosophy.

It is that attitude of Bruno that we must

remember in our day to day lives. Today, on this Adyar day, the 421st anniversary of his physical death, we do so in a special way. His ideas are still relevant; looking back at them should make us think about our purpose as students of theosophy and how to fulfil the *dharma* of the Theosophical Society. The TS is a centre for spreading the Ageless Wisdom, for combating intolerance, dogmatism, superstition and fundamentalism which were, are and will always be obstacles to man's inner progress.

On the day of Adyar, the vibrant centre of our beloved TS, let us remember that it is from the attitude of an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect; let us remember that we can transform our lives. We must position ourselves as defenders of those unjustly attacked and that a deep understanding of the principles of *Gupta Vidya* is fundamental to maintain, as Bruno did until the last moment of his life, a brave declaration of principles.

I will conclude with his words: "No matter how dark the night is, wait for the dawn, rejoice and remain with integrity, return love for love". Let us honour these words by making ours a life of integrity, service and brave declaration of principles. Thank you. Namaste.

*Article based on a talk recorded for the Rohit Lodge of Ahmedabad (India) during the celebration of Adyar Day, February 2021.*

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# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING



# Love Is Harmony, Even In Discord

## Discord Is The Harmony Of The Universe

Simon O'Rourke

This title is made up of two separate sayings. The first, "**Love is harmony, even in discord**" \_comes from an episode called The Tide, from the well known TV series Kung Fu. That show's developers borrowed heavily aphorisms from Asian spiritual cultures, particularly the *Tao Te Ching*, attributed to the ancient Taoist philosopher and sage Lao-tzu. The second, "**discord is the harmony of the universe**"\_ \_is from the Mahatma Letters (ML 120), written by, as termed by HP Blavatsky, one of the inner founders of the Theosophical Society.

Both sayings refer to the idea of Brotherhood, the most important idea placed in the First Object of the Theosophical Society. Namely; "*To form a Nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, with-out distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.*"\_ That nucleus was begun with the first dedicated members who felt the first unselfish twinge of love and camaraderie. At every moment it continues to call to us to retain its existence and its integrity, one among

many possible nuclei in the world, as the strength of love from that nucleus radiates out into the world. The ever-changing quality and strength of that form will determine if it is to grow and expand to become a leading nucleus in the world. And that depends very much on the membership, now and in the future.

It refers to "*Humanity, without distinction* of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour." \_Some would argue, that we should include into this nucleus every-thing that has consciousness. As has been said, life is consciousness, consciousness is life. However, the Object is meant for Humanity alone. In Mahatma Letter 15, Humanity is referred to as the 'great orphan',\_ \_constantly struggling with itself, "since there is hope for man *only in man*".\_ \_Why 'great orphan'?\_ \_It could be said the less developed fields for the life wave such as the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms are instinctually part of universal nature. Equally, the more developed kingdoms are intuitionally at one. Only Humanity has forgotten,

needing to be reminded, that it is a part of the abstract nature of the Universe.

We are a Brotherhood of course. Yet what does that word mean? It was intended to refer to all people bound together in mutual love and support, a name associated with a family relationship familiar to all, to emblematically indicate both the hearty depths and interconnected responsibility of that bond. Without the distinctions listed to hold it back. It is without the distinction of 'sex', and so is sex-neutral, and perhaps gender-neutral. By 'sex' we mean: "Either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions." [Oxford English Dictionary (at <https://www.lexico.com/definition/sex>).

*"Organisms of many species are specialized into male and female varieties, each known as a sex. Sexual reproduction involves the combining and mixing of genetic traits: specialized cells known as gametes combine to form offspring that inherit traits from each parent."*

[Wikipedia] Technically we could add Hermaphrodites and Androgynes. These are biological terms while gender tends to be predominately social: *"Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity."* [Wikipedia] Many people today self-identify with more than 60 different gender characteristics or types. Even so, it is a sensitive issue in the community and as a result of the use of language and labels, one person's label

and definition may vary considerably from another person's. So it is kinder at a social level to accommodate date and respect each and every person's view of themselves. (See <https://www.healthline.com/health/different-genders#a-d>)

There are no words in the English language which have the same feeling and sense of unity as *"Brotherhood"*. Hopefully there will be one. If we add the word *"Sisterhood"* then the phrase '*without distinction ... of sex*' is confused and distorts the original intention. And which is placed first? If we add the numerous variations of gender then the meaning is diluted. According to EtymologyOnline.com: *Sibling* comes from Old English sibling "relative, kinsman," from sibb "kinship, relationship; love, friend-ship, peace, happiness." A Sibling relationship "tends to be more *egalitarian and symmetrical* than with family members of other generations. Furthermore, sibling relationships often reflect the overall condition of cohesiveness within a family." [Wikipedia.]

Egalitarianism is important in the concept of Brotherhood. Equality highlights the common condition, we being the mortal children of the parent divine. This concept is a part of several traditions. In Ancient Greece, *"many other mythologists informed us that the chiefs of the Gods even were anxious to claim for themselves that superlative affection which, through marriage, binds children to their parents. That is why they introduced among the Gods the terms father and mother, Zeus*

*begetting Athena, while Hera produced Hephaestus, the nature of which offspring is contrary so as to unite the most remote through friendship." (Iamblichus: *The Life Of Pythagoras*).* While respecting and acknowledging our differences, and contrary natures, the principle of Equality strengthens our bonds. Pythagoras also noted "*Equality is Friendship, Friendship is Equality*". (Iamblichus: *The Life Of Pythagoras*). In other words, "Love is harmony, even in dis-cord." It can mean, united in spite of our differences. However, it would be truer to say united and stronger by the *merging* of our differences, like the Knights of the Round Table, or the points of the Astrological Wheel. What are contraries and similarities but the harmonious and discordant aspects of the wheel. Four elements, earth, water, air and fire representing three harmonious triangles, such as Aquarius, Libra and Gemini which are harmonious to each other. These are pleasing and yet powerless.

And three crosses, representing the discords. The crosses represent the three archetypal qualities of Will (the fixed cross, Leo, Aquarius, Taurus and Scorpio), Wisdom (the mutable cross, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces and Gemini) and Intelligence (the cardinal cross, Libra, Capricorn, Aries and Cancer). These are difficult and yet powerful. These contraries represent balance or justice. The acquisitive-ness of Taurus is balanced by the de-cluttering of Scorpio, the emptiness and love of essence associated with Scorpio is balanced by the fullness and love of beauty of Taurus, and so on.

In a similar way, the members who come into the Theosophical Society, and who work together in a brotherhood are points on a great wheel. No doubt many through karmic associations in the past. If we study the work of the Great Ones and the principles of Karma, the conclusion is that we come into the Society, at different places around the world, to fulfil the requirements to make smaller wheels that help in the work, "... *the purpose we have all at heart, namely the dissemination of TRUTH through Esoteric doctrines, conveyed by whatever religious channel, and the efface-ment of crass materialism and blind prejudices and scepticism.*" (Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, #120)

This means the weaknesses and character flaws of one person in that wheel are balanced by the character strengths or physical, moral and intellectual virtues of another. And the weaknesses of that person are equally balanced by the strengths or virtues of yet another in the group. Sometimes the members develop themselves through working with the support of others in larger groups, sometimes, when there are few in number, they are forced to stand alone and rely on that which is within them-selves.

Those discordant aspects are very difficult and there may be many arguments and even squabbling. But no matter how difficult, the success of the group relies on remaining together. When people are forced out, then that undoes the wheel and its completeness. As a broken group, the members are weaker. Though more in

harmony, their weakness may be exposed to a problem or event that creates long lasting pain and suffering, which tears at the effectiveness of the group.

It doesn't take a strong imagination to realise that the work of the Great Ones is then undone, the work of supporting the Theosophical Society down through the centuries, of bringing souls together to enhance the good qualities of each group, and to cancel out the negative karmic effects we are likely to produce, like noise cancellation in sound equipment. When a sound wave which undulates meets with another sound wave which undulates, milliseconds later, so the highs of one cancel the lows of another, at 180 degrees or as opposites. Take away the second wave and the noise returns.

*"Deluded victims of distorted truth, they for-get, or never knew, that discord is the harmony of the Universe. Thus in the Theos. Society, each part, as in the glorious fugues of the immortal Mozart, ceaselessly chases the other in harmonious discord on the paths of Eternal progress to meet and finally blend at the threshold of the pursued goal into one harmonious whole, the keynote in nature." ( Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett #120)*

In ancient times, there were and are four great virtues or strengths of character, Fortitude, Temperance, Prudence and Justice. These teach power, self-control and mindfulness, particularly in our physical, emotional and mental experiences. Yet the king of all is Justice because this

relates to motive and governs all of our relationships, leading to Wisdom, and can never be perfect until the other three are fully developed.

"Every Western Theosophist should learn and remember, especially those of them who would be our followers — that in our Brotherhood all personalities sink into one idea — abstract right and absolute practical justice for all. And that, though we may not say with the Christians, "return good for evil" — we repeat with Confucius, "return good for good; for evil — JUSTICE." (ML #120)

This may seem like a hard saying. We do not have the right to take an eye for an eye, which falls to the impartial law of Karma, Necessity or Sowing and Reaping. "So long as one has not developed a perfect sense of justice, he should prefer to err rather on the side of mercy than commit the slightest act of injustice." (K.H. from Letters Of The Masters Of The Wisdom, Series II No. 131.)

**Always Justice tempered with Love.**

Justice is non-judgemental and represents collective well-being. The well-being and harmony of the family, of the community in which we live, of the spiritual community in which we have our responsibilities, and in the world. If Justice is impersonal and consistent, then the love one gives to the world is the same as that which one gives to the family. The greater our sense of true Justice, and of adhering to the principles of Brotherhood, then the closer we are to unity.

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## Friendship

What nobler relationship than that of a friend? what nobler compliment can man bestow than friendship? the bonds and ties of the life we know break easily, but through eternity one bond remains - the bond of fellowship - the fellowship of atoms, of stardust in its endless flight, of suns and worlds , of gods and men. The clasped hands of comradeship unite in a bond eternal - the fellowship of spirit. Who is more desolate than the friendless one? Who is more honored than onewhose virtues have given him a friend? To have a friend is good, but to be a friend is better. The noblest title ever given man, the highest title bestowed by the gods, was when the great jove gazed down upon prometheus and said, "Behold, a friend of man!" Who serves man, serves God. This is the symbol of the fellowship of your Craft, for the plan of God is upheld by the clasped hands of friends. The bonds of relationships must pass, but the friend remains. Serve God by being a friend - a friend of the soul of man, serving his needs, lighting his steps, smoothing his way. Let the world of its own accord say of the Mason, "behold the friend of all." Let the the world say of the Lodge, "This is indeed a fraternity of brothers and sisters, comrades in spirit and in truth."

Manly Palmer Hall  
Lost Keys of Freemasonry

# **Yoga Yesterday Yoga Today**

**Sonia Sanchez**

Yoga has gained popularity over the last 40 years and surprisingly incrementing over the last decade according with latest global statistics; yoga is becoming a trendy topic with a lot of information circulating about it. Some practitioners are doing their best of following the teachings from the source through an unchanged lineage. Other information is new based on mixing different sources.

*Yoga is not a belief or religion, no faith is needed, its neither philosophy but It is a discipline using methods for a Self-effort of learning the science of being here and now. Yoga teaches how to discover and enter the temple of your own self.*

*Yoga was born in India as Hindu Philosophy which is practical and based on Natural Laws. Principles that could be applied for a better way of living in harmony with oneself: physically and mentally; as well with other humans and nature. Yoga comes from the Sanskrit YUJ meaning "to Join": Union between the limited self (jiva) and the cosmic self (atman) however*

*we are already united with the cosmic consciousness.*

## **HISTORY**

*The history of Yoga is a composed of different ancient traditions; the Yoga of India that we know has been practiced for more than 5000 years, but some researchers think that yoga may be up to 10.000 years old. Some traditions believe that Yoga was a divine gift given to ancient sages, therefore this knowledge and techniques were passed from a guru or teacher to their disciples by word of mouth. The teacher would guide his students based on his personal experience and guided the students along the right path.*

*Over time the writers of classical texts transcribed yogi principles to avoid misinterpretation; presenting the ideas in a way that people could understand the meanings; however, they camouflaged the writings in symbols and analogies for the student that was ready to receive the teachings.*

The first ancient texts to mention Yoga were written in the Vedas, in Vedic Sanskrit 1500 and 500 BC (before common era), the word Veda "knowledge, wisdom" meaning "see or know". Illustrated as verses, they are regarded as the first yogi texts that illustrate the essence and many aspects of Yoga like dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and the self (consciousness) being understood as something beyond body and mind. The Vedas clearly recognized the existence of a life force principle called prana, they mentioned the pranic centers, (chakras) within but not of the physical body; however, the science of sound was mentioned in various mantras that could be used to achieve worldly goals and spiritual aspirations.

With Vedic information Yoga started to be refined by the Brahmanas and Upanishads, and it began to take shape and form as it is currently known, different techniques of meditation, chanting of mantras, inner silence. These texts also set the foundations for the later development of the Swara Yoga science of pranic body rhythms which are controlled by breath and flow of psychic currents in our life.

The Upanishads are late Vedic Sanskrit text of religious teachings and ideas still revered by Hinduism. The culmination of the Vedas are also said to contain the essence of the Vedas, the message of the Upanishads is that the self can only be known through union (Yoga). Giving to Yoga a stronger foundation; Upanishad word can be interpreted as "sitting near and receiving teachings from a master"

or a "secret teaching". They emphasized again and again that SELF is not to be realized from outside or something separate, but at the very core of our being. Some Upanishads used analogies, stories and poetry to deliver yogic principles; others were more practical cultivating and adopting mental attitudes in order to progress the yogic path.

Traditionally around 108 Upanishads are regarded as authentic, of which the first dozen are referred as the oldest and most important of all teachings.

## CLASSICAL YOGA HISTORY

Patanjali, following the Upanishads and taking Yoga a step forward wrote the historical text of The Yoga-Sutras, the first systematic method of presentation of Yoga and the classical and authoritative book on Raja Yoga in mere 196 verses, He relates the philosophy, techniques and achievements of Raja Yoga in a sense that He compiled all the existing practices used for many centuries up until his time and created a comprehensive and harmonious system.

The whole subject of Raja Yoga is treated in a scientific manner, starting with moral concepts, leading to physical and mental aspects, and self-realization. Patanjali is often considered the father of the yoga and his Yoga-Sutras have left a strong influence in modern Yoga.

Patanjali Yoga is directly associated with Raja Yoga related as synonymous, He

classified the eight limbs or steps of Yoga practice in a sequence from outer to inner.

### EIGHT LIMBS OF YOGA

- 1.- Yama: Self-Restraints or abstinences / Universal Morality.
- 2.- Niyama: Self-Observances / Personal observances.
- 3.- Asana: Body Postures / Practice of moving and physical poses.
- 4.- Pranayama: Breathing exercises / Control of prana
- 5.- Pratyahara: Withdrawal from external senses / Practicing nonattachment,
- 6.- Dharana: Concentration / Cultivating inner awareness
- 7.- Dhyana: Meditation on the Divine/ Concentration, contemplation.
- 8.- Samadhi: Union with the Divine / The merge of body and senses at rest.

### YOGA MADE OF PATHS

According to ancient archives there are over one hundred different paths with numerous variations still with basic form of Yoga practices but designed to suit different beliefs; for each path many spiritual schools exist made to for those with different tastes, beliefs, intellectual and individual needs.

### Modern Yoga

It is important to recognize that many other sages have contributed, to the development of Yoga who are yet to mention. Bhakti yogis, including Kabir, Tulsidas, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu,

Shankracharya, Gorakhnath, Vyasa, Yajnavalkya and many more.

From 1800 and 1900 yoga masters and sages began to travel to the west, attracting followers, this began in 1893 when Swami Vivekananda started to visit several cities in Japan, China and Canada on his route to United States reaching Chicago where He participated in the congress of The Parliament of Religions. In order to participate in such event, He gave a brief speech representing India and Hinduism.

Swami Vivekananda was chief disciple of the 19th-century Indian mystic Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Vivekananda was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western World. After His participation, Vivekananda became a great figure and influential man at the Parliament of Religions.

Vivekananda spent nearly two years traveling across The United States lecturing and teaching yoga, He founded the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894. By spring of 1895 He ended his lecture tours and began giving private lessons. During this period, He traveled to UK twice and visited other European countries.

An important element to mention was the introduction of his "four yogas" model which includes Raja Yoga, his interpretation of Patanjali's Yoga sutras. In 1896, His book Raja Yoga was published becoming a success.

It is important to mention that in 1841, sacred Indian text found their way to the educated western public as with other topics of Indian philosophy sparking the interest of number of groups and societies such as the Theosophical Society which was formed in 1875. Madam P. Blavatsky co-founder of the society published the book *Isis Unveiled* written in 1877 and *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888, the society contributed to pave the way to introduce Yoga in the West; Blavatsky traveled to India in 1852 and became interested in Yoga which she mentioned in her esoteric doctrines; However She had a different point of view of the paths of Yoga, rather considering Raja Yoga most suitable for Western world which incorporates the main road to self-realization.

#### NOWDAYS YOGA

Many sages and yogis have contributed to the growth of yoga. The most commonly known yogis in the west are: Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda, Yogananda, Yogi Bhajan and Swami Satyananda.

Yoga coordinates and harmonizes Mind and Body through the practice of physical exercises, poses, breathing exercises, relaxation, meditation, chanting, devotion etc.. Physically benefits different organs, muscles, nerves, endocrine system; yoga eliminates and smooths out different problems including emotional feelings, enhance mental state of the person; the purpose of practicing yoga is obtaining

physical and mental balance; therefore, achieving consciousness and self-awareness of existence has taken different roads for each person depending on nowadays social media, culture or any outsider influence.

The variation from ancient writings and legacy from the gurus in the past have transitioned to a range of disciplines and modalities influencing in today's population lifestyle, offering better health, habits and holistic alternatives to reach ideal way of living; however Yoga is not intended to heal any illness, or any chronic condition instead it has become an integral part of understanding the relation between the physical-mental-emotional states, they are all connected and are part of achieving spiritual balance, therefore, practicing yoga takes very important role in people's life.

#### CHOICE AND JOURNEY

Despite different modalities and varieties of Yoga like hot yoga, boxing yoga, and so on, there is also an impact through the media and commercialized global market of Yoga, offering retreats, teacher training, special equipment, special clothing etc. yet people have the freedom to choose and discern what is convenient and what not depending of their awareness.

The purpose of Yoga could be simpler than it has been written or on the contrary as a quick fix practice. Practicing the eight limbs of Yoga on a personal level is a guideline of living a meaningful and purposeful

life, a pathway to connect with yourself, with surroundings that includes other humans, nature and universe reaching a self-realization and the connection with higher self.

Every one creates their own journey, every one chooses their paths, within each one of us can be found the different paths; socially we grow influenced from our parents, education, religions and cultures depending where we are born that, influences our decisions according to the situation at the moment, but ultimately we have in common the internal desire of freedom of being our own selves, the urge to be humble, compassionate, kind, commute with nature and find the balance and harmony internally and externally.

Recognizing the physical, mental and emotional body we realized that we all are spiritual as well as energetic beings, knowing the purpose of our own life in this time and space is one step ahead to choose the path to walk our own journey.

Yoga offers the wisdom that we always had,

but that we have forgotten, being aware of our physical body, respecting it, nourishing it, keeping it in healthy conditions in accordance with nature, doing good actions with sincere intentions, practicing dharma without expectations, learning from mistakes with no resentments.

The choice of selecting what type of Yoga is following the ancient techniques since yoga is considered also a science it requires practice, surrendering, devotion, awareness and understanding that self-realization comes from inside out, conscious of being alive and breakaway with the cycles that keep us stuck in habits, thoughts, emotions, memories, pain and all kind patterns.

Ultimately it is up to each one of us to decide the kind growth for our journey, we all are on the same road on a different speed with a mission, being aware the kind of mind, intention, wisdom and love that we share among each other; therefore, to accomplish the balance, the joyful and blissful state for the completion of the soul.

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