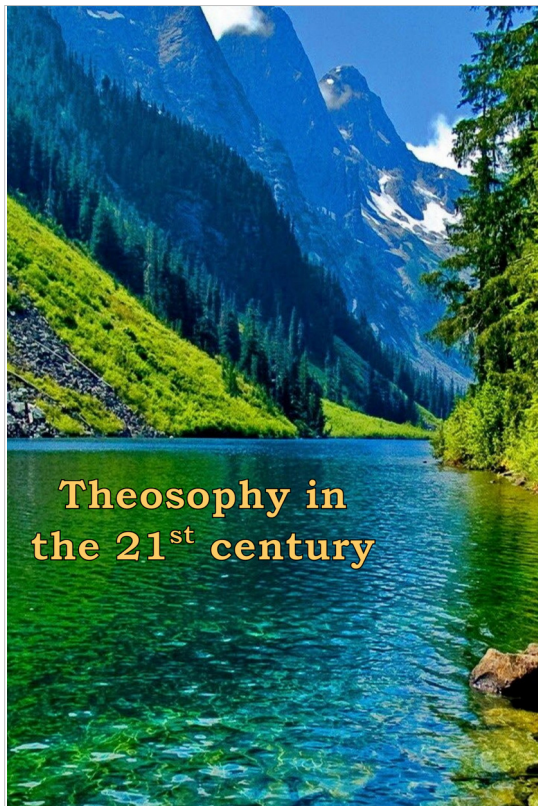




**Theosophy in
the 21st century**

12 The awakening of consciousness

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Las flores de la evolución humana

- Not all beings evolve with the same speed.
- The natural result of human evolution are beings that have reached a great state of consciousness.
- They are called **Mahatmas** or **Adepts**.
- They have appeared as Instructors of humanity on many occasions.
- According to HPB, two of them inspired the founding of the Theosophical Society.



As we have seen, the entire Universe is in evolution. And not only do we have to consider the evolution of matter and energy, but consciousness has an evolution that accompanies material evolution. Our psyche evolves, but the internal being also evolves thanks to the process of reincarnation.

All human beings have a great potential because our essence is a sparkle of the Universal Light, an unseen spark of the Flame as the Neoplatonists said. Through successive incarnations in different places and times we learn. The difficulties and the law of Karma allow us to mature, and the inner being thus manifests its potential. But not all evolve with the same "speed". There will be beings who learn more quickly than others, like children at school.

This leads us to the idea that there must be human beings who managed to evolve before the majority and who reached a deeper and broader level of consciousness. They are the early flowers of humanity. In history we recognize them as the great beings, generally instructors, wise, spiritual leaders such as Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegisto, and many others. These beings have shone especially for their spiritual dimension, their intelligence and their love for Life and they have been Instructors for humanity. They have found their way out of the illusions of ordinary life and have taught others the existence of this possibility, since they knew that all human beings are in the same evolutionary process.

In the theosophical literature these advanced beings are called **Mahatmas**, from the Sanskrit *maha* = great, *atma* = spirit, although they are also known as *Masters of Wisdom*, *Initiates* or *Adepts*. And it would not be logical to think that they appeared incarnated on Earth only in the remote past. They must have been in the near past, they must also be in the present and they will be in the future.

Modernly some people, among them the founders of the Theosophical Society, said to be in contact with some of these Mahatmas, and they published works that they said were inspired by these Mahatmas.

Helena Blavatsky was in contact with some Mahatmas of the East, who taught and inspired the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875. The contact was occasionally physical since these Mahatmas were incarnated at that time, but most of the time the contact was psychic. Not only did she have direct contact with these beings, but several people from her circle and other personalities were in contact with them. Some did it by correspondence since they received letters of a very special writing that were sent by strange means. Notably the book *Letters of the Mahatmas M. and K.H. A. A. Sinnet* is a very valuable compilation of the correspondence that two Mahatmas, called Koot Hoomi (K.H.) and Morya (M.) sent to A. P. Sinnet, the editor of a famous Anglo-Indian newspaper, usually via Blavatsky.

There are a lot of people who claim to be teachers, instructors, gurus, channelers, yogis, ascetics and all kinds of spiritual guides. How can we discern the true ones, those who have a wisdom and a legitimate teaching of the spurious, the merchants, the liars, the egomaniacs, profiteers and fantasists? Basically everyone must exercise the judgment of his purest intuition and discernment, but a clear signal to consider are his works and his message.

Every teaching that proclaims itself as the only truth and its communicators the exclusive prophets who claim to possess it are clearly a deception. No great Instructor of humanity proclaimed himself as the only or the possessor of Truth, but adopted the attitude of the philosopher in search of the truth or that of the doctor trying to cure the ills of poor humanity.

Behind the desire to find a guru who tells us personally what needs to be done, there is a lack of confidence in one's inner capacities.

The nature of a Mahatma

- His conscience acts from the higher principles.
- He is much more aware of the essential Reality and the One Life and in him Atma-Buddhi-Manas shine.
- His life is dedicated to helping evolution.
- A proverb says:

When the disciple is ready,
 the Master appears.
- How does the Master appear?



Let us try to imagine, since we can not understand with the normal mind, what will be the consciousness of a being of the characteristics of a Mahatma. We must bear in mind that everything we say is only a very rough approximation to try to grasp the direction of the idea but that the true nature of such a being can not be enclosed in a concept.

The Mahatmas describe themselves as human beings whose consciousness can act from the higher principles. That is, they have a development of Atma-Buddhi-Manas and are self-aware of these principles. When consciousness acts from these levels, the understanding of Life must be enormously deep and very different from that of an ordinary person.

- [1] An adept — the highest as the lowest — is one only during the exercise of his occult powers.
- [2] Whenever these powers are needed, the sovereign will unlock the door to the inner man [the adept] who can emerge and act freely but on condition that his jailor — the outer man will be either completely or partially paralyzed — as the case may require; viz: either (a) mentally and physically; (b) mentally, — but not physically; (c) physically but not entirely mentally; (d) neither, — but with an akasic film interposed between the outer and the inner man.

K.H., The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, letter 24b, chronological 85b

One of the most important qualities of the adept is the understanding of the Unity of Life, not at the intellectual level and with a sparkle of intuition but as a much full realization of it. The adept devotes his life and energies to promoting the spiritual progress of humanity.

According to the little we know of them, the Mahatmas accept disciples, whom they help in their work of awakening and growth. A Mahatma only admits to a disciple or chela if this one is going to serve to the silent and invisible work but of remarkable effects for the world, compensating thus its dedication to him.

An old adage says: "When the disciple is ready, the Master appears."

But several important questions arise:

How can the Master know that a person is prepared to be a disciple? How does it appear in the life of the disciple? Where does the Master reside?

Esoteric philosophy and logic tell us that the Master appears within us, and that our spiritual nature is our own Master. Thus, the encounter of the Master is the meeting of our own essence of life, and fidelity to the Master is fidelity to our real nature.

I can come nearer to you, but you must draw me by a purified heart and a gradually developing will. Like the needle the adept follows his attractions.

K.H., *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, N.º 45, chronological N.º 47

There are people who aspire to find their instructor or their guru by visiting monasteries, ashrams or by contacting instructors from different disciplines. This could be enriching as is the activity of traveling. But we observe a certain childish attitude in it because that kind of search finally obeys the desire to have an infallible reference, a spiritual father, an authority that tells us what we should do and frees us from the responsibility of having to decide and discover for ourselves. Internal evolution is not a matter of following a path already traced, but of activating intelligence and divine abilities within us.

We never guide our chelas (the most advanced even); nor do we forewarn them leaving the effects produced by causes of their own creation to teach them better experience.

K.H., *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, N.º 72, chronological N.º 95

See the article of Joy Mills "Who is the Master?" in *The Theosophist*, June, 1978.

Evolving

- Evolution exists in all aspects of the Manifestation.
- We evolve by learning and loving, being more aware of Life as a whole.
- It is a work of many incarnations.
- Suffering and "evil" in the world are caused by ignorance and immaturity.
- Is there any way to evolve more consciously?



Throughout the course we have seen some very important ideas that can help us understand who we are and what life is. We have talked about the Unity of Life, the cycles in nature, the law of Karma, reincarnation and recently we have investigated about the Evolution of all life, including ourselves.

Evolution drags us, pushes us forward because according to the stumbles of life we are learning, slowly. We make decisions, we act or we stop acting and some decisions bring us joy and fulfillment while others cause us problems and pain, to us and to those around us. But most of the time we do not understand what happens and we lose the chance to learn. We simply resist or complain about how badly others do it or about the misfortune that has fallen on us.

But even if we do not realize it, we evolve learning and loving, making us more aware of Life as a whole. It is a patient work, of maturation through many incarnations. The inner being, the true human being, more than the personality, learns and makes sprout its true potential.

We have also seen that evil and suffering in the world are due to ignorance about the fundamental things of life (Avidya). Because ignorance we damage each other and damage our environment including animals, vegetables and the planet itself.

Then the natural question arises: is there any way to evolve more consciously? Is it possible to direct our life instead of simply reacting to what comes our way? Is it possible to awaken from this dream, from this illusion in which our mind is submerged?

Can we improve?

- Is it possible to boost our evolution?
- Do we have the power to do it?
- Do we have the necessary time?
- Will it work?
- Is it a procedure or is it a transformation? Is it possible to follow a recipe?
- What has to be done?



In view of all the above we can ask ourselves if it is in our power to improve and be active in the evolution of consciousness and not mere passive spectators.

Evolution is not only possible but is the way to go towards our destiny, as it is the way of Life as a whole. We are part of it, and that is why we have the power to develop universal potentialities. We do not need to acquire anything outside, or procure or wait for certain circumstances. It is not so much a problem of what we do but of how we do it.

Evolution is a process that takes place over time, such as biological evolution. But the mere passage of time does not produce any change by itself. We are the ones who produce the changes as we learn. When we realize that we are bound by habits and customs, it may seem that any progress we can make is very slow. But we must first consider that our conscience is not limited to one incarnation only, and secondly that our measurement of time may actually be irrelevant. Many people achieved a profound change of vision in their life in a moment, when their intuition dissipated the shadows of their mind and understood the problems of life.

If we approach the task seriously, with attention, as Krishnamurti reminds us, the universal laws guarantee us success. If we make wrong decisions but we are attentive and we see the effect and its cause, observing without veils and as a whole, we will learn from the experience and we will mature.

Is this a procedure we can follow? Is it an objective such as a professional career or a business goal? Are there some practices that allow us to awaken and evolve? No way.

Evolution is not the fruit of a defined or mechanical process and has no recipes. It is above all a constant transformation of the mind, emotions and even our body in a way that allows an increasingly full expression of our inner being. What we must do to develop the conscience only has very general common guidelines, but the circumstances and modality of each one make that there are no recipes. It is only necessary to observe, discover and learn.

The awakening

- Consciousness is identified with the outside world.
- The mind generates illusion.
- Illusion leads to ignorance.
- Ignorance produces suffering.
- The resulting state is one of confusion and conflict.
- Can Theosophy help us to get out of this state of confusion, to **wake up**?



By identifying with the ideas and feelings produced by the mind, consciousness identifies with the objects of the external world that motivate them. For example, a good new car will give us pleasure in seeing it and driving it. The mind and emotions will make us feel it as an extension of ourselves. Therefore the mind will have generated an illusion. Not because the car does not exist, but because it has distorted its nature and our relationship with it, not taking into account, for example, its ephemeral and utilitarian characteristic.

This illusion generated by the mind is the basis of ignorance, Avidya, which is not ignorance in the academic sense but ignorance about the essential truths of Life and of oneself. Ignorance is what produces our perceptions and ideas about good and evil. The mind focused on the self qualifies and colors everything according to how it affects you.

The resulting state is one of confusion, disorientation and conflict. We do not understand why things are the way they are. Life can be painful for us. Satisfactory and pleasant sooner or later they end. Many loved ones leave us one way or another. We have conflicts of desires. We have fears, frustrations and hopes.

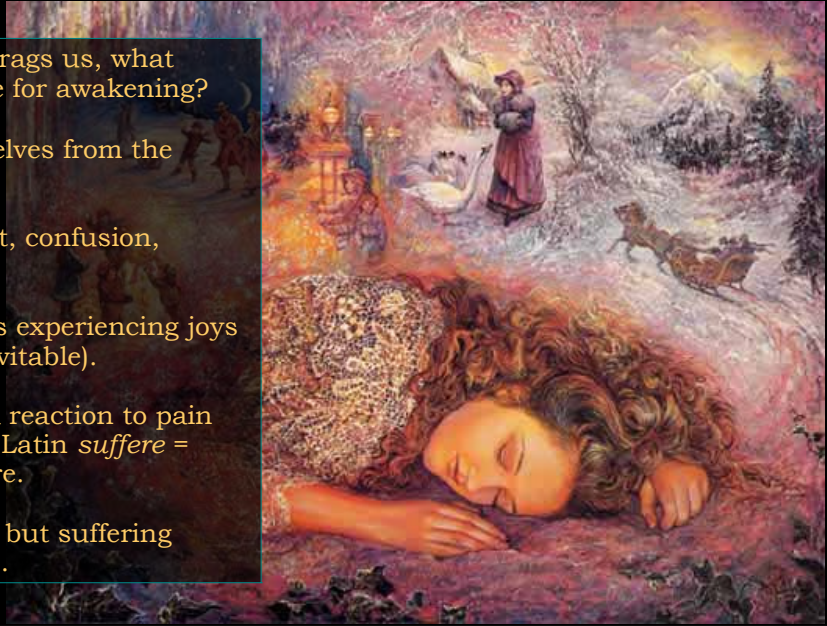
Can Theosophy help us out of this state? Theosophy is not theoretical or practical, it is not a tool or a method but the divine Wisdom in itself. Our attitude is what can make it just a collection of concepts or that we consciously undertake the adventure of discovering it and illuminating our life and with it the life of the whole world. If we evolve everything evolves to some extent. Everything we think, feel and do is reflected in everyone's consciousness. The ideas of individual "salvation" are blind and selfish.

Can the whole of life be understood through the part? Or is it that the whole must first be perceived and understood, and that only then can the parts be examined and remodeled in relation to the whole? Without understanding the whole, the mere concentration on the part does nothing but create more confusion and misery.

J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries on living*

Why wake up?

- If evolution drags us, what reason is there for awakening?
- Freeing ourselves from the illusion.
- Cease conflict, confusion, suffering.
- Living implies experiencing joys and pains (inevitable).
- Suffering is a reaction to pain (avoidable). In Latin *suffere* = sustain, endure.
- Pain is a fact but suffering depends on us.



We can ask ourselves: if evolution pushes us even if we do not realize it, why wake up? Why undertake this challenge and not simply let ourselves be carried away by life?

The more aware we are of what happens, we will see more mistakes, more injustices, more pain around us. Being unaware of all this apparently provides comfortable protection. Why then wake up from sleep?

Because the dream is a deception. We do not see the true nature of life, we see our self at the center of everything and that ultimately leads to greater suffering for us and for all life. Awakening is a crucial point in evolution. Sooner or later we will come to it. It implies a change of attitude, a conscious collaboration with Life.

Life is interaction, and in interaction there is joy and there is pain. We can not avoid the pain.

As J. Krishnamurti says, "there is not my personal pain or yours, but the pain." There is joy in the encounter and pain in the loss. It is part of the ephemeral nature of the world. There is joy and pain as light and shadow and both are related to each other.

In whatever way your spine is called, accept it; she is a companion of the rose

Rabindranath Tagore

But suffering is different from pain. It is an affective experience that arises as a reaction to pain. It is a product of our mind. The word suffering derives from the Latin *suffere* which means to suffer, tolerate, endure. Faced with the experience of pain we can suffer or we can understand and accept.

What can we do?

- We need a radical change of focus in our life.
- Holistic vision: be aware of the unity of Life.
- Understand the fundamental laws of Life in action.
- Live in the present. The opportunity is here and now.
- Dissolve our prejudices, beliefs, fears ...
- Undertake the adventure of discovering the Truth of Life.



The awakening of consciousness is the abandonment of the state of Avidya. What does this transcendent change imply in human nature?

In the first place, the realization of the Unity of Life. Be increasingly aware that the Universe is One, that the All is in us and in all parts and that we are ultimately like a great interconnected organism.

In light of this approach, recognition of the fundamental laws of existence allow us to understand life and act intelligently, without causing further confusion. It is not about following certain rules. It is not necessary to fill the mind with ideas, but to be a good observer and to understand the processes of Nature acting in harmony with them.

Universal love and its fruit, compassion, are the state of consciousness in the realization of Unity.

Silence and space go together. The immensity of silence is the immensity of the mind in which there is no center.

J. Krishnamurti, *Meditations*

Some travel guides

▪ Classical works regarding human development:

- At the feet of the Master
- Viveka Chudamani
- The voice of the Silence
- Light on the Path
- Raja Yoga

...

▪ There are many presentations of the "path" of internal development.

▪ They are not instructions. We ourselves must discover and understand.



The finger that points to the moon
is not the moon.
Gautama Buddha

From the mists of time some wise persons have expressed in their teaching some guidelines related to the development of human consciousness. This teaching was transmitted and collected in works that have reached us. In them we can find some very good considerations about the work of transformation.

There are many presentations of this subject and many are really very beautiful and profound. Without wishing to make a complete list we can mention the following works:

- At the feet of the master
- Viveka Chudamani (Crest Jewel of Discrimination)
- The voice of Silence
- Light on the Path
- Raja Yoga (The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

But we must remember what Gautama the Buddha said "The finger pointing to the moon is not the moon" and is also attributed to Confucius "When the wise point to the moon, the fool looks at the finger". These works are like travel guides. They can anticipate to some extent what we can find in a certain place, but they can not replace the experience of visiting the place. A Vienna guide is not the same as visiting Vienna. They are attempts to communicate something incommunicable, they are fragmented descriptions of something integral, as when we see the net of a cube in a plane. It is not enough to see the faces of the cube to understand it. It is necessary to see the fact integrally. We need to know the cube itself.

Therefore we say that the content of these works of self-realization are not really instructions but just a few indications. It is our own task to discover and understand by acting in our lives in an intelligent way according to our conscience.

Walker, your treads are the path and nothing more;
walker, there is no path, the path is made when walking.
When walking the path is made and when looking back
you see the path that never has to be walked again.
Walker, there is no path, but trails in the sea...

Antonio Machado, *Proverbios y Cantares*

What is needed?

- What is needed to undertake this transformation?
- Give up our habit of thinking centered in our self.
- We need to regenerate our mind and emotions.
- Do we transform when we wake up or wake up if we transform?
- Awakening and transformation are two sides of the same coin.



What is needed to undertake this transformation? We can see that it is a true regeneration, a reconstruction of our mind, as pointed out by Radha Burnier in Human Regeneration.

We have lived so settled in our little self, in the partial vision, in the competence, in our own salvation, that we do not realize the process of Life and we need to regenerate our mind and our emotions. It is the only way to solve at the root the conflicts of the world, be they in our family, in our profession, in our country or in the case of the great world problems.

How does this process begin? Do we transform when we wake up or wake up if we transform? It is the classic dilemma of the egg and the chicken. How can we transform if we have not changed our understanding before? We can only create those conditions when we are awakening and an inner impulse leads us to "open our eyes". And how are we going to have a better vision if our mind is dull and confused distorting our perception of reality?

Transformation and awakening are two sides of the same coin. They are two complementary aspects of something that happens continuously. In our life there may be times when we become aware of something new, in which we awaken to a new reality and understand. When this happens, we immediately act in accordance with that new understanding. We do not need to force a behavior. There will be no conflict of interests because we have understood. A mother who loves her child and feeds him does not ask if she should do it or better to dedicate herself to something that interests her. He does it from the heart, without conflict and without grief.

The transformation

- It is initiated from the inside.
- Favorable outside circumstances can stimulate but can not force.
- We do not need to change circumstances. We can undertake the adventure **here and now**.
- Full attention.
- We can prepare.

Man carving his own destiny [Albin Polasek]



The awakening of the higher consciousness produces the liberation of its potential. The essence of Life in us is imprisoned by the illusions that we have created with our mind and emotions, centered in the structure of the self.

Then the transformation takes place, which is not an improvement of our personal self, but something completely different, a universal experience. It is not about doing more of the same, of accumulating more knowledge, of knowing more people or changing careers. Plotinus described this trip as the flight from the lonely to the ONLY.

We do not need special circumstances in our lives for this change. We do not need to wait to have more free time. We do not need to live somewhere retired. Circumstances are part of life itself and are always changing, and transformation is about the realization of Life in us regardless of the circumstances. If we accept our circumstances, even if they are not what we would like and we are attentive to the here and now, we will be in a better position to learn and act more wisely.

Awakening and transformation can not be induced or forced from the outside. Nothing can change the inner understanding. You can only try to stimulate it. But if we have a glimpse of this reality, we can prepare ourselves, create the favorable conditions for a greater understanding and the regeneration of our mind to take place.

Awakening means being attentive, mindfulness, commitment. It is attention to what we do but goes much further there. There are different levels of attention. For example, if someone asks us for advice on a specific topic, we can be fully aware of the issue, but not grasp that perhaps our friend is implicitly asking us for some emotional support. We can also not be attentive to the consequences of our actions. Therefore the attention at increasingly wide levels is fundamental, it is what makes us really awake. Attention is observation without judging ourselves and trying to see ourselves beyond the usual image we have of ourselves.

The preparation

- Our life must be aligned with our intention.
- Discernment and detachment.
- Behavior based on love and compassion:
 - Respect for life, not to injure
 - Absence of cruelty
 - Vegetarian or vegan diet
 - Veracity
 - Confidence in ourselves
 - Devotion to Being in everything
 - Peace of the mind
- Study, research, meditation, good relations, inspiration.



What is the preparation?

Essentially, our daily life must be aligned with our intention. The aspirant to discover the Truth must not settle for less. Our conduct must be based on love, respect and compassion.

One of the first requirements is **not to injure**, called *Ahimsa* in the literature of Raja Yoga. It is inevitable that we do some damage to Nature and others. Life is interaction and our actions will be good for some and bad for others. But outside of this, where we have a choice, we must take care to respect every manifestation of life. We can not aspire to be aware of the Unity of Life and at the same time be cruel to other people and animals. The vegetarian regime has already been a requirement for aspirants in the time of the Pythagoreans, and it is in the Raja Yoga. The benefits of vegetarian and vegan food go beyond the animals that we do not kill. Today we know that one of the significant contributions to greenhouse gases that produce climate change is the contribution of methane due to livestock. The current world consumption of meat is unsustainable. Therefore it is a matter of compassion and responsibility.

Nothing will benefit health or increase chances of survival on earth as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.

Albert Einstein

In today's world, truthfulness is not a predominant attitude. But how can discover the truth a confused mind with its own lies?

If we perceive to some extent the inner potential that we have, it will endow us with confidence in ourselves and in the inner being in any other manifestation of life.

Some practices that can help us are study, open-minded research, meditation, cultivating good relationships and seeking inspiration from our purest intuition.

Can we do it?

- Why not?
 - Fervent desire to discover the Truth.
 - Do not settle for less
 - Zen story: how can I know the Truth?
 - It should not be another dream
 - The power is in us.
 - Experience does not consist in accumulating but in developing, flourishing.
 - Do we have time to do it?



Can we face this transformation? Why not?

We need a fervent desire to discover the Truth, to realize the union with Life, as it has been expressed in a Zen story. He, a disciple and his master were on the banks of a river, and the disciple asks:

- Master, how can I know the Truth?

Then the master took the disciple's head and immersed it in the water of the river, preventing him from breathing. The disciple initially restrained himself but as time went by he began to worry about not being able to breathe, until finally, in a struggle with the master, he takes off his head and breathes in despair. Then the master says:

- When you aspire to the Truth with as much need as the air that you lacked, you will be able to know it.

The search for realization should not be another dream or chimera that we add to our life. To be effective it must be a real aspiration. The power to do it is in ourselves, since we are part of the Whole. Experience does not consist in accumulating riches or even qualities or virtues, but in developing, and making our real nature flourish.

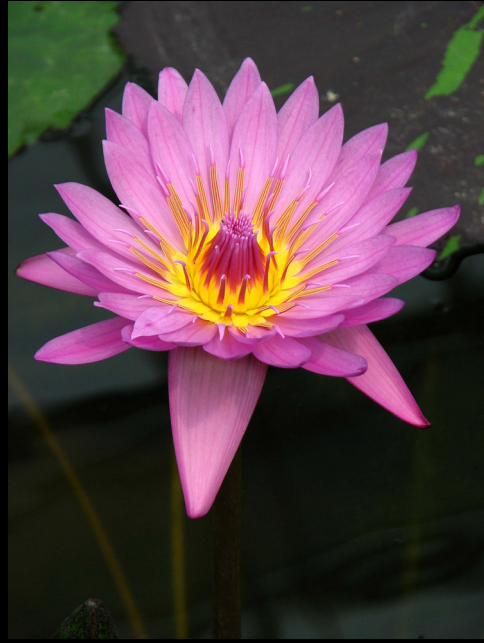
Do we have time? Time does not matter in this process. Evolution is a long process, but time alone does not produce the changes. We must do them ourselves. The sense of time and urgency or relaxation in this transformation is nothing more than an illusion.

Time is a river which sweeps me along, but I am the river;
it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger;
it is a fire which consumes me, but I am the fire.

Jorge Luis Borges

The action must be now

- Attention
- To be fresh
- To live on
- To take part
- To love
- Learning from joy and pain
- To aspire



We do not need anything from the outside. We do not need to wait for any special circumstance. We need inspiration and will.

The transformation of consciousness is not a bitter path. It is the only beautiful and true option that is presented to us. It requires of us full attention, being fresh, living authentically, participating with others in the process of life, loving widely and learning from both joy and pain.

It is said that the evolution of the common people is like a path that skirts the mountain to reach its peak while the occultist is someone who climbs a steep, direct path. But we need to keep in mind that there is no marked path or path to follow. The metaphor of the Path really means that this path is unique for each one of us, which is not traced and that, as Antonio Machado said, "when you look back you can see the path that no one has to step on again".

Living fully is a product of intelligence and not of imitation.

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

Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*

You do not say, 'I have reached the end, this is enlightenment.' Enlightenment cannot be given by another; enlightenment comes when there is the understanding of confusion; and to understand confusion one must look at it.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, *The Flight of the Eagle*



Throughout this course we have tried to draw attention to the fundamental ideas of Theosophy and how if they resonate in us they allow us to live more intelligently, understandingv better the process of Life and relating better to other beings.

Theosophy is not studied, it is discovered. We can study what others have said about it and that can be useful for reflecting and inspiring us, but that is only the beginning. To investigate, to observe, to understand, to act are coordinated aspects of the challenge of discovering the Truth and living intelligently.

There are many institutions, NGOs, that are dedicated to helping in different aspects to the needy in the world. They usually have good organizations, good means and a great will. They fight against hunger, disease, injustice, war, exploitation. In general, they do an excellent and necessary job. But the Theosophical Society fights against ignorance, Avidya, which is the cause of all the previous problems. If there is no real change of consciousness, external aid is like patches that, on the other hand, allow the current model of civilization to be perpetuated with its defects and corruption.

There is a corrupt, exhausted, conflictive, cruel world that survives and tries to endure. But there is a new world that is being born among the ruins of the previous one. Everywhere there are more and more people who see the problem, the need for a change and how that change should start by ourselves.

The challenge of the 21st century is to produce that real change and the Theosophy is the divine Wisdom produces that change, which allows us to perceive Life holistically and realize the happiness of living in harmony with it. Let's help together in this task.

If you want to share your questions, doubts or comments about this course, you can send an email to carlosmprz-at-gmail.com (please replace -at- with @).

If you want to know more about Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, you can contact a group close to you. You can find an international directory of the TS in:

<http://www.ts-adyar.org/directory>

Thank you very much.

