Transcript ~ Theosophia: The Living Source of all Integral Wisdom

A Lecture by Prof. Elton A. Hall
International Theosophy Conferences, Wheaton, IL, July 2019

The timeless tradition of beginning with gratitude expressed for one's teachers is most appropriate today. Whatever there is of value in this presentation is due to H.P. Blavatsky and those Great Beings who taught through her; to Professor Raghavan Iyer whose spiritual presence remains with those who had the privilege to learn from him; to Nandini Iyer, who luminously articulates pure Theosophy; and to numerous fellow students of Theosophy whose calm discrimination and steady persistence have been an inspiration for over 50 years.

The Great Master gave only one letter, so rich in insight and implication that it quite suffices. He said:

> That the world is in such a bad condition, morally, is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the civilized races less than any other, has ever possessed the truth. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism, are as impossible to them now as they were 1880 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they were; but to these problems there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first to confess that there must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the truth.
>
> The Great Master's Letter

Consider the Pointillist paintings of the end of the 19th century. They are made by placing dots of paint on canvas. The dots of various colors remain dots and are not blended together. From a critical distance, the painting comes to life, a composed scene. Of course, if one looks from far away, the painting becomes indistinct and one cannot tell what it depicts. If one draws very close, the individual points of paint are quite clear, but again the scene as a whole is lost. We recognize these phenomena in aphorisms like, "He can't see the forest for the trees," and in the scholarly worry that specialization leads

one to know more and more about less and less. Clearly perspective must be brought to any observation, and this is critical distance. That distance is not some fixed length, for it depends on what one is aiming to see.

Such reflection reveals another aspect of understanding: clarity and precision. Looking at a Pointillist painting, a certain critical distance provides clarity of composition, but not the precision of a close view. If one wants to understand the whole painting—the conception, the scene, the balance of its parts and interaction of its colors and shapes—one has to establish the critical distance necessary to grasp the whole. The precision of the dots requires a closer view. So one might say that these terms are relative: the subject at hand specifies the critical distance required for both clarity and precision. We start with the large view and then on closer observation the details become meaningful. With just the details, it is virtually impossible to provide a clear grasp of the whole. Paracelsus in his very broad practice of medicine, took this approach. He did not merely examine an ailment and mechanically prescribe a remedy. He insisted on looking at the whole person, that person's environment including family, community and even the heavens, before recommending a remedy. And his remedies were not just the herbs and chemicals of his time, both of which he examined in detail. He looked at diet, exercise, astral influences, individual psychology and patterns of living for an integrated solution.

From the second half of the nineteenth century through the latter half of the twentieth, many thinkers were increasingly concerned with the problems posed by specialization. This concern began in medicine, thanks in part to Paracelsus. As more was learned of the functioning of the human body and the diseases that can affect it, physicians began to focus on specific areas. Today, one may go to a general practitioner for regular check-ups, but if some serious ailment or malfunction is detected, it is likely that one will be referred to a specialist, someone deeply versed in lungs, heart, eye, digestive tract, and so on. But as specializations became ever more sophisticated, especially with pharmaceuticals, increasing attention had to be paid to side effects: even while a procedure or drug might alleviate a particular condition, it might aggravate others. As Paracelsus saw, treatment of the human being requires what in medicine came to be

called a holistic approach. Put simply, medical science needs to be integrated across its whole spectrum. Saying this is not to criticize specialization but only to recognize its limits. Both precision and critical distance are needed for effective treatment.

The same issues arise in other branches of science. In biology, the attempt to explain evolution without any reference to purpose or intention has allowed for many discoveries. But evolutionary biologists have utterly failed to find a way of speaking of evolutionary development without sliding into some language of teleology. For example: "The bones of birds are hollow to keep the bird light and capable of more efficient flying." That statement includes purpose, of course. Physicists are struggling to reconcile the perfectly effective theories of relativity and quantum mechanics. Even the so-called Big Bang is now challenged, because of the problems it raises, for example, regarding entropy and time.

The twentieth century has been called the century of physics. The twenty-first looks like being the century of biology. But both are also centuries of psychology. While physics attempts to discern the workings of the universe without dealing with consciousness, psychologists make it the center of their focus. Yet the spiritual dimension of the human being and the whole of nature remain largely unaddressed in modern thought. This is finally beginning to change. Many scientists and philosophers have moved beyond the positivism of the early twentieth century and the exclusive use of the reductive materialist method to address fundamental issues. Dismissing consciousness as an epiphenomenon no longer makes sense to these thinkers, even as some neuroscientists continue to hold it. Some even insist that mind in some sense is as fundamental a part of nature as matter and energy are. All this is good, but not adequate news.

Clearly what is needed is a much more integrated knowledge of ourselves and the world. This inadequacy shows up in the attempt to build an integrated edifice from outside in. We do not start with the roof and walls, then later on add plumbing and a foundation. We start with the foundation and build from that to the surfaces which we will see after the construction is complete. From within, without is the process of

manifestation, and so it is with thought and understanding. The ancients called this approach beginning from first principles. As every scientist, philosopher and theologian knows, any system of understanding, any line of thought has to have a beginning. In religion, this beginning might be an array of concepts and dogmas that cannot be questioned. In science, it is a set of assumptions behind any theory. Aristotle, in formalizing logic as it existed in his time, noted that first premises have to come from somewhere. For the Theosophist and the Occultist, those come from the Great Beings who have witnessed the most universal aspects of existence in their own consciousness. And their insights are compared with those of others for verification. And to understand the cosmos and the human place in it—indeed, the human role in it—we cannot exclude much of experienced nature and deal only with the grossest forms of matter and energy. Thought, feeling, the sense of right and wrong and all the great dual principles, indeed, all human experience, must be part of the picture. We will not build a full understanding from fragments, even though fragments may give important clues to that understanding.

The same is generally true of the Teachings of Theosophy. We cannot stand back and absorb the whole of *theosophia*, and not even the sixth sub-race will do that. But its forerunners and the great teachers of humanity have provided as much as we can take in and use in the Teachings of Theosophy. Integral Theosophy requires multiple approaches in thought, will, word and deed, and each has its critical distance for clarity and precision. Given the complex karmic history of each human being as well as our collective situation, just what that critical distance is will vary with the individual. As we grow in understanding, that distance changes. As the Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson so eloquently put the matter, we are apprentices to truth. And apprenticeship requires thought, feeling, development of skills, and practice, practice, practice.

Theosophia is integral. Theosophy, as it has been given to humanity by H.P. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas in *The Secret Doctrine* and other writings show, it is the synthesis of science, religion and philosophy, that is, of all knowledge. Theosophy is neither revelation, nor syncretism, nor theory. H.P.B. placed a significant part of the famous Vedic "Hymn to Creation" just before the Stanzas of Dzyan in *The Secret Doctrine*. The

part of the hymn that is not included (indicated by the dots) says that the most ancient seers, *saw* the emergence of the manifest from the unmanifest. If we take the whole hierarchy of intelligent beings together, Theosophy is empirical science, natural philosophy and true religion, and it is the ultimate source of anything of lasting value in these three all-encompassing fields. Yet as we know, Theosophy is not a subject to be mastered in some academic manner. Rather it is true knowledge, not just a mass of information, and true knowledge is alchemical in that, as one comes to understand it, one is affected in one's whole being. As Plato so wisely declared twenty-three centuries ago, true knowing is being. Gaining such knowledge requires not just study but equally application and reflection on that application. So addressing the great dual principles that underlie and pervade all human existence requires study, practice, reflection, correction, a cycle to be repeated so long as we have breath.

In terms of thought, learning and gaining competence in the Teachings, we have two models that are suggestive. One is indirectly from H.P. Blavatsky and the other from B.P. Wadia. Commodore Robert Bowen had the privilege of small group lessons with H.P.B. between 1888 and 1891 and left his notes to his son, P.C. Bowen, who later shared them. Commodore Bowen wrote a note on April 19, 1891, saying that he showed H.P.B. his notes on what she had taught and that she indicated that nothing can be put in words but that he had got her teachings "better than anyone else ever did." In those notes, he recorded her as saying that the true student of *The Secret Doctrine* is a *jñana yogi*, which is the path for the Western student. We recall that the *Bhagavad Gita* gives four yogas: *bhakti*, the path of devotion, *karma*, the yoga of right action, and *jñana*, the yoga of knowledge, and a fourth, *raja*, which is a synthesis of all three. Given the mind-set, astral, psyche, and karma of the West, this path is best for the committed Theosophist. So we should study *The Secret Doctrine* and her other writings. As several early Theosophists pointed out, careful study of and reflection on *The Secret Doctrine* slowly affects the mind and brain so that one may become increasingly porous to deeper, more spiritual reality, knowing that there is as much in this as we can comprehend and most likely far more than we will comprehend in this life.

Unlike the sciences of today, both hard like physics and chemistry, and soft like sociology and psychology, and in-between like biology, Theosophy does not begin with observations, creating hypotheses based on those observations and assumptions, and then testing to see if predicted results are observed. Theosophy begins with those first principles that the divine predecessors saw and recorded for subsequent humanity. Hence these principles are at once scientific, spiritual and philosophical, and they constitute and insist upon the synthesis of philosophy, religion and science. And they are testable. Like the complex experiments in science today, that testing requires appropriate conditions, foremost of which are critical distance and clarity.

So we begin with first principles, and these are the Three Fundamentals. Everything in the S.D. is based on them, and H.P.B. told Commodore Bowen that it may take years to grasp them. She also recommended studying the Summing Up to Part I of Volume I, the Preliminary Notes to Volume II and its conclusion. In addition, she insisted that the basis of all thinking regarding the S.D. should be adherence to (1) the fundamental unity of all existence, which is not unity by association (as, for example, a nation united by collective agreement of its citizens) but united in being One Principle, the One Life. (2) There is no dead matter: every atom is alive, as the One Principle makes plain. (3) Every human being as the microcosm is the whole structure of existence, the Macrocosm, but seen from a very limited point of view, the individual consciousness. In reality, there is no distinction between Macrocosm and Microcosm except in terms of that limitation. Given this program of learning, H.P.B. also warned, according to Bowen, not to expect the final truth of existence to reside in the book *The Secret Doctrine* but rather to understanding that it leads toward the truth. "Truth lies beyond any ideas we can formulate or express," she said. We should ignore opinions and interpretations, for the path to Truth is within each of us and only the individual can tread it. We recall that the Buddha is reported as saying that none of his teachings should be taken on mere faith but should be tested in the thought and life of the hearer. The result of such individual effort is that even the brain will be gradually restructured to become increasingly open to ever deeper realization: this is the path of a *jñana yogi*. It was almost a hundred years before

neuroscientists recognized that the brain can undergo changes even in adulthood and old age as one learns. This approach is the first model for studying the S.D. and of Theosophy in general.

The second model comes from the profound Theosophist B.P. Wadia. In 1922 he published a booklet called "Some Observations on the Study of the Secret Doctrine of H.P. Blavatsky." He noted that many people approach the S.D. in the hope of self-improvement or in the expectation that they will gain clarity in the direct teachings so that they can teach others. Both, he said, will be disappointed, for the S.D. is not written that way. We might say that *The Secret Doctrine* is a secret doctrine and is not simply revealed in a book. But, B.P. Wadia said, if studied correctly, it will affect the individual in ways that both improve him or her and allow for teaching others something of that bottomless ocean of knowledge and wisdom. He agreed that in studying the S.D., the faculty of spiritual perception is aroused. In his words, "In this study, properly carried on, a particular mental process is bound to take place in which this faculty will be sharpened." And so sharpened, insight into all subjects, whether or not addressed in the S.D., will be enhanced.

B. P. Wadia said that reading the S.D. straight through or concentrating on one topic by using the index is not essential; concentration with the aim of developing spiritual perception is. There are two elements to this essential approach. In whatever way one dips into the S.D., one should so focus on what is read that one attempts to gain the meaning of what is written, and, equally, one should study the S.D. for some period of time, perhaps half an hour every day, preferably at the same time. This approach both develops and deploys the faculty of spiritual perception. Then group study and exchange of views will be useful when the purpose is clear, for the clarity of the group's purpose is what gives meaning to the idea that we are apprentices to truth. In this conference we will be attempting such discussion, and our purpose is bridging the gap between Theosophy as synthesis of science, religion and philosophy and science, religion and philosophy as found in the world today. This is a high purpose and requires the best of our spiritual perception in whatever degree we have it.

B.P. Wadia warns that the spiritual growth of each occurs "only when the teachings are utilized for the spiritual help of others." In other words, the Bodhisattva Path is essential to all our work individually and together. In serving one another here in this conference, the highest purpose is always serving the larger group, which is the whole of humanity.

As Commodore Bowen learned from H.P.B., B.P. Wadia also suggests as an initial effort to understand the S.D., studying the Proem, Introduction, and Summing Up in Volume I and Preliminary Notes and Conclusion in Vol. II. He added a review of the Table of Contents to gain a sense of the structure of the volumes. And his "real test" of understanding any subject within those volumes is the ability to express the teaching in "simple, untechnical terminology." Such expression should be faithful to H.P.B.'s teachings, not to our own opinions and views. If we are faithful, we pass on and share the teachings of Theosophy and not something else.

B.P. Wadia advises that when we work together, as we will here, we should be attempting to contact the Mind of the author. If so concentrated, ideas will strike the mind of the participant, for one has to some degree entered into the spiritual world and sacred atmosphere of the Masters, and ideas will come from within rather than from without. To the extent that we follow this advice, we will begin reading between the lines and within the words of the S.D. and the true secret doctrine will begin to manifest itself to us.

Yet as all this reminds us, study alone is not the whole of the path of *jñana yoga*. Our long, involved, inscrutable history of karma, individually and collectively, compels engagement with the world. We must practice what we learn, for that gives learning its depth and meaning. Theosophy is not information; it is a way of life, and a way of life that encompasses the whole being of the individual, who is a center of the whole of being itself.

We know only too well how challenging study is. Practicing Theosophy, that is, living the Teachings, is even more challenging. Those of us who have had the sacred privilege

of encountering Theosophy were not so directed in order to win comfort and security for ourselves. Rather, we have been led to Theosophy to be awakened to our real nature and to the world. *Raja Yoga* is the synthesis of the other three yogas because all three are implicit in each other. *Jñana Yoga*, the yoga of true knowledge, cannot go far without *bhakti*, reverence for and gratitude to the Masters and their Agents who have given us Theosophy in the maximum abundance that we can possibly assimilate in life and over lifetimes. Nor can *jñana yoga* succeed without the engagement of oneself with the world. Theosophy appeared not for personal aggrandizement but to face and resolve the great dual principles, one of which is egotism and altruism, and so Theosophists may not be *karma yogis* but they must take up the great work in the world.

In terms of practice, we have the Bodhisattva Path provided in *The Voice of the Silence*. We are told that we at some point come to the realization that we must choose between living for oneself or for the whole, to enlist in the army of the Voice or withdraw into what at best is a glorious egotism. But we know that this is not a choice simply made and then put in the past. So long as we are not fully aware of the reality of the One Life, we can aim to serve it and yet, when circumstances are challenging, lapse. Even when all seems on track, we can unintentionally through ignorance serve the separative self. The Bodisattva Path begins and ends outside of self, of any self we typically imagine in the present state of knowledge and awareness of many, perhaps most, of us. And yet we are the path we tread, for we are each an instantiation of the One Life under our unique karmic conditions. The Bodhisattva Path is ourselves as we strive to develop spiritually as an inseparable part of the whole of existence. This is the karma dimension of the path of knowledge. As we gain real knowledge, karma is triggered so that it may be dealt with and resolved. The very fact that one learns of the two paths and the unavoidable necessity of choosing one shows that the Self, the spiritual Ego has reached into the incarnate individual, however momentarily, and changed one's life.

In *The Voice of the Silence,* H.P.B. notes that the *paramitas* are six in number (and ten for the priests). These are the traditional transcendental virtues of exoteric Buddhism. *Paramita* is a Sanskrit term literally meaning "carrying beyond," hence a virtue that

carries one beyond one's personal self. But the fragment she translates says that the *paramita* path leads to wisdom, the seventh. A little later, in the fragment that discusses the Portals, there are seven, the fourth, *Viraga*, being inserted like a fulcrum in the middle of the traditional six *paramitas*. This alone should tell the reader that the *Voice* is an occult work, filled with hints and intimations that can be grasped and assimilated in meditation, the fourfold path of Dhyana. The *Voice* guides the student from the eye to the heart doctrine, the Bodhisattva Way.

At numerous points, the *Voice* warns that one can slip back. This suggests that the steps on that Path are walked again and again, now and through incarnations. *Dana* means giving but expands into generosity. Clearly this is more than generosity of means, which is important, but also generosity of spirit, how we treat and respond to others. The whole Path is found in seed form at this first Portal. While the student will walk the Paramita path repeatedly, if successful, at every more refined, spiritual and universal levels, crossing the Portal means mastery, where *Dana* is no longer an intentional way of living but is as natural as breathing. Yet even here, we are warned that it is possible to slip back, and it is understood that the higher one climbs, the harder any fall will be. Only when the last Portal, *prajña*, is crossed, is one safely a Bodhisattva, and not only an aspirant to bodhisattvahood. All this makes sense, of course, if one thinks in terms of the One Life, for in those terms, there is no ultimately meaningful individual existence save as a Bodhisattva, in which one's individuality is merged in the whole, separate from nothing, even while acting as a center of truth and real being.

Shila, often taken as ethics and right living, becomes increasingly karmically situated right action. One can engage in intentional right action to the degree that discrimination is developed, and our old friends, critical distance and precision.

Kshanti, patience, is needed once the first two steps are taken at any level, for frustration and failure seem to mount with every effort. The obvious temptation is to be annoyed by the perceived denseness of others when it comes to Theosophy. But equally obvious is impatience with oneself. In the practice of meditation, many teachers have advised not to fight against the random thoughts and images that arise as one makes the effort to

concentrate on the highest abstract reality, such as absolute abstract space. Rather simply return to the meditative focus, thereby depriving those thoughts and images of the power of distraction. Patience is not a passive stance but an active virtue, and anyone who has tried to cultivate it knows how persistent the effort must be.

Hence the fourth step, *Viraga*, indifference to pain as to pleasure, finds deep expression in the idea of critical distance, of not being deflected by the sensations of the moment. This does not mean that one does not experience pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, but that one is not erroneously redirected by them. In the metaphor of the mango, we are advised to be compassionate to the woes and trials of others and hard to our own, not in order to wallow in guilt, but to recognize the karmic source of our woes and trials and to overcome them and put them away. One cannot think of and respond compassionately to others if one is distracted by the trammels of one's own reflected personal ego. The Dalai Lama laughs easily and takes joy in humanity, but he keeps rigorously to his path, and his example can encourage all aspirants.

Dhyana, concentration, suggests focus in meditation and in the daily round. And this concentration is not only internal and abstract, though it is certainly that, but includes self-study and focus on what is presented to us by the world and life.

Samadhi, deep meditation, is essential if *prajña*, wisdom is to be attained. Yet, even if we have taken all these steps, we find that whatever wisdom we have gained refines our sense of *dana*, generosity, and we begin again. In this respect, the path can be seen as a spiral staircase, ever returning to its starting point but at a higher, more profound, level. We each are the path, and that staircase is both within and without: as our life in the world is refined, tending toward realization of the One Life which is us and all existence, so we are refined within as points of that One Life.

To the extent the Bodhisattva Path is real to us, wherever we may be on it, it is us. The great dual principles set out by the Great Master are to be reconciled in us and in the world. Like the three yogas—*jñana, bhakti* and *karma*—which are synthesized in *raja*, for the Theosophist who would be an Occultist, study, gratitude and action are integrated

and integral to one's life. Yet H.P.B. said that the Western path is *jñana*, and so *The Secret Doctrine* was given here, for the West and to the world, as the West has fostered globalization and sometimes unfortunate imitation. Sharing Theosophy with the world is a task Theosophists undertake with a deep sense of mission.

Dharma is one of those wonderful Sanskrit terms that has no English equivalent. It can be translated 'duty' as it often is in the *Bhagavad Gita*, or 'law' as in the Hindu *dharmaśastras*, or 'doctrine' or 'teaching' as in *buddhadharma*, and so on. Yet none of these fully capture the richness and resonance of the term. At the most universal level, *dharma* is the way of the One Life. In each individual, it is the right path to be taken, the Theosophical life, and the mission of that life includes sharing the Theosophical Teachings by deed and word, by example and by teaching. As William Quan Judge said, each individual is a center, and that is each individual's *dharma*.

There are those who wonder whether such a lofty task is impossible, even foolish in this world of almost eight billion people, each with a life story influenced by myriad previous lives and by mutual interaction. But the human being as microcosm of the macrocosm, a distinction that is ultimately dissolved on the Path, has latent with himself or herself the very powers that allow the whole of visible and invisible Nature to exist. They are the mysterious *saktis—parasakti*, *itchasakti, jñanasakti*, *kriyasakti*, *kundalinisakti*, and *matrikasakti*, all synthesized by the seventh. In treading the Path, we seek to awaken these powers by becoming porous to the Atmic light that shines over all. In Shankacharya's suggestive metaphor, we work to dispel the clouds that block the sunlight. When the clouds are parted and dispersed, the light that was always present shines through. To the degree that it shines into the lower principles, it also shines out into the world, even if we are not aware of that. We have what we need: the question is whether we avail ourselves of our spiritual resources.

Looking at the questions challenging us in these three days might appear to be a departure from last year's conference where we discussed three hot topics—religious intolerance, suicide and end of life issues—and to be a turning inward this year to our own understanding of Theosophy. Yet the distinction "inner" and "outer," or "within

oneself" and "in the world" becomes meaningless for the student of Theosophy. Realization of Theosophical truths is all inner and their meaning is all outer. The yogas are already unified, and students of Theosophy are learning to synthesize them within themselves. This is the Bodhisattva path.

We are called upon to consider religion, philosophy and science, what they really are Theosophically, what they seem to be for most of the world, and how the gap can be bridged. Here 'bridge' is a very important word. We know that the Three Fundamentals are the bridge. But we also know that simply proclaiming them is insufficient to cross that bridge. Hence the original three objects of the Theosophical Society, which are the objects of all Theosophical institutions, are set out. The effort to create a nucleus of universal brotherhood, the study of religions and science, and the exploration of the unrecognized powers in the human being and nature, all nurture that bridge. The first speaks to philosophy, the second to religion and science and the third to the whole of cosmos. This conference is devoted to understanding both what religion, philosophy and science are, Theosophically considered, and how to bring that consideration into the public arena where preconceptions and sensitivities abound.

The One Life is the root of all three, and the first object clearly involves the highest ethics if universal brotherhood, even in seed form, is to be realized. So the whole Bodhisattva path is involved in the three objects. Bridging the gap will not be achieved only by promulgating the Teachings, though that done in a respectful and discriminating way, is essential. How we live, which includes how we respond to others who may ask questions, share difficulties, express their preconceptions and even prejudices, and including even chance encounters, is equally essential.

Here we will discuss together our understanding of the issues involved. If we practice *Dhyana*, concentration, and focus on both our own thinking and listen carefully to what others share, remaining open to new insights that may elevate our own, we will be involved in valuable conversation. Maintaining a meditative openness, ideas previously unthought may enter one or another mind, for if we have together the right attitude of gratitude for the Teachings and reverence for the Teachers, both known and unmanifest

to us, invisible presences may join us and spark profound ideas. The One Life is not constrained by the visible and acknowledged: its aspects are myriad, and we may be confident that, just as we are each challenged by our karma and lower natures, we are supported by what is higher in us and in the universe, if we only allow it. Thus, this conference may be a joyous and also humbling experience for each one, and both joy and humility are integral to that Path we tread, which is ourselves.

What then is the point of devoting all this precious time to the theme of this conference? The answer is simple, if we but listen. It is given even to one who is prepared to cross the seventh Portal, wisdom itself:

"Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"

Apprentices to truth, in Emerson's felicitous phrase, cannot finally answer that question in the way one who is about to cross the seventh Portal can, but each knows what the answer must be at every level of attainment. We recall William Quan Judge's great image of Theosophy at the beginning of his *The Ocean of Theosophy*:

> Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet, shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child.

We may be hesitant at the water's edge; we may have stepped into the ocean; perhaps we have waded out a bit or even have plunged completely into its wonderous waters. Whatever our relation to that ocean, this conference calls on all of us to risk going deeper into that fathomless sea with critical distance and precision, with openness and focus, tuned to the highest and best in ourselves and to the cry of the world. In 1888, Jasper Niemand wrote a letter to William Quan Judge. In it she said: "*The future of humanity is as stake.* It is seed time and the ground must be harrowed and torn." The future is still at stake, and it falls to Theosophists and all people of good will to plant and nurture seeds wherever possible amongst humanity.

Integral Theosophy is the reconciliation of the great dual principles. May we all be worthy of the task set before us in this conference and in life.