



Theosophical Society Point Loma - Blavatskyhouse

Literature, supporting the study (on Sunday, December 4, 2022)
of the lecture of Barend Voorham (on Sunday, November 27, 2022)

Series: **Inner Peace and Outer Peace**

Lecture: **Do ideas change the world?**

'The origin and prevention of war'

article in *Lucifer the Lightbringer*, Peace Special, No. 2/3, July – August, 2022, p 50-1, 53

Emotional exacerbation

When people think excessive thoughts of selfish desire, it has an effect not only on others but also on themselves. The other person will be disadvantaged by it, but also in one's own consciousness, a strong imbalance arises. After all, desires are never satisfied by giving in to them. Satisfying your own desires is like quenching your thirst with seawater. The more you drink, the greater the thirst. Therefore, one who is strongly overpowered by desires is an unsatisfied person. He does not find peace and satisfaction. He does not know *peace*.

This affects his mood. The whole emotional nature bubbles and boils and, as the power of desire becomes stronger in a person, it becomes overheated. The pressure becomes too great. He has to blow off steam.

Take as an example a selfish person, who in his discontentment is always cranky and thinks uncontrollably. He is easily irritated and annoyed beyond measure by his neighbor, who always puts his car in *his* parking lot and never weeds his front yard on time. He starts to feel like a *victim* of what he calls his neighbor's anti-social behavior. At some point, for example, when his neighbor has again done something that annoys him, it reaches an outburst. The pent-up irritation – unfulfilled desires and uncontrolled emotions – breaks through and finds its way into the external, physical realm. His body reacts. He gets an increased heart rate and his hands sweat. In a fit of rage, he steps up to his neighbor to punch him. The uncontrolled emotions have led to physical violence.

The living planet Earth

On planet Earth, the same thing happens as with an human being. The planet is a living organism, in which the same processes take place as within a human being. Humanity performs

a function in the living organism earth, just as each of the organs in the human body has a function. And our function is that we form the mental atmosphere of the earth. If human beings are hostile to each other because they believe that others are preventing them from satisfying their selfish desires, humanity is failing in its functioning within the larger scheme of planetary life. Note that it is not the planet but the human mind that is causing the imbalance. The tension field of aggression and hatred fueled by millions is growing stronger and more influential. It presses with increasing force on the emotional nature of man. As in an individual case, this pressure can become so great that the thoughts that are dominant within certain populations or nations can no longer control the emotions and there will be a release: physical violence and physical war.

Arguing people are strong at finding all sorts of (false) excuses why the quarrel had to take place. "I will not let him walk over me", "he always plays music loudly at night", and so on. The irritation felt is the impulse for "countermeasures", whereby the end justifies the means. Between countries, the same thing takes place. The (feigned) arguments differ, of course, from those of a neighborly dispute, but the characteristic is the same. The "enemy" is said to have disrespected the border, to have oppressed related populations, to have scorned one's own people or religion, and so on.

The release of accumulated uncontrolled selfish desires and emotions always takes place where the greatest imbalance is. Just as the physical human being often has a weak spot, so does humanity. These weaknesses are created by the common power of thought and the mental imbalance created as a result. Regions where people live with different nationalistic or religious feelings, which are opposed to people with other nationalistic and religious feelings, are the weak spots of the living planet. They are therefore the most vulnerable and prone to outbreaks of violence.

(...)

Is war inevitable? ...

Everyone can see for themselves that an overheated emotional nature that, like a volcano that is about to spew its fire, can be dampened. The man who is annoyed with his neighbor can appeal to aspects of consciousness within himself that will reduce the pressure. He can do this even when he is about to slap his neighbor.

The first somewhat deeper layer in our consciousness is the intellect. Call it our *common sense*. You can simply *reason* that a conversation with your neighbor, in which you try to make agreements with each other, leads to a more sustainable and better solution for everyone than if you resort to physical violence.

Still better is to dig even deeper than the intellect. The ability to understand, insight and idealism are equally aspects of consciousness that everyone possesses *potentially*, and that one can develop by oneself. If we do that, we will never get irritated, and there will be no accumulation of negative emotions. Then we will never step on our stripes, constantly justifying ourselves and believing that we have the right on our side. We will not try to harm those we do not like and who we feel have wronged us in equal measure. What is the point of fretting and complaining about the perceived injustice done to you? It never leads to solutions. It is much better for everyone to keep the inner peace so that you can work with a calm mind on solutions that are beneficial for everyone. (...)

What applies to individual cases also applies wholesale. Consultation is much better than weapons. (See the article "Mediation from a sense of unity".) Even better is when the populations of nations learn to see each other as partners, with whom you must cooperate, just

as individual human beings cooperate with their neighbors. Then as a nation, or as an international community, you build a continent of thought of peace and harmony from which all who open themselves to it can draw.

Peace is possible if you yourself live in peace. There is no human being who does not possess the noble qualities of insight and transcendent love. That we do not always live in these aspects is all too obvious, but that does not mean we cannot start doing it.

Gottfried de Purucker, 'Civilization Buildded Upon Thought'

Article in: *The Theosophical Forum*, Vol. XI, No. 4, October 1937, p. 241-245.

In: *Wind of the Spirit*, 1st edition, 1944, p. 42-45.

Source: <https://blavatskyhouse.org/reading/gottfried-de-purucker/wind-of-the-spirit/>

Thought is the motive power of men. It governs even emotion and can control it, and although sometimes thought is evoked by feeling, I think that on the higher planes they are one. The world we live in is a world of men, a world of thinkers and feelers; and if the world is bad, it is because men's thoughts and feelings have made it so. If human conditions are inharmonious, even diabolic at times, when brute force takes the place of reason and justice, it is because men's thoughts have made it so. Ideas control actions. There you have the cause of the unrest in the world we live in, and its cure. If a man wants to reform himself, he does so by first of all changing his thought; he begins by feeling differently. There is no other way. It is the only lasting way, for it means a change of character. If you want to prevent a quarrel you have to begin your work *before* the quarrel threatens. If you try to interfere in a quarrel between two men, you are apt to hurt yourself, and you will have a quarrel of three. It is no way to stop a quarrel by going to the quarrelers and preaching. By so doing you have not touched these men where they are susceptible, you have not changed them, you have not appealed to their thought or their feelings. You have been trying mere palliatives.

Make them see that they are acting a bit worse than the beasts are when the beasts fight, because the beasts have not our reason and common sense. Make your appeal with ideas. Awaken thoughts in their minds. Put into their minds a new sequence of thought and feeling. Then they will begin to realize that you cannot settle a quarrel by brute force, for that simply means that the chap who has got the worst of it is going to bide his time to see if he can best the other fellow by brute force. They will begin to see that you cannot stop wars by making wars to stop wars. It never has worked and never will, because it is an entirely wrong psychology, as well as foolish.

Do you know that all civilization is buildded upon thought? And that if you want to change a civilization, you must change accepted thought, give a new thought. What is an invention? A thought. What is literature? Thought. What are philosophy, religion, science? Thought. What is the social structure under which we live? Thought. Every movement in the world today is buildded upon thought: social, political, philosophic, religious, scientific, what not. Nine out of ten of these movements began in the mind of one man, and spread. You see in the pages of history the tremendous cataclysmic effects of thought. What was the Great War? Not only the result of thought, but thought itself. Men fighting because of ideas — thoughts. To avoid another war we

must begin before the next one happens. We must begin by starting a new current of thought in the world.

These truths are so simple they pass over our heads and we do not take them in and digest them. It is ideas that shake the world. It is ideas that make the world. It is ideas that unmake men and the world of men. Consult the annals of history. Look at the amazing results that spring from movements which begin perhaps with a handful of earnest people. For years they may work and preach and labor apparently without result. Suddenly, for some remarkable reason, the idea catches and spreads like wildfire. Sometimes ideas take hold of men in the most amazing way. What were the Crusades, when men left home and hearth and fireside and everything they held dear to go to fight the paynim, in a distant foreign and unknown land? These tens of thousands of men collected from all over Europe *for an idea*. Still more remarkable: what was this amazing and thought-arresting idea which even caught the thoughts and imaginations of little children? Have you ever heard of the Children's Crusade? Out of Germany and what is now Belgium and Holland and France and Switzerland, down into the south of France and into Italy, suddenly children began to arise, boys and girls from toddling ones up to those of thirteen or fourteen years — they took to the roads and went by the scores of thousands till the highways were black with their marching feet. Hundreds of miles they went, dying by thousands on the way, and horribly treated by human monsters who battered on them. Nobody knows how this thought arose. Suddenly the children in the various countries took it into their heads: "We will go fight, we will go save the Holy Sepulcher." Fancy children talking like that! They got it from their parents, of course; but look at the psychology — a psychology that swept every home, took one or more children from every fireside. The mothers and fathers could not stop them. They would steal out by night. They would go by byways and devious pathways to the great highways, those bands of helpless children going south, going south! All for an idea, a thought!

What was the idea of the wonderful tarantella which is best described by the historians of Spain and Italy — Italy, perhaps particularly? Suddenly for no understandable reason, grown men and women got the idea that they must dance; and they began to dance, and danced on and on until they fell down unconscious, exhausted. They could not stop themselves from singing and dancing, singly and together — whole country sides, whole districts of them. A psychology, a thought, an idea.

It is just such kind of insane psychology that rules the world of human thought today. Men and women have got the idea that it is impossible to prevent a second Great War. They really believe it. And that is one of the reasons why it will happen unless sanity resumes its sway over our minds. What makes and carries on any war? Thought. What stops any war? Thought: a changing of the thoughts of men; for by changing their thoughts you change their hearts, you change their lives and therefore their civilizations: If a war comes, it is because men and women have brought it about by their thinking. Their thinking arouses their feeling. Their feeling arouses their jealousy and fear. Evil thought will be followed by similar thought. You cannot extinguish fire by fire. You cannot stop war by war. This is as simple as ABC. These are thoughts which fly unnoticed over our heads because we are so accustomed to them, and yet they are the secret of all good and all evil. A man's life is changed sublimely by his thoughts; so too can he go to "hell" or the gallows by his thinking. It is thought which makes the gentleman and the boor. It is thought which makes the courageous man or the coward. It is thought which produces forgiveness or carries on hate.

It was because these facts are such that the Theosophical Society was begun: to try to change the thoughts of men towards better and higher things; to arouse inspiring and benevolent ideas in the minds of individual men and women. Why don't we Theosophists go into the arena of

politics? For the reason I have already pointed out. You cannot stop a fight between two by making it a fight of three. But you can stop men from acting worse than beasts by showing them that if they act in *this* way they will be acting like men, and if they act in *that* way they will be acting worse than beasts. If they act in *this* way they will be acting wisely and constructively; and if they act in *that* way they will be destroying each other.

Why don't we Theosophists all go out and take lunch-baskets around to the starving, and go to the bedsides of the people who are smitten with disease, and dying? Many of us do it and have done it. But our main work in life is to try to *do away* with poverty, rather than tinkering with the needs of the poor; and this will gradually be accomplished by changing men's minds so that our civilization will be an enlightened one. That, among other noble objectives, is what we aspire towards. And there is no other work which is farther-reaching than that. It goes to the root of things, instead of only putting plaster and ointments on the surface of the festering wounds. And in a still higher field our work is to teach men and women what they as individuals have locked up within them:

powers, capacities, faculties, which the average man and woman today does not suspect. Yet they are there; the titan intellects, the greatest men who have ever lived, have proved what the human mind is capable of; and every normal man has the same potencies within himself. It is part of the work of the Theosophical Society to rearouse belief in these things, so that men will yearn to cultivate themselves from within outwards, to awaken what is within, and to become greater and grander. What a world we shall live in then! It is thought that will do it, and the feeling which follows upon thought. Then indeed will the Christ, crucified in us every day we live, ascend from the Crucifix, our own being, the body of each man, and enter into the brain of the man, and enlighten his life, and reform his conduct towards his fellows. Just that one thought alone, if you could get men to believe it and inwardly to know it, would bring about a universal "conversion," as the Christians say, a converting, a changing, a turning around, of our minds and hearts to the living Christ within, the living Buddha! It is as simple as that.

— G. de P.

The Theosophical Society
Point Loma - Blavatskyhouse

De Ruijterstraat 72-74
2518AV The Hague
The Netherlands

website: www.blavatskyhouse.org
email: info@blavatskyhouse.org
tel.: +31 70 3461545