

Why One Should Join the Theosophical Society

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THE Theosophical Society is the proper place for many different types of men and women, and for people in varied stages of growth and development.

First. Its broad and non-sectarian basis should attract to it all those who take an intellectual interest in its second or third objects: the study of ancient philosophies, religions, and sciences, and the development and investigations of the psychic powers and faculties latent in many.

Many students of modern western philosophy join its ranks because they find there others who can assist them and throw light upon their difficulties from the standpoint of Oriental philosophy. Students of modern physical science, too, will find in the T. S. those who can cooperate with them, and give them suggestion and sympathy in their investigations. This is especially the case as regards such subjects as Anthropology and Cosmogony, upon which many students of Oriental science belonging to the Society would have numerous ideas to share with their fellow-members.

But among those specially interested in intellectual pursuits, the Society appeals most nearly, perhaps, to such as are oppressed by the intellectual difficulty of the crushing problems of human life, its origin and destiny, the riddles of heredity and the dark mysteries of psychology.

Many members of the Society have given much time to the study of Religions, religious symbolism and dogma, as phases and expressions of the human mind, so that all those interested in such pursuits will find in the T. S. help, stores of information, and many a guiding clue to these labyrinthine mazes. And the same thing applies to those intellectually interested in the study of the abnormal manifestations which occur through the human organism, and in such subjects as Hypnotism, Mesmerism, Clairvoyance, etc., etc.

But the intellect, and the intellectual faculties, by no means embrace the entire human being, and they are far from being the most vitally important of his attributes, great as their importance [Page 15] undoubtedly is; and the Theosophical Society is even more the appropriate place for all those men and women who have the cause of suffering Humanity at heart, than for the purely intellectual student. To lead men on to think for themselves, to assist them to cultivate and develop their nobler and broader aspirations, to aid them in forming a vaster and deeper conception of human life, its laws and its purpose — to do this is true philanthropic work, far more real, more lasting, more important in its results, than to fill their stomachs, to clothe their bodies, or even to minister to their diseases. It is only in the ideas and conceptions as to man and nature which the Society has done

so much to popularize, that the poor, the suffering, and the wretched can find a remedy for the sense of bitter wrong, injustice, and cruelty which gnaws so keenly at many a heart.

To assist in this labour of love is a task in which should share all whose hearts beat in responsive sympathy to the mental agony of others. All those of large heart, all the more developed and more compassionate souls of our race should hasten to join in the service of our common humanity, should lay aside all religious and sectarian prejudice, and seek in the ranks of the Theosophical Society the co-operation, assistance, and support which it freely offers to all sincere and ardent lovers of their fellowmen. All such, all who seek as the true goal of effort, to benefit and help others, all who can rise to the broad and lofty ideal of humanity itself as the object of their devotion, can find no truer home, no stronger support, nor more earnest fellow-workers than the Theosophical Society and its devoted members.

The Society has no dogmas, no tenets, no religion; it aims at teaching men the power of co-operation, and demonstrating the value of perfect toleration and mutual aid in the search after truth. Through its many branches, scattered all over the world, it brings together, and focuses at a common centre, the labours and investigations of many minds, and places within reach of the student the labours of others engaged in the same research. Thus it puts into the hands of western students the key to the real comprehension of the religious, philosophical, and scientific knowledge of our Aryan ancestors, while it also opens up the way to a broader and more philosophical comprehension of our own forms of faith in all these directions. No one joining its ranks is called upon to subscribe to any beliefs or doctrines, nor abandon his own, whatever they may be. Theosophy is not the creed of the T.S. ; it is only a system of thought studied ardently by many of its members, because they find there that satisfaction for those deeper cravings and longings of their hearts which they have failed to find elsewhere.

It is a commonplace to say that union is strength, yet few [Page 16] people realize the importance of this truth in the intellectual and aspirational worlds of life. How many a true and noble thought, how many a lofty, unselfish aspiration, how many a longing after a larger and more comprehensive grasp of life have perished, stillborn, for want of the timely sympathy and encouragement of others sharing in like feelings! In moments of weariness and despondency, when the weight of sorrow or suffering forces upon our attention the dark mystery of human life, we feel the need of a friendly hand amid the gloom. In our hours of keen perception, of clear insight, when our hearts are uplifted with the glow of some new thought, some fuller apprehension of the laws which guide our lives, we need kindred minds into which we can pour out our new-found treasures. Such help, such opportunities it is the aim of the T.S. to furnish to all who desire them.

Many minds in our day feel instinctively the desire for some solid foundation on which to rest the aspirations of their hearts in what maybe called a religious direction. But they have sought in vain for any firm ground on which to build. To such the T.S. offers opportunities of study and of obtaining what they seek such as no other organization can show. It is true that every man must find his own footing in this search for truth; but much, very much, can be done by mutual assistance, and many errors and mistakes avoided by the free discussion and comparison of views and experiences which the Society exists to promote.

But there are many persons fully in sympathy with the basic ideas of the Theosophical movement, many even who hold such fundamental conceptions of Theosophy as Karma and Reincarnation, who yet do not join the ranks of the Society. Such people are making a very grave mistake, whether their abstention is due to the fact that they do not accept or sympathize with all the teachings of Theosophy, or to a fear of being hampered and limited in their growth or action through belonging to any organization, or again, to the belief that they can get all they need from Theosophical publications and would gain no good by joining the Society. To begin with, no one who joins the Society is expected or asked to believe in or accept anything, except the ideal of Universal Brotherhood. Secondly, no one need fear that he will be hampered or hindered in his growth or action through belonging to the Society, for the whole tendency and spirit of the organization is to encourage and provide for the very largest possible measure of individual freedom of thought and action. Thirdly, those who remain outside the Society under the impression that they can get all they need from books, and have nothing to gain by joining an organization, will sooner or later find out their mistake. For, not only do the magnetic, the mental, and the spiritual currents bind all earnest members of the [Page 17] organization together, so that each is upheld and aided in his progress by the strength of all, not only do the interchange of thought and the mental contact between the members greatly benefit each, but the time is rapidly approaching when the great current of spiritual life and light now sweeping through the world will cease to flow, and those who trusted to themselves alone will find that, not being integral parts of a living whole, their inner life will rapidly die out under these unfavourable conditions.

But these reasons appeal only to selfishness. There is a nobler, a truer, a grander motive which should make all those join the society, who sympathize with the ideal of Universal Brotherhood, or who hold any of the basic conceptions of Theosophy. This is the love of truth and the desire to help others. Nowhere can such a field be found for the action of these two motives as in the Society. No other organization can appeal with half the force to all who love truth for her own sake, to all who long to aid their fellow-men, who desire to uplift the masses of the ignorant and the miserable, who realize that life has a grander, a nobler purpose than eating, drinking, begetting children, and the gratification of selfish desires and ambitions — from all such no organization can claim allegiance with a better right than the Theosophical Society, whose motto is: "There is no Religion higher than Truth", whose foundation stone is the Universal Brotherhood of mankind, and whose maxim for daily life is Altruism.