

# What is the Relevance of Theosophical Metaphysics to Daily Life?

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(Originally published in the *Theosophical Research Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 1, March 1987.)

I believe that the theosophical perspective can help modern people to recover a sense of wonder and meaning that permeates even the most mundane areas of life, by showing that this ordinary life is set against a vast and potentially splendid cosmic backdrop with which it interacts, so that nothing is truly insignificant or without meaning on many dimensions and throughout many ages.

Through the concept of “planes” – i.e. etheric, astral, mental, intuitional etc., theosophists postulate that actions on the “material” level have ramifications affecting other beings and the future on several other levels, extending even to future worlds and races by the action of karma. Nothing is only itself; everything, even the minutest thought, is interrelated with everything else past, present and future. This can of course be a sobering, even terrifying notion. Yet when combined with the theosophical vision of overall upward evolution toward unimaginable heights, it is basically positive, making the good more significant and setting the bad in perspective.

Sociologists of religion such as Peter Berger have spoken of a modern “disenchantment of the world”, suggesting that we have lost the sense of power and consequence tinged with wonder – enchantment – known to earlier people whose world was full of magic, revelation, divinity and sacred mandate for the laws and structures of society. I do not myself see the history of religion – or perhaps one should say, of secularization – as quite as ‘straight line’ as Berger seems to, yet the point remains that many modern people have lost a real sense of transcendence, or of real meaning in moral decision.

To be sure, many things are rushing in to fill the void. The explosive vogue for science fiction and fantasy, not only in books but perhaps even more significantly in films such as *Star Wars* and children’s toys, despite often simplistic good guys and bad guys scenarios, reveal a yearning for a multi-level universe in which wonder is possible and moral decision of vital reality. (Interestingly, the cosmos of many of these fantasies strikingly approximates the theosophical, with etheric powers like “The Force” and close equivalents of mahatmas, devas and dugpas). The resurgence of fervent fundamentalism in several religions also displays a desperate drive to find transcendent reference points and fill the void. But to my mind those movements cannot finally succeed because there is too much dissonance between them and other cultural realities e.g. science, art, literature and social movements such as feminism, which only create more acute anxiety and tension on deep, half-conscious levels. Further, history in the end inevitably shows up the relativity of all such verbally absolutistic religion.

These deep anxieties definitely reach into the lives of ordinary people. Polls and profit margins show it is they in their millions, who read the SF books, attend the movies, support the fundamentalist preachers. I propose that theosophy, rightly understood, can handle the same void with less tension.

Metaphysics has been described as an effort to discover the relations between the underlying Reality and its consequences.

This being the primary task of theosophy, it seems that the critical question is, how do we illuminate the theosophical worldview in such a way as to demonstrate its separability from immediacy of human experience?

It is not the theoretical aspects of theosophy that give the individual power to transform himself and his life, but rather the insight which knits that person firmly and unshakably to his vision of the whole, so that his life is never without meaning, purpose and spiritual promise.

Thus it is the relevancy of theosophy to life-in-the-world that needs to be explored in every context, so that the consequences of theosophy in day to day situations become an intrinsic part of each theosophist's decision making, and an ever present commitment to the whole and to the good lies at the root of every personal choice and human relationship – commitment which survives personal error, negates personal guilt and in the long run, frees one from bondage to the personal self.

*The question:* How do we illumine the fabric of theosophy so as to reveal its immediacy and its relevance to the day to day problems of individual life, and thereby offer the possibility of self-deliverance to “the great orphan, humanity”?

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