

## **Brotherhood and Service - *Tim Boyd***

### **Notes**

The class began with a short talk on meditation and then a 20-minute Metta (Loving-Kindness) Meditation

Metta practice is a great practice for creating positive momentum both personally and socially. Metta can help us see our hidden potential for love; metta practice helps us expand beyond our normal boundaries.

This link will take you to a 28-minute guided Metta Meditation by meditation teacher Gil Fronsdal (The group facilitator should have this free mp3 set up and ready to go before class begins.) <http://diydharm.org/guided-metta-meditation-gil-fronsdal>

After the Metta practice, have participants share their experiences of the meditation.

### **Meditation is stilling the mind.**

Its essence is common to all religions.

Old joke: “Meditation is not what you think”

### **Posture**

Certain postures probably activate body energy options more than others

But for our purpose we will simply stress these three basic tenets to posture:

- 1) comfort
- 2) spine aligned (straight)
- 3) hands—many varieties of meditative prescriptions for hands, again for our sake, keep your hands still and comfortable wherever you decide to settle them

Another important key to meditation is regularity and consistency (let your body develop a rhythm so it gets in sync: it gets to know when you are going to meditate)

- A- Try to meditate at the same time(s) of day each day
- B- Try to meditate in the same location each day
- C- Meditating in groups can be more powerful than meditating alone

Early in the day is preferable: other people’s minds and emotions have not affected us yet. Yes, we are all busy, but find 15 minutes a day to meditate. Gradually you may build this meditation “muscle” and will find you are lengthening the time quite effortlessly. Practicing daily helps you to build your practice. Nature will take back that progress you make if you do not keep working on it - you have to weed the garden of your mind with meditation.

### **Meditation can remind us of a key Theosophical/Spiritual Principle:**

Who we are is much more expansive than we generally give ourselves credit for being; or, as Thich Nhat Hanh asserts, we exist and are connected at levels that are too subtle for our usual perceptions to be aware of.

One fact of our Inter-Being ness is that other people's thoughts are going through us constantly—other people's thoughts may pass through our mind and we may take them as our own: they appear on the screen of our mind and we assume they are our own.

Mistakenly owning these thoughts strengthens them and then we send them back out and likely the process continues on with others. This is a problem when there is some negative content/energy to the thoughts.

Spiritual study, and especially spiritual contemplation or meditations on specific spiritual themes, help us to put this momentum on a positive path.

### **Some Basic Principles of Theosophy Relevant to Brotherhood and Service**

Sutras — Short spiritual expressions in Buddhism -- these compact and impactful expressions are part of all spiritual systems, including of course, Theosophy.

“Brotherhood” and “Service” are examples of ideas - words in themselves work as sort of energy packets. Similarly “Family”—we associate with “family” working together selflessly, being inter-connected, knowledgeable that all of our actions affect everyone.

Theosophical Society: Its Object: To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without Distinction.

As your go deeper with your spiritual practice, unity becomes more apparent.

Septenary: 7-fold nature of reality-- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septenary\\_\(Theosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septenary_(Theosophy))

A very basic model for the different aspects of our being can be made clear with a simpler four-layer mode:

Physical  
Etheric  
Emotional  
Mental

Brotherhood is most difficult to apply at the physical level (the densest level). However, even at the physical level, it is logical that we are connected. For example, atoms in our bodies may have also been in the bodies of Christ or Buddha.

Mahatma letters indicate—everything—even thoughts—have a degree of matter.

As you go beyond the lower mind to the Higher Mind you find Unity.

Blavatsky: human being is both the highest spirit and the lowest matter—linked by mind. Thus we want to cultivate that mind, that bridge between these two essentials. Cultivate the bridge between materialism and seeming separateness and brotherhood and spirit.

Intuition is the faculty which can sense this oneness.

Brotherhood: we have a shared, spiritual heritage.  
There is One from which we all came.

We have Buddha nature within us.  
Prophets have given this message throughout history.

**What is meant by Service:**

+ to put others first

+ Buddha on his deathbed “Do no harm. Do good. Purify yourselves.”

If you want to add to the world, stop adding to its problems. “No snow flake in an avalanche feels itself responsible.”

Who are we serving? A question we all need to ask...

Mother Teresa: in every person she saw Jesus.

“Love” has so many different uses and meanings in our society and language that many feel that the word has lost its energy...

You might love football  
You might love the Divine  
You might love your father  
You might love your wife, etc.

All of these loves are significantly different.

Love is a verb, not a noun.

In a Buddhist context, “Love is the desire for the happiness of others.”

Love requires others (we are not, of course, talking about self love here).

In Buddhism, Buddhi (spiritual intuition) is that same faculty which connects us to love.

As an individual “I,” as a single body, we can do some things, but working singularly in this way is not working at our greatest capacity.

T.O.S.(Theosophical Order of Service) — union of those who work in love for the service of others.

Today we are blitzed with information. And crisis, personal and especially social, national, and international makes provocative news, news that sells. Thus we are bombarded by so many stories of devastation, desperation, and crisis that we may indeed feel overwhelmed and, like our actions as a single person we cannot possibly matter at all.

This feeling of futility though is precisely the attitude we cannot afford to sustain.

Many feel that just having our thoughts and emotions in order is the greatest possible service we can provide.

Theosophy teaches our inter-connectedness at many levels: Theosophically speaking it is a fact, a given, that our thoughts and emotions are infectious. Since thoughts and emotions ultimately decide our actions most significantly, their order can lead to true peace for us and others.

To achieve this sort of order of thought and peace in the face of all the negativity in the world and in face of the nature of the world to lull us into a dull, dreamy blind acceptance of materialism, requires a spiritual connection.

In devotional spiritual practices like Hinduism and Christianity, one devotes oneself to God and God promises, “I will keep you in perfect peace if you keep your mind on Me.” Some may prefer to phrase this as focus or devotion to the Higher Self.

For several different reasons and on several different levels, anyone who makes a connection to his/her Higher Self automatically becomes a healer.

The more you can preserve your connection to the spiritual, to your Higher Self, the more tangible and energetic the results.

Your realization of Truth goes out and positively affects those around you (far more profoundly than you will probably imagine). On the other hand, Wrong View, as the Buddhists phrase it, has the opposite affect. Wrong view is our mistaken delusional way of seeing the world—purely materialistic, absolutely separate, etc.

It is important to see correctly, Right View—the cure for darkness is light. A deeper experience of the Light should be our goal.

Where does profound peace come from? <http://nety-nety.net/it/filosofia/neti-neti-we-are-more> Netti Netti - That peace comes when we get past dualism and jump into wholeness, the wholeness, Oneness that lies in Reality beneath the illusory surface appearance of separateness.

We can get to this place of *Netti Netti* through deep spiritual practice. Meditation is an excellent tool for this: we temporarily suspend the constant mind chatter, the continuous stream of thought in our mind. If we cannot stop the thought completely we can at least develop the presence and strength of the Witness, the watcher, and watch our thoughts as separate phenomenon, knowing that we are not our thoughts.

Whatever our meditation/spiritual practice—a well-developed mindfulness and acute awareness of our thoughts is the key: “Our thoughts are prayers and we are always praying.”

We have certain spiritual potentials: we need to devote ourselves more fully to our potentials.

There are an array of spiritual beings who would love to help us: we need only to set our will toward/on the Path.

Part of us is not convinced about the validity of spiritual teachings. We can try spiritual experiments—take one small thing we do and make that action an offering to something greater. It can be anything, even having a meal. Make the entire action an offering to the very highest part of yourself for example.

This skill of offering an action to your Higher Self or the Divine, just like meditation, is an art that can be developed, a skill muscle which can be strengthened: start small, be consistent with this practice, and gradually the sacred movement aspect of your life will increase—this is Practice of the Divine Presence, the key to Brotherhood and Service.