



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: Adyar's abundant foliage provides shelter to a monkey – J. Suresh

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

The Wonder Around Us

You can pick up a feather around your house when walking near about, perhaps look at it carefully, because feathers are so intricately constructed that modern technologists are trying to emulate their perfection. In fact all of Nature contains moral elements to see, to feel, and to understand from the structure. There are creatures so small that one presumes that they cannot contain even a minimum of essentials, but the miracle is that they do. Only we human beings are so lost in the idea that building anything — even a tiny but wonderful system which we also call a creature — is possible only for us.

In a review in *The Guardian* of a recent publication called *Feathers: The Evolution of a Natural Miracle*, it is pointed out that ‘feathers are the most complicated artefact fashioned by Nature from a single substance’, the protein ‘keratin’ of which many things are made. It is the stuff out of which is produced hair, horses’ hooves, their nails, and various other things. A hair we are told is simply a string of dead protein fibres. The principal gene involved is the same as the one which is doing many other things apart from this. Feathers are still intriguing clever human beings

who are unable to guess how such an intricate structure has evolved.

What is the original purpose? How did flight get invented? Feathers are needed, we think, to fly, but bats have no feathers. So there is a problem of how a complex organ comes into being. Feathers, for example, are simple things, according to us, but they have properties involved like lightness, thermal insulation, strength and flexibility, capacity to repel water and some structural magic which gives rise to iridescence. Unfortunately it is this iridescence which tempts women to use feathers as ornaments even if this means killing the original owner.

The same problem which would affect some human beings who want to dress in stunning ways affects the peacock. Its tail, grown any longer, would be impossible to bear. In fact the wings of a plane are modelled on natural development which has taken place in the world of ‘God’. Or has it not? Perhaps a mighty intelligence has constructed some things, so extraordinary that modern technologists are trying to imitate them.

Perhaps all of creation has hundreds of wonderful aspects and can show to the limited human mind something of its marvels. All of Nature is a wonder, not

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only in the small area of living beings, but in the body of a bird or other creature, exhibiting marvels which we are too blind to notice. But it makes the study of Nature the most amazing thing to observe all around, as every form has wonderful features. If only we could see that everything around us is a marvel, we would not be so conscious of our own prowess. The ordinary things which we discard thoughtlessly may contain miraculous elements that we do not notice. Is it because there is so much in nature that we cannot understand?

Knock and the Door Will Open

Being a serious member of the TS is not easy for most people, particularly for anybody who is not serious when joining. Of course this may not apply to most members. There are many applicants who are not too interested in doing the work of the Society, but all the same have some interest; they would therefore like to join the TS. They are welcome to do so. The TS has no wish to impose rules on them and leaves them free. But others, few in number, are very serious about membership. Such persons have to understand that they have a more difficult set of rules to follow.

But who are these persons — those who are the right people to knock on the door? The Society has known some, but perhaps a difficult set of conditions to follow applies to people who have prepared themselves. In a letter a Master of the Wisdom wrote: Those who knock and really want to move in the right direction

must be fit not only to knock, but to adopt a new way of life. This way of life may be strange, perhaps impossible, for those who are not serious although they appear to be so. They must have done the hard work of building rightness as a part of their way, which includes some qualities which seem relatively unimportant to others, but are important to make the character of the person wishing to live differently.

One of those qualities is the love of others, even the foolish who do things which suit themselves but not others. The applicant must accept that he is ready to do good work for the love of others, whether he thinks they are suitable or unsuitable, for purposes his teacher has in mind. This is not as easy as it looks, because he must become more and more resolute in the right direction, in what is righteous for a person turning towards the truth. An ordinary individual may, for example, think it quite right to give a blow or nourish unkind thoughts as a response to certain actions. To himself this may appear to be right. But in his new life, he must be different: he must be calm to consider what will really benefit the other person. We must not presume that we know what is good for the other person. Tentative action — action even while learning — is necessary until one is far on the way.

If we carefully think over all this, not once but again and again, we can learn to be more unselfish, which means being more honest to oneself. All this reaches to a calm, even perhaps to a contemplative

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state of mind. It is not easy to be so; there are many circumstances which lead in a different direction. The seeker may not always know what to do, and may be expecting others to show the way. They cannot always be given through methods which conform to what we expect.

We are told not to wait for orders, which means not to wait but learn to do. What is right is possible only for those who have found how to learn. This flexibility is difficult in the beginning, but we learn that there can be no acceptance of self or selfishness at any time.

As the new way of life becomes gradually part of one's being and a sense of right values and sense of sacredness takes the place of all selfish wants and greed, loving service becomes natural. The person is not ready until then, and must go on until he is able to knock and be chosen for the life.

There is a beautiful representation of this fact, in the religion of love and service. It leads an aspirant to have the door open for his entrance. This is signified by the figure of love for all, Jesus Christ, opening the door and letting in the true servant, the lover of humanity. Unfortunately, many people who understand up to a point, do not realize that love in the real sense sheds its light for all. Animals, plants, and many other things in life which we do not realize have life in them, are included in universal love. This is why we have to learn, according to the Theosophical ideal, what is universal love. Is it meant for one type of person or one type of life or is it something that radiates

within and touches whatever it comes across? Real love can be only universal, not meant to be relegated to one or a few forms of life. This will make a difference to the concerned person who is aspiring to move on the path. The one who has seen the end — the all-pervasive character of love — can know this. It is like the lamp which is lit, and cannot confine light to one thing alone; life is light which spreads in every direction. One of the tests is universality, which is above and below, on every side, with no restrictions. This can automatically change the world, if we know it.

Preparing Oneself

It is said in the Mahatma Letters: 'The door is always open to the right man who knocks and we invariably welcome the newcomer: only instead of going over to him he has to come to us.' In another passage of the Mahatma Letters we hear that 'a man who places not the good of mankind above his own good, is not worthy of becoming our Chela'. Every would-be Chela ought to know thoroughly what a Chela is capable of doing at the time and under the circumstances during the period of probation. We have to know also of what he may become capable under different and every kind of opportunity. So it is not only what he is at present but what he seems capable of being. If one believes in reincarnation, the creation of which depends on oneself, one can work definitely towards that end. It is left to us, if we desire seriously to prepare for growth from stagnation.

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Most of the people in the world work for stagnation. They do the same thing, what they think is wanted, and hope for or even expect circumstances sufficiently to make them suitable persons for spiritual progress. In other words, they think that the way they react, the way they think, has been a satisfactory one. This may be quite wrong.

While considering the future from the esoteric point of view, we may think that it is all right to do many of the things that other people do; but it may not be sufficient. It may be necessary to have an absolutely different concept. This might exist among various people. For example, among the Christians it has been the custom for people interested in a spiritual programme not to care about being clever. A man may be extremely good at promoting his own point of view, which may be good from the worldly point of view, but this is not sufficient. It may be necessary to change completely one's whole outlook. Therefore, although the capacity is developed, from the spiritual point of view, the effort is not successful.

One part of it is fulfilled — but the main part which is the direction is not the right one. It is better to change the direction first and start doing everything as that direction indicates.

So, the direction is important and everything connected with that is consequently of some importance. That is why a simple life has been considered necessary. This means that all unnecessary actions and ambitions must be given up or put into the background to start with. This is more important than anything else. Secondly, if one wants to change one's way of life the desire for other things must no more be of value in one's life. Many of the people we hear of, who are now regarded as those whom we must look up to, did not care for what was considered as success. The whole idea of success, and who is the successful person, must change. This was easy in some civilizations but different in the present day. Now a special effort must be made not to run after what the world thinks is important, but to keep steadily to those attempts and way of life which one needs for the future. ✧

**No drives, no compulsions,
No needs, no attractions:
Then your affairs are under control.
You are a free person.**

Chuang Tzu, Taoist sage

St Paul: A Dialogue

RAVI RAVINDRA AND PEDRO OLIVEIRA

Pedro Oliveira: Both of us have a heart-felt feeling for the teachings of St Paul and we propose to go into aspects of his teachings in a serious manner.

Ravi Ravindra: This is a bit of a conversation between a priest of Christ and a heathen, who is actually a lover of Christ. And one of his earliest interpreters is St Paul, the first Christian theologian. Nearly a third of the New Testament is really letters of St Paul and according to most scholars who study the New Testament his letters are the oldest Christian manuscripts that we have.

Paul was a Roman, a soldier tyrannizing the early Christians. Then, once on his travels towards Damascus he had a completely extraordinary experience, in which, as the description is given, he was blinded by a dazzling light. Now exactly how long this experience lasted is difficult to determine because he himself is unable to say very much about this. However, the fact of the matter is that this experience marked him as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He is the only Apostle out of the total twelve, who did not meet Christ in flesh

and blood. So there is something already a little exceptional about him and this particular vision, which has to be considered a spiritual vision — it is not in flesh and blood in the ordinary sense of perception — so deeply marked him that he felt that Christ himself had now given him a new name. This is quite a common practice both in the Old Testament and the New Testament; whenever there is a radical transformation of being, a new name is given. We have examples of this: for example, Abram becomes Abraham, Jacob becomes Israel and Simon is called Peter — Saul now is called Paul.

One of his remarks which I often return to is: ‘A necessity is laid upon my soul. Woe is unto me if I do not preach the Gospel’ (1 Corinthians, 9:16). Now what is this necessity that is laid upon his soul? It seems to me it is because of something that deeply touched him and thoroughly transformed him. Therefore there is a responsibility — because he saw and understood something extraordinary, therefore he is responsible.

One often finds in St Paul two completely different sides struggling with

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each other, the great struggle between 'the spirit and the flesh'. And he says: 'I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me' (Galatians, 2:20). This is one side of St Paul; when he is in that mode of consciousness he speaks almost nothing that is short of an angelic level, particularly obvious in his first letter to the Corinthians which speaks about love (1 Corinthians, 13). It is a paean to love, which is absolutely unsurpassed in any other body of literature in the world that I am aware of.

On the other side, it is obvious that he has a great struggle with himself, as he says; there is the law which resides in his members, which does not want to obey the Law of God or the Law of Spirit. He understands many things in his mind, but his flesh is unwilling and in that there is a great conflict (Romans, 7:22–24).

I should emphasize simply that he has a very fiery character. Whenever he is wholly taken over by the spirit of Christ he remarks: 'There is neither Jew, nor Greek, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised, neither male nor female, they are one in Christ' (Colossians, 3:10–11). When he is in his other mood, then he is a disciplinarian, laying down what is the right thing to do, whether women should wear hats in the churches or they should not wear hats. Then he has a very traditional understanding of all this and a very traditional way of emphasizing that it was Eve who transgressed, not Adam, and therefore women should not be given the high place. 'Let women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted

to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church,' says St Paul (1 Corinthians, 14:34–35).

If they followed this in the Theosophical Society, we would have no HPB, no Annie Besant, and none of the many remarkable women! But we are speaking about two St Pauls or two levels in him, one of which is almost wholly taken over by Christ and there are extraordinarily striking examples of this in his letters to the Corinthians and to the Galatians. However, when he is in the other mode, then he is very traditionalist, asserting where the place of men is, the place of women is, and he comes across as almost a complete misogynist in those remarks.

There is a very puritanical attitude that comes across in him. St Paul is the first major person in the Judeo-Christian tradition to make a very sharp distinction between *eros* and *agape*. Even among the early Church fathers this distinction is not so radically made, partly because the word *eros* includes all levels of love. For example, Socrates speaks about *eros* as well as one of the very great Church fathers does, who unfortunately later on got declared as a heretic — Origen. He even invokes Jesus Christ by referring to him as 'Oh Eros'. As a reminder, *eros* is the fundamental fohat in the Theosophical literature. But St Paul makes a very radical division within the whole realm of *eros*, between the lower levels of that, its erotic aspects, calling it only as *eros*, while the

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more spiritual love he would call *agape*. I think this radical distinction arises out of his puritanical feelings about this whole matter.

PO: You have mentioned his experience on the road to Damascus, and I just want to read from the Acts of the Apostles (26:13), which contains his own description of it. He is talking to King Agrippa, who was somehow interviewing him, because they wanted to know who he was as some people thought that he was up to mischief, and so on. This was his description: ‘At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journey with me.’ It was obviously not a physical phenomenon. ‘A light which was above the brightness of the sun.’ The text of the scriptures says that others saw this light but they did not participate in this experience for out of that light a voice spoke to him and said: ‘Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ Now he was a professional hunter of Christians, and suddenly he meets with this experience. When he inquired about the identity of that voice he was told it was Jesus. This is important because genuine Gnostic gospels affirm that Jesus was instructing his disciples up to eleven years after his physical death.

Why does an experience completely transform one person? Why do we, and many people in the world, go through many experiences and are not transformed? In the case of the Buddha, it only

took the sight of a beggar on the roadside, a mendicant, somebody in appalling poverty, a destitute. That experience was enough for him to find determination in himself to seek the cause of suffering. Krishnamurti once said: ‘Why do people think that only A, B, C, or D can be gurus? Why can life itself not be the guru?’ Life means every relationship, every contact, not only human contact, but every contact. If the consciousness is receptive, perhaps the experience ceases to be just ordinary experience but something which is transforming.

In his letter to the Ephesians (3:8,9), he refers to his responsibility to preach the gospel as a ‘mandate from the spirit’. It is not necessarily a moral responsibility, but it was perhaps part of his connectedness with God. He wrote:

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

A spiritual search is a necessity of the soul. However, there will always be in it a transcendent element which the mind can never fathom for Spirit is inexhaustible. In the words of Meister Eckhart, ‘the soul has within it an abyss, an uncreated dimension’, which is the ground in which this transformative experience — the birth of Christ — takes place. It is a new consciousness, meaningfully described by

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St Paul as ‘the fellowship of the mystery’ (Ephesians, 3:9).

RR: Maybe you would want to add a quote from St Paul himself, that ‘we become members of one another’ (Ephesians, 4:25).

PO: Yes, he said in his letters to the Romans (12:4,5): ‘For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.’ We are related to each other, including to those whom we will never meet. This is a very radical teaching. In the same letter he says: ‘None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.’ The mystery of life is relationship.

RR: For St Paul the whole experience of Christ is spiritual. In none of his letters does he show the least bit of interest in any historical, physical or material details about Jesus Christ. This is the earliest testimony of Christ that we have, within thirty-five to forty years after his death and there is absolutely no interest shown by St Paul in any of the historical or physical or material details. I find this completely puzzling. How do you find it?

PO: If you read the letters, he hardly mentioned the name ‘Jesus’ at all; he mostly refers to Christ. Some scholars have said that it was Paul’s travels that really laid the foundation for the continued existence of the Church. In some letters it

is mentioned that he broke the bread and blessed the wine with the community. But it is a fact that he did not demonstrate much historical interest. Is it because for him Christ was not a historical figure but a daily reality? In his letter to the Romans (6:3,4), he said:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

I would like to mention my favourite passage in St Paul’s letters. It is perhaps one of the most honest, inspiring and beautiful portrayals of the human condition that one can ever come across. It is from Corinthians (13:12): ‘For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.’

What we think is clear vision in our ordinary consciousness is like the vision through a dark glass, because self-centred activity does not allow us to see clearly. For St Paul, true seeing is face to face; it is a meeting. Or as Martin Buber wrote: ‘In the beginning there is relation.’ And then Paul says, ‘now I know in part’. If only we had the courage to realize that all our knowledge — whatever it is — is fragmentary. ‘But then I shall know even as also I am known’, which implies completeness.

RR: That is an indication of the reason

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for our friendship because that is exactly the part that I had singled out as my favourite. However, I had a verse before that and a verse after that also, so I would read the whole passage (1Cor.,13:11–13):

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

I should point out an important aspect in this remark: it is less important that I, as I am, know; more important is that I be known by a subtler level within me.

RR: Why was he chosen? We have a sense that if somebody repents for his bad deeds, then he will be forgiven. In fact, often in the ordinary Christian interpretation, even of the Bible, this is the point that gets emphasized. So, if only you repent, then God will forgive you. But I have become convinced that there is actually something a little different going on in the Gospels. You see several stories, including that of a woman caught in adultery and of another woman who is being tried, etc. Christ first forgives, then the sinner repents and lives a different life. St Paul, as you have said, is very intense in his persecution of the Christians. But it is my impression that Christ forgives him, which is the reason why St Paul thoroughly repents. The Greek word for repentance

is *metanoia* which literally means ‘to make a hundred and eighty degree turn’, which is exactly what he does. Forgiveness is transformative for the evil-doer.

PO: Perhaps there is an answer to your question in the Acts of the Apostles (9:15). When he had this profound experience he was taken to the house of Ananias who knew his reputation of being a persecutor of Christians and who said to the Lord ‘much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem’. And this was the answer received by Ananias from the Lord: ‘Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.’ So Christ chose Paul.

RR: To reaffirm what you just read, all the disciples or apostles of Christ were Jews and there was a very strong movement among those disciples, more particularly from James, who is regarded by scholars to be the older brother of Christ, to keep this teaching that Christ came only for the Jews. But it was St Paul, and fairly soon, later on, Peter, who suggested that this teaching is not confined only to the Jews, that it is for all as all are one in the Spirit — as if the choosing spirit, Christ, wishes this message to be more universally known or transmitted. Then you see that St Paul would be the right choice for this, because none of the other disciples seem so keen on this.

PO: There is perhaps another element at play here when it is said that there is a

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great saint behind a great sinner. The lives of both St Augustine and St Francis of Assisi come to mind in this regard. Is it because a sinner has a lot of energy to invest? You mentioned the word 'intensity'. This is what St Paul says in his letter to the Romans (8:38,39):

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

RR: One can put down passion if we just think of it in terms of just deleterious passions that diminish us. On the other hand, passion is simply an intensity of the heart. Unless that exists it is very difficult to imagine that one can come to anything.

PO: They call it in Sanskrit *ātma-śakti* or soul energy. According to Annie Besant, Giordano Bruno also had this intensity of soul.

PO: Many feminists consider St Paul responsible for the subsequent condition of women throughout Europe and in the world. He called himself the 'master builder' who is someone who directs the building of a structure, in his case the building of budding Christian communities. Besides the early structure of bishops, priests and deacons, there were also deaconesses, two of whom worked closely with him. My own understanding of this is that he upheld the existing social

order of his day, while for us today, living in the twenty-first century, to tell a woman that she should obey her husband and stay in her house is quite unacceptable. The tragedy is that the condition of women has not essentially changed much, not only in that part of the world, but even in Asia. I have read that certain Catholic female scholars were more or less sympathetic to St Paul's limitations in this matter.

RR: In the case of Christ, it is really obvious that there are women disciples who are travelling with him, being taught by him. As you move from the Old Testament to the New Testament, it would be more appropriate to say that one moves from God the Father to God the Mother. There is that full shift of feeling, but in spite of all this Christ still keeps referring to God as Father because of the whole traditional usage of it. Even great revolutionaries are more or less bound, partly because they are, after all, speaking to people who also have to listen to them.

I feel that Paul has in him at least two levels: one is a social reformer, but even within that he is very much occupied with the proper mode of dress, the place of women, or lack of it, or how the church should be built or not built, all that. But to me that is a secondary part of his teaching. We would not even bother with St Paul if that is all that he did. The reason why we actually read him, not only we, but why his letters are included in the New Testament, is that when he spoke from this other level, he clearly transcended any of the ordinary human limitations. ✧

A Red Indian Birth Chant

ANNIE BESANT

AT the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Administration Building at Krotona the following delightful Birth Chant of the Omaha Tribe of the American Red Men was given. How near and intimate and beautiful is the relation between man and non-human nature indicated herein. It was a very graceful thought which brought this to the birthing of a new centre of the work of the White Lodge. It appeared in *The Theosophist* for April 1912, pp. 150–51.

Ho! Ye Sun, Moon, Stars, all ye that move
in the heavens,

I bid you hear me!

Into your midst has come a new life.

Consent ye, I implore!

Make its path smooth, that it may reach
the brow of the first hill!

Ho! Ye Winds, Clouds, Rain, Mist, all
ye that move in the air,

I bid you hear me!

Into your midst has come a new life.

Consent ye, I implore!

Make its path smooth, that it may reach
the brow of the second hill!

Ho! Ye Hills, Valleys, Rivers, Lakes,
Trees, Grasses, all ye of the earth,

I bid you hear me!

Into your midst has come a new life.

Consent ye, I implore!

Make its path smooth, that it may reach
the brow of the third hill!

Ho! Ye Birds, great and small, that fly in
the air,

Ho! Ye Animals, great and small, that
dwell in the forest,

Ho! Ye Insects, that creep among the
grasses and burrow in the ground,

I bid you hear me!

Into your midst has come a new life.

Consent ye, I implore!

Make its path smooth, that it may reach
the brow of the fourth hill!

Ho! All ye of the heavens, all ye of the air,
all ye of the earth:

I bid you all to hear me!

Into your midst has come a new life.

Consent ye, consent ye all, I implore!

Make its path smooth — then shall it travel
beyond the four hills!

A breath comes to us herein from the far-off days when the gods walked with men, and when the nature-spirits were wooed to friendliness to a new life, their consent to its inbringing being sought. Maybe, in days to come, this love will again arise — for it but slumbers — and will bless the earth, enduing it with new and radiant beauty. ✧

Reprinted from *The Adyar Bulletin*, 1912.

Science: Modern and Occult — II

PABLO SENDER

Occult Science — A Regenerative Synthesis

One feature of our time is a certain sense of void in the life of people. Many feel that their existence does not have a deep meaning or an ultimate aim, and they seek happiness through sensual enjoyment. The belief that happiness is attained through possessions (objects, people, situations, etc.) is the source of egoism, competition and violence, which are so prevalent in our present culture.

How did we come to this situation? As we think over this matter we can see that science and religion have played an important role in producing the present state of affairs. When modern science started to develop, it began to question the beliefs of dogmatic religion. The latter, unable to answer to the challenges that the new scientific discoveries were posing, denounced knowledge as evil and tried to silence the scientists, as in the famous case of Galileo Galilei in 1633. This produced a sharp severance between the two disciplines.

In part, as a reaction to religion, the growing science systematically chose the most secular possible interpretation of the facts it discovered, and turned towards a

materialistic view. It was not long before scientists denounced religion as a mere superstition, stating there was no other reality than what can be perceived through our senses. With a religion unable to respond to the awakening intellect, the situation resulted in a fading of transcendental aspirations in the hearts of many people, even among those who did not have more than a superficial knowledge of science. Thus, narrow religion and materialistic science generated a fertile ground for the present sense of void that many try to fill by means of possessions, sensual stimuli and distractions.

Today, we face an additional danger because modern science, which is basically unwilling to limit itself by ethical considerations, is capable of dangerous manipulations of life, or even of utter destruction by means of nuclear or biological weapons.

A change is greatly needed. We need to move towards a more religious science and a more scientific religion, and Occult Science can prove to be the ‘missing link’.

Science and the Mahatmas

In the first part of this article we showed instances of the occult knowledge

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possessed by those called ‘Mahatmas’ or ‘Adepts’ in Theosophical literature. These individuals, by means of a systematic yogic training, have developed reliable extrasensory faculties that can be used to research into the hidden dimensions of nature. The Adepts, known as *rshi-s* in Hinduism and ‘Bodhisattva-s’ in Mahāyāna Buddhism, have developed not only psychic and spiritual powers, which are latent in every human being, but also wisdom and compassion. Having freed themselves from suffering, they are devoted to help humanity to do the same.

They help in many ways. Sometimes, they become spiritual teachers, or they may become influential leaders in different fields of human endeavour. On other occasions, they inspire the formation of philosophical or spiritual organizations. The founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) at the end of the nineteenth century was part of their efforts.

During the early years of the TS, two of these Mahatmas maintained correspondence with two Englishmen, A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume, who were scientifically-minded. In these letters it became clear that the Adepts had much scientific knowledge, and Sinnett and Hume could not understand why they did not share this knowledge openly with the world.

a) A question of responsibility

One of the limitations the Adepts find in sharing their knowledge lies in the fact that their help could result in more harm than good. Scientific knowledge can be dangerous; it gives the power to

manipulate the forces of nature. Power can be handled safely only when there is responsibility, maturity and a firm moral basis. Unfortunately, this is not the case in our current society, and a number of discoveries in different fields have become more a curse than a blessing to humanity. Mahatma KH wrote to Mr Sinnett about this as early as in 1880:

The public safety is only ensured by our keeping secret the terrible weapons which might otherwise be used against it, and which, as you have been told became deadly in the hands of the wicked and selfish.¹

As we have shown previously, Mme Blavatsky and the Mahatmas knew, for example, that the atom was divisible and contained energy. This information would have seemed a harmless piece of scientific knowledge for most people at the time. However, when science became aware of this fact, the knowledge was used to build a nuclear bomb, which was soon to be used upon fellow human beings.

The scientific community is unwilling to refrain from researching into things that can be misused. In the name of the advancement of knowledge, scientists continue their course unrestrained, claiming that science is neutral. This may be true in regards to science itself, but the powers that fund most researches in the world are not. They are interested in learning how to manipulate nature (whether it is subatomic particles, forms of energy, bacteria, stem cells or the environment, etc.) for self-serving purposes. The

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welfare of humanity is, at best, only a secondary consideration. Thus scientists, not questioning the motivation behind those who fund the researches, often work for people or companies that will use the knowledge acquired for domination — whether political, military, financial, or of other types.

The Adepts are free from any ulterior motive. They are only interested in helping humanity and are not willing to foster the development of a science that is being used for harmful purposes. For them to contribute openly to the development of modern science a further maturation of humanity is necessary, along with the development of a social and governmental awareness that prevents scientific discoveries from being applied to immoral or dangerous uses.

b) The cause of human suffering

A second reason that limits the possibility of help on the part of the Adepts is that science does not address the real problems of humanity. As Mahatma KH wrote in one of his letters to ‘a Member’:

The moral and spiritual sufferings of the world are more important and need help and cure more than science needs aid from us in any field of discovery.²

The Mahatmas are interested in producing a happier society, free from psychological compulsions and based on a perception of unity and a feeling of compassion. The real cause of suffering lies in the hearts and minds of people who are victims of fear, ignorance, greed,

frustration and hatred. If the Adepts are not willing to make more efforts to help the development of science it is because it does not address the primary causes of human suffering. Again, in the words of Mahatma KH:

Now for us poor and unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of *moral* results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. And what, in its proud isolation, can be more utterly indifferent . . . than this materialistic and realistic science of fact? May I not ask then without being taxed with a vain ‘display of science’ what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity viewed as an integral whole? What care they for MAN as an isolated atom of this great and harmonious Whole, even though they may sometimes be of practical use to him? ³

We think that the development of technology benefits humanity. Of course it does to a certain extent, on a practical level. It is evident that the lives of a portion of humanity are more comfortable than in the past, and that our ability to do things has expanded. But can we affirm that, as a result of this, we are happier, freer from worries and stress than our ancestors? Even when considering this on a global scale we can see that, in spite of all the technological advancement that occurred during the last hundred and fifty years, humanity still has the same problems of violence,

exclusion, intolerance, corruption, etc.

One may argue that these are not ‘scientific problems’; that they are socio-political issues beyond the field and aim of science. This is true. But the Adepts claim that the inability of science to address these problems is not intrinsic to it. It is the result of its unwillingness to do it, and of the limitations this discipline puts on itself. As we are going to discuss later, they maintain that if science becomes more ‘spiritual’ or metaphysical, it will find the means to address and help solve these problems.

c) The problem of scepticism

The Adepts state that, despite the limitations previously considered, they have always tried to help science in directions that could be beneficial to humanity. However, their attempts have clashed against the scepticism found in a part of the scientific community. As Mahatma KH told Mr Sinnett:

I am unable to give you purely scientific information since we can never agree entirely with Western conclusions; and that ours will be rejected as ‘unscientific’.⁴

The situation was not new, but had been the case since the early scientific development. Because of this, all that the Mahatmas have been able to do is to point out certain directions and let science get there at its own pace and with its own methods:

For it is we who were the divers and the pioneers, and the men of science have but to reap where we have sown. It is our

mission to plunge and bring the pearls of Truth to the surface; theirs — to clean and set them into scientific jewels. And, if they refuse to touch the ill-shapen oyster-shell, insisting that there is [not], nor *cannot* be any precious pearl inside it, then shall we once more wash our hands of any responsibility before humankind.⁵

Many of the scientific discoveries (such as the atoms, the sphericity of Earth, the heliocentric system, etc.) were known and taught by ancient philosophers and the esoteric traditions. This information served as a guide to a number of early European scientists who, being aware of this ‘philosophical’ knowledge, devised ways to prove it scientifically. But the source of their inspiration was seldom acknowledged. As the Mahatma wrote:

... nothing that I may give you in answer will ever be accepted from us. Whenever discovered that ‘it is verily so’, the discovery will be attributed to him who corroborated the evidence — as in the case of Copernicus and Galileo, the latter having availed himself but of the Pythagorean MSS.⁶

The case of the discovery of isotopes a century ago is paradigmatic of this situation. Even though Professor Aston was fully aware of Annie Besant’s and C. W. Leadbeater’s research, their contribution received no recognition by the scientific community, except for a few isolated scientists.

Helping the few open-minded individuals found in every century seems to be all the Adepts can hope to achieve. In

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the letters received by A. P. Sinnett we can see they were aware of those scientists willing to apply their knowledge to foster man's spiritual welfare:

There are — even among English men of Science — those who are already prepared to find our teachings in harmony with the results and progress of their own researches, and who are not indifferent to their application to the spiritual needs of humanity at large.⁷

In this correspondence we find evidence that the Adepts were helping in one way or another the chemist, William Crookes, discoverer of 'plasma', the fourth state of matter, and the inventor, Thomas Edison. Both of them were members of the Theosophical Society. Even Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer of the law of evolution, was in correspondence with Blavatsky for a while, though he did not become attracted to Theosophy. These scientists had something in common: they all were interested in researching scientifically the spiritualistic phenomena prominent at the time.

H. P. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas hoped these scientists would lead an impulse towards the investigation of non-physical dimensions and laws unknown to modern science. However, since the phenomena produced in the séances were associated to 'spirits', and a number of mediums had been found to be frauds, all spiritualistic phenomena were doubted.

Then, Mme Blavatsky (with the help of the Adepts) decided to perform some phenomena outside the spiritualistic circle,

in open spaces, in daylight, and with a variety of educated witnesses. Mr Sinnett published many of these phenomena in his book, *The Occult World*, of which Mahatma KH wrote:

. . . thoughtful men will read and ponder over the book, as they have never pondered over the most scientific efforts of Wallace and Crookes to reconcile modern science with Spirits, and — the little seed will grow and thrive.⁸

Unfortunately, the scientific community was not receptive to this. Both Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society were attacked for the production of such phenomena, and efforts in this direction were finally dropped. Blavatsky wrote about this some years later:

They failed to produce the desired effect . . . It was supposed that intelligent people, especially men of science, would, at least, have recognized the existence of a new and deeply interesting field of enquiry and research when they witnessed physical effects produced at will, for which they were not able to account. . . . These expectations were not realized. The phenomena were misunderstood and misrepresented, both as regards their nature and their purpose.⁹

Now, we can ask, has the attitude of current scientists changed in this regard? Are they more open to do research on unorthodox lines? This is a difficult question to answer, because we may be at the beginning of a transition. The fact that some scientists have begun to explore

this field may be taken as a positive sign. However, if we are to make generalizations, the scientific community is still closed to researches that include 'esoteric' elements. The scientists who ventured to explore these forbidden lands lost their credibility in the scientific community and were ostracized from it. A remarkable example of this is Rupert Sheldrake, a Cambridge-trained biochemist who at a time was a Research Fellow of the Royal Society. Because of his work on the morphogenetic fields and related topics, the prestigious scientific journal *Nature* branded him in an Editorial as a 'heretic' and suggested his work should be burnt. This occurred in 1981. Other scientists like Dr Stephen Phillips, who took seriously the researches published in the book, *Occult Chemistry*, also suffered a similar fate. Even the theories postulated by Dr David Bohm, considered to be one of the most significant theoretical physicists of the twentieth century, do not receive much attention because his work is too holistic and close to the mystical view.

Steps towards Integration

Let us explore now the conditions necessary for a hypothetical special effort on the part of the Mahatmas to help more actively in the scientific field.

It is doubtful that much energy will be spent by them in stimulating researches that would remain unattended, maybe to be unearthed by somebody years, decades, or even centuries after modern science slowly comes to discover the same results. An obvious first condition, then,

is that the scientific community opens up to the possibility of non-physical dimensions and whether they are subject to some kind of scientific research. This step towards the metaphysical seems to be essential for the Adepts to regard their efforts in this field worthwhile:

Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, philanthropy, therefore can make no claim upon our help, until it blends itself with the metaphysics.¹⁰

In the first part of this article we have shown some instances of how occult research can contribute to discoveries in the fields of astronomy, physics, chemistry, etc. However, aiding modern science at this level of research does not seem to be the ultimate aim of the Adepts. From the point of view of the moral and spiritual needs of humanity, it does not make much difference whether you are studying the subatomic particles through clairvoyant means or by means of a particle accelerator.

So far, questions related to the nature of desire, virtuous action, consciousness, after-death states, etc., have been addressed by religion and philosophy. And though in the past, religious belief had a strong influence on people, this is not the case anymore for a large portion of humanity. Today's awakened intellect needs 'proof' to accept anything. If science were able to throw light on these important human concerns, this would have a very important impact on humanity's moral and spiritual life.

It is clear that a materialistic science cannot address these topics, except

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peripherally. But a more ‘occult’ science could. The Theosophical efforts to show the validity of extrasensory perception to study the physical reality were made in the hope that, once scientists recognize the validity of these means and gradually incorporate them, it would not be long before they discover that the new means of research can bring the non-physical dimensions of the universe within the scientific reach.

Once a portion of the scientific community is willing to examine the metaphysical field, they will begin to explore whether they can use people with extrasensory abilities as part of their research. And here there is something important to keep in mind. It is well accepted that the performance of experiments by modern science is affected by environmental factors, so that scientists try to minimize them in their laboratory conditions. The research by extrasensory means also requires some ‘environmental’ conditions. However, they are of a different kind: since the means used in the occult science are psychological rather than physical, the environmental conditions required are also at that level. Mahatma KH wrote to A. O. Hume:

But will you permit me to sketch for you still more clearly the difference between

the modes of physical, called exact — often out of mere politeness — and metaphysical sciences? The latter, as you know, being incapable of verification before mixed audiences, is classed by Mr Tyndall with the fictions of poetry.¹¹

One of the foundational findings of occult science is that thoughts are a type of energy, and that they have a very clear effect on the non-physical dimensions. Therefore, if there is animosity and scepticism in the midst of an extrasensory observation, the results will be distorted or even completely precluded.

And here there is another important factor to keep in mind. Although the use of people born with some extrasensory ability can be useful in the beginning of the new science, a solid development cannot be attained by using untrained psychics. To develop a sound research on non-physical dimensions requires people who have been systematically trained to use these faculties, such as was the case of H. P. Blavatsky, C. W. Leadbeater and others.¹²

Finding people well trained in occult research is not easy, but once the right conditions are present, it is not unthinkable that the Adepts may send some of their disciples to become involved in this scientific research. ✧

References and Note

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4. *cML*, Letter no. 93B, pp. 313–14.
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6. *cML*, Letter no. 93B, p. 311.
7. *cML*, Letter A, p. 463.
8. *cML*, Letter no. 18, p. 68.
9. Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna, *Collected Writings*, vol. IX, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL, 1974, pp. 46–7.
10. *cML*, Appendix I, p. 472.
11. *Idem*, p. 471.
12. The last two considerations are part of the reasons why the isolated experiments with psychics attempted in the past have not so far been very successful. However, even if using trained clairvoyants, the possibility of mistakes in a particular instance cannot be entirely ruled out in this, as in any other science.

The general theory of relativity shows us that our minds follow different rules than the real world does. A rational mind, based on the impressions that it receives from its limited perspective, forms structures which thereafter determine what it further will and will not accept freely. From that point on, regardless of how the real world actually operates, this rational mind, following its self-imposed rules, tries to superimpose on the real world its own version of what must be.

This continues until at long last a beginner's mind cries out, 'This is not right. What "must be" is not happening. I have tried and tried to discover why this is so. I have stretched my imagination to the limit to preserve my belief in what "must be". The breaking point has come. Now I have no choice but to admit that the "must" I have believed in does not come from the real world, but from my own head.'

Gary Zukav
The Dancing Wu Li Masters

Helping Man Find His Soul

CORNELIA CROWTHER

THE world of science and technology, which makes our lives very comfortable on a material and physical level, is a Godless world and unless we perceive it through our Higher Self and apply spiritual values to life, it will continue to lead us into destruction. This sounds very gloomy, you may say, but we are moving down the path of wars and catastrophes, and humanity urgently needs to find the Path of Enlightenment. The darkness we experience today is brought about by man's soulless use of the powers of science and technology. Only spiritual wisdom can effectively control the powers released by physical science. It is now, that man must investigate the powers latent in him and thereby discover the land of the spirit.

In the past, whenever there was a decay of spirituality, a surge of mysticism brought inspiration to mankind and this still follows today. We are fortunate to have been introduced to the Ancient Wisdom which is giving us the means to influence mankind in a positive way, by promulgating Theosophy. One hundred and thirty-seven years ago, Mme Blavatsky gave us the tools and Col. Olcott, the workshop by founding the Theosophical Society.

The Theosophical Society was organized for the purpose of promulgating the Theosophical doctrines and for the promotion of the Theosophic life. (Dr Buck, in H. P. Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*)

Our lives today are filled with material wealth and passing pleasures. We feel an emptiness within us and yet we intrinsically know there is an otherness above and beyond of what we see around us, and this produces a constant battle within us. We must understand it is not material wealth which makes our lives empty as outer simplicity does not necessarily bring inner tranquillity. J. Krishnamurti says being simple outwardly does give a certain freedom, but why is it that invariably we start with the outer and not with the inner simplicity!

Freedom from things needs intelligence, not gestures and convictions, and intelligence is not personal. If one is aware of all the implications of many possessions, that very awareness liberates, and then there is no need for dramatic assertions and gestures. It is when this intelligent awareness is not functioning that we resort to disciplines and detachments. The emphasis is not on much or little, but on

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intelligence; and the intelligent man, being content with little, is free from many possessions. (J. Krishnamurti)

Today there are many, particularly the young, who are searching for Mysticism and Spirituality, which is displayed by an increased interest in Hindu Vedānta and Zen Buddhism — both of which are outstanding examples of spiritual and philosophical Mysticism. In the midst of the darkness of the tragedies of life today, people need the message of Mysticism more than ever as through it they will regain the spiritual values of life. The teachings contained in theosophical literature are a fountain of Mysticism for the people of today who are in search of their Soul, and it is the duty of everyone who is versed in Theosophy to broadcast those teachings. Mrs Radha Burnier, our International President, when once asked by a young member, ‘What does the Society do to promulgate Theosophy and encourage younger people to join our Society?’ quick-wittedly responded by saying, ‘What do *you* do?’ A very important question. What do any of us do? How aware are we of what is going on around us, or within us. Most of us are too preoccupied with our material lives and forget to actively promulgate Theosophy. We allow ourselves to be bogged down by things we think are important, which when more closely inspected are trivial. Without Right Vision the treading of the Path is utterly impossible.

HPB, in the second Fragment of *The Voice of the Silence*, speaks of ‘Ālaya’ (the Universal Soul):

Alas, alas, that all men should possess Ālaya, be one with the great Soul, and that possessing it, Ālaya should so little avail them!

Behold how, like the moon reflected in the tranquil waves, Ālaya is reflected by the small and by the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent! (VOS, II.107,108)

It is a struggle for man to find the right path as we often feel alone and isolated. In *The Mahatma Letters*, references are made to the isolation, to the ‘orphanage’ of humanity, alone in an unbending, immutable realm of law. There are some hopeful notes, however, as seemingly there is more awareness of our interconnectedness, and a glimmer of awakening of our Self. To awaken the Self or Ego within us is the key to our future, and to the survival of mankind. ‘There is hope for man only in man’.

For an inner awakening to take place we need to wake up and begin to listen to our inner voice. When we allow our intuition to speak to us we will feel a sense of knowing. Then we will know we are on the right Path. We will have opened the gateway for ‘Ātma-Buddhi’, the Pilgrim (as HPB called it) to start its journey within us.

A lonely journey it may be, yet we are never alone, and if we will but look, the signposts are clearly marked by generations of Adept Teachers. ‘Awake, Arise’ is the call heard through the Upanishad-s;

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‘Follow me’ is the injunction of the Christos. Our journey is from the everyday self through the Self to the One Self, as HPB put it in *The Voice of the Silence* (I.19, 90):

Saith the Great Law: ‘In order to become the KNOWER of ALL-SELF thou hast first of Self to be the knower.’ To reach the knowledge of that Self, thou hast to give up self to non-self, being to non-being.

And now thy self is lost in Self, thyself unto Thyself, merged in that Self, from which thou first didst radiate.

We need to let go of our crutches and begin to climb the Path, which is steep and thorny, hand in hand with our friends and enemies alike. We need to look at the First Object of the Theosophical Society with our eyes open and become aware that it speaks of the Ego we all share. This may help us to become true Theosophists and not only pay lip-service. According to HPB the meaning of Theosophy is ‘Altruism’ and the meaning of altruism according to Webster’s Dictionary is ‘unselfish regard for, or devotion to, the welfare of others’, ‘Theosophist is who Theosophy does’.

In 1968, E. L. Gardner wrote:

The very fact of man’s dependence on man — and on man alone — is being realized as, probably, never before. Maybe it is the beginning only but it is immensely promising. . . . There are plenty of defects to remedy yet, but the movement is on. This all means that an awakening to our human responsibilities is afoot, an awakening of one’s self. (*Thyself Both Heaven and Hell*)

There is a great need to pass on the theosophical teachings we have acquired through word and deed, and help mankind to stop sacrificing the higher for the lower. It is not our aim to convert, but to create awareness of the Ancient Wisdom and its spiritual values. By nourishing the inner self it will emerge and bring about a transformation from the lower to the higher.

J. Krishnamurti said:

You don’t have to seek Truth because thought is the instrument with which you are seeking. If I am greedy, envious, prejudiced and I try to seek Truth, obviously my truth will be the result of greed, envy, prejudice — therefore it is not Truth. All I can do is to see what is false, to be aware that I am conditioned, that I am greedy, that I am envious. That is all I can do — to be aware of it choicelessly. Then, when I am so aware, and therefore free from greed, Truth comes into being.

The motto of the Theosophical Society is: ‘There is no religion higher than Truth’, the ultimate TRUTH.

By promulgating Theosophy we will not only promote the theosophical life, but we will be instrumental in helping man find his Soul.

Though Christ a thousand times in
Bethlehem were born
And not in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.
Though Christ on Golgotha a thousand
times were slain
And not in thee, thy soul has lived in vain.
(Jakob Boehme)

Penetrative Wisdom in Emptiness

BINAY KRISHNA

THAT the materialistic approach — devoid of a spiritual foundation — can bring lasting happiness, is an idea which is rapidly evaporating. People are once again beginning to appreciate the need for inner development and are not satisfied with the usual hand-to-mouth animal existence. People may teach us how to succeed in a career, but they cannot teach wisdom. As many spiritual traditions still thrive throughout the globe, the great lack is not the absence of teaching, but our lack of inclination to study and practise it.

The tradition has been passed on in an unbroken lineage from that time to the present day by the *Lam Rim's* excellent teaching, which incorporates teachings given by the Buddha that can be practised by everyone at every level of intelligence and development. Through meditation and wisdom, one generates the Bodhi mind, an attitude of universal responsibility that accrues on the attainment of omniscient enlightenment.

Consciousness has many levels. In the Vajrayana school, the subtle level of consciousness is called the mind of clear light. In Theosophy, it is the higher mind free from the defilement of the gross

senses. Doing this brings immediate peace and calm to the mind, enabling higher meditation.

According to the Buddhist concept of attaining liberation from *samsāra* (worldly preoccupation), one is required to perfect the three aspects of higher training: self-discipline, meditative concentration and the wisdom of emptiness. The essential purpose of the Buddha in giving teachings was to eliminate both the mistaken states of mind and the experience of suffering.

Almost all religions are based upon faith, rather blind faith. But in Buddhism, emphasis is laid on 'seeing', knowing, understanding, and not on faith or belief. In Buddhist texts there is the word *saddhā* (Sanskrit: *śraddhā*) which is usually translated as faith or belief. However, it is not faith, but a confidence born out of conviction. It must, however, be admitted that in popular Buddhism, the word has the element of faith, in the sense that it signifies devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma (teaching) and the Sangha (the Order).

According to Asanga, the great philosopher of the fourth century, *śraddhā* has three aspects: 1. full and firm conviction that a thing is 2. serene joy at good

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qualities, and 3. aspiration to achieve an object in view. It is therefore a question of knowing and seeing and not of believing. The teachings of the Buddha are qualified as *ehi-paśya*, inviting you 'to come and see' but not to come and believe. Emancipation depends on one's own realization of Truth, and not on the benevolent grace of a good person, or any external power as a reward for obedient good behaviour. Master KH voices the same idea (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, chron. edn., Letter no. 15): 'Its [the person's] suffering and agony never cease. . . . And who can blame it — as your materialistic philosophers do — if, in this everlasting isolation and neglect, it has evolved gods unto whom "it ever cries for help but is not heard! . . . Since there is hope for man *only in man*, I would not let *one* cry whom I could save.'"

The root cause of one's spiritual development is oneself. The Buddha said: 'We are our own saviours or we are our own enemy. We wish to avoid suffering, but because our minds are not cultivated in wisdom, we directly run towards suffering like insects caught in the lighted taper!'

Our present condition is not something causeless, nor did something cause it by chance. It is something we ourselves have contributed through a series of past decisions and the actions of body, speech and mind that arose from them. To place the blame on external persons or things is a source of further confusion and negativity that does not lead to solving difficulties. We human beings, most of us,

are like blind animals, unable to discern the pattern of life unfolding within us, leaving spiritual aims behind and chasing only the biological and emotional needs of the senses.

We are capable of engaging in the highest meditation and attaining enlightenment in one lifetime. A unique quality of Mahāyāna is that it emphasizes the path leading to omniscience. Only those schools that contain Tantric methods have the ability to produce complete enlightenment in one life. Nevertheless, there are many levels of Dharma practice; they all share the fundamental aim of leading sentient beings from darkness to light, evil to goodness, ignorance to clarity.

The vicious circle of *samsāric* (terrestrial) existence catches us in its current and before long we are unable to exert even a semblance of control. Our life passes in darkness, and death leaves us standing naked with memories of fruitless pursuits to accompany us in future existences.

We should apply ourselves to teachings of spiritual transmission. Slowly and carefully we must study and contemplate and then gradually work through the various methods of meditation. We should not expect the path to be a bed of roses. Steady, persistent effort and a clear enquiring mind are the prerequisites to success. At the moment, we are totally absorbed in the coarse states. We must begin our practice by working within. This means consciously encouraging love over hate, patience in place of anger, emotional freedom rather than attachment, kindness

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over violence, and altruistic, benevolent love for all living creatures. In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, (chron. edn., Letter no. 15), Master KH writes: ‘Until final emancipation reabsorbs the Ego, it *must* be conscious of the purest sympathies called out by the aesthetic effects of high art, its tenderest cords respond to the call of the holier and nobler *human* attachments.’ This brings immediate peace and calm to the mind, making possible higher meditation.

To attain liberation one must perfect the three higher trainings: self-discipline, meditative concentration and the wisdom of emptiness. In a sense, the most important of these three is the wisdom of emptiness. It leads to the accomplishment of omniscient illumination in order to benefit the world.

However, in order to touch upon the essential doctrine in a manner that will cause beneficent effect to ripen, the study must be approached correctly. The mind has to be cleared of preconceptions and superstitions and must make attentive effort, and maintain consistency and regularity of practice. To study and practise Dharma on the basis of preoccupation is like pouring food in a contaminated pot; to be inattentive is like pouring food on an overturned pot, and to be irregular and inconsistent in study and practice is like pouring food in a pot with a hole in its base.

The four great schools of Indian Buddhism — Vaibhāshika, Sautrāntika, Chittamātra and Mādhyamaka — differ

largely in their interpretation of the theory of emptiness. The study of these topics is difficult and requires intense effort. First, we must gain the intellectual comprehension of what the scriptures mean by emptiness, and then meditate and cultivate a direct understanding within our own mind-stream. This method is the approach to the perfection of wisdom.

Wisdom is taught by all the scriptures as the most profound method of freeing oneself and others from the suffering of worldly experience. Therefore, we should train ourselves in three types of wisdom: understanding the ultimate level of reality; the wisdom of understanding the conventional level of reality; and the wisdom that expresses the above two in order to fulfil the needs of the world.

One must gain intellectual comprehension of what the scriptures mean by emptiness and then meditate and cultivate a direct understanding within the mind-stream. This method is the approach to the perfection of wisdom; the practice of emptiness conjoined with meditative concentration can transport one across the four levels of penetration in emptiness and bring the path of vision in a direct, non-conceptual experience of the ultimate nature.

One generates an awareness of emptiness in meditation by applying method. When a sense of emptiness has been aroused, one enters into fixed meditative concentration: then the awareness that we have so painstakingly generated is quickly lost. Emptiness of inherent

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existence is not merely a philosophy or doctrine invented by the Buddha, it is the ultimate nature of ourselves, our body and mind and the world we experience. All we have to do is to cultivate an awareness of it. This awareness needs to be practised on the basis of meditative concentration; otherwise one will not be able to attain a

deeper level of understanding. Wisdom is the eye to see That-ness. 'The Ideal of the Spiritual can penetrate only through the imagination which is the leading path and first gate to the conception and impression of the earthly Ātmā' (*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, no. 18). ✧

. . . there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
. . . we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness
In this wise passiveness, he says:
One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

William Wordsworth
The Tables Turned

Freedom in Spirituality

M. KANNAN

THE conduct of life in the subhuman kingdoms is highly *disciplined*. The formation of rocks and mountains; the appearance, bloom and disappearance of flowers, fruits, vegetables, plants and trees; the birth, growth, movement and migration of fishes, reptiles, birds and animals are all regulated by Nature and follow an order and cycle. They rarely deviate from the set pattern, except maybe in cases of mutation. One cannot but wonder at the beauty and harmony in creation; and one can therefore expect and foretell the behaviour of Nature as one passes through time and space.

Man has been acclaimed as the highest form in creation and is endowed with faculties not seen in lower kingdoms. (The masculine pronoun is used here only for convenience and is intended to include the feminine as well.) The capacity for discernment is what separates man from the animal. This faculty is a blessing and is expected to be applied in the quickening of the evolutionary process. The opportunity of speeding up evolution is given to man and out of this opportunity springs a host of other qualities like the capacity to handle choice, to use free will, and to make decisions. All these as a

whole may be termed as his 'mind'.

Endowed with additional faculties and opportunities, and with the help of his mind, man observes the world and records his observation as memory. He is able to compare new experiences with those recorded in his memory and establish similarities. Thereafter he classifies experiences as those that produce pleasure or discomfort to his sense-organs. Then arises the desire to repeat the pleasurable and avoid the painful or uncomfortable experiences. Desire may be understood as that quality of the mind which gives rise to the craving for a pleasurable thing or experience, and when that thing or experience is exhausted, the craving is repeated with greater intensity. Desire also gives rise to the craving for the avoidance of a painful thing or experience.

By the prolonged repetition of pleasurable and painful experiences man learns that both are short-lived, transitory and unreal. At this point in time, he starts seeking something that transcends the polarities of pleasure and pain, something that is lasting, something that is real. This is the dawn of a new phase of his life and thus his quest for the real begins. He experiences a complete turnaround in

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the way he conducts his life, his vision changes, his attitude changes, and he perceives the world differently. He enjoys this way of life which was hidden from his view in the past. He begins to realize that he is now in charge and no longer subject to external forces. Man now conducts his life as a commander would conduct his army. He holds the reins of his mind, desires, senses and sense-organs. He regulates the type and the amount of experience with which he will feed the organs of his senses.

Once he achieves this self-control, he experiences the world differently. This new experience is quite contrary to his previous experience. This is freedom and his initial experience of the world was bondage. He also realizes that *freedom* is real and lasting while bondage is unreal and transitory.

Having got the first glimpse of freedom man seeks more of it, more often, and then seeks for still more in an unbroken sequence. He starts looking for ways and means to achieve this, and strikes upon a path or a way of life that leads to this end. He decides to tread this path and adopt this way of life. As he does this, he notices that there are many who have travelled on this path and have crossed many milestones. He seeks their company and tries to learn from them. For our understanding, we may term this as the spiritual path and the traveller as the spiritual aspirant or disciple. Interestingly, the Oxford Dictionary gives us one of the origins for the word 'discipline', via

Old French from Latin — *disciplina*, meaning 'instruction, knowledge', from *discipulus*, meaning 'disciple'.

Let us take a closer look at the path and observe the lifestyle of the aspirants. Our observation reveals that the aspirants are found in two broad categories or stages or phases. First, the phase of involvement; and second, the phase of withdrawal. In the initial stage, the aspirant is deeply engaged in worldly activities and his lifestyle is one of expansion of wealth, relationships and transactions, and the resultant obligations.

This is a phase of intense activity and therefore, demands the adherence to a number of disciplines, codes, authorities, regulations and the like. Even a minor deviation, whether planned or otherwise, may drastically alter the projected results. The aspirant notices that though the inputs were under his control, the outcome of his actions has turned out to be unexpected. Though a little surprised and perturbed in the beginning, eventually he accepts the fact that there are external forces acting on his transactions, which cause results initially not envisaged. He continues to put in his best efforts and leaves the results to some other superior power. In this process he becomes essentially selfless in his attitude and offers his services for the benefit of the world at large.

In the next phase in the sequence, the aspirant progressively reduces his involvement in worldly activities and engages himself in an inward quest. He withdraws himself into total or partial solitude and

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limits his association to only a few advanced aspirants who have gone ahead on the path. In this phase, certain higher truths are revealed to him. One such truth is the brotherhood of humanity, in fact the brotherhood of all that exists in whatever form. The indwelling life is one, while the outer forms may be many. This realization gives rise to qualities like universal love and compassion for all forms of life. The differences in forms do not mean anything to the advanced aspirant as his vision transcends the outer envelopes, penetrates into the deeper self and recognizes the self in one form to be the same as the self in any other.

From the foregoing, certain facts emerge. The journey on the spiritual path does not involve movement from place to place. A start can be made 'right now' and progress can be made 'right here'. It only involves the shift of focus from the empirical, or the relative truth, to the eternal or absolute truth. This journey is not the birthright of a selected few. All of us are travelling on this path at our own pace; in fact, it is obligatory for every being, sentient or otherwise. The words of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, a thirteenth century Persian mystic poet, are relevant here. He wrote:

A stone I died and rose again a plant;
A plant I died and rose an animal;
I died an animal and was born a man;
Why should I fear? What have I lost by
death?

The journey consists mainly of two stages: the first, preparatory, and the

second, advanced. These two stages are sequential and may be seen at different levels. There are disciplines to be followed and freedom to be achieved, as a consequence, at each stage and at each level.

The journey has to be undertaken by each one of us, but the advanced candidate or disciple has the additional responsibility of helping his fellow traveller. Real progress cannot be made in isolation. The realization of this fact will bring about a transformation in the candidate and usher in a world order where disparities in social, political and economic opportunities will progressively be reduced. We can look forward to a civilization where everyone recognizes his responsibility, and works towards holistic development. In the field of education, moral and ethical development will enjoy equal emphasis to that of modern science.

The opening verses of *The Dhammapada* spell out the influence of thought in our life. They make it out that a concerted effort at the regeneration of our nature leads to salvation. No one but *we* decide the course of our life and we do it every moment by our thoughts and deeds. Our freedom can help in shaping the 'unknown tomorrow' but is inoperative in the realm of the irrevocable past. The words of Sir Edwin Arnold in *The Light of Asia* may be remembered here with profit. He writes:

Seek naught from the helpless gods by gift
and hymn
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits
and cakes.

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Within yourself deliverance must be
sought:
Each man his prison makes.

In conclusion I would like to quote from *Man and his Bodies* by Annie Besant. These words have influenced my life in a profound way. Some of you may have had a similar experience. She writes:

By the law of evolution everything that is evil, however strong for the time it may seem, has within itself the germ of its own destruction, while everything that is good has in it the seed of immortality. The secret

of it lies in the fact that everything evil is inharmonious, that it sets itself against the cosmic law; it is sooner or later broken up by that law, dashed into pieces against it, crushed into dust. Everything that is good, on the other hand, being in harmony with the law, is taken on by it, carried forward; it becomes part of the stream of evolution, and therefore it can never perish, can never be destroyed.

The purpose of this talk is not to give a final verdict but to leave the question open for deliberation. ✧

**Exaltedly pure, like the excellent nectar in the sun,
I am a shining treasure,
Wise, immortal, indestructible!**

Taittiriya Upanishad, I.10

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter. . . .
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms.
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation.
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

T. S. Eliot
Journey of the Magi

Theosophical Work around the World

India

The North India Study Camp was held at the Indian Section Headquarters from 16 to 20 October 2012. Dr Radha Burnier's book *Human Regeneration* was studied under the guidance of Bro. P. K. Jayaswal, National Lecturer. The International President's message was read out and encouraged the participants to explore the subject in great depth:

I am happy to have the privilege and pleasure of sending a message for those present at the Study Camp at Varanasi. Due to various circumstances I could not be present as I thought I would be. Any study camp should make our minds a little clearer, a little nobler, much more alive than it was before . . . something which affects our consciousness and the words we use.

What our study is will depend on our minds rising to the highest level, which is a perception of the Truth. We are all trying to understand more and can study, wonder and rise at least for the time being.

This message is not meant to have nice words but invites all of us to rise above our normal level.

Ninety-four delegates from thirteen Federations attended the Camp. Bro. P. K. Jayaswal had prepared a brief summary of the book. The study was instructive and interactive.

U. P. Federation: The U. P. Federation organized its 93rd Annual Conference with the theme, 'The More We Teach the More We Learn'. Theosophy not only gives a knowledge of the working of the universe but a knowledge of our own working so that we can take charge of ourselves. In addition there was a seminar on the main theme. Learning and teaching go together — the more we teach the more we can learn. In *Isis Unveiled*, a Mahatma is quoted as having said that spiritual power in ourselves and learning to help others expedites the progress of human evolution.

Opening of the School of the Wisdom

In her opening remarks on 5 November at Blavatsky Bungalow, Adyar, Mrs Radha Burnier explained that Wisdom does not come as much by study as by living a righteous and selfless life of sacrifice and service. She said that J. Krishnamurti had a childlike innocence in matters of the world although he was extraordinarily wise. Again, Kabir, a simple weaver from Varanasi, lived with extreme devotion to God and was a unifying influence between people of different faiths. Mrs Burnier expressed the hope that students of the School would get at least a glimpse of the path that leads to Wisdom, as the pursuit of Wisdom is the work of eternity.

Theosophical Work around the World

The theme of the first session of the School is 'The Secret Doctrine'. Mr M. P. Singhal, international Vice-President, drew attention to the plaque fixed on the wall of Leadbeater Chambers, wherein Mrs Besant said in 1910 that this facility was for the students of the Ancient Wisdom. In her review of *The Secret Doctrine* in 1893, she wrote that most students who venture to study *The Secret Doctrine* are faced with bewilderment and despair because of the many difficulties that they encounter. But, Mr Singhal said that a group of dedicated students under the able guidance of Prof. Tampi, the Director of the School, need not fear that.

Australia

From 26 to 30 October 2012, the Australian Section held an event at its Springbrook Centre in Queensland on

the theme 'Soul Nourishment'. The main presenter was Mrs Beverley Champion, a former National President of The Theosophical Society in Australia. Mrs Phoebe Williams, an artist and long-time member from Brisbane, and Mrs Linda Oliveira, the current National President, also presented sessions. The gathering aimed to interest non-members in the Theosophical Society and to provide creative ways in which to nourish the soul. About half of the attendees were members of the public. Various theosophical principles and teachings were brought out during the sessions. Some of the topics included exploring the myths we are living, walking meditation and creative writing. The event was particularly well received and proved a worthwhile introduction to the Theosophical Society for the newcomers concerned.

The Conquest of Illusion

When we let the soul speak we put true colour into our life.

When we let the soul speak we change direction — to the soul's direction.

When we let the soul speak we live with purpose — the soul's purpose.

When we let the soul speak, we start to really live.

The soul already knows that which the mind is desperately seeking to understand.

The soul already knows that which we have not remembered in this lifetime.

The soul already knows, and can if allowed, remind us.

Let the soul speak.

(Author not known)

**ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

Adyar

Theme: 'The Present Shapes the Future'

26 to 31 December 2012

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 25 December

8.00 am General Council Meeting
2.00 pm General Council Meeting

Wednesday, 26 December

8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
OPENING OF THE CONVENTION
3.30 pm Reception
5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'The Future is Now'
Dr P. Krishna, *Educationist and International Lecturer*
7.30 pm Ritual of the Mystic Star

Thursday, 27 December

8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
SHORT LECTURES
'The Past, Present and the Future'
Mrs Manju Sundaram, *Indian Section*
'Nature: Treat Me Gently'
Mr M. P. Singhal, *Vice-President, TS*
9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I
3.00 pm SYMPOSIUM
'An Enquiry into Regeneration'
5.00 pm BESANT LECTURE
'The Vision of Free India — Is it a Mirage?'
Mr J. S. Verma, *Former Chief Justice of India*
7.30 pm Dance Drama — 'Narayaniyam' by Tapasya Kala Sampraday

Convention Programme

Friday, 28 December

- 8.00 am Devotional Meeting
10.00 am Inauguration of Vocational Training Centre
5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'Theosophy and the Crowding World'
Mr Tim Boyd, *General Secretary, American Section*
7.30 pm (to be confirmed)

Saturday, 29 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
SHORT LECTURES
'The Means Determine the End'
Mr Ricardo Lindemann, *Brazilian Section*
Mr Kiran H. Shah, *East African Section*
9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II
3.00 pm THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE
5.00 pm THEOSOPHY–SCIENCE LECTURE
'Delhi Metro: The Spiritual Dimension of its Success'
Dr E. Sreedharan,
Former Chairman, Delhi-Metro Rail Corporation
7.30 pm North Indian Music by Ms Sunita Avani Amin

Sunday, 30 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
SHORT LECTURES
Miss Dianne K. Kynaston, *Australian Section*
Mr Marcos L. B. Resende, *General Secretary, Brazilian Section*
9.30 am QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'Living Mindfully in the Present'
Ven. Olande Ananda Thera, *Pagoda Meditation Centre, Sri Lanka*
7.30 pm Film on 'A Different Pilgrimage' by Dr S. Krishnaswamy

Monday, 31 December

- 8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION
9.30 am Admission of New Members

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Date refers to the date of formation

* Regional Association

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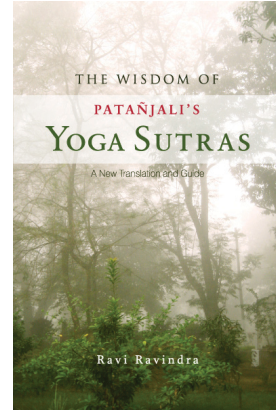
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