



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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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

## **Ahimsā — Civilized and Uncivilized**

Some people are believers in the practice of ahimsā, but much depends on what one means by the word. Is it merely a question of doing fairly well in the attitude and treatment of other human beings, or is it something more than that? This is an important question, to be answered correctly. The word ‘ahimsā’ must be used properly, both in understanding the meaning, and the way it is used. There is a great deal of difference between the two, because when the word is used only in respect of other human beings it is incomplete, and becomes uncivilized when it reaches a point where we do not include other creatures. For those who have very little care and consciousness there is little meaning to be practising ahimsā as a virtue.

We must realize that *himsā* or doing harm in one way or another, is common, even among those whom we consider as good people. The ancient view was that ahimsā applies to our relations with all things. Many people familiar with ancient thought know that ahimsā is mentioned as a high duty (*ahimsā paramo dharmah*). Of course, we do not have a suitable translation of *dharmā* because it has a wide significance and role. It is said that the

great example of ahimsā was the saint Rabia, shown in a picture of her sitting quietly with many animals, big and small, normally dangerous but at other times surrounding her. This example was attributed to many of the persons who remained calm in what we may consider as provoking circumstances. Such people do not exist now; and they lived separately because they cannot attribute virtues which they cherish, to others who do not value them.

It is difficult to follow the same path. In these days, products are becoming more numerous, and all kinds of names are given to them although they may be merely forms of materials we know. Real names are not used for so many products — perfumes, soaps, creams, etc., about which we know nothing. Are they all harmless or are they the result of harmful practices hidden from us — as many of these things are, that are put on the market today.

For example, we use medicines the provenance of which is of a variable nature. Usually there are better substitutes, but the average person does not think it matters. He wants only to have something which smells nice, appears good and is claimed to be the best.

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Dr I. K. Taimni says ahimsā really stands for the highest degree of harmlessness, which means that when a thing appears to be harmful, a person who really cares must abstain, because causing harm to living beings under all circumstances must be avoided. There are some actions which seem to be even murder, because people do not care what they do when producing something, and harm may be done of a very dire kind or consequence. To counteract this one must have a dynamic sort of compassion. Anything which is out of harmony in practising the Law of Love puts us out of harmony with the Law of Nature; for example, the cutting of vast forests, as they have done in Brazil, Indonesia, etc. Avoiding doing harm indirectly by our way of life is important so that harm in any form is avoided. They discovered recently one island in Indonesia where animals are not afraid because they have never been misused and their innocence never taken advantage of. Humans have rarely gone there.

Love is a positive action. The story about Angulimālā who went to Buddha with violent intentions is a matter of interest. The worst vibrations can be counteracted by love and kindness. Angulimālā was a violent man, but Buddha was at all times so full of love and kindness that he could influence even the worst characters. This kind of attitude must pervade everywhere.

We are at present in a world where killing is considered shocking only when it affects other human beings, but ahimsā

applies to the treatment of all creatures. As the *Bhagavadgītā* says, one may abstain from harming a Brāhmana who is full of knowledge and fine character, but he is not different from pandit-s or other people. Even a dog or cow or an outcaste needs to be treated with humility and good will. So we must in this direction be really Theosophists, referring to all alive, not only all human beings, even if they do not appear to us to be loving. Love is something which exists not only towards some people, but in itself. It can be known by all alike, and a cow, an elephant and a dog are equal in value, says the *Bhagavadgītā*, which is considered to have very high merit, at least by Indians.

### Hints of the Future

There are a number of ways in which to rise above the ordinary level to a higher and higher extent, with a perception. It is said 'the prime and constant qualifications is a calm, even contemplative state of mind'. If we are ambitious, at the level we are trying to enter, it is itself an obstacle. There is always the I-ness behind the ambition which comes in the way and therefore it should be seen and dropped. Unimportant things must come to be known for what they are. We have to go so far that when we read and listen to inspiring things — not exciting things — it helps, while the exciting by the very nature of the emotion becomes an obstacle. Perhaps this is the reason they say that *śama* must be learnt from the very beginning, because in an excitable body everything gets somewhat distorted. The

## On the Watch-Tower

measure of distortion may vary when the distortion is in the way.

It is the same, when we are talking about *dama* or mastery over the bodies which is possible provided the other factors which control the body or bodies is also dominating the outer system. This would mean for example that health would be taken care of. The physical body is an elemental creature. If allowed to do what it wants, it can go off the track. So we should have a sensible view in controlling the body. Health for example is a matter of regulation and we should not give less than primary importance to it.

The human being is capable of understanding and learning this. Life is constantly teaching us, but we do not realize it. It is an incomprehensible mystery. Is it a form of energy or intelligence or love? It can be any or all of these. In fact the whole of life is teaching, but we do not realize it. We are all the time told that evolution is leading to greater and greater expansion of form while it is needed, and also of consciousness after the form ceases to help. Previous power and qualities of consciousness are manifested in ever increasing measure if we allow this to happen. Wisdom, Love, Beauty are all in the background as part of the perfection that we reach sooner or later — a state of development which at present we only speculate upon.

But everything in the Universe is ordered to bring about such a culmination. Only we do not realize it. The natural laws, meetings and partings, joys and sorrows, all have one single purpose — to make

the individual self open itself to being a representative of the perfection which we already spoke about. The ancient Upanishadic teaching is constantly saying: put yourself in the way to perfection. ‘Be ye perfect.’ The human being when he has shed all the qualities which characterize him at present, which include both what we understand and what we do not — is doing the work of trying to raise consciousness to a new level. In other words consciousness is constantly teaching: everything is learning, as children do yet.

When mature, the university children learn more quickly. Students realize the value of having a teacher and also the great value of internal processes like cogitation, observation, reflection, etc. These come as the capacity to understand increases in the student. He is learning now in other ways.

Many messages have come through evolved human beings — we call them ‘Masters’ and by other names. They do not teach people until they realize for themselves that this is what we exist for. We do not exist for gaining money, nor for pleasure or even for cooperation with others or being good to each other. These are all only the power of Divine Life which manifests in every one of its habitations. In that sense we are all part of Divine Life, waiting to experience more, to accept and not exceed the signs. If we resist the ‘bad’ it does not come back, because we abandon the desire for sensation, possession, power and such things. Small changes go out and instead there is a new life in the future. ✧

# *Make Theosophy a Living Power*

N. SRI RAM

I AM not unconscious of the uphill nature of our task, of the fact that there is a great deal to be done, that we must have changes — first of all, in ourselves — that we must look into things deeply and not superficially, that we have yet to make Theosophy a living power in our lives. At the same time, I can honestly express the opinion that here is an organization which has great potentialities. When we think of the Theosophical Society, we have to think not only of what it has achieved and is today, but also of what we can make of it if we take hold of it rightly.

How can we transform the minds of the members, what kind of an organization can the Society become twenty, thirty, fifty years hence? Is that not also an approach of great importance, to determine what possibilities there are in the movement as it is, in spite of every shortcoming, every weakness it may exhibit at present? Into what sort of an instrument of progress can we turn it by our efforts? How can we make it more effective for its purpose than it has ever been? There is a possibility, and it is for you and me to realize it. Whether we shall rise to the occasion, become channels for the flowing stream of life, transform the hearts of people and thus the external conditions is a big question. We cannot answer that question now, even if we would. If we answer it in the affirmative now, that answer is of no value. We have to give the answer by life, for a bright new age, a pattern of work for the benefit of humanity.

*On the Watch-Tower, April 1953*

# The Past, Present and the Future

MANJU SUNDARAM

**M**OST of us would remember the beautiful, profound verses that we find at the end of the book *At the Feet of the Master*, and also in the text of ‘The Ritual of the Mystic Star’ — lines which are recited at the time of Invocation:

Waiting the Word of the Master,  
Watching the Hidden Light;  
Listening to catch His orders  
In the very midst of the fight;

Seeing His slightest signal  
Across the heads of the throng;  
Hearing His faintest whisper  
Above earth’s loudest song.

These powerful words have inspired and impelled one to explore the wide expanses and delve into the depths of the subject: The Past, Present and the Future. These lines have helped one immensely in looking at it — anew, afresh, in a different light, a different dimension altogether.

Let us mark the words: *Waiting* — waiting the word of the Master — i.e., waiting to *hear* the Word of the Master; *Watching* the Hidden Light . . . ! Every line stresses on Watching, Listening, Seeing and Hearing, and obviously, it is

not just the literal meaning of the words; it is not seeing or hearing in the ordinary sense, with one’s physical, sensory organs that they speak of; they hint at something much deeper, wider, higher. It is ‘seeing’ beyond what is seen and hearing beyond the ordinary sounds. These words and lines encompass all the deeper, finer intuitive faculties which bring one to the understanding of the Essence of Reality, that is beyond the limits and comprehension of intellect, beyond logic and reasoning. It is perception, entirely at a different plane.

Sanskrit, it is said, is the language of the gods, and music, the universal language as also the language of the Universe. These two powerful languages have helped one in many a way in perceiving and understanding the depths and dimensions of life in its myriad hues.

In all the languages of the world there are certain words and expressions which have profound connotations, enshrining in themselves the deepest of truths, the eternal truths. *Darśan* is one of these vibrant words.

The words *philosophy* in English and *darśan* in Sanskrit are accepted as

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synonymous with each other. The word *darśan* is derived from the root *drś*, to see, to observe, view, vision, perception. So, *darśan* is neither an intellectual speculation, intellectual sport or pastime, nor a maze of arguments. It is direct perception (*pratyakshānubhuti*). It may also be a transmission of spiritual perception or vision, when Reality, the Truth, the whole phenomena await unfoldment before a sensitive, receptive being. The deeper one delves, the subtler become the meanings. It is, perhaps, like the profound resonances that linger long after the bell is struck. Those who are receptive, are able to hear the last resonance fading and merging into the vastness, into that all-pervading sound (*nāda*) from where it emerged.

The well-known Vietnamese Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh, tells a very illuminating story in his book *Cultivating the Mind of Love*:

This is a story about a man named Meursalt, who is in prison. In his cell one day, Meursalt was able to touch life . . . Lying flat on his back, he looked up, and through a small window near the ceiling, he ‘saw’ the blue sky for the first time in his life. How could a grown man see the blue sky for the first time? In fact, many people live like that, imprisoned in their anger, frustration or belief that happiness and peace are only in the future. Meursalt had three days to live before his execution. In that moment of mindfulness, the sky was really there and he was able to touch it. He saw that life had meaning and he began living deeply the moments that were left for him. The

last three days of his life became *true life*.

On the last day, a priest knocked at his cell door to extract a confession from him, but Meursalt refused. Finally the priest left, frustrated. At that moment Meursalt described the priest as someone who lived like a dead person. Meursalt realized that it was the priest who needed to be saved, not he. He further says: ‘If we look around, we may see people, who are like dead persons, carrying their own “dead bodies” on their shoulders. They need to be touched by something — the blue sky, the eyes of a child, an autumn leaf . . . so they can wake up . . . anything can wake us up to life’ — *right here and right now*.

This is what *darśan* means, in its deepest of meanings — waking up to life — *right here and right now!* This is what ‘seeing’ is, not in fragments, but in entirety — seeing the whole with one’s whole being. This moment of ‘seeing’ is the *now*, is the *present*, having nothing to do with seconds, minutes, hours or days; with past, the present or the future. It is the moment that enshrines *the all*, the moment that has in it the *eternal now*. This moment of seeing brings about a new awakening, a new awareness; this ‘seeing’ itself is understanding. These moments of perception are perhaps the moments when reality can be seen — *in a flash!* It is in these vibrant moments that the mist that masks one’s perception, disappears, and with which comes the clarity of vision, an unblurred vision of the vast expanses of Nature and Life. We all must have experienced this: The sky is darkened as the storm approaches and one is unable



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to see anything; then all of a sudden the thunderstorm breaks, with flashes of lightning — and then, in that flash of lightning one sees everything; things close by and also the distant. This moment of seeing is — *being into it*. This seeing is not a gradual process; it is instantaneous. There is this beautiful word, again in Sanskrit, *unmesha*, which means light, flash, and also, opening, expansion, awakening. So, the ‘flash of lightning’ itself is *the awakening*.

This ‘seeing’, this vision, though complete in itself, yet always has so much more to convey, to express, to unravel, and herein lies the beauty of creative vision that penetrates into the immeasurable, the unfathomable, and brings out all that is ever true, good and beautiful.

Tagore, in his inimitable style says:

The light that fills the sky  
Seeks its limits in a dewdrop on the grass!

And also:

True end is not in reaching of the limit  
But in a completion which is limitless.

The poet, the painter or the sculptor, all have the vision of their poetry, picture, or the piece of sculpture within their own being — as a whole; and when one begins to write or paint or sculpt, one just begins from any point, giving expression to one’s feelings, emotions, poetic imageries and intuitive perceptions. In a lyric or a song, a poem or a painting, the rhythm or metre, the emotional perception, the creative perception and their expression, all are blended into one; they

flow simultaneously, together, and not one after the other — they cannot! So, there always is the movement in the present. The song, the poem, the painting, blossom from moment to moment. Song and words just flow, the brush just meanders spontaneously, every expression springing forth from the fountain within. In fact, the painter lets the painting create itself, the poet lets the words find their own rhythm and expression and the song too in the hands of a creative singer, is free to caress the melody it loves.

As with the poet or the painter, so is it with the one who looks at a beautiful painting, or enjoys reading a beautiful poem, or admires a lovely statue. One does not enjoy a painting piecemeal or music in fragments; one enjoys it as a whole. The most beautiful landscape paintings by John Constable or Turner may be within the limits of the frame, but they certainly give the feel, the vision, of the limitless. One *feels* the force, the energy, the beauty and vibrancy of colours, the many moods of Nature, as one looks deeply at a painting. The exuberance, the serenity, the play of light and shade, the still skies, the gale, the storm — all that the painting depicts, touches the core of one’s being. The painting takes one into its fold, allowing one to *be* a part of the landscape! When one really ‘sees’ the marvellous dawn, one does not see it just *passively*, one does not see the beauty and light as a casual spectator; one shares in the light, one feels the light, one is enwrapped in the light. It is a unified vision, nay, a complete vision, in

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which reality is not isolated, dissected, fragmented.

According to the ancient, traditional faith of the Hindus, the Veda-s are considered to be texts not written or composed by humans. They are supposed to have been directly revealed by the Supreme ONE. That is why they are known as *śruti*, what is heard or revealed or perceived. The many sages or *rshi-s* to whom the Vedic hymns are ascribed, are, therefore called *mantra-dṛshṭa*, the seers of the hymns, and not *mantrakarta*, composers or writers.

A lot has also been said about Revelation, that is, the Vedic Revelation. What is it, really — this Revelation? It perhaps has nothing to do with just the activity of the brain, nor is it some narrow intellectual speculation. It surely hints at the unfolding of something immense, something very vast and deep.

A wise man made this profound statement more than a century ago:

Never does it happen that Nature says one thing and wisdom another.

The seers, the mystics of all ages, belonging to all parts of the world, have been graced, blessed, with this 'awakening' to the mysteries, the truths of life, Life in its wholeness. It is all about seeing and hearing, not just that which is visible or audible on the physical plane but seeing, hearing, feeling, observing, beyond that.

To the great seers and creative beings were revealed all the Eternal Truth of Nature and Life, the immutable Laws of Life. It was their keen inner vision, their

deep insight, that let the mysteries unfold, unveil themselves, splashing all the Divine Beauty and Splendour around.

The Vedic Seers saw, with wordless wonder and delight, the marvels and mysteries of Nature, of the Universe. They observed with great joy, the splendour of dawn and dusk; they also observed how the changing seasons follow each other — the spring, the summer, the rainy season, the autumn or fall, and then spring again. They saw, they heard, they felt, the whole of Nature breathing, swaying, dancing, to the sounds struck or unstruck, to the sounds of the Silence, a constant cycle of changes and counter-changes, going on ceaselessly, unendingly. They were dazed, wonderstruck one moment, awestruck at another, and found their whole being bathed in sheer Bliss — at yet another moment! They felt, within their hearts, an intense stirring, a chord having struck deep within. Failing to contain within, the ecstasy, they just burst into hymns and prayers! It was the irresistible joy of beholding something extraordinary, it was the joy of being blessed with the revelations of the immutable laws that govern this Universe, it was the joy of being wakened to the inherent harmony, rhythm, tremendous order and regularity which hold this Universe intact. And the hymns were not just meaningless utterances or outbursts either. They were the impelling, spontaneous expression born out of the deep sense of gratitude, reverence, sense and feeling of surrender and submission to the Power, the Energy, the Intelligence, that

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are behind all this manifestation. This is what Revelation is all about. In *this* seeing, in *this* hearing, is that awakening to the reality of all things, the awakening of the awareness of that Supreme Consciousness that abides in all. This is just the pure awareness of the Presence of that *one in all*.

We all must have seen and heard the sound of the wonderful musical instrument known as the *tānpura*, which is used for accompanying a singer and also other instruments. The four strings of the *tānpura* are tuned in different notes, but once they are tuned to perfection, the different notes, blending with each other, merge into that ONE VIBRANT NOTE, emanating endless resonances. One then hears the ONE deep sound which has in it all the cosmic vibration. One does not isolate, separate, one note from the other — one cannot. The notes, the *svara-s*, surrendering their individual entity, merge into that ONE INDIVISIBLE NOTE.

Every musical note is independent, complete and perfect in itself, but no single note creates music; it may be a beautiful note but it cannot be sung or struck alone, for ever. It is the eternal melting of one note before another that creates a song. The fulfilment of each note lies in surrendering, losing completely, its own entity to bring about music; dying every moment, as it were, for the sake of the eternal, for the sake of the whole. There is neither anything as past nor anything as future; there is only that endlessness of movement. It is dying and being reborn every moment and so living anew every moment.

Music is a revelation; a revelation,  
loftier than  
all wisdom and all philosophy.

These are the significant words of none other than the all-time great composer, musician Ludwig van Beethoven!

The seers come to the understanding, with their intense perception, that the laws of music *are* the laws of Life itself: the law of harmony and rhythm, the law that brings about balance and the sense of proportion. They are awakened to the reality that behind this great phenomena of Life, there is movement, motion, vibration. As is music, so is Life! an endless movement, a stream ever-flowing, ever in flux. It is this movement that causes day and night, sunrise and sunset, the rising and falling of waves — which we comprehend and label as time, which, in reality, is Eternity.

There is a beautiful song by Kabir, in which he talks about the ocean and the waves. The waves of the ocean are the ocean itself. They are but one surf. When the wave rises, it is water; when it falls, it is still water. Tell me, where is the distinction? Just because it has been named 'wave', shall it cease to remain the Ocean? It is really the different levels of being, different planes of manifestations and forms that make them appear as different from each other. Life is no different from this; there is just Eternity — with no shores, no horizons and no boundaries. We, on our physical plane of existence have fragmented the eternal into what we name as time. We, for our convenience, for our day-to-day living and activities,

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measure our lives, segment our lives linearly, chronologically, dividing them into seconds, minutes, hours, days, as also yesterday, today and tomorrow, as past, present and future. In the depth of all this is the Infinite, the endless flow of Eternity.

As the great Sufi saint Hazrat Inayat Khan says:

The art of music is the exact miniature of the law working through the whole Universe.

The musician, while tuning his instrument also tunes his soul, his inner being, and with it is also the attunement with the listener, with the atmosphere. And then, the moment the first note is struck, something amazing happens. The instrument, the singer and the listener cease to be there as different entities. There is neither the singer, nor the listener, nor even the consciousness of all this. What remains is the flow of wholesome music, in all its pure freedom. These are the dynamic moments when the Creative Energy is in action — in its effortless, spontaneous flow, leaving behind, dissolving the narrow self; the ego, the individual consciousness, all is lost into nothing; music just flows on — unhindered. No one *makes* anything happen — everything happens on its own — smoothly, in complete accordance with the universal law and harmony. The singer does not cling on to the music — he cannot. He just readies himself, his whole being, to fulfil the demands of music. There is that state of losing, letting go of one's narrow self, transcending one's rational, dissecting self, and being thus,

one with the source of Music. All the great musicians of all ages and times, would not have been able to create such sublime, divine music had they not lost themselves in Music. It is a state which Sufis call *Fanā-al-Fanā*, to die before one dies! And so, to dwell in the Eternal.

The singer is never tired of singing the same mode day after day; the painter is never tired of painting the same landscape again and again. Every time, they look at it, feeling it afresh, with new inspiration and new vitality. It is that sense of deep devotion, dedication, surrender and worship with which a devotee offers oblation to the morning sun rising from the depths of the horizon — every morning! And as the singer and the painter enjoy their music and painting, so do the listeners and those who look at the painting. They share in the beauty of the music and the landscape painting with a new vision, full of wonder and delight. It is in no way bound to the images and memories of the past, anchored to the shores of the past or the future. They just tune themselves to the music of the Universe. There is the complete, unconditional surrender of their individual entities to the Great Music, to what is, to what is seen or heard or felt in that moment. There is this spontaneous understanding of and being in the reality of the creative moment.

In this 'seeing' itself is the dawning of the awareness of the Unity, the Oneness and the endless flow of that Harmony, that Music, which is beyond the limitations of time and space, beyond thoughts and concepts.

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This deep seeing and listening, with a heightened alertness, attention and enhanced receptivity, brings about a new understanding, a new awakening to what is, to the present, free from the fetters of time — past and future. One, then, lives a life which is not static, not stagnant, but a life ever fresh, ever new and ever sacred.

In the tranquil moments of contemplation, reflection, one comes to the understanding that one has to 'see' life as a whole, as one — and oneself, in no way separate from the ONE. *One is the whole*. In a musical instrument, the single string, the single note, has to be in complete, perfect consonance with all the other strings and notes. One discordant note, one untuned string — and *music* pays the price. So, one, as an individual, has to be in complete consonance, or as Inayat Khan said, in 'at-one-ment', with the indivisible whole. One wrong deed, one selfish thought, one selfish motive, one callous, destructive move, one insensitive, thoughtless action — and *the very existence, very life* is the price! One can hardly evade, escape, this truth.

And here one comes again to the lines one began with: 'waiting the Word of the Master . . . watching the Hidden Light . . .'

When is one able to watch the Hidden Light? To hear the faintest whisper? To see the slightest signal?

It is when one readies oneself with absolute alertness, undistracted attention, awareness, penetrating perception, that

one is able to hear the faintest whisper and see the Hidden Light. It is deep sensitivity, heightened receptivity, that enables one to hear, to see into, and to see beyond.

The deeper one sees *into* life, the wider *life* opens itself to one.

It is when one is intensely, passionately, alive to every moment, fettered neither to the past, nor groping in vain for something labelled as the future — that *is* the state, the moment when one abides in the present, the present that is alive. The present is in the *moment* and in the *movement*. It is then, in the living moment, that one sees the Infinite; in just a glance one sees, one touches, the Infinite skies; it is then that one hears the music in the *silence between two notes*. It is this vibrant centre that one dwells in. One is then blessed with the clarity of vision, with an insight that reveals to one all that was veiled till then. In that living present moment *is* right perception, right response, right action, right step. One no more finds oneself standing at the crossroads, in a fix, in a conflict of choices; one no more wavers between choices, alternatives, options, compromises. Then the step taken *is* the right step and in *that* very step *is* the step ahead.

Every step, then, is complete in itself, is a destination in itself; every step is the sacred centre of pilgrimage and every step is that unique compass which *directs* one to the Realm of the Eternal, the Infinite. ✧

**Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.**

William Wordsworth

# Confirmation of the Existence of an Ancient Worldwide Wisdom Religion

## Transforming Belief into Knowledge

RAY WALDER AND EDI BILIMORIA

We tell you what we know, *for we are made to learn it through personal experience.*  
[Mahatma's emphasis] Letter no. 70 C

### Preamble: How Do We Truly Know?

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) affirmed in her writings that there once existed throughout the world a wisdom religion which was known to the priests of ancient Egypt, to the magi of Babylon and Persia, to the philosophers of ancient Greece, and to the *rshi-s* of India. By no means was she alone in holding this idea: many, many others have asserted the notion — among them such eminent thinkers as Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Henry More (1614–1687) and Isaac Newton (1642–1727). This ancient wisdom religion we term ‘Theosophy’ — simply because ‘Theosophy’ means ‘divine wisdom’.

But, in addition, Blavatsky set out to ‘assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists’. And, today, an important question arises: Does Theosophy place reliance on *beliefs* — *belief* in an infinite essence, *belief* in man’s immortal

nature, etc.? This question is important because, in our current intellectual climate, beliefs have no appeal. In fact, the very idea that an organization is founded upon beliefs may be — and often is — sufficient to frighten many people away. These days, the very possession of beliefs is often enough to bring upon oneself the accusation of belonging to yet another naive New Age movement or fundamentalist religious cult.

HPB strove to answer the question, ‘Was there once a worldwide wisdom religion?’. But we may put the question another way: ‘If there was once a worldwide wisdom religion — a religion which recognized a quintessential essence underlying and underpinning life and the world — how did the ancient priests, magi, philosophers, sages and saints *know* that there is this underlying essence?’ These questions cannot be answered

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through entertaining the notion that this wisdom religion was founded on beliefs. Beliefs would be insufficient; higher knowledge (wisdom) based on direct experience is the surest foundation: one must establish that the holy ones possessed a certain higher knowledge, not that they held to a set of beliefs.

### One Way Forward

One way to answer the question, ‘Was there once a worldwide wisdom religion?’, is the method that HPB used: to collect together immense tracts of literature from the archaic sciences, scriptures, mythologies, occult literature and esoteric writings of diverse ages, cultures and epochs, and then to highlight their common thread. When she did this, however, HPB was not just acting in the manner of a conventional PhD student performing a literature survey on the theme of his chosen research.

The quotation at the head of this article and the one following are of seminal importance:

The system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective *experiences* were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings . . . No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions — so obtained as to stand as independent evidence — of other adepts, and by

centuries of *experiences* (present writers’ italicized emphasis). *The Secret Doctrine*, (Adyar edn.), vol. I, p. 316

These quotations make it crystal clear that the ancient wisdom religion is not a set of beliefs to be taken at face value as an article of faith; rather it is something to be verified for ourselves through personal exploration and experience. But that is all very well for those gifted with such a pure and elevated nature that they can undertake such exploration first-hand; or for those who can afford unlimited time and energy to work assiduously in libraries verifying those portions of the archaic doctrines to which we can have access. For the majority of us, many statements in theosophical literature (like *The Secret Doctrine*) must remain at the level of belief, even though, as just stated, Blavatsky has provided massive corroboration from the sacred doctrines of diverse cultures, races, and epochs. How, then, can we quicken our experience? Surely by first trying to understand what we *mean* by experience.

Does there exist, then, another way forwards in complete harmony with the first? The answer lies in attempting to understand what we mean by that disarmingly simple word ‘experience’. But first we need to clear our path.

### Clearing Obstacles in the Way of Understanding: The ‘I’ versus ‘You’: Subject versus Object Dichotomy

It seems that the prime difficulty in addressing the question of the nature of

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experience lies in the way we are conventionally taught to look at life and the world. For we are all taught — by our parents, by our peers, by the education system, by the very language that we use, etc. — to look at life and the world in terms of objects which are ‘out there’ and a self which is ‘in here’ apprehending those objects. In short, we are taught to look at life and the world in terms of *objects and subject*. What we are *not* taught is to look at life and the world in terms of *experience* — that which, as ordinarily considered, mediates between object and subject.

But as soon as we speak of looking at life and the world in terms of experience, a problem is likely to arise: our reader is immediately likely to assume that ‘experience’ signifies the process of apprehension of an object (or objects) by a subject. That is not the position that was taken by those priests, magi, philosophers, *rshi-s*: they did not assume a world ‘out there’ which a self ‘in here’ is experiencing. Rather, they looked at experience as an ‘entity’ in itself without making assumptions (for that is what they are) of a world ‘out there’ or a self ‘in here’.

Humanity has ever been divided into those whose view is founded upon ‘subject-experiencing-object’ and those whose view is founded upon ‘experience-as-an-“entity”-in-itself’. But the former received a huge boost in the seventeenth century when the philosopher René Descartes announced the idea that Nature is divided into two ‘realms’: an ‘extended thing’ (*res extensa*) and a ‘thinking thing’

(*res cogitans*). In fact, this idea took firm hold of the popular imagination — and made possible an enormous advance in mankind’s understanding of one — but only one — of Descartes’ ‘realms’: *res extensa*.

In large measure, this advance resulted from the realization that the ‘realm’ of *res extensa* possesses a structure. It is because of this that any given part of *res extensa* can be understood in relation to other parts of the ‘realm’. In the conventional way of considering the world, then, it can be said that each object possesses a structure and that each object is related to all other objects through an over-arching structure.

In the ordinary way of considering the world, these structures are ‘conveyed’ from object to subject by that which mediates between them: experience. This thought immediately suggests that experience must *itself* possess a structure. But if that is so, then it will be possible to analyse experience as an ‘entity’ in itself.

### **A Second Way Forwards — Understanding the Structure of Experience**

Has a structure for experience ever been suggested? It has: indeed, a possible structure has been suggested by one of the twentieth century’s most eminent scientists — Wolfgang Pauli. Not only a Nobel laureate held in the highest esteem by his peers such as Einstein and Heisenberg, Pauli was also a mystic and a friend and collaborator with Carl Jung. Pauli’s structure was a product of intuition, but now a structure for experience has been *derived* with mathematical rigour and shown to be



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just that structure which Pauli proposed. Before saying more about this structure, however, the question concerning what is to be expected of a structure for experience may be addressed.

First and foremost, it is to be expected of the structure that it reflect everyday experience. But immediately there arises an obvious difficulty: the question is open-ended. For all that the structure can be shown to reflect some types of experience, it is impossible to guarantee that it would not fail completely when another type of experience is addressed. An additional method is therefore required for the assurance that the structure is correct.

Just such a method is provided by considering the writings of those ancient priests, magi, philosophers, *rshi-s*, and asking if the proposed structure for experience substantiates any of the claims they made. For instance, is there a way in which the structure shows itself to be built up according to the six-stage scheme originated by the priests of ancient Egypt and set down in the first chapter of the *Book of Genesis*? Notice how severe and demanding this question is: the structure must complete itself in precisely six stages; the stages must follow the pattern given in *Genesis*; the structure must derive only from its own internal 'workings' — since there obviously cannot be anything outside of experience.

The answer to the question is in the affirmative: Pauli's proposed structure, when correctly interpreted, does all of these things. This finding opens the way to questions concerning the insights of

other religions, and provides a template for answering such questions. And, underlying these questions, will be the fundamental question as to whether there once existed a wisdom religion known to thinkers throughout the world.

Through these questions, the structure begins, by showing how important insights within Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, etc., are incorporated and explained, to obtain confirmation of its correctness. But, as it transpires, it is the answers obtained from questions concerning insights in Christianity which most readily illustrate the correctness of the structure.

The Christian religion centres upon an 'entity' which has certain attributes. This 'entity' can be called — following the example of Paul the Apostle — 'The Christ'.

According to Christian thought, the attributes of the Christ include the idea that the Christ is selfless love, the idea that the Christ is 'the light of the world', and the idea that the death of the Christ generates newness of life. Does the structure for experience incorporate 'The Christ' and does it do so in a way which demonstrates at least these three attributes? It does indeed incorporate 'The Christ', and it does so in such a way as to substantiate these attributes, and more besides.

So, Pauli's suggestion for a structure for experience provides something that reflects (and explains) everyday experience (to the extent that that is possible) and ideas encountered in the religions. And yet, demanding though they be, the pertinent methods of enquiry are

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insufficient to substantiate the structure for experience as correct: something more is needed, something so definitive as to provide incontrovertible substantiation.

Incontrovertible substantiation of the structure for experience has been obtained: the structure is found to predict correctly certain numbers known to science — the human gestation period, the Planck time (smallest possible increment of time), and the fine-structure constant (which determines, ultimately, how everything in the physical universe holds together). In other words, the structure proposed for experience has demonstrated the ability to generate both qualitative results (everyday experience, ideas encountered in the religions) and quantitative results (numbers known to science). The structure has, therefore, vindicated itself.

But what is this structure? Few readers will be surprised to learn that Pauli's original proposal for a structure for experience was a mathematical suggestion: Pauli was, after all, a physicist. But the idea that the structure is mathematical in nature is likely to be frightening to many readers. Yet how could it be otherwise? Even in the objects-and-subject view of life and the world, the structures of objects — necessarily mathematical — are 'conveyed' through experience to the subject. Those who are not mathematically inclined can still investigate the structure for experience, gaining a qualitative appreciation of how the structure can be used to generate new information concerning life and the world. Of course for a complete understanding — if one wishes

to see for oneself, for example, how it is that there exists a smallest possible increment of time — the mathematical aspects (which are not more advanced than the university-undergraduate level) are unavoidable. But, just as one can do satisfying work in, say, chemistry without delving into the mathematical aspects of molecules, so one can investigate experience without delving into its mathematical aspects.

However, there is one aspect of the quantitative investigation which, without going into the mathematics as such, may be discussed: its prediction of the fine-structure constant. The fact that the structure for experience is built up in six stages which follow closely the pattern given in *Genesis* implies that the first stage is a 'division of light from darkness' (to use the biblical description). Now, the fine-structure constant can be considered as the measure of what it takes to separate a particle of light (a 'photon') from a particle of matter — in other words, 'light from darkness'. This separation is, according to physics, fundamental to all the processes which make possible the physical universe. And the quantitative investigation of the structure for experience shows that the value of the fine-structure constant is found from just that region which relates to the first stage as described in *Genesis*. So, then, the description in *Genesis* is apposite: the 'division of light from darkness' is, truly, fundamental to all that follows (namely, in popular terms, 'Creation'; strictly speaking, emanation or manifestation).

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It can also be correlated in a general sense with several of the Stanzas of Dzyan which describe the stages of cosmic awakening and unfoldment.

All of the above serves to establish that Blavatsky was, of course, wholly correct: there once existed a wisdom

religion which was known to the thinkers of the ancient world. For there is an essence which underlies and underpins life and the world, an essence which can be discovered simply through the investigation of experience as an 'entity' in itself. ✧

### Note

At face value, this article makes some astounding claims. The reader is assured that such claims could not be made were they not backed up by many years (about twenty-five) of continuous, detailed research by one of the authors (RW). That research is written up in a book *Experience and Essence* of over 200,000 words. A technical paper titled *A Mathematical Solution of the Psychophysical Problem* presents the mathematical essence of the book in justification of the qualitative assertions made in this article. The authors are more than willing to discuss, and expand upon, any aspect of the article with any interested reader.

**Universal Order and Truth  
were born of blazing spiritual fire,  
and thence night was born, and thence  
the billowy ocean of space.**

**From the billowy ocean of space  
was born Time — the year  
ordaining days and nights,  
the ruler of every moment.**

**In the beginning as before,  
the Creator made the sun,  
The moon, the heaven and the earth,  
the firmament and the realm of light.**

*Rg-Veda* X.190.1-3

# The Making of *The Secret Doctrine*

MICHAEL GOMES

WHILE most theosophists are familiar with the fact that H. P. Blavatsky's *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine*, was published in 1888, and are aware of the theories of vast cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis contained therein, the events which shaped the making of the book are not as well known. Fortunately a number of eyewitness accounts have survived, making it possible to reconstruct this period. The most fascinating and detailed is Countess Wachtmeister's *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and The Secret Doctrine*, published in 1893 after HPB's death, and reprinted by Quest Books.

The blond, blue-eyed Countess was a society woman related to the old French family of Bourbel de Montjucon. Her father was the Marquis de Bourbel, and she was born in Florence, Italy, on 28 March 1838. She married her cousin, the Count Karl Wachtmeister, in 1863, who was then stationed in London as the Swedish and Norwegian minister to the Court of St James. Subsequently they lived in Copenhagen where he was minister to the Danish court, and in Stockholm, where he was named minister of foreign affairs. After his death in 1871 she

developed an interest in spiritualism. But like many titled members of the early Theosophical Society — the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Baron Spedalieri, Duchesse de Pomar — her spiritualism soon developed into occultism. Her reading *Isis Unveiled* led her to join the British Theosophical Society in 1880.<sup>1</sup>

It was at the London home of the popular Theosophical author, A. P. Sinnett, early in April 1884 that Countess Wachtmeister first met HPB, who had come over briefly from Paris for the London Lodge TS elections. The Countess saw Mme Blavatsky later that spring at the chateau of the Count and Countess d'Adhemar at Enghien, France, before returning to Sweden, and was told by HPB that 'before two years had passed, I would devote my life wholly to Theosophy',<sup>2</sup> which at the time, she says, she regarded as an utter impossibility.

When Countess Wachtmeister contacted HPB again, at the beginning of December 1885, the situation was a very different one from the brilliant receptions of London and Paris, which had culminated with a gala farewell for Col. Olcott and Mme Blavatsky at Prince's Hall in

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London on 21 July 1884, attended by 500 people in evening dress. 'It's not life', HPB had written to her sister Vera, then, 'but a sort of mad turmoil from morning till night. Visitors, dinners, evening callers and meetings every day.'<sup>3</sup> But now the Theosophical leader was in disgrace, 'abandoned by all and deserted'. Letters attributed to her in the September and October 1884 *Madras Christian College Magazine* seemed seriously to compromise her phenomena, as had her failure to prosecute for libel, and her sudden leaving of India in March 1885 for Europe. An agent had been sent by the newly-formed London Society for Psychical Research to investigate the matter, and his report to be issued soon was generally believed to be unfavourable.<sup>4</sup>

The Countess had intended to spend the winter of 1885/86 in Italy, and had stopped en route at the home of a fellow TS member and student of the occult, Marie Gebhard in Elberfeld, Germany. Mme Gebhard, who had been one of the few private pupils of the French Kabbalist, Eliphas Levi, urged her guest to see HPB now settled in nearby Würzburg. Mme Blavatsky's response was a polite refusal claiming lack of space and time to entertain a visitor, as she was engaged in writing *The Secret Doctrine*. But as the Countess was preparing to leave for Rome, and the cab was actually at the door, a telegram arrived saying, 'Come to Würzburg at once, wanted immediately — Blavatsky.'<sup>5</sup>

Because of the rumours of fraud and deception circulating about Blavatsky,

Countess Wachtmeister says she could not help being on her guard as she climbed the steps of No. 6 Ludwigstrasse in Würzburg on the evening of her arrival. She found an unhappy 54-year-old woman who was smarting sensitively under insults and suspicions, and who embarrassingly told her that she had not initially invited the Countess because the small size of her apartment, mainly a bedroom, dining room, sitting room and maid's quarters, might not satisfy someone of her guest's background.

Countess Wachtmeister must have been a remarkably unpretentious person for she stayed with Mme Blavatsky for the next five months. A screen had been bought which separated the bedroom to provide their only private space. At six in the morning their Swiss maid, Louise, would bring a cup of coffee for HPB, who then rose and dressed, and was at her writing desk by seven. Breakfast was at eight when the day's mail would be read, and then Mme Blavatsky would return to her writing. Their main meal was served at one in the afternoon, but when the Countess rang the handbell, sometimes HPB might not respond for hours depending how well her writing was going. Finally at seven she put it aside, and after tea, the two of them would spend 'a pleasant evening together', HPB amusing herself with a game of patience, while the Countess read her passages and articles from the daily journals. By nine HPB retired to bed where she would read the Russian newspapers late into the night.

They had few visitors at this time, the

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regularity of their days punctuated only by the weekly visit of HPB's doctor who usually stayed an hour, and an occasional appearance by their landlord. Most of HPB's time was spent working on her new book which had been advertised in the *Journal* of the Society early in 1884 as a 'new version of *Isis Unveiled* with a new arrangement of the matter, large and important additions, and copious notes and commentaries'. But the work had gone slowly. An attempt at grouping subjects exists from HPB's 1884 European tour, and before the arrival of the Countess she had managed to put together a few chapters.

Like Col. Olcott's testimony for HPB's writing *Isis Unveiled*, and Annie Besant's on the production of *The Voice of the Silence*, Countess Wachtmeister's account tallies with the depiction of HPB being able to sit for long hours and write continuously, stopping only to gaze into vacant space. HPB explained her technique as being able to 'make what I can only describe as a sort of a vacuum in the air before me, and fix my sight and my will upon it, and soon scene after scene passes before me like the successive pictures of a diorama, or, if I need a reference or information from some book, I fix my mind intently, and the astral counterpart of the book appears, and from it I take what I need. The more perfectly my mind is freed from distractions and mortifications, the more energy and intentness it possesses, the more easily I can do this'.<sup>6</sup>

But soon the peaceful atmosphere the

Countess had managed to create by relieving HPB from concern about the running of the household was shattered in a most dramatic way. On New Year's Eve 1885 a member of the Germania TS, Prof. Sellin, appeared with the finally published report by Richard Hodgson for the Society for Psychical Research Committee on theosophical phenomena in which the Committee had judged her worthy of permanent remembrance as 'one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting impostors in history',<sup>7</sup> and Hodgson had added his own conclusion that she had done it all as a cover for her being a Russian spy!

'I shall never forget that day,' the Countess records in her *Reminiscences*, 'nor the look of blank and stony despair that she [HPB] cast on me when I entered her sitting room and found her with the open book in her hands.' In the intensity of the moment HPB turned on her, shouting, 'Why don't you go? Why don't you leave me? You are a Countess, you cannot stop here with a ruined woman, with one held up to scorn before the whole world, one who will be pointed at everywhere as a trickster and an impostor. Go before you are defiled by my shame.'<sup>8</sup>

The Countess did not go; instead she stayed on, not only through this crisis, but until HPB's death in 1891. Her presence did much to alleviate HPB's suffering, and her personal integrity must be counted towards influencing HPB's later acceptance by London society. This is something HPB herself acknowledged, for in writing to a TS member in India, she says, 'The widow

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of the Swedish ambassador in London, the ex-visitor at all hours of the Queen, and one who is known in London for twenty years in the highest circles as a woman of unblemished reputation and one who has never uttered a falsehood in her life, is not likely to throw her reputation, her friends and position, to become the most devoted champion of an HPB, if there was nothing serious in it.<sup>9</sup>

Still, they had a terrible time as Countess Wachtmeister's letters to A. P. Sinnett in London show. 'We have had a terrible day and the Old Lady wanted to start to London at once,' she wrote him on the evening of 1 January 1886.<sup>10</sup> The Countess had finally managed to calm HPB down, who wanted to write a number of indignant protests to all concerned, and who in her excited state had developed palpitations of the heart and had required a dose of digitals. The following days brought rude letters and resignations as the contents of the S. P. R. Report became known, until, the Countess says, 'my heart used to sink every morning when the postman's ring was heard, at the thought of the fresh insults which the letters would surely contain'.<sup>11</sup>

'We are having a horrible time of it here,' she informed Sinnett on 4 January. 'I thought Madame would have had an apoplectic fit — but fortunately a violent attack of diarrhoea saved her, but I weary of it all so much.'<sup>12</sup> The Countess reports how HPB 'felt herself deserted by all those who had professed such devotion for her. As she pathetically said one day: "If there was only one man, who had the courage

to come forward and defend me as he would his own mother, if thus scurrilously attacked, the whole current of the Theosophical Society would be changed".' It was a critical moment for the Society, and HPB was left alone in her agony and despair.<sup>13</sup>

Out of this crucial testing period came the nucleus of *The Secret Doctrine* as we know it. The book would no longer simply be a revision of an earlier work, but something HPB felt would serve as her vindication by answering the charges against her. She wrote to the President of the Society accordingly on 6 January: '*Secret Doctrine is entirely new. There will not be there 20 pages quoted by bits from Isis. New matter, occult explanations — the whole Hindu Pantheon explained, based on exoteric translations (to be easily verified) and explained esoterically proving Xty and every other religion to have taken their dogmas from India's oldest religion. . . . In four Parts — Archaic, Ancient, Medieval and Modern Periods. Each Part 12 chapters, with Appendices and a Glossary of terms at the end. Countess here, and she sees I have almost no books. Master and Kashmiri dictating in turn. She copies all. This will be my vindication, I tell you.*'<sup>14</sup>

Here perhaps is the great lesson of the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*. Here was someone whose world was crumbling around her, who had worked for a decade to see the Society that she had helped start almost destroyed, to be socially ostracized, shunned and dropped by friends and acquaintances. How did she react?

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Did she give up, as many others might have, defeated? No. She turned on her critics by producing a book containing one of the most complete outlines of physical and spiritual evolution of her century. A book that has survived a hundred years and that is read around the world.

When HPB returned to the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* at the start of February 1886, it was with a grim determination that would carry her through the next two years, and which would triumph over death itself. By the end of the month she had completed 300 foolscap pages of a preliminary volume that would show 'what was known historically and in literature, in classics and in profane and sacred histories — during the 500 years that preceded the Christian period and the 500 years that followed it' of the existence of a 'Universal Secret Doctrine', and would serve as an introduction to her translation of the Stanzas of Dzyan.<sup>15</sup>

As the rent on the apartment at Würzburg was only paid up until 15 April, HPB decided to pass the summer months at Ostende on the Belgian sea coast. Her sister Vera and a niece would stay with her, allowing the Countess the chance to return to Sweden to settle her affairs there. An English member, Miss Emily Kislingbury, whose affiliation with the Society went back to 1876, would travel with HPB till Ostende. But when they arrived at Cologne to change trains and rest for the day, Gustav Gebhard persuaded HPB to pay a brief visit to his family in Elberfeld. It was there that she slipped and sprained her leg, which

postponed her leaving till July accompanied by her sister and niece.

She arrived in Ostende at the height of the season to find everything overpriced. With the help of her sister she managed to find a suite of rooms, first at No. 10 Boulevard Van Isgham, and later at No. 17 Rue d'Quest, where, reunited with the Countess, she passed the winter. The regularity of their Würzburg days was repeated, the monotony broken only by a few more visitors, the English seer, Anna Kingsford, and her uncle, Edward Maitland; Sinnett gathering material for his proposed biography of HPB; Arthur Gebhard and Mohini Chatterji, who spent their time 'studying "Bhagavad Gitā" all day';<sup>16</sup> the Revd A. Ayton; and K. F. Gaboriau from France.

A copy of the MS of the finished preliminary volume of *The Secret Doctrine* was given to Marie Gebhard to send to Col. Olcott from Elberfeld, but she kept it for a month, and it did not reach him in India until 10 December. This volume was to be the introductory section to the 'real pukka S.D.' volume of the Archaic Period with the seven stanzas of Dzyan and the commentaries on them. 'It is an absolutely necessary one,' HPB informed Olcott, 'otherwise if they began reading the Archaic vol., the public would get crazy before five pages, *too metaphysical*.'<sup>17</sup>

The Countess had been sent to London to attend to a business matter there, and HPB passed the New Year into 1887 alone. 'The 2nd anniversary in exile and for what guilt or fault, ye Gods', she wrote to an



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American member. 'Ah, life is a hard thing to bear.'<sup>18</sup> It was at this time that she made the following important decision about her future. 'Either I have to return to India to die this autumn, or I have to form between this and November next a nucleus of true Theosophists, a school of my own. . . . I can stop here, or go to England, or whatever I like,' she revealed to the Countess Wachtmeister.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps it was just coincidental, but after the Countess's return HPB began receiving letters from a small group of members of the London Lodge who still met on a regular basis, and who wrote her for advice on the best way of carrying on the work. Dr Archibald Keightley, who with his uncle Bertram, had joined the Society in 1884, was deputed by this group personally to invite HPB to come over to England where she could spend the summer. Since Countess Wachtmeister had to go to Sweden that summer to dispose of property there to enable her to live with HPB on a more permanent basis, the move was decided upon.

A departure date of 27 March had been set, but on the 17th of the month HPB uncharacteristically lost consciousness in her armchair after dinner. Then she developed a cold, and on the fifth day of her illness, the doctor diagnosed uremic poisoning due to inaction of the kidneys. The Countess says she became alarmed when HPB began to drift into 'a heavy lethargic state, she seemed to be unconscious for hours at a time, and nothing could rouse or interest her'.<sup>20</sup>

Madame Gebhard had come from

Elberfeld so that in shifts someone would always be in attendance with HPB, and as their local doctor could get no results, Countess Wachtmeister telegraphed Dr Ashton Ellis, a member of the London group of Theosophists, to send over a specialist. Dr Ellis replied that he would come immediately, and upon arrival prescribed a programme of massage to stimulate paralysed organs, which he proceeded to do for the next three days.

As there seemed to be no improvement to HPB's condition, Mme Gebhard suggested that her will be made out, for if she died intestate in a foreign country there would be no end of complications. So a lawyer, the doctor and the American Consul were to come the next day. During that night's watch the Countess says: 'To my horror I began to detect the peculiar faint odour of death which sometimes precedes dissolution. I hardly dared hope that she would live through the night.'<sup>21</sup>

HPB was anxious about the fate of the manuscript of *The Secret Doctrine*, and gave the Countess instructions to send it to Col. Olcott at Adyar to have it printed. She said she was glad to die after what she had suffered in the last years. She drifted into unconsciousness, and as the night passed seemed to grow weaker by the hour. The strain of the last few days was such that the Countess says a 'wave of blank despondency' swept over her and she too drifted off.

Morning light was already streaming in when Countess Wachtmeister opened her eyes. Her first thought was that HPB might have died as she slept. Instead she

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found an alert and awake HPB who told her that during the night she had the choice of being able to die or finish *The Secret Doctrine*. 'But when I thought of those students to whom I shall be permitted to teach a few things, and of the Theosophical Society, in general, to which I have already given my heart's blood, I accepted the sacrifice.'<sup>22</sup>

It was a joyous group that the lawyer found when he arrived to make the will later in the day. The Belgian doctor kept repeating, 'But she should be dead . . . she should be dead', and the American Consul, who had come as a witness, left with the words, 'Well, I think this is enough fatigue for a dying woman',<sup>23</sup> and the little party laughed heartily over the events of that day's turnaround.

The Countess looked so used up that Mme Gebhard suggested that she leave for Sweden at once, and offered to stay until the Keightleys came to take HPB to London. In spite of bad weather the crossing to Dover was without incident, though everyone was concerned for HPB who had not left her heated rooms for weeks. She was housed at 'Maycot', a small cottage in Upper Norwood, with Mabel Collins, a member of the London group, on 1 May, and before the day's end was back at work with *The Secret Doctrine*.

During Countess Wachtmeister's absence in Sweden throughout the summer of 1887, the narrative for the making of *The Secret Doctrine* is continued by the accounts of two young Cambridge graduates, Archibald (1859–1930), and his uncle, Bertram Keightley (1860–1945).

By the end of May, Bertram Keightley could write to W. Q. Judge, General Secretary of the newly formed American Section, and editor of the New York *Path*, that 'HPB is fairly well and working away right hard at *The Secret Doctrine*, which is *awfully good*, and I am sure you will be immensely pleased with it'.<sup>24</sup>

Soon after her arrival at Maycot, HPB passed her MS, which was now over three feet high, over to the Keightleys 'to read, punctuate, correct the English, alter, and generally treat as if it were our own'.<sup>25</sup> Their summer was spent 'reading, rereading and copying' *The Secret Doctrine* as it came to be published dates from this time, for it was the Keightleys' suggestion that 'instead of making the first volume to consist, as she had intended, of the history of some great occultists, we advised her to follow the natural order of exposition, and begin with the Evolution of Cosmos, to pass from that to the Evolution of Man, then to deal with the historical part in a third volume treating of some Great Occultists; and finally, to speak of Practical Occultism in a fourth volume, should she ever be able to write'.<sup>26</sup>

The material was then rearranged under the headings of Cosmogogenesis and Anthropogenesis with the stanzas of Dzyan and her commentaries leading off each volume, followed by explanations of the symbolism and science treated therein. The thing that impressed the Keightleys was the paucity of Mme Blavatsky's personal library. Archibald, who had made the transit with her from Ostende and who had helped her unpack, states:

## The Making of *The Secret Doctrine*

'I knew there was no library to consult and I could see that HPB's own books did not amount to thirty in all, of which several were dictionaries and several works counted two or more volumes.'<sup>27</sup> Yet the manuscript edited by them for the press quoted or referred to over 1300 books. The checking of the sources alone occupied a group of people, including E. Douglas Fawcett, assistant editor of the London *Daily Telegraph*, Richard Harte, a member from America, and it was even rumoured, S. L. Macgregor Mathers, who was regularly seen at the British Museum poring over old folios of Kabbalistic lore.

Concurrent with the editorial work on *The Secret Doctrine* were a series of events which revived Theosophical work in England. The Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society (still in existence) was formed on 19 May with ten members; by the second meeting a week later it was decided to publish a magazine that would bring theosophical ideas to a larger public, and The Theosophical Publishing Company was started to manage this. By the time Countess Wachtmeister arrived in England in August, a three-storey brick building had been leased at 17 Lansdowne Road in London to serve as a residence for the Theosophical household.

*The Secret Doctrine* was to be issued by the London publisher George Redway, with whom A. P. Sinnett had invested in, but after a disagreement on terms the work was taken over by the Theosophical Publishing Society, and the release date of 27 October 1888 set. An advance copy of the first volume (723 pp.) exists bearing

the notation by Richard Harte that he received it at Lansdowne Road from the printer on 20 October as he was leaving for India with Colonel Olcott. The first edition of 500, bound in light grey, and bearing the dedication 'to all True Theosophists, in every Country and of every Race', sold out immediately, going mainly to subscribers, and a second edition was printed before the end of the year.<sup>28</sup> With the publication of the book, Countess Wachtmeister closes her *Reminiscences* with the words 'HPB was happy that day'.<sup>29</sup>

In comparison to *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine* was not as widely reviewed by the press, though *The Theosophist* reprinted notices from such diverse sources as the *Memphis Appeal*, the New Orleans *Southland*, and the London *Secular Review*. Such was the prejudice against the movement at the time that the New York *Evening Telegram* published a review based only on the prospectus sent out four months before the actual release date. The *Telegram* reported: 'Mme Blavatsky is undoubtedly an intellectual phenomenon, but because she can soar back into the Brahmin ignorance of the Buddhists and furnish Edwin Arnold with food for thought is no proof that everything she says is true . . . Ten minutes of Edison and Noah Webster will do more for civilization than all the fine spun immoralities of the Indian poets. However it is a good thing to study history, and Mme Blavatsky, with her learning and patience throws the light of her intellectual dark lantern on the monstrosities of the past. Her book is very elaborate and

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comprehensive in its scope, and will undoubtedly be widely read.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most influential review appeared in London's literary *Pall Mall Gazette*. The anonymous reviewer's closing remarks serve as a fitting conclusion to the making of *The Secret Doctrine* and an introduction to the book itself. 'Mme Blavatsky's views may not meet with acceptance, but they are supported by sufficient learning, acuteness and ability to enforce a respectful hearing. It is indeed

the East which, through her, challenges the West, and the Orient need not be ashamed of its champion.

'The book deserves to be read: it deserves to be thought over; and none who believe in the progress of humanity has the right to turn away over-hastily from any contribution to knowledge, however new its form, from any theory, however strange its aspect. The wild dreams of one generation become the commonplaces of a later one . . .'<sup>31</sup> ✧

## References and Notes

1. Biographical information on the Countess is given in the *Path*, N.Y., November 1893, pp. 246–47, and with slight amplification by Boris de Zirkoff in *Theosophia*, L.A., Fall 1957, p. 16. The Countess's early psychic experiences are given in her 1897 talk, *Spiritualism in the Light of Theosophy*, printed by the Mercury Pub. Co., San Francisco, 1897. She applied for membership in the Theosophical Society in London, 24 November 1880, and was elected on 5 December.
2. Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and The Secret Doctrine*, Theosophical Publishing Society, London, 1893, reprinted by Quest Books, Wheaton, 1976, p. 9.
3. HPB to Vera Zhelihovsky, July 1884. *The Path*, New York, June 1895, pp. 74–77.
4. For background on this incident see my article, 'The Coulomb Case, 1884–1984', in *The Theosophist*, December 1984, January and February 1985.
5. Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, p. 12.
6. *Reminiscences*, p. 25.
7. *S.P.R. Proceedings* 3 (1885): 202.
8. *Reminiscences*, p. 18.
9. HPB to Judge N. D. Khandalavala, 12 July 1888, TS Archives, Adyar. 'She would never consciously tell an untruth', remembers another

- member of the London household, James Pryse, *Canadian Theosophist*, 15 June 1932, p. 126.
10. In *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, (LBS), Letter CXXVI, p. 270.
11. Wachtmeister, 'A New Year's Greeting', *The Vahan*, London, 1 January 1891, and *Theosophical Siftings*, 3:17, p. 3.
12. LBS, Letter CXXVII, p. 272.
13. Wachtmeister, *HPB and the Present Crisis in the Theosophical Society*, privately printed, London, c. 1895, p. 6.
14. In *The Theosophist*, HPB Centenary number, August 1931, p. 667.
15. HPB to A. P. Sinnett, 3 March 1886, LBS, Letter LXXX, p. 195.
16. LBS, Letter XCVII, p. 217.
17. HPB to HSO, 23 September 1886, *The Theosophist*, March 1925, p. 789.
18. HPB to Elliott Coues, dated by her 'between 1886–1887', *The Canadian Theosophist*, November–December 1984, p. 116.
19. *Reminiscences*, pp. 54–55.
- 20–23. *ibid.*, p. 59, p. 60, p. 62, p. 64.
24. Letter of 29 May 1887, quoted in Kirby van Mater's 'The Writings of *The Secret Doctrine*', *Sunrise*, November 1975, p. 60.
25. Keightley, B., 'Writing of *The Secret*

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*Doctrine*, in *Reminiscences*, p. 78.

26. Keightley, B., in *Reminiscences*, p. 79. In addressing the December 1890 Adyar TS Convention he revealed that 'what would now be the 3rd volume was to have been the first volume. . . .'

27. Keightley, A., 'Writing of *The Secret Doctrine*' in *Reminiscences*, p. 84. Marion Meade in her biography *Madame Blavatsky*, 1980, p. 380, notes, 'In fact, every person involved with Madame Blavatsky during the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* seems to have gone out of their way to mention the curious lack of reference works.' They were genuinely impressed by it.

28. Harte's copy with the 20 October 1888

notation on the flyleaf now in the Boris de Zirkoff Collection at the Olcott Library, Wheaton, formerly belonged to the Blavatsky Association in London. The note is transcribed in de Zirkoff's exhaustive presentation of the writing of *The Secret Doctrine, Rebirth of the Occult Tradition* (TPH, Adyar, 1977, p. 1). A copy of the second edition inscribed 7 December 1888, and presented 'to the Adyar Library by its most devoted and humble servant, H. P. Blavatsky', exists in the Adyar Archives.

29. *Reminiscences*, p. 72.

30. N. Y. *Evening Telegram*, 30 June 1888, 'Words with Wings'.

31. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 April 1889, p. 3, 'Among the Adepts'.

It's a very strange book, and I've even told Prof. Heisenberg, my fellow physicist, to get a copy and keep it on his desk. I urged him to dip into it when he's handicapped by some problem. The strangeness of this book may relax or possibly inspire him . . . For instance, here is something she said which intrigued me, and I'm astonished how much in keeping it is with modern physics:

'This is sufficient to show how absurd are the simultaneous admissions of the non-divisibility and elasticity of the atom. The atom *is* elastic, *ergo*, the atom is divisible, and must consist of particles, or of *sub*-atoms. And these sub-atoms? They are either non-elastic, and in such case they represent no dynamic importance, or, they are *elastic* also; and in that case, they, too, are subject to divisibility. And thus *ad infinitum*. But infinite divisibility of atoms resolves matter into simple centres of force, *i.e.*, precludes the possibility of conceiving matter as an *objective* substance.'

There are many other significant statements of hers which I find interesting.

Albert Einstein on *The Secret Doctrine*, 1935

# Time — Some Reflections

D. P. SABNIS

GENERALLY, we reckon time in hours, minutes and seconds, following the rotation of the earth around its own axis. When the earth goes around the sun, it is one year, which gives us four seasons. But apart from this, there is a sense of time that is subjective. Besides defining time by the motion of the earth, we can define it in our conception. Time is something created entirely by ourselves, says a Master of Wisdom. Time seems to fly in happier moments, while it seems to drag on, ever so slowly, during painful experiences. Thus, one moment of intense agony may appear as an eternity to one person, while months and years may seem to fly like one brief moment to a person surrounded by bliss.

Mahatmas have the knowledge of the very foundation of nature — they know what the ultimate divisions of time are, and also, the meaning and the times of the cycles. In one of the Yoga aphorisms of Patañjali (Bk. III, Vibhuti Pāda), we are given the description of various powers that a yogi comes to possess by practising *sanyama*. *Sanyama* is the practice of concentration, contemplation and meditation, all three at once. When a yogi practises *sanyama* with regard to the moment and

to the continuous flow of moments, he comes to possess discrimination, which in turn leads to subtle knowledge, i.e., knowledge not limited by space and time. In this aphorism, Patañjali speaks of the ultimate divisions of time, i.e. moments (*kshana*), and the order in which these moments precede and succeed each other. The *kshana*, or moment, that cannot be further subdivided, is smaller than the second, a nanosecond or pico-second of science. We are aware of, and can distinguish, periods such as days or hours. There are born mathematicians who can perceive the succession of minutes and tell without a watch how many minutes would have elapsed between any two given points in time. A yogi is able to distinguish between the successions of moments.

Moments succeed each other in sequence, and these sequences put together, constitute time. Thus, moments are like spokes in the wheel of time. The movement of moments, in the present, past and future, constitute chronological time. The yogi remains attentive to the moment and does not allow his attention to slip into the moments, and thus conquers chronological time.

In other words, ‘Time is only an illusion

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produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but “lies asleep” (*The Secret Doctrine*, I.37). HPB implies that time is but a by-product of consciousness. In the experience of the mystic, past, present and future merge in the Eternal Now.

A Master of Wisdom says that ‘past, present and future’ are clumsy words. The subdivisions, which seem natural, are man-made and purely subjective. It is impossible to point out the dividing line between the past and present, or the present and future. Even as we say ‘now’, it has moved into the past. Our divisions of time are relative to the observer’s point of view.

Teachers down the ages, and especially, the New Age gurus advise us to live in the present moment. We are so habituated to fly from the present that the experience of trying to stay in the present moment, even for an hour, could be daunting. If we can live in the moment, whether it is good, bad or indifferent, without longing or sighing, then we are free.

We seem to live life, carrying with us a heavy load of past baggage. We seldom appreciate situations and people as they present themselves from moment to moment. Our reactions are predominantly based on a storehouse of memory, impressions and preconceived notions. For instance, when a person greets us, our reaction — consciously or unconsciously

— is based on the image of him stored in our memory. Memory is based on experience. Should we allow it to have such an overriding influence on our response and our capacity to meet life afresh? We seldom live in the present. We live life, oscillating between the past and future. *The Voice of the Silence* advises us: ‘Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.’ It is said that the past is gone, and static, and nothing we can do can change it, but the future is before us and dynamic; everything we do will affect it. The suggestion is to forget the emotional experience attached to the past events that tend to take control of our mind and colour the present and the future. Once we have extracted the lesson from an event, we must let it pass without brooding over it. Our capacity to do good in the present is adversely affected when we dwell too much on the past, which drags us down from our present level of consciousness. HPB writes:

For the occultist . . . the Future and the Past are both included in each moment of their lives, hence in the eternal PRESENT. The past is a torrent madly rushing by, that we face incessantly, without one second of interval, every wave of it, and every drop in it, being an event, whether great or small. Yet, no sooner have we faced it, and whether it brings joy or sorrow, whether it elevates us or knocks us off our feet, than it is carried away and disappears behind us, to be lost sooner or later in the great Sea of Oblivion. It

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depends on us to make every such event non-existent to ourselves by obliterating it from our memory; or else to create of our past sorrows Promethean Vultures.

Paradoxically, a person desiring to cultivate concentration has to be aware of his mental process, so that not even a fleeting impression or a passing thought might be missed. We must learn to be able to go backwards into our days and carefully and in detail go over all that happened and all that we permitted to pass through our mind. We shall succeed in recollecting all thoughts and impressions only if we have been vigilant and aware all through our waking hours.

Karma is not subject to time, and therefore he who knows what is the ultimate division of time in this Universe, knows karma.

Cycles are the clocks of Karma. Cycles are not arbitrary divisions of time, but they mark the periodic return of our impressions and actions. Cycles mark the moments of cause and effect. Having the knowledge of Karma and Cycles, the yogi can predict a future event.

One of the most practical applications of the concept of time is in understanding the value of cycles. By paying attention to the cyclical return of impressions, we can save time and effort in the training of mind and body. If we eat at regular times, our digestive system is ready and active so that the food is digested well. If we study at a fixed time every day, then the mind comes ready for work so that more work gets done. Our 'blues' or depression comes in cycles. When the depressive

cycle returns, we must compel ourselves to feel joyous, even against our will — or at least to try to feel the joy of others. We may do this the next day or even two days later. We would then have implanted joyous impressions, so that when the depression returns, it brings along with it the impressions of joy and they would counteract each other's momentum. Soon we would succeed in establishing a joyous cycle.

But why stop at moods and feelings? The law of Karma postulates that an impulse, action or thought returns to the sender in the course of time. The law of Reincarnation lays down that man comes into this world, lives a life and then dies to come back in due time with a new body and personality. In the state between death and rebirth, the soul goes to Heaven or Devachan and assimilates the good garnered during earth-life so as to come back enriched in the next life. The average stay in Devachan is said to be 1000 to 1500 years. The time taken by the Ego for assimilation in Devachan is proportionately more than the time spent on Earth in garnering experience. It takes only a few minutes to eat our food but its digestion takes a much longer time — about seven to eight hours.

We have to regard each life as a precious cyclic opportunity, which is going to come again only after 1000 to 1500 years. It is only proper to question every action and every aspiration: 'Is this the thing I will take with me to Devachan?'

Śiva is called Kāla-bhairava. Bhairava is that which makes you *bhiru* (afraid) and



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we are all afraid of time, which snatches away things and the people most dear to us. Kṛṣṇa too, says: 'I am Time matured, come hither for the destruction of these creatures' (*Bhagavadgītā*, XI).

Infinite time, or Kāla, is the symbol of the One Reality or Absolute. The Absolute is beyond time. Being beyond time and space, IT is described as 'the Swan out of time' in its transcendental aspect. 'The Swan in time' represents the immanent aspect of the Absolute, also called Ívara. Anything in manifestation is subject to a threefold limitation. For instance, a rose is limited in space, as it cannot be in two places at the same time. It is limited by time, because there was a time when this

rose did not exist, and so also, at some future time it will cease to exist. Similarly, the rose has certain qualities which make it a rose, distinct from all other objects; i.e., a rose has only 'rose-ness'.

*Light on the Path* says that 'Time' is a great deluder. A spiritual aspirant who experiences divine discontent is described as someone to whom the sense of space is like the bars of an iron cage, while the sense of time is like the strokes of a sledge hammer. His consciousness struggles to soar upwards, breaking free from the confines of space and time. He wants to break these limitations and experience timelessness, where the oscillation between pain and pleasure ceases. ✧

Things of the past are already long gone  
and things to be, distant beyond imagining.  
The Tao is just this moment, these words:  
plum blossoms fallen; gardenia just opening.

Ch'ing Kung,  
*Mountain Dwelling*

# How Can Ancient Wisdom Heal the Earth?

KUSUM GALADA

HOW can most ancient religions bring about the spirit of brotherhood in the universe through the doctrine of Karma? All forces of life and nature are associated with the principle of cause and effect. According to Indian philosophy the Soul (*ātman*) is endowed with consciousness, an infinite mode of knowledge, and self-awareness in its perfect eternal state. But we worldly souls are imperfect; our inner ability is clouded by our mental, vocal and bodily actions, called 'karma'. It is this energy of karma which keeps us in this mundane world (*samsāra*). The kinds of karma which keep an individual in a backward condition are known as *pāpa* and those that help in advancement are called *punya*.

The unusual feature of Indian philosophy is its precise and scientific treatment of the law of karma. The Jaina Anga-s (sacred texts), belonging to the most ancient religion of the world, treat karma as a motivational force of the cycle of existence. The Uttarādhyāyana Sutra of the Jaina-s observes that the *jīva*, or soul, is sometimes born in *devaloka* (the world of the gods), sometimes in hell, and sometimes it acquires the body of an

*asura*. All these happen due to karma. It again states that karma is the root of birth and death. It is also said in the Uttarādhyāyana Sutra that the soul bound by karma goes round and round in the cycle of existence.

Karma denotes action, and action denotes progress. Progress may be two-fold: (1) Progress that helps the realization of one's inner self and (2) Progress in worldly matters. It is the everyday experience of everyone that undisturbed peace and happiness cannot be obtained from worldly attachments. Only self-knowledge, i.e., liberation or Moksha, can free us from pain and suffering. Almost all thinkers agree that the sole aim of the soul is to liberate itself from the enslavement of the world. As long as karma, comprising of the four passions, anger, pride, deceitfulness and greed, is present, freedom of the soul, i.e., salvation, cannot be attained.

When this law of karma of Indian philosophy is understood, nobody will wonder at the inequalities found in the world and we will be always on the safeguard to protect ourselves from further karma as far as possible. The belief of

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Mrs Kusum Galada, a member of the Indian Section, is a student of Jaina philosophy.

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the Jaina-s that karma can be exhausted through austerities ensures that this doctrine of karma does not promote fatalism among its believers.

The Law of Non-violence, i.e., *ahimsā*, is closely connected with the law of karma. This doctrine of *ahimsā* internally impels man's soul to treat other living beings of the world as his own and behave towards them in a friendly and brotherly way. As man's own existence and happiness are dear to him, so are they to other living beings. Lord Mahāvira, the twenty-fourth Thirthankara of Jainism says that 'there is one uniform soul. All differences, like caste, family, society, nation, are outwardly imposed, so they are unreal. There exists no question of struggle or conflict among human beings'.

All the negative actions of the human mind, such as enmity, malice, envy, anger, and ego, are different forms of violence. The remedy for violence is non-violence. Lord Mahāvira advises us to 'conquer anger by forgiveness, ego by humility, arrogance by modesty, greed by generosity, hatred by love'. In the *Ācharanga Sutra*, it is said:

**Be human in the fullest, most beautiful sense, shedding gentle consideration, delicacy and graciousness, but with exquisite detachment.**

He whom you want to kill is you  
He whom you want to rule is you  
He whom you torture is you

We see that universal peace and promotion of human welfare can be brought about with the spirit of *ahimsā*.

Today the concept of universal brotherhood is rising in the minds of wise and enlightened persons. Only non-violence can give it a concrete form. To quote Max Müller:

It is India that has taught the world how to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life not for this life alone but a transfigured and eternal life.

The doctrine of non-violence can bring about a spirit of brotherhood in the universe.

Annie Besant said:

The Jaina doctrine of karma to me solves the problem of inequality and apparent injustice of the world. Personally, right faith, right knowledge and right conduct can destroy all karma and become divine.

N. Sri Ram

# Theosophical Work around the World

## **Australia**

The 2013 Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society in Australia was held in Melbourne during January on the theme 'Theosophical Insights and the Contemporary World'. Highlights included the well-attended public talk by key speaker Prof. Richard Silberstein, whose professional area of speciality is neuroscience. His topic was 'Intuition: a Transpersonal and Neuroscience Perspective'. Also featured as a key speaker was Dr Jenny McFarlane, an art historian, curator and writer who spoke about the influence of the Theosophical Society on a number of Australian artists, a subject on which she had a book published during 2012, and mentioned that the members in Australia could be proud of their heritage. The programme also included among other things various talks, an interview by the National President with two long-standing members, small group workshops, a day outing and a workshop for Lodge/Branch Committee members. All in all, the Convention was very successful and well received by participants.

## **The Krotona Institute, USA**

The winter-spring semester of the Krotona School of Theosophy began with a TS Members' Intensive programme, *The Process of Self-Transformation*, which was held from 18 to 25 January 2013. Guided by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.,

past president of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines, thirty members participated in the seminar, which combined lectures, exercises and interactive experiences. The seminar was part of an annual series intended to further Partners in Theosophy, a programme funded by the Kern Foundation, in which TS members and mentors collaborate to develop depth in Theosophical understanding, leadership skills, and projects helpful to the Society's work. The Self-Transformation Seminar was followed by a Facilitator Training programme attended by fifteen members for further understanding and mastery of the principles and methods used in guiding future seminars.

February programmes included the following: 5–8 February: *Understanding Reincarnation and Karma* with Fernando de Torrijos; 12–15 February: *Worlds Without End: The Afterlife Today and in the World Religions* with Robert Ellwood, PhD; 15–17 February: *A New Epoch and a New God: Esoteric and Jungian Predictions about the Age of Aquarius*, with Stephan Hoeller, PhD; 22 February to 1 March: *Therapeutic Touch: Healing Based on Theosophy and Science*, beginning and follow-up classes guided by Nelda Samarel, EdD, RN.

## **South America**

Mr Ricardo Lindemann, National Lecturer of the Brazilian Section, was the

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guest speaker at the Winter School of the Argentinian Section, which was held at San Rafael from 10 to 15 July 2012, on the theme 'Theosophy applied to Social Reconstruction' (developed in December 1996 by the speaker at the School of the Wisdom in Adyar), and members from Bolivia and Paraguay were also in attendance. Later, he also gave lectures in Rosario and Buenos Aires. His lecture, 'Regeneration and the Significance of Life', was broadcast live from Buenos Aires to the whole world as a Web Video experiment from that Section, and thus reached many Spanish-speaking countries simultaneously. He was also invited to lecture on 'Theosophy and Occult Science' at the centenary celebration of Fraternidad Lodge, Asuncion, Paraguay, from 16 to 18 November 2012.

### Vice-President's Visit

The international Vice-President, Bro. M. P. Singhal, was the Chief Guest at the Ninety-third Annual Conference of the Telugu Federation, which took place in Visakhapatnam from 8 to 10 February 2013. The theme of the Conference was 'Human Regeneration and the Contemporary World'. Bro. M. P. Singhal gave the Inaugural Address as well as a public talk entitled 'The Art of Listening'. More than one hundred delegates attended the Conference. Lectures were also given by Federation and Lodge office-bearers and others, in English and Telugu, on topics such as 'Life in the Modern World', 'Spiritual Regeneration of Humanity', 'Theosophy for the Present', 'Salvation

through Service', 'It is Enough if You Transform Yourself', and so on.

### Bangladesh

Mr B. L. Bhattacharyya of the Indian Section visited Bangladesh for about two weeks in the first half of February at the invitation of members of Olcott Lodge in Dhaka and of Chittagong Lodge. In Dhaka, he gave a talk on 'Unity among Diversity' which was attended by thirty-five members, and another talk on the objectives of the TS where about twenty people were present. 'What is Theosophy?' was the subject of his Chittagong talk. He had discussions with members at the Besant Lodge in Patiya, and spoke about Theosophy and the Theosophical Society at a public meeting arranged by the Kusum Theosophical Lodge in the auditorium of the Ramkrishna Mission, where members of different religions attended. He reports there are members interested in Theosophy and it was a successful trip.

### Adyar

Adyar Day was celebrated as usual on 17 February this year in the beautiful Headquarters Hall, where members remembered with gratitude the great work done by Col. Olcott, C. W. Leadbeater, J. Krishnamurti, and Giordano Bruno who is believed to be a previous incarnation of Dr Besant. The children and teachers of the Olcott Memorial High School participated in the celebration. The work Col. Olcott started for the betterment of the underprivileged is carried on till today.

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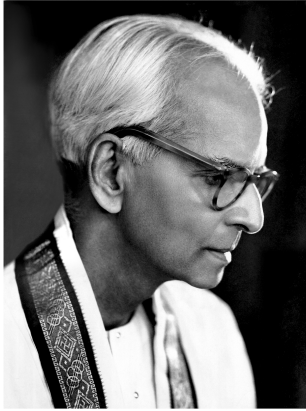
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