

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Mrs Radha Burnier

(Report on Lecture delivered on 29.12.11)

Mrs Radha Burnier, President of the TS, said that Theosophical literature describes a future that is more harmonious and glorious than the life we live at present. We think of the future in terms of the past. Because of our modern knowledge we think we are at the peak of life. According to Theosophical literature we are not even at the beginning. From our lower point of view, transformation from one condition to another takes time; at a higher level transformation takes place in no time. Time is of little importance except for human beings who live and function in time.

We think that if we make the present wonderful, the future will be wonderful, but we do not know what the present is, because it moves in a moment into the past. We look at the present with the eyes of the past. We enter the future carrying the load of the past. Let us consider the future without the past, and the present as we know it.

Can we think how we can live with cooperation, not competition? In the

present, we compete all the time, being up-to-date is important, at a trivial level dress becomes important, people seek enjoyment in the form of food, etc., nations imagine they can rule the world, people want to appear more powerful, important and advanced. This causes conflict. Modern life is full of imaginary ways of being foremost and keeps people agitated all the time. The system is based on acquisition. What we seek is an exaggeration of what is important to an animal. Can we live a simple life because we realize the beauty of simplicity, and give our heart and mind to the pursuit of something more important than the pleasures of the physical body?

Emotionally, we cling to the known, to family, friends, and so on, for security and satisfaction. Are not the insects and animals of interest to us? We are destroying our beautiful Earth to satisfy ourselves, cutting down forests to grow potatoes to feed animals, which in turn we eat. God has created the marvellous mysteries of the world . . . can that beauty and wonder satisfy our emotions?

Intellectually, we are confused. The intellect does not know what to do with itself. There is the great mystery of life around us. The more that is discovered, the more there is to wonder about, the mystery of Nature and people. Modern man is much cleverer than ancient man, but knowledge does not affect character. Mrs Burnier said she believes the mind is made in order to come into contact with wonder. When that happens it becomes sharper, clearer and able to know what it cannot even speak about at present. The mind transforms.

The future is a great future, not a continuation of the past and present. It is a new life. Krishnamurti was a new

person, interested in some things of the past, but what really interested him was the mystery of life. That is what we are seeking as members of the TS. What can we know of the new if we are caught, trapped, in the old? A fresh mind makes man really human. If we can live in a different way, we would be living on the next step of evolution. The TS exists to carry all of humanity forward. Can we form a nucleus, a group of people, who respond in a different way to all of life and the teachings? We convert all teachings into stuff that we know and go on in the same way. Can we be different human beings even while we carry the bodies we have? Different inwardly; the outer does not matter.

MIND MANAGEMENT

Prof. V. V. Chalam

(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 30.12.2011)

Modern man enjoys many comforts as a result of technological innovations, but he lacks peace and harmony. There is much stress and strain, greed and lust, hatred and cruelty, leading to anxiety, disharmony and suffering. More and more people are affected by neurosis, psychosis and other ailments.

All human problems are mind-based. Happiness does not lie in external things but in our own selves. Purification of the mind leads to a change in human behaviour. Psychological toxins are flushed out. A radical change in the quality of life takes place, which cannot be done by intellectual gymnastics, emotional stimulations, religious dramas or drugs. It is difficult to educate the mind in a new way of perception.

One needs a lot of patience, alertness and vigilance.

There is an urgent need for proper mind-management. The mind is dis-oriented because it is drawn constantly by many forces. One should explore one's condition objectively, detachedly and dispassionately. Meditation opens the way for the resolution of the most complex human problems.

We are always looking outwards, even for our joy. We do not look within. We rarely examine our own thoughts, words and actions. We remain unknown to ourselves. By self-observation, we can gain an insight into our own nature. This demands sustained effort.

When the mind is purified and balanced, we can see into the deepest

depths of ourselves. If the mind is filled with evil thoughts, Patanjali advocates '*pratipaksha-bhavana*', that is, filling the mind with opposite thoughts.

Mr J. Krishnamurti asks us to develop constant awareness, a state of mind 'which looks at everything with complete attention, totally'. He says that the 'flame of attention' burns away all the impurities. The Buddha calls this the 'fire of mindfulness'.

The *Dhammapada* devotes one chapter to mindfulness. Mindfulness means to be awake, on one's guard, never to be taken by surprise. If one is mindful, one can change each circumstance, action, thought and word. Mindfulness warns us if we are about to make a wrong choice. When the mind is protected by mindfulness, external senses do not disturb its tranquillity.

The Buddha advises that the only way to conquer the defilements of the mind is to go on examining its contents again and again, so that evil tendencies are

rooted out and only the good tendencies flourish. By constant awareness, we can see that the mind is not free to play its devastating pranks. Mindfulness is, therefore, essential to manage the mind.

Purification of the mind must take place in the entire mind, both at the conscious and unconscious levels. Our effort must be to reach the deepest depths of the unconscious mind. We must adopt a meditation technique which takes us to these deep levels where lie layer after layer of impurities. Some meditation methods work only at the surface level, and purification of the mind does not take place, even though there may be some peace and calm.

Those who have gained mastery over the 'conscious' and 'unconscious' mind can reach the 'super-conscious' state, the purest state, which is communion with the Atman. All we need is a burning desire and relentless effort to transform ourselves.

CASTE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Prof. Andre Beteille

(Report on Besant Lecture delivered on 29.12.2011)

Prof. Andre Beteille started his talk with the question: Is caste growing or declining in present days? The answer is: Both. It is growing in the area of identity politics. Use of identities is not unique; such politics exist in many countries, including the US. Unique to India is the scale. Caste is sometimes the only means for mobilizing politics. The growth is highlighted because of immediate media attention. It is

declining in the areas of purity and purification, regulation of marriage and occupation. No caste can be assigned to new occupations, such as those connected with computers.

Caste is diverse in its manifestation. All the religions in the subcontinent have caste. Loyalty to one's community overrides the loyalty to one's religion. The *Dharmasastra* mentions four castes (*varna*-s). Each breaks down into further

divisions and subdivisions called *jati-s*. *Jati-s* differ greatly in the different states of India. *Varna* has lost its moral and legal validity and has become obsolete. The real operation of the caste system

is in the *jati-s*, the living system, the division now being in terms of forward and backward groups and not identity.

Dr Besant would not be happy about the present development of caste, he said.

SELF-PREPARATION FOR REGENERATION

(Summaries of Symposium Lectures delivered on 30.12.2011)

Mr Anand Khatri

When the self within the human form reciprocates to the call of Brotherhood it takes evolution in its own hand. This process is called Regeneration.

The first step is taken when the Being is in complete awareness of the Self. The human being that associates itself with just the body, emotions and thoughts, wakes up and in full consciousness, understands Unity. This is a state when the awareness of the oneness of Man with the macrocosm propels the purification and control of the human body, desire and thought. A detailed study of Theosophy and religions helps develop the knowledge base.

The participation of Will in this preparation is the second step. The Will is an important tool for the health and unison of vehicles in this ceaseless work.

If his aspiration is genuine — a settled conviction and not a sentimental flash of the moment — he transfers from one body to another the determination which finally leads him to the attainment of his desire. (KH)

Once the purpose is fixed, the Self 'learns to discriminate truth from falsehood' (KH).

When we do not restrict our spiritual composition only to meetings and symposiums and start living the laws through action, through every deed, Regeneration begins in *awareness*, in *control* and in *harmony*. Human beings have been instructed in these rules time and again through the teachings of different religions.

Human and national interdependence are the reasons that have forced peace into the world. The human model for brotherhood in the coming root race is ready. It is not long before this interdependence will establish this Unity through knowledge and then through love.

We know that all that is happening is a process of evolution, but being among those who are gathered here for the common cause of Universal Love and Brotherhood, we must continuously evolve with Will; Germinate and Unfold like a seed, responding to every hint, imbibing and absorbing the forces of Nature and the elements that contribute to making us capable of this change — the Regeneration — the one that manifests through the Golden Stairs and the Seven Portals.

Mr M. P. Singhal

To end sorrow, the Buddha suggested an eightfold path of righteousness. But greater than that is the objective of the spiritual regeneration of mankind. It is of fundamental importance; because, when that takes place, all else follows. The forces that are brought into play in regeneration will themselves have their effect on the external conditions. Merely to produce an outer change is not enough. It is like teaching good manners,' said N. Sri Ram.

While Krishnamurti was being initiated, his teacher told him: 'Will, Wisdom and Love are the three aspects of the Logos, and therefore essential elements in self-preparation for regeneration.' However, Will, Wisdom and Love are mere words and their essence needs to be fully internalized and reflected in our thoughts, words, deeds and behaviour.

Just as a tree, though cut down, can grow again and again if its roots are undamaged and strong, our soul is the undecaying root of our life and capable of regeneration life after life.

But the aspirant first wants to be sure that regeneration is a definite possibility before embarking on his endeavour. He learns from a great truth — that the Soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit. Thus assured, the aspirant makes regeneration his definite purpose in life and takes deliberate actions to achieve his goal.

The first step in self-preparation for regeneration is to diligently practise Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga — *yama*,

niyama, *asana-s*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dhyana*, *dharana*, and *samadhi* — to train one's physical and mental bodies and bring them under one's control.

As self-awareness develops, the negative content of the mind will start giving place to the positive qualities of will, wisdom and love. Self-determination will grow along with self-confidence, patience, tolerance and endurance. Help will come if one takes up new projects or learns new skills. Wisdom, we know, is achievable by treading the Golden Stairs, step by step. Out of the thirteen steps, the first four are preparatory. Before we march onwards, these four steps must be mastered.

Love is nothing but strengthening the bonds of affection by way of attention, by sharing with and caring for our loved ones. The strength of this bond is unlimited. It starts with getting attracted to a truth or to beauty. The more we dwell on these virtues and practise them, the stronger the bond grows. As Krishnamurti was told by his teacher: of Will, Wisdom and Love, love is the most important. For if this is strong, the others will emerge by themselves.

Thus, starting with Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga, living and acting from within, practising the Golden Stairs by internalizing the essence of each step, an aspirant will prepare himself for self-regeneration — slowly but surely, moving his orientation from the personality to individuality, and from there to universality; from passion to

compassion; shorn of all tendencies, endowed with spiritual capacities that are without selfishness, as we saw in

Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa, the two apostles of Will, Wisdom and Love.

Ms K. Parvathamma

The keyword in the title of this talk is 'regeneration'. It means a new birth or awakening into higher levels of consciousness, a resurgence by the blossoming of our true divine nature. This unfoldment of our inner nature is evolution.

The transmutation of consciousness does not take place in the natural course without effort and preparation on the part of the individual. This preparation begins with the realization of the futility of the search for momentary pleasures.

This urges one to explore ways of meaningful existence, and forces one to ask for the first time the most fundamental questions like 'Who am I?', 'What is my goal?', 'How can I reach it?', etc. For such persons, Theosophy provides satisfactory solutions and offers ways of arriving at the new goal.

The turning point is the realization of the illusory nature of the separate self. The moment one is convinced of one's illusory existence, one becomes aware of the true self. The focus of consciousness then is transcended from the limited vehicles of awareness to a higher all-embracing consciousness. One important difference at this stage of transformation is that the self-identification or identification with separate, sensuous experiences gives way to universal undivided awareness.

It is in this light that we must take the simple but practical and lofty injunctions. It is stated: Do not mistake your bodies for yourself, neither the physical, nor astral or mental. Each one of them pretend to be the self in order to gain what it wants. You must know them all and know yourself as their master.

Self-preparation is closely connected with self-purification. It is not the work of one incarnation. Every serious person is preparing himself for regeneration when he is doing his work in daily life and fulfilling his responsibilities without a trace of self-centredness.

The Golden Stairs by Madame Blavatsky provides guidelines for self-preparation. From the evolutionary standard, a clean life and the next three steps are ascended with conscious effort. The pure heart is not personal; it concerns humanity as a whole.

The lower self masquerades as the real self. This has taken the shape primarily of pride, prejudice, and so on. Through freedom from pride and prejudice, we can come upon universal Brotherhood. Opportunities for conquering the lower self are available everyday in every life situation. Conquest of the self means the sacrifice of I-ness. Self-preparation through Will, Wisdom and Love is the royal road to Regeneration.



THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The Presidential representative in Hungary says that the number of members is thirty-nine. Many of the members live in different places in the country but they are carrying on.

The Society has sixty-two members in Ukraine in four Lodges. Seminars have been held in several places, but there is hope that the work will progress.

Singapore Lodge has 366 members but all have not renewed their subscriptions. The principal source of the income for the Lodge is membership subscriptions and also book sales. Meditation courses, study of *The Mahatma Letters* and *The Key to Theosophy* and other lectures took place. Thirty-six members of the Lodge participated in the International Convention.

The report from Abraham Oron, Israel, is full of enthusiasm. Members went out into Nature once every two months for Study and Meditation. An inter-religious convention was held in May with 140 participants. Four courses of Theosophy were conducted. Three active study groups meet once a month and their magazine *Or (Light)* was regularly published.

The Australian Section's report has come from the retiring General Secretary at the very end of her term. We therefore do not know how far her suggestions will make headway. The Section's website has been redesigned. There are now 1133 members. The Retreat Centres in Queensland and New South Wales are proceeding well.

The TOS has now many active centres throughout the world. It intends to make a little impact with material

towards the work of the world organization, the UN. It has enlarged and improved its initiatives.

The School of the Wisdom proceeded to organize programmes which were appreciated. Dr V. V. Chalam conducted the first one with many occasions for meditation. The second one was three weeks long and dealt with topics of importance. It was led by Prof. Shinde. The third one was conducted by Mr Ricardo Lindemann from Brazil and dealt with interesting connections between Astrology and Theosophy.

The Olcott Education Society has five units of which the largest is the Olcott Memorial High School which has been regularly improved. The two annual reports of the school and the TS must be compatible with each other; this has become necessary because the Olcott School is settled in the Society's premises, so also the Social Welfare Centre, the HPB Hostel and the Animal Welfare Centre. It is also proposed to run the Vocational Training Centre in the compound. A beginning has been made by shifting initial work to Damodar Gardens and by having a training programme in electrical and plumbing work.

The Besant Scout Centre helped 1,500 children, by providing camping experience in the compound of the Theosophical Society. An open shelter for multi-purpose use has been added to the camping site.

The last twelve months have brought higher royalty compared to the previous year to the Theosophical Publishing House. It is proposed to increase the

subscriptions of the magazine. Three new editions and eleven reprints were brought out during the past year. Manpower constraints affect all our work and make a difference. The Adyar Library and Research Centre suffers from lack of competent scholars and we

hope the situation will improve in our favour in the next few years.

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This ends my report and I offer my warm good wishes to everyone present and also to every one of our members.

RADHA BURNIER

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A Questions and Answers session took place on 30 December. Mrs Radha Burnier and Ven. Olande Ananda answered queries about the difference between reflection and contemplation, the absence of brotherhood even among members of the TS, the reason for only a few Muslim members in the TS, the failure of the TS to attract young members, and the nature of a TS Lodge. Mrs Burnier said that although questions help a person to develop, the real answers must come from within oneself and not from someone else.

MUSIC AND DANCE

Prof. Dr Karaikudi S. Subramaniam has been giving virtuoso veena performances since childhood, and has many national and international awards to his credit. He gave a well-appreciated concert, with explanations about what he was playing, on 29 December in the Headquarters Hall, for the Convention delegates. The mridangam and ghatam accompanists provided suitable support. Dr Subramaniam is the son of Karaikudi Sambasiva Aiyar who was a legend in his lifetime.

The **Dance** performance, entitled 'The World Mother', and scheduled for the evening of 30 December, could not take place owing to stormy weather conditions.

THE BUDDHIST SHRINE

The Buddhist shrine is a place of great peace, a place for quiet contemplation. Built in 1925 under the direction of Mr Jinarajadasa, it enshrines a grey sandstone image of the Lord Buddha, as the Teacher of Dharma, turning the Wheel of the Law. Around his head is an inscription in Tibetan characters: 'He taught the cause of all things as also the means of cessation.' A lily tank, a Buddhist gong and a magnificent Bodhi tree, grown from a sapling of the original tree under which the Lord Gautama attained enlightenment, grace the temple precincts. In 2010, a memorial stone gifted by a group of Japanese Zen Buddhists in honour of Bodhidharma, the twenty-eighth Patriarch of Buddhism, was added.



Printed at the Vasanta Press, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India