

## **SUSTAINABILITY: THE WORLD'S BIG CHALLENGE**

**Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri**

*(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 28.12.2013)*

Since industrialization began human society has benefitted from the use of the global commons, and combined with technological progress the world has been able to produce a rapidly increasing quantity and range of goods and services. This has led to what Garrett Hardin referred to as the 'tragedy of the common'. High levels of consumption and production have accompanied a rapid increase in the population of the world, which at the beginning of the 20th century stood at around two billion, but is currently in excess of seven billion people. It is likely that in the next two decades or so we would add another two billion to this number which when compared to the total population just over a hundred years ago is clearly a staggering increase. Economic progress has come

with large scale degradation and damage to the earth's ecosystems, the most serious of which is perhaps the growing problem of climate change. In several respects the world has witnessed phenomenal growth, the sustainability of which is questionable.

There are several dimensions of unsustainable growth that need to be analyzed, and policies put in place by which the world moves towards sustainability. Neglect of this objective can prove harmful in respect of the health of the earth's ecosystems and sustainability of economic growth itself. It is, therefore, essential for economic policies, human actions and lifestyles to be oriented in the direction of sustainability. In that process the challenge of global problems such as climate change can also be met effectively.



**A clean life is characterized by absolute integrity and an unchangeable attitude of harmlessness towards all living beings, and not requiring for oneself more than what is essential for simple living.**

— Radha Burnier

# REGENERATING WISDOM (CONTD)

(Summaries of Symposium Lectures delivered on 28.12.2013)

## Mr Jan Jelle Keppler

'To generate' means to produce something like electricity. 'Genesis' means beginning, birth, creation. We know cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis. With the genes in their DNA living beings can reproduce themselves and thus generate their posterity.

'Re' means 'again' and re-generate indicates that something is created or produced again or reproduced. Each generation, which is born, has again almost the same genetic information as the preceding generation.

Spiritual regeneration takes place when a person consciously or unconsciously makes contact with the Higher Ego and begins to develop an altruistic insight into life and the understanding of the universe. All the creative intelligences in our universe have been and will be reincarnated as human beings. Regeneration takes place in a cyclic movement, like the electric generator.

The *Kali Yuga* began with the death of Krishna, around 3,100 years BC and will last for 427,000 years to come as its total duration is said to be 432,000 years. After the *Kali Yuga* comes the Golden Age and all humanity will become initiated. Between the yugas there is a transition of 180,000 years, before the Golden Age (*Krita* or *Satya Yuga*) of 1,440,000 years will begin. The continents will submerge and emerge, the Sixth Root Race will reign the earth and at that time, the Kalki Avatar (White Horse Avatar) or Maitreya

Buddha will appear. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, the first movements of the submerging by fire of the Fifth Continent will begin some 16,000 years from now.

Wisdom is an insight surpassing all mental knowledge or such a development of human consciousness, by which man has become self-conscious on the *Buddhic* plane. It also characterizes the ethical human behaviour, which is of high moral value, like the wisdom of King Solomon. Compared with animal behaviour we speak about the wise human behaviour of an ethically developed man versus the bestiality of another who has no ethics at all and behaves extremely immorally.

The purpose of the planetary *manvantara* is, that the animal kingdom of the former planetary *manvantara* will be able to develop itself as a humanity until every new human being, with a few exceptions, will have been perfected according to the model of the divine man, which was created by the highest intelligences. This means that at the end of the *manvantara* in the seventh round and on the seventh globe, when humanity will be at the end of the seventh root race, practically everybody will become enlightened, be in possession of the wisdom of the bodhisattvas and enter into nirvana. This is the regeneration of wisdom on a macrocosmic scale.

Each human being is a part of humanity and humanity is the world.

So if a new Buddha arrives at enlightenment, the whole world rejoices in all its kingdoms, because the whole world is one in experiencing this regeneration of wisdom. This also explains the bodhisattva promise to stay with humanity until the last human being would have reached nirvana.

During sleep, we make full contact with the Higher Ego and our consciousness is illumined.

The Lords of Karma have programmed the life of everyone to the utmost

perfection in order to give us every moment of the day the necessary opportunities to make as fast a progress as possible.

The only reason why we are going slowly is because we do not see these opportunities, which actually are painful experiences, called tests of life, which we try to avoid with all our might.

It can be concluded that 'regenerating wisdom' is an individual challenge and that the master will be there when the disciple is ready.

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### **Mr Krishnaphani Kesiraju**

The word 'wisdom' yields a long list of meanings and it gives us a sense of both the depth of meaning and breadth of what the word symbolizes. The word 'wisdom' is also explained as the sum of learning through the ages.

The other word 'regenerating' means to reform spiritually or morally, to give new life or energy, to revitalize. For the purpose of my presentation today I use the term 'regenerating' as an adjective to the word 'wisdom', meaning 'ever renewing wisdom'.

The word 'wisdom' does not mean something concrete or tangible out there; but that it connotes a dynamic state of consciousness here to be experienced. It is not an abstract noun but an active verb suggesting a movement in our being within.

The subject at hand is presented from two viewpoints:

Firstly, from our understanding of Theosophical and ancient Indian scriptural sources.

Secondly, from the emerging modern thought and literature in the fields of business, political philosophy and organizational psychology — the study of workplace dynamics.

### **Part I**

#### **Four Facets of Wisdom**

*Compassion:* Wisdom expresses itself as an outpouring of compassion or Love.

*Observance:* Abiding by the spiritual and natural laws helps in the unfolding and blossoming of Wisdom.

*Discrimination:* An unerring sense of the real and the unreal and the capacity of seeing everything in its proper perspective and in its essence is discrimination.

*Equanimity:* An unruffled state of being undisturbed by anything that may happen externally is the *sine qua non* of wisdom.

#### **Approaches to Wisdom**

Three qualifications — strength, unselfishness and purity of a high order

— help us in preparing the ground for approaching wisdom. Strength of character helps the *sadhaka* to bear tremendous strains on the Path without breaking down.

Unselfishness is more to be understood as getting rid of the more ubiquitous and common kind of selfishness which is known as self-centredness.

The third requisite is purity — purity of body, mind and emotions. The chief obstruction for the descent of the higher consciousness is the impurity of the lower vehicles.

## Part II

The book *The Go-Giver — A Little Story about a Powerful Business Idea* by Bob Burg and John David Mann, is set in the background of a story of Joe, an ambitious young salesman who yearns for success. Joe is a true go-getter, though sometimes he feels as if the harder and faster he works, the further away his goals seem to be. As the story develops Joe is introduced to five ‘go-givers’ who share with him the Five Laws of Stratospheric Success and teach him how to open himself up to the power of giving.

In the very recently published book, *Political Emotions — Why Love Matters for Justice* by Martha C. Nussbaum, the author poses a question: How can we achieve and sustain a decent liberal society, one that aspires to justice and equal opportunity for all and inspires individuals to sacrifice

for the common good?

In this book, the author makes out a strong case for love. Amid the fears, resentments, and competitive concerns that are endemic even to good societies, public emotions rooted in love — in intense attachments to things outside our control — can foster commitment to shared goals and keep at bay the forces of disgust and envy.

I have recently read the review of a book published in the New York Times magazine by Susan Dominus. The title of the book is *Give and Take* by Adam Grant. Susan Dominus writes:

Helpfulness is Grant’s credo. Grant’s book, incorporating several decades of social-science research on reciprocity, divides the world into three categories: givers, matchers and takers. Givers give without expectation of immediate gain; they never seem too busy to help, share credit actively and mentor generously. Matchers go through life with a master chit list in mind, giving when they can see how they will get something of equal value back and to people who they think can help them. And takers seek to come out ahead in every exchange; they manage up and are defensive about their turf.

The content and recurring theme of these three books — the leitmotif — does it not echo the truths enshrined in the Wisdom-Religion? The ideas presented in these books substantially contribute to the theme of our symposium ‘Regenerating Wisdom’.



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Number of delegates registered by Sunday, 29 December: 1093

# INSPIRED LIVING: THE BASIS FOR UNDERSTANDING

Mr Tim Boyd

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 29.12.2013)*

There is an aphorism in conventional wisdom that tells us 'knowledge is power'. It is a statement that has a certain appeal because it seems to accord with our daily experience and common sense. Every time we learn a new skill, or apply some new piece of information we influence our environment for better or worse. In this sense our knowledge is empowering, but is this as far as it goes? Clearly knowledge is a flexible term that can encompass a great many things.

In normal speech the term knowledge can mean a variety of things — from the address of the neighbourhood grocery store, to the data from a physics experiment, to a description of the astral body. Although different in content and quality, the process for gaining knowledge is the same. The organs of sensation convey impressions to the inner man. In the view of contemporary science the nervous system reports to the brain. In the ageless wisdom tradition, which acknowledges the primacy of consciousness, the process has a greater range. The *jnanendriyas* (organs of knowledge) transfer our perceptions to ever deeper layers of our being. What begins as a physical impression becomes a sensation, then a feeling, then combines with thought. The distinguishing characteristic of information is that no matter what the subject, information does not transform.

It is at best a mental phenomenon.

For those who are consciously engaged in a process of self-transformation there is a hierarchy of perception in which normal knowledge is the first step. The unfoldment of consciousness moves from knowledge to understanding to wisdom. Knowledge is the builder. It gives structure and is a function of mind. Understanding gives meaning to the structures that the mind builds and is a function of *buddhi*, the spiritual intuition. Wisdom is like space, which contains all things, defines all things, but cannot be identified by any or all of it. It is the nature of Reality. In Krishna's words, 'Having pervaded this universe with a fragment of myself, I remain'. We experience it as the perception of reality. From the unreal lead me to the Real.

For most of us the present need is to move beyond the information gathering tendencies of mind to the deeper function of the mind illumined by *buddhi*. Only this mind reflects the spaciousness, creativity, understanding, freedom, and compassion that characterize an inspired life.

From time to time we encounter the term 'a vicious cycle' which refers to the tendency for unintelligent action to produce undesired reactions in a closed cycle. The most prominent example of this process is found in the concept of *samsara*, often depicted as a wheel of

repetitive birth, sickness, old age, death, and rebirth. In our approach to understanding, the same principle applies, except that it could be more accurately called 'a virtuous cycle'.

Compassionate and loving acts evoke a response from our higher nature, illuminating our hearts and minds which in turn allows us to act with deeper

awareness and discrimination. The self initiated process of continually bringing ourselves into the presence of those thoughts and emotions coloured by love, is inspired living—a process that necessarily results in the up-welling of synthetic vision, global awareness, all embracing comprehension, and sense of unity that we call understanding.



## THE NASCENT MIND

**Mr R. C. Tampi**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 29.12.2013)*

Over a hundred years ago, when the scientists refused to recognize life even in plants, H. P. Blavatsky declared that there is no inert or blind matter. She proclaimed categorically that there is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience Intelligence in the universe and throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Cosmos. Consciousness is said to be primary and it forms the ground of all existence. More and more scientists have started echoing the same truth. While the word consciousness was once anathema to science, the century that followed found growing number of scientists keenly interested in researches to unravel the mystery of consciousness. Sir Arthur S Eddington, astronomer, physicist and the earliest exponent of the Theory of Relativity, sums up the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century thus:

Modern physics has eliminated the notion of substance. Mind is the

first and the most direct thing in our experience. I regard consciousness as fundamental; I regard matter as a derivative from consciousness.

The unitary nature of consciousness is affirmed by the Austrian physicist and Nobel laureate, Ervin Schroedinger's assertion that consciousness is a singular, the plural of which is not known.

Consciousness is marked by sensitiveness. From the minerals and metals through plants and animals to man and beyond, everything exhibits ever increasing sensitiveness of consciousness. That is what evolution implies.

Man is an entity of consciousness exhibiting progressively complex function of consciousness at physical, emotional, mental and supra-mental levels. The most important function of consciousness is as a mirror reflecting everything which enters its field. In its purest nature it is 'negative'. When

it is uninfluenced by thought it is pure sensitiveness. When there is choice exerted by will, it becomes positive. Consciousness produces impressions which last. Thought produces images, either pleasant or unpleasant, which remain as memory. When one wants something, the image of the thing wanted is the object of consciousness. The consciousness which wants it is the subject. It becomes the centre or the sense of 'I', which is strengthened by repetition. The centre, 'I', exists only when there is desire or wanting. The continuance of the process results in the sense of

attachment which is automatic. The way to undo it is constant attention to what goes on within. It is also the way to know oneself.

Habitual interference of the mind by thought, unattended by attention there and then, leaves the consciousness distorted. Alacrity and alertness can restore its pure sensitiveness. A nascent mind is one that is alive and awake. The dewdrops in a clear morning reflect the dazzling glory of the sun. Likewise, the clear and pure consciousness, which is sensitiveness itself, mirrors the radiance from beyond it and illumines the mind.



## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### 'Music of the Spheres'

The solo violin was the prelude to the Western Classical Music Concert held on 27 December 2013 in the evening. The delegates were asked to meditate *with* the musicians. A probe 'Voyager' that was sent into space in 1977 included music from the composer Johann Sebastian Bach, such is the genius of his music. Anwar M. Alam, on the violin, made the music of this 17th century composer come alive at the Adyar Theatre.

Anwar was accompanied by a wonderful pianist, Anil Srinivasan, who hails from Chennai. What a wonderful light touch! His fingers were flying over the keys! He was able to tell the Tamil speaking audience all about this wonderful music in their language.

Anwar is from Cologne in Germany and is now based in Munich. Anil is well-known in the Tamil Nadu region but often performs abroad. The performers played more music from Bach and then asked us to imagine the swan — 'The swan is blessed. . . . It can fly in the air, swim in the river and yet walk on the land also.' It is revered both in the West and other traditions. We heard this swan in the beautiful music of the French Composer Camille Saint-Saëns. Then we were taken to Hungary for a lively Gypsy dance — *Csárdás* by Vittorio Monti!

Anwar and Anil explained to the audience a special musical scale inspired by *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, 'Voice of Nature' also known as Music of the Spheres. The

correspondences between the Music of the Spheres, the ragas of Indian music, the chords and scales in western music were explained and a piece composed by Anwar was played. The finale was a really exquisite piece

called Maitreya song based on the Maitreya mantra. The audience enjoyed the ambience and meditative quality of the music played without using any amplification in the quiet Adyar evening.

## THE VASANTA PRESS

During the early years of the Society, the printing and binding of books was not done in Adyar, but ten kilometers away, in the heart of Madras city (now Chennai). Colonel Olcott would drive in on an old horse-drawn cart and spend hours in a stuffy office reading proofs and checking publication material; C. W. Leadbeater often walked the distance to and fro. Therefore, a hand-press was hired and installed in 1907 in a room in TS Adyar to print some smaller works. The next year, Annie Besant bought it, along with a small printing machine; and in 1909 she established a Press just outside the Adyar estate, with equipment brought over from England, for the work of printing her celebrated newspaper *New India*. She bequeathed the Press to the Society and it was named in her honour as Vasanta Press (Vasanta being regarded as an Indian equivalent of Besant). Since then, it has been continuously printing Theosophical literature.

In 1971 the Vasanta Press moved to a fine new building in Besant Gardens, with well-designed facilities for staff and modern printing equipment. The Vasanta Press prints all the publi-

cations of the TPH, the Adyar Library and Research Centre, and allied organizations. Its professional performance is of such quality that the first prize for excellence in printing was awarded to it in 1987 by the All India Printer's Conference.

The work of the Vasanta Press, especially the technical side, has been competently overseen by Mr V. Gopalan who has been working there for more than 55 years. Other long term staff are a senior Offset Printer, Mr Kumaresan who has been working for 50 years, Mr Gnanasekaran, Assistant Offset Printer, for 40 years, Mr S. Chandrasekaran, Platemaker, for 40 years, Mr N. Raghupati who does many other duties such as composing and pasting negatives and Mrs Geetha R. helping with secretarial work for the last eight years. A lot of work is done to publish the various magazines and journals, reprints, new editions, colourful book-jackets and other printing jobs. Since its inception there have been many dedicated Theosophists who have served as Managers of the Vasanta Press. We often forget the work done behind the scenes to keep an organization functioning smoothly and effectively.

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