

On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

The Two Worlds: Māyā and Light

One of the statements in *The Mahatma Letters* refers to their world being different from the human world, our world. This by itself is a very big subject. It becomes easier for us to understand if we think for example of a person who has been blind from birth. He cannot see all the things that we see, the beauty of the earth, the colours of the sky, nothing of that. But he or she still perceives sounds, smells, taste and so on, and he experiences the world in a completely different way from us. And there is no way of conveying to him the experiences which we feel, which we go through, because we have eyesight.

Similarly we can take the example of various creatures, animals, birds and so on who live in their own world. In their world there is very little of reasoning and all the experiences which have to do with reasoning in the human life, have no meaning for them. The human being receives affection from them but they cannot understand most of the human experience. And the human being, similarly, cannot understand them wholly because they live by instinct, which is a different kind of awareness from reasoning. By analogy we can try to understand that there may be people who

lead a life which is very different from ours. Their world is not the same as our world, because what is essential and vital in Their world is not important in our world. What seems important to us has no relevance at all to the world in which They live.

Let us consider some points which will perhaps indicate the enormous difference between the world of illusion or *māyā* in which we live and the world of Mahatmas. In the human world, time is very important; in the modern world, much more than in the ancient world. All our organizations and institutions depend on time to function, and if human beings were not conscious of time, these organizations would collapse. But that is only at the outer level.

This illusion of time makes us psychologically face the world in a certain way. The first rule in *Light on the Path* is: 'Kill out ambition.' Ambition exists only because we are under the control of time. Ambition is the desire for achievement; to get something done within a certain time.

Everything in Nature grows and exists and dies according to the dictates of Nature. A child is born and you do not have to do anything about it growing. You

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plant a seed and if the conditions are right it sprouts, becomes a little seedling and then maybe a big tree; it bears flowers and fruits; all this happens by itself.

One can give numerous examples of how expansion takes place, not only through physical growth, but the growth of faculties. Each human being has extraordinary faculties, not only the faculty of reasoning but the faculties which awaken the sense of beauty in him, make him aware of peace, and so on.

These faculties exist in the human being; they have grown into the human consciousness by themselves. But we do not accept that growth, expansion and all that is connected with that can come by themselves. Because of the sense of time, we feel that within our particular lifetime, we must reach somewhere, get something and so on.

And time is an illusion. Time passes differently if you are happy, and in another way if you are in distress. If you are standing in a queue, the time passes very slowly. If you have reached the top of the queue, then time does not go so slowly.

So we see that this has something to do with our desire. If you are at the back of the queue, and you want very badly to be in front, time goes very slowly. But if you are at the top of the queue, then you are not conscious that time is going slowly.

This was perhaps the reason why Krishnamurti made such statements as: 'Desire is time.' And ambition is a kind of desire. It is intense desire. And ambition produces all kinds of difficulties in

relationships. The wars that have taken place in the world and caused misery for millions of people are the products of ambition in the human mind. Ambition makes people want more and more things to satisfy them. We may be ambitious about small things or apparently great things. We may be ambitious to derive spiritual satisfaction, or intellectual satisfaction, not only sensory satisfaction. But it is all the same thing. It is caused by the feeling of the desire for achievement in this lifetime, or even within one part of a lifetime.

Animals do not have ambition, because they have no time-sense. Unlike human beings, they live freely and spontaneously and they do not want other animals to recognize that they have gone ahead more than their friends.

But the ambitious human being wants the whole world to know that he has done better than others. Part of the satisfaction that ambition gives is comparing oneself with everybody else. I have run faster than everybody else and I have got the Olympic gold medal. But the animal runs very fast, unconsciously, not trying to impress anybody else. And competition in this world is the source of enormous evil. In one of the essays of Madame Blavatsky, printed in the booklet *Practical Occultism*, she points out how competition in the modern world is the source of evil.

All this is part of the world in which the illusion of time is strong. Ambition, desire, achievement, all these are expressive of the human mind being under the illusion of time. But in the Master's

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world, this sense of time does not oppress any of Them. The Masters know how to wait for things to grow according to the flow of Nature.

Sometimes people ask: 'Why don't they intervene, and put things right? Can't they remove quickly some of the bad characteristics in the human being?' This is like saying, why is the small plant not a big tree? If we are not thinking in terms of time, we will just be watching the plant growing into a tree. We will realize that what we call a bad man will slowly become a good man and we do not have to force him, model him, change him, all those things that human beings want to do.

So what we call patience is one of the great characteristics which prevails in that world of light, which is the Masters' world. They know what has happened and what will happen, because everything already exists in eternity. We are imprisoned in time, psychologically. They live in the eternal.

In *Light on the Path*, this contrast between that world of light and the world of illusion has not been explained. Four times we are told: 'Live in the eternal.' And from that eternal point of view all the activities, particularly the psychological changes and attitudes, which exist in the human being, based on time, are false. That is why it is *māyā*.

The Future depends on the Present

From the *Compassionate Friend* of the Beauty Without Cruelty organization we understand that the only all-Vegan

Supermarket in Europe is in Dortmund, Germany. It occupies more than a hundred square metres in the centre of the city, which is important, because it has become a large marketing centre. The store, we are told, is offering a variety of food to a numerous clientele. The use of soya spices and other supplements has made it possible to stack the shelves with about one thousand five hundred products. The flow of customers reaches up to a hundred and fifty per day. And this is growing, which is very encouraging.

The world is disproportionately divided because people either belong to the large number who seek more and more, or the few who are conscious of the problem which will undoubtedly arise in the future because of this tendency. The world is in general greedy. But the profits go to the rich and others have merely to look on.

The minority are doing their best to remedy the situation. In America, the number of vegetarians and vegans is growing, not because all of them are concerned with the condition of the poor victims, the animals and birds, but mainly out of fear about the future. Land is being grabbed, as in Brazil, where huge areas of the vast Brazilian forest are being destroyed in order to create farms. The profits will no doubt go to the very rich.

There is need for people to wake up to facts, because only facts will convince them that we are going to face a tremendous problem unless a change is made. The disposal of the vast number of

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animals kept impounded is itself a great danger, because it is polluting the environment, creating disease and so on.

Britain is the only country which is conscious to some extent of the way human beings are using animals for gastronomic pleasure. In about five years most of the animals now in captivity will be free to walk around. This will make a major difference to them. In the continent of Europe they have strict rules about animals in captivity, but this effort seems to be not so successful because large companies which are producing animal products are merely transferring them to countries like India, where hardly any rules exist to protect them.

Global realization of the problems involved and quick action in the right direction are called for. Any movement working for protection of living creatures, and aware of the merit of not using animals for food, is urgently needed.

What is Theosophy?

It has become common nowadays to use the word 'Theosophy' for whatever one understands for the time being by that word. So it is becoming, like the word 'religion' a word which denotes almost anything that the user means. C. Jinarājadāsa wrote in 1941:

The word is of course now used by all, including the public, as a label to describe a set of ideas held by a body of people who profess (so thinks the public) a new faith.

He also points out that in the early days of the Society, the word 'Theosophy' appears very rarely as the designation of the teachings which the Mahatmas offered, 'merely a few times in their letters'. In fact, in the extensive letters of two of the Masters of the Wisdom, compiled by Mr Barker, the word appears seven times.

But it is clear, as we read the letters of the Adepts, that it is not the name that matters, but truths and principles which are eternal and unchanging, whatever label is given to them in successive civilizations.

We are asked to take into consideration the fact that the Theosophical Society itself is a concept which has undergone many changes in its chequered career. In the Constitution of the Society there is no mention of the word 'Theosophy'; and there is *no official definition* of what is Theosophy. So every member can say what Theosophy is or is not.

It is very important that we realize that the work of the Society is to establish a Universal Brotherhood, not to proclaim what is Theosophy. ✧