



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

The greatest obstacle on the Path

It may be important for us to realize that the ego sense, compared to all others, is the greatest obstacle on the spiritual path. The Buddhist teachers have therefore given emphasis to becoming free of this sense of 'I'-ness. False, because the I's importance is not actual, it is imaginary; the mind concocts it for its own satisfaction. In Buddhist literature they mention various fetters which bind a person down and prevent him from proceeding ahead. If we consider those fetters, and go into them carefully, we will find that they are connected with the ego-problem. Take for example, the fetter which is doubt, which is a problem on the path. What is the basis of doubt?

The path of forthgoing is greater immersion in materiality, a belief in the things of material value which will bring benefit to oneself, to one's family, etc. But, the way is utterly different, for it is the realization, very dim in the beginning, but clearer and clearer as one proceeds, that these material aims will not bring about one's welfare or anybody's welfare. If there is doubt, a person is not sure whether he really wants to shed the values of the material life and proceed towards something higher, or to see whether the

spiritual life suits him or not. He will continue to live in the material sense. Most people want to reconcile impossibly contradictory things — serve God and Mammon at the same time. But this is impossible. They are cast into situations where they are uncertain whether to do this or to do that and doubt arises about following inclinations towards material things. What will happen to me after death? A cloud arises about this. That is why many people feel afraid before they are going to die, or as they are aging. What will happen to me? Everything is dark, we do not really know. We read books about the after-death state, but we have doubts about that. How far are these authors and speakers correct? I do not really know. So doubt and confusion are in the mind.

Doubt enters the mind about the spiritual life also. People say that you will experience more real happiness, and get benefits of a different order, etc., but the mind is not sure about that. Are these just promises, or is this way really beneficial? Is it nothing but egoistic desire? I want to be safe, I want to be sure. If I am following the material path I want to be sure that after my body dies I will be all right, not be cast into hell. Fortunately, very few

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people believe in hell nowadays. People may wonder what will happen to them, so there is uncertainty which is based on 'What will happen to me?'

The fanatics and fundamentalists do not really know the truth of what they assert usually with much vengeance, what they fight for, and what they will shed blood for. They pretend to themselves that they speak the truth, because the priest or scripture says so. They too are seeking security for the 'me'. Like a person who clings to a piece of wood when he is drowning, he will cling to any belief, any set of ideas, which will give him the greatest assurance that he will be right.

So both doubt and certainty are said to be fetters on the path, but they are not explained. If we explore the question, we see that they both spring from the desire of the egoistic mind to find what is convenient. Is there a state which is neither certainty nor doubt, these being the two sides of the razor's edge? There is a way between the two, and all that is between these sorts of dilemmas are what we can regard as part of that way. In between is the safe way, which is what we have in the 'Golden Stairs' — the Open Mind.

The Open Mind

Can we keep the mind not only open intellectually, but open to intuitive knowledge? That is much more difficult. This means that we must be patient, go on observing, studying life's processes, studying not only from books, but actually looking at the movements of life and trying to understand what they are. Unless

my mind is open, I may believe that I am not egoistical when I am, or in a particular situation if my ego thrusts itself forward, I am unaware of it, because I do not practise true mindfulness. I am not objectively and impartially watching.

If I am watching then I begin to see more and more. Watching comes to a stop when you arrive at a conclusion, or when you are stuck with the idea that you must come to a conclusion. But to live without wanting to arrive at conclusions means to have a balanced position. Because the balance is very quickly lost it is like a razor's edge.

To see the ego in action we must be aware of the nature of relationships, not only one's own relationships with people, but relationship with ideas, objects or past traditions, and also become aware of the nature of relationships in general. If we try to understand when other people have a problem, we come to know that ultimately the problem is in the person's own mind. A lady, who has been a member of the Theosophical Society for many years, studied theosophical books, tried to interest other people in them, and so on, lost a near relative. What was her reaction? A highly disturbed mind, with a sense of loneliness and grief, wanting to know where the relative was, what she was doing and so on. The whole mind was in a turmoil.

You find the same thing when two people quarrel. They try to convince others that the other person was wrong. Why should you convince others that the other person was wrong? Why should you

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convince others if you are certain? When you watch life, particularly human action without judging anyone, you will often find ego concepts connected with sorrow, agitation or whatever. If action is not serene, balanced, benevolent, then we can be sure the ego is in it. But the problem is that when we find the condition in our own mind, we quickly conclude that it is not so. It is only when it happens to other people that we see the fault. But suppose we continue to watch, perhaps we will be able to recognize the egoistic impulse behind all this.

When I get angry, when I say something which is not really kind, when I feel offended over some trifling little thing, or irritated, proud, etc., when I want to talk too much, and thrust my ideas upon other people — when the numerous situations of life are seen without condemnation of anything, we may observe the truth about it. Perhaps we see that the ego is there all the time, either lying low or ready to come into action. That is the first step to see for ourselves. That is why they say that from the beginning of the path, right up to the end, discrimination must be practised.

We practise only by watchfulness, which must be totally objective. Let us say as an example, I am a person of high status (even in a small situation somebody can think his status is higher than that of others). All this is just imagination, is it not? Is there actually a thing called 'I'? It is just a physiological feeling. We come to a certain conclusion about ourselves; it is nothing more than that. Some people have said that it is a thought form that we

create. Of course it becomes a strong thought form, very difficult to demolish. But first we must start by not adding bricks to this mental connection. When the Buddha emerged out of his illumination, it is said that he spoke some verses. Whether he spoke, we do not know, but tradition says that he knew he had come out of the prison, and he had found out who is the builder of the prison. Obviously it is a long course which has to be trodden, but we have to work persistently at it, because as long as we remain in the prison-house that we make for ourselves, which is entirely constructed by thought, we are not free to move on. It obstructs one in every way.

To repeat Annie Besant's words, a sense of spirituality is not to feel separate from anything else. Now 'I' does the opposite. If you are inside the prison and everybody else is outside, you are all the time separate. So the prison walls around oneself have to be broken down. One cannot enter Nirvāna, that state of profound, unbroken bliss by desiring it, or by doing all kinds of other things; you have to put out the fire of ambition, desire, illusion, lust, and so on. First of all, put out the fire by not adding fuel to it. If you stop feeding it then it will die down by itself. That is what we all have to do in daily life, in all our relationships. Whether the ego is in subtle form or in definite outline, recognize it as a false creation of the mind. HPB said 'the mind is not your mind or my mind'. The impure mind is working all over the world — in your mind, my mind, in everybody's mind. See

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how that impure mind, which is the egoistic mind, operates. If we see that the problem is inside us, then we can free ourselves of it. So this must be our constant endeavour, if we are to bring about a state of goodness, calmness, peace and all that is blessed in life.

Let us learn to be attentive

The centenary of the book *At the Feet of the Master* brings to our attention many things which have to do with the Path, although this may seem like an unreasonable remark I am making. But everything that we encounter helps the Path or hinders it. All great books have a beneficial value, because what they have to say can be looked at from different points of view. Anyhow, taking *At the Feet of the Master* as an example, we know that there are what we may regard as important factors, but which are not so in fact. For instance our attitude to a person because he belongs to a particular religion, a rich or poor man, educated or uneducated and so on, appear to matter at least to some extent; but they may matter much more than we give them credit for, because all the small things of life are part of a situation on the way we are proceeding forward.

If we take the first of the qualifications, discrimination, it has many applications. This book cannot list them all, of course. We have to see for ourselves where the right and wrong, the useful or the not so

useful belong and this little book gives some examples. We have to remain awake and see that we do not fall short of perceptiveness, of what makes life more spiritual. A person may say something which you think applies to yourself, but maybe he was not in a good mood, or he was not well. Each soul has its own problems. This is true of all the qualities mentioned. Those virtues which we have to absorb though they are not mentioned in the little book are many and make us aware of the right kind of action.

We can take perhaps one other example, that is under the heading of love. Love is not something that we should feel only for our family and friends, or even for all of humanity. It is a quality that should be like a flame burning brightly inside us, so we feel equally the beauty of life even in the smallest creature and in those things that we do not appreciate as living beings, including the earth, the stones and many objects to which we usually give no attention. It is said that there is a rock on the way from the Manor to the beach in Sydney and it feels joy or indifference, depending on the persons who notice it. This may be the case with all things in nature; they respond when we express our feelings of joy or whatever as we pass by. So perhaps, this little book which brings to our attention the whole of life, is the reason why it has continued to be a bestseller, influencing hearts and minds in unknown ways. ✧

Learn to distinguish the God in everyone and everything.

J. Krishnamurti

All is Brahman

BHUPENDRA R. VORA

METAPHYSICS or Brahma Vidyā has been considered, since ancient times, as the Supreme Science, the foundation of all other sciences. This Brahma Vidyā or Theosophy as it is now known, postulates that there is an Infinite and Eternal Principle that is the rootless root of all manifestation. Echoing similar sentiments both the *Mundaka* and *Brahma Upanishad-s* refer to this science as the basis of all sciences. It is on the principles of this science that other sciences stand securely, and it is by that alone that they can be correlated. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa, signifying the Supreme consciousness, states:

Of created things I am the beginning and the end and also the middle, O Arjuna. Of all the sciences I am the Science of the Self. (X.32)

In *The Secret Doctrine* this principle has been described as the substratum of the manifested Universe. It is the One Subjective Reality, the underlying principle behind the manifold objective world. In the first fundamental proposition it has been described as ‘An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable

Principle on which all speculation is impossible since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression’. It is beyond the range and reach of thought. This One Absolute Reality is the rootless root of all that was, is or ever shall be. There is therefore one single holistic source for the entire Universe.

The *Bhagavadgītā* symbolically describes this Reality as the Aśvattha tree with roots above and the branches below. Being subtler than time and being the cause, eternal and great, Brahman the unmanifest, that is endowed with the power of māyā is said to be above. That Brahman is the root of this tree of transmigrating life (XV.1).

The physicist David Bohm postulates that the world is an unbroken wholeness in flowing movement. Whilst there is a great diversity of forms, these are derived from the larger whole. He states that each manifested form, whether it is an undersea current, a stone or a subatomic particle, is a separate whole. He states further, that each is only a relatively separate or autonomous ‘subtotality’, whose stability derives not from its

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separateness, but from the movement of the whole. *The Light of Asia* refers to the movement of stars and planets in a circular movement around a centre. Star systems and galaxies are all subject to this movement in greater and greater circles.

Therefore the Theosophical Society's principle of Universal Brotherhood is not merely an ideal to be worked for at the outer level, but a fact of the oneness of life at the subjective level of being. It is the acceptance of the One Life manifesting itself in the innumerable species of nature with differing forms and levels of manifestation of consciousness. For instance the manifestation of this life may vary in an ant or an elephant but each is endowed with cognitive senses and intelligence. There is also a symbiotic relationship between life in the different species and variety of expressions.

The great sage Śrī Ramana Maharshi was once approached by a person who desired to be of service to others. When he told the Maharshi of his desire, the poignant reply came 'Where is the other?' The Self is to be seen in all and therefore there is no duality. However, the veils of materiality cause the illusion of separateness and the ego accentuates itself in 'I-ness'.

Śrī Ramana suggests an enquiry into the self. When the question 'Who am I?' is delved into in the depths of one's being all the accretions arising from the cognitive senses and the mind fall away and there remains only the awareness of the One indivisible consciousness. It is a state of 'Sat-Cit-Ānanda'.

In that state there is no other.

The repositories of wisdom, the Upanishad-s, have much to say about the life principle that is the substratum of the Universe. There is the story of the sage who sent his son Śvetaketu to the hermitage of an enlightened master to learn. He learnt everything that could be learnt, memorized the Veda-s, and all the sciences. When there was nothing left to teach, the Master said: 'You have known all that can be taught. Now you can go back.' But on returning home he was asked by his father, a learned sage himself, the question: 'Have you learned that, by learning which, there is no need to learn anything more? Have you known that, by knowing which, all suffering ceases? Have you been taught that which cannot be taught?'

The learning of the material sciences of the objective world was not adequate to understand the spiritual science of the subjective world. A totally different journey had to be started by the aspirant. That which had been learnt had to be unlearned in order to experience the Real. His Guru on seeing the pupil return for the true knowledge, asked him to take his one hundred cows to the forest and return when there were a thousand. This meant that the aspirant was expected to spend a considerable period of time alone with Nature to realize the supreme wisdom.

It was only when he lived in total harmony with Nature for a considerable period of time that the outer accretions arising from the senses and the mind fell off. The self dissolved and the light of

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wisdom shone on his face. He experienced Brahman in the blue skies, in the cows, in the grazing fields, in the flying birds and in the flowing river.

The poet William Blake describes this quest in the following words:

To see a World in a grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.

When there is at-one-ment with all life in its variety of expressions, then a larger perception of the Real is experienced. It was this experience that Śvetaketu had. He intuited the life of Brahman in everything around him and was in harmony with it. Our present mode of living alienates us from the harmony of Nature.

Much of the scientific investigation and enquiry in recent times, into the nature of things, borders on the spiritual or metaphysical aspects. Professor Jagdish Chandra Bose carried out investigations and proved that the so-called ‘inorganic matter’ is responsive to stimulus. He proved further that the response to stimuli is identical in metals, vegetables, animals and man. The response to stimuli was excitement, fatigue, depression, etc. The consciousness within these manifestations responded according to the limits of its forms and expressions. It has also been proved conclusively that plants respond positively to music with something akin to joy. Theosophical teaching states that there is no dead or blind matter and that consciousness pervades everything in this manifested

world, from tiny infusoria to a distant star system, and to the totality of existence.

The objective world is a play of spirit and matter. In the *Bhāgavata Purāna* are many stories on the life of Kṛṣṇa. One story is told about Kṛṣṇa assuming many identical forms and dancing simultaneously with several *gopi-s*. This Rāsa dance has a deep symbolism. It portrays the play of Puruṣa and Prakṛti or spirit and matter — One Consciousness in play with myriads of forms in this manifested world. The great mystic, Guru Nanak, expresses wonderment and amazement at the multiplicity and beauty of this life in his compositions.

This dance of consciousness can be seen in the movement of the stars and the ebb and tide of the waves as well as everything else in nature. It is also the dance of the electrons and protons within the atom.

This Reality has been stated to be ‘beyond the range and reach of thought’. *The Light of Asia* describes it beautifully in the following words:

OM, Amitaya! measure not with words
Th’ Immeasurable; nor sink the string
of thought
Into the fathomless. Who asks doth err,
Who answers, errs. Say nought!

The physicist Robert Oppenheimer in discussing the science of particles states that the position of the electron within the atom cannot be determined with any certainty. It would be difficult to say whether it is in a certain position or it is not or whether it is at rest or in motion.

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This paradoxical thought is echoed in the *Íśa Upanishad* that defines consciousness in the following words:

That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That also is Outside all this.

Consequently occult philosophy has described this Reality as beyond the range and reach of thought. Sages of Vedic times described it by a process of negation or ‘*neti-neti-neti*’, meaning it is not this, it is not this, it is not this. Paradoxically it was also described as ‘*iti-iti-iti*’ meaning it is this, it is this, it is this. Both statements could be termed justifiable in their own ways.

In *The Secret Doctrine* Brahman has been described as the unchanging, pure, undecaying supreme Root, the ‘One true Existence, Pāramārthika’ (ultimate meaning). It is the rootless Root, of all that was, is and shall be. In the Mahatma Letters the Mahatma KH states: ‘When we speak of our One Life we also say that it penetrates, nay is the essence of every atom of matter; and that therefore it not only has correspondence with matter but has all its properties likewise, etc. — hence it is material, is matter itself’ (*Mahatma Letters*, Letter no. 10, 3rd edn).

The current interest of physicists is the conditions that prevailed at the time of the coming into being of the Universe or the ‘Big Bang’. The Hadron Collider located between Switzerland and France is expected to throw some light on some fundamental questions in physics. Scientists are hoping to get answers to questions

on the ultimate building blocks of the universe as well as theories of electromagnetism, strong nuclear force and the weak nuclear force. Is there a single unified force of which these are manifestations? This is the quest of science, to search for the conditions that prevailed at the time of the birth of the Universe.

The scientific theory of the coming into existence of the Universe, from a point no bigger than a pinhead, is very similar to the occult teaching of the point of differentiation, appearing within the circle of manifestation. In the *Śiva-sūtra-s* this point has been described as the ‘Śakti-chakra.’ It is this great point or centre, through which potential divine Power descends from the unmanifest into the realm of the manifest. Madame Blavatsky describes this power as having a ‘Centre everywhere and circumference nowhere’.

In her book *A Study in Consciousness* Dr Annie Besant reveals how this One Life gradually unfolds itself from the inner realms into the various planes of existence. This Life sequentially occupies the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. The intricacy of manifestation, into the amazingly complex forms in nature, reveals the work of a great intelligence.

The entire Cosmos is creation in motion. There is a grand cosmic drama, in which the dance of Brahman is manifested, from the microcosmic level to the macrocosmic level. In the words of *The Light of Asia*:

Before beginning, and without an end,
As space eternal and as surety sure,

All is Brahman

Is fixed a Power divine which moves to
good,
Only its laws endure.

Theosophy provides a deep insight into the nature of this reality and a comprehensive plan of evolution. The three fundamental propositions throw light on the nature of Parabrahman and its manifestation in the objective world. Its propositions on the subject of the Yuga-s and the Laws of Karma and reincarnation are stupendous. Similarly the propositions

on the subject of human evolution are very revealing. They show the painstaking efforts of Nature to perfect all the species of life in a cyclic process that leads to higher and higher levels of perfection and goodness. The light of this wisdom has begun to shine in the material sciences.

There is now an emerging world view of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life and the working of the Law of Causality. ✧

We are like waves in the ocean; the wave is the ocean, and yet not the ocean. There is not any part of the wave of which you cannot say, 'it is the ocean'. The name 'ocean' applies to the wave and equally to every other part of the ocean, and yet it is separate from the ocean. So in this infinite ocean of existence we are like wavelets; at the same time, when we want really to grasp ourselves we cannot; we have become the infinite.

Swami Vivekananda

Why is there a Theosophical Society?

FAY VAN IERLANT

IN *The Key to Theosophy*, a book that H. P. Blavatsky wrote in 1889 after she received many requests for more information about Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, we might find some answers to this question. *The Key to Theosophy* is, as the first page indicates: ‘a clear exposition in the form of question and answer’.

One of the questions asked is: ‘Can you attain the “Secret Wisdom” simply by study?’ Part of the answer is:

Ancient Theosophists claimed, and so do the modern, that the Infinite cannot be known by the finite — i.e., sensed by the finite self — but that the divine essence could be communicated to the higher spiritual Self in a state of ecstasy.

And then Mme Blavatsky explains that Plotinus defined *ecstasy* as ‘the liberation of the mind from its finite consciousness, becoming one and identified with the infinite’.

To be able to become one with, and identified with, the infinite by liberating the mind from the finite, might be the essential aim of every religion worthy of its name. But often the infinite is clad in finite ideas and conceptions in

order for the finite mind to understand or believe in it. The infinite is made finite and put down in words, as we see for example in the rules of religions, called dogmas; these dogmas have to be believed. The consequences are that religions with dogmas see themselves as superior to other religions with other dogmas, resulting in blind followers as their flock.

The Founders of the Theosophical Society knew that mankind does not depend on dogmas made by others to suit the finite mind. They brought forward the teaching that a search for the infinite starts with an open mind that can break through its own images and ideas continually and has the courage to question itself again and again. They spoke of the infinite, often hidden or forgotten, and of the Wisdom Religion, eternal and universal, rooted in the infinite. Mme Blavatsky wrote in *The Key to Theosophy* that a member of the Theosophical Society has to undertake the search for the infinite himself. The Society cannot do that for him; he has to search for and discover his own spiritual possibilities as the third Object of the Society indicates: ‘To investigate unexplained laws of Nature

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and the powers latent in man'. The search we speak about is also called the search for Truth, the infinite Truth behind the finite phenomenal world.

In her booklet, *No Other Path to Go*, Radha Burnier, the international President of the Theosophical Society writes:

Every realization of truth, a partial realization though it may be, has to be tested by observation and experience, as otherwise it might prove to be illusory, or empty thought based on false premises.

Discernment seems to be very important here, as it means to be able to see the actual truth in its true light, and to be able to recognize emotional truths, which can lead to all kinds of negative thought-forms not having anything to do with the real truth. This indicates that the search lies in the human mind. The constantly reacting mind can change into a witnessing mind, 'choiceless awareness' as Krishnamurti called it — without attractions and repulsions, when all the reactive faculties have disappeared and one sees the cause in the effect.

The Founders of the Theosophical Society realized that the founding of a Society with the purpose of spreading these teachings of ancient wisdom was not without risks. It depended on the different states of consciousness possible in the receivers of the teachings and in those who were going to spread it. Again, in *The Key to Theosophy* Mme Blavatsky, when asked if the Society had any prohibitory laws or clauses for Theosophists, explained:

Many, but alas! none of them are enforced. They express the ideal of our organization — but the practical application of such things we are compelled to leave to the discretion of the Fellows themselves. Unfortunately, the state of men's mind in the present century is such that, unless we allow these clauses to remain, so to speak, obsolete, no man or woman would dare to risk joining the Theosophical Society. This is precisely why I feel forced to lay such stress on the difference between true Theosophy and its hard-struggling and well-intentioned, but still unworthy vehicle, the Theosophical Society.

So the aim of Theosophy, as an expression of the ancient wisdom that once united humanity, and the Society with its Fellows, are the means by which that wisdom can again be universally known, depending on the states of consciousness of the Fellows, and that state depends on their continual investigation in the teachings and in their lives.

That continual investigation takes place in the Lodges and during national and international meetings. About the way in which this should be done, we can read in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, written by Mme Blavatsky's Teachers and co-Founders of the Theosophical Society.

In Letter 120 (chron. sequence), Mahatma KH writes about the differences of opinion in the London Lodge in 1884: He explains how, if not respected, differences of opinion can lead to

even the faintest shadow of difference arms seekers after the same truth, otherwise

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earnest and sincere, with the scorpion-whip of hatred against their brothers, equally sincere and earnest. Deluded victims of distorted truth, they forget, or never knew, that discord is the harmony of the Universe. Thus, in the Theosophical Society, each part, as in the glorious *fugues* of the immortal Mozart, ceaselessly chases the other in harmonious discord on the paths of Eternal progress to meet and finally blend at the threshold of the pursued goal into one harmonious whole, the keynote in nature, *Sat*.

Investigating together and going deeper and deeper, breaking through each other's and one's own thinking patterns until they dissolve into new insights, is necessary in all the work of the Theosophical Society. It comes to learning to function out of choiceless awareness, seeing the profoundness of the teachings and of the Society, trying to understand them. The French say: '*Du choque des opinions jaillit la vérité*' — out of the collision of opinions truth wells up. But the truth must be given the chance to well up.

In 1875 when the Theosophical Society was founded, the world still lived with slavery and colonial suppression. Some religions were very powerful. They saw themselves as most important and the only representatives of their God. Courage was needed to present ideas like 'forming a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour', and with 'no religion higher than Truth', and proving it by teachings that

were called heathenish in the West.

Until the Second World War the Society functioned in the midst of what was then called a colonial mentality. Even now many cultures think themselves completely separated from other cultures and that kind of thinking is still the great handicap and blind spot of many nationalities and religions. This kind of fragmented thinking has many negative consequences which we experience nearly every day, everywhere.

The work of the Theosophical Society lies in the opposite field. It is about the unselfish, altruistic ideal that can bring fundamental changes in every country's society. To promote this ideal the Theosophical Society, from the beginning, has published books of perennial wisdom, such as the deep knowledge of the Vedic literature and of Buddhism and other philosophies, published by the Theosophical Publishing Houses. The world-famous Theosophical Library in Adyar was followed up by theosophical libraries all over the world, like the one here in Amsterdam.

If we look around in a non-specialized bookstore today we see many manuscripts about world religions and philosophies, where once only the Bible and the catholic catechism were available and we realize that the Theosophical Society was involved in that great change. Also today, the spreading and publishing of literature of perennial wisdom and an ongoing investigation into that literature is an urgent matter in this world of advertising, consumerism, and entertainment. It might

Why is there a Theosophical Society?

be encouraging to note that a book like *The Science of Yoga, (a commentary in the light of modern thought)* by I. K. Taimni, first published by TPH Adyar in 1961 and a bestseller all over the world, has made it to a sixth edition now, even in Dutch. Creating possibilities for a comparative study of Religion, Philosophy and Science, as expressed in the second Object of the Society is very much needed as segregation still continues.

In relation to this, it is interesting that Mme Blavatsky wrote thus about education in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Children should above all be taught self-reliance, love for all men, altruism, mutual charity, and more than anything else, to think and reason for themselves. We would reduce the purely mechanical work of the memory to an absolute minimum, and devote the time to the development and training of the inner senses, faculties and latent capacities. We would endeavour to deal with each child as a unit, and to educate it so as to produce the most harmonious and equal unfoldment of its powers, in order that its special aptitudes should find their full natural development. We should aim at creating *free* men and

women, free intellectually, free morally, unprejudiced in all respects, and above all things, *unselfish*.

Clearly this statement of Mme Blavatsky does not apply only to children; we might profit by it.

Of course the International Theosophical Centre in Adyar, India, has a crucial role to play in the Theosophical Society, which has as its first Object the forming of a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.

The National Sections are part of the worldwide Theosophical network. They have their Lodges where they can organize discussion groups about the literature that they can make available through their own publishing houses or by translations. Theosophical literature is available at various levels, starting with introductory brochures to books that ask for deep investigation. The idea is that by that investigation, mentioned in the second Object, the unexplained laws in Nature and the powers latent in man are discovered and awakened, according to the third Object, so that finally the nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity can be really understood and come to light. ✧

We love, because He first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

1 John, 4:7-20

Dante — Introducing *The Divine Comedy*

EDI D. BILIMORIA

THE most significant aspects of the poem are: incredibly, but perhaps not surprisingly, its broad consonance and common symbolism with the perennial teachings of both the Western and Eastern esoteric traditions¹ concerning human consciousness, and especially the post-mortem states of the soul journeying through various spheres of being; Ptolemaic cosmology used to depict the nine spheres of *Paradiso*; the role of spiritual guides in assisting the errant soul on the path away from wrongdoing towards virtue; the manner in which the poem has inspired artists and musicians for generations. Space permits us to do some justice only to the first of these; nonetheless, the last will also be mentioned briefly in closing.

Correspondences between the *Divina Commedia* and the Ancient Wisdom

Every ancient exoteric religion taught that the so-called ‘heavens’ are divided into steps or grades of ascending purity and bliss; and the so-called ‘hells’ into steps or grades of increasing purgation or suffering. However the Ancient Wisdom

teaches that the one is not a ‘reward’, nor is the other strictly speaking a punishment. The teaching is simply that as an object immersed in water will, according to Archimedes’ principle, either sink to the bottom, rise to the surface, or remain suspended in a state of neutral buoyancy, by analogous reasoning, each entity, after physical death is drawn to the appropriate sphere of ‘neutral buoyancy’ to which its destiny, character and impulses attract it. It is just the old adage that as a man sows causes — during earthly life — so shall he reap the consequences in his post-mortem existence. Good seed produces good fruit; bad seed, tares. So there is a sphere or circle, with subdivisions, for every degree of development of the soul and it gravitates to that appropriate sphere. Thus after death the soul ‘enters’ an intermediary stage where it is purged of all its sins and the grosser elements are sloughed off. Thereafter, cleansed, it rises to a realm of bliss, or in the case of extreme evil committed during earthly life, sinks into unalloyed misery.

This grand scheme is depicted allegorically in the *Divina Commedia*. The most

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evident connection with the Ancient Wisdom is that the poem is made up of three *canticas*, corresponding with Dante's three journeys: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. Broadly equivalent terms from these esoteric traditions of both the East and West are:

1. *Inferno* corresponding to 'Hell' of exoteric Christianity or Avichi of the Vedāntin-s. The general meaning of Avichi is 'waveless', i.e. having no waves or movement, suggesting utter stagnation or uninterrupted hell. It is of course a generalized term for 'places' of, meaning the state of consciousness pertaining to, evil realizations.

2. *Purgatorio* corresponding to Kāma Loka or desire-world of the Vedāntin-s, Hades of the ancient Greeks, Amenti of the Egyptians or the land of Silent Shadows, Yuh-kai and Gestation of the Tibetan Bardo.²

3. *Paradiso* corresponding with Devachan or 'dwelling of the gods (deva-s)' of the Tibetans, Sukhavati of the Buddhists, Elysian Fields of the Greeks, region of Sekhem³ (Fields of Bliss) of the Egyptians, 'Heaven' of exoteric Christianity, Summerland of Islam.

Next there is the actual journey through these three realms. The genius of Dante was his skill in writing a poem conveying a universal meaning for all mankind through his own experience of 'the particular', namely, his personal experience of characters past and present during his own life. In other words, Dante's encounters in the Beyond are based on a personification and projection of

personalities and characters drawn during his life from three main sources: (a) ancient Roman history, e.g. Virgil, Brutus, Cassius; (b) mythology such as the Cretan legend of Minos who rules the First Circle (Limbo) of *Inferno* and sentences each soul to one of the lower eight circles, and the violent Minotaur who guards the entrance to the Seventh Circle; and (c) recent and contemporary Italian history, including his personal adversaries and friends. This depiction of the Beyond by constant allusions to human affairs makes the work, at one and the same time: a description of the Beyond containing a mystic vision of Divinity with the allegorical progress of the individual soul to the Divine towards which it strives; as well as a portrayal of terrestrial life, with the constant reminder that experiences in the Beyond are the reverse side of the coin, being the deserved consequences of causes set out during earthly life, as for example, Francesca da Rimini tells Dante in the Second Circle of Hell how she and Paolo Malatesta, her brother-in-law, committed adultery and so died a violent death at the hands of her husband, which tale causes Dante to faint (Canto V). A more general example from the path of moral decline is the gluttonous who sink to the Third Circle where, guarded by the three-headed monster-dog Cerberus, guardian of the Underworld, they are forced to lie in mud constantly flailed by cold and filthy rain (Canto VI). The contrary applies equally, for example, to those who did good out of a love for humanity who then ascend to the Third

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Venus Sphere of *Paradiso* (Cantos VIII and IX); and those who gained wisdom in earthly life will inhabit the Fourth Solar Sphere (Cantos X to XIV).

The universal esoteric teaching is that upon physical death the soul 'enters' or is drawn into the vortex of the *kāma-loka*. It is in the *kāma-loka* that the 'second death' takes place after which the human entity, purged of its lower psychic encumbrances and terrestrial passions enters the devachan. The highest regions of the *kāma-loka* blend insensibly into the lowest realms of the devachan; and the grossest regions of the *kāma-loka* blend insensibly into the highest regions of Avichi. After the 'second death' the human monad (spiritual essence of each human being) 'enters', rather rises to Devachan — the 'Heaven-world'. But what becomes of the entity so befouled and weighted that it cannot rise? It sinks into Avichi — the so-called 'hells' and remains there until it is thoroughly purged, until the sin-energy has been completely washed out and exhausted.

Thus the *Divina Commedia* commences with an allegorical depiction of the passage of the soul after physical death. Dante is lost in a dark wood attacked by wild beasts (a lion, a leopard, and a she-wolf) and unable to find the 'straight way' (*diretta via*) to salvation. Realizing that he is degrading himself, that he is falling into a 'deep place' (*basso loco*) where the sun is silent (*l sol tace*), Dante is at last rescued by Virgil after his love Beatrice intercedes on his behalf (Canto II). Then he and Virgil begin

their journey to the underworld.

The allegorical parallels between Dante's journey and the Ancient Wisdom are illustrated by drawing upon the above passage, as a small and arbitrary example. For convenience, these correlations are shown in tabular form on p. 20.

Dante passes through the Gate of Hell, on which is inscribed the famous phrase, '*Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate*' or 'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here'. Then Dante and Virgil reach the ferry that will take them across the river Acheron and to Hell proper. Having survived the depths of Hell, Dante and Virgil ascend out of the gloom, to the Mountain of Purgatory on the far side of the world. Virgil guides Dante through the seven terraces of Purgatory. These correspond to the seven deadly sins, each terrace causing the purging of a particular sin in an appropriate manner.

The ascension of terraces culminates at the summit, which is the Garden of Eden (Cantos XXVIII through XXXIII). From this point on, Beatrice (a woman Dante loved in childhood, and who died in 1290), becomes his second guide and saviour.

After an initial ascension (Canto I), Beatrice guides the pilgrim Dante through the nine spheres of *Paradiso*. These are concentric and spherical, similar to Aristotelian and Ptolemaic cosmology. A soul that has reached *Paradiso* stops at the level applicable to it in the corresponding way that a soul in *Inferno* is consigned to the Circle applicable to his misdeeds.

Symbol and Allegory in the *Divina Commedia* and the Ancient Wisdom

In depicting the allegorical aspect of human nature during earth life and its fate in the afterlife, it is deeply significant that Dante should draw on the metaphor of the Cretan King Minos and the Minotaur. References to these characters provide arguably the strongest allusion to the Ancient Wisdom. The legend is well known, the esoteric meaning perhaps less so. First an outline of the legend germane to this essay: Within the labyrinth at Knossos dwelt the Minotaur, a monster with a human torso and a bull's head, who quickly disposed of anyone wandering in the passages. During those bygone ages, Athens was under the dominance of Crete and one of the obligations imposed upon the ruler of Athens by the Cretan overlord was that he must send a yearly tribute of seven youths and seven maidens to Minos. Theseus, son of Aegeus, king of Athens, was chosen to be the first victim to be devoured by the human-flesh-eating Minotaur. However, Ariadne, the daughter of the king of Crete fell in love with the Athenian youth and, determined to rescue him from certain death, provided him with a sword and skein of thread, which he must unwind as he penetrated the maze while she would hold the other end at the entrance. The prince vanquished the monster and found his way out of the intricate passages by means of the guiding thread.

The interpretation is very much in line with the overall tenor of Dante's passage

through *Inferno* — refer again to the table of correspondences on p. 20. The Labyrinth stands for the arena of earth life into which human beings enter. Not having the clue to escape from the entanglements of life and not being able to attain liberation or union with the Divine, being mortals, they die (they are slain by the Minotaur in the Labyrinth). The fate of mortals is to pass into the Underworld or *Inferno*, where Minos is the judge, very logically stationed by Dante in the First Circle. The judgement meted out by Minos to those who would enter his domain consists of being obliged to re-enter the Labyrinth, signifying a return to wandering and suffering in the maze — only this time the maze is the flip side as the playing out in *Inferno*, rather as *Inferno*, of causes set forth during earthly life. The Minotaur — half animal and half human — represents man's lower nature, namely his self-seeking desire-driven thoughts, which, much of the time seeks to gratify itself through the pleasures of the flesh and so, quite logically, the Minotaur feeds on human flesh. This desire-thought complex usually dominates mortal man's life and is responsible for his becoming more enmeshed in earth life (and subsequent necessary purging of his sins in *Purgatorio*) unless the clue of the guiding thread and someone to hold the end of that thread is made available.

For Dante the guiding thread would appear to be Virgil; the maiden holding the end is Beatrice. It is Virgil who, after all, guides him through the labyrinth or

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the Circles of *Inferno*; then it is Beatrice, the beacon light of love who takes over to guide him onwards and upwards through *Paradiso*.

According to the Ancient Wisdom, the Virgil-Beatrice coupling is the union of the Higher Mind and Spiritual Intuition,

the latter loosely referred to as the Higher Self. As in so many allegories (Dante's poem, Greek legends, Indian drama such as the epic *Rāmāyana*) the Higher Self is portrayed as a maiden, be she Beatrice, Ariadne, Sitā or by any other name.

So we may infer that Dante was well

A Few Correspondences

Allegory in Dante's <i>Divina Commedia</i>	Universal Ancient Wisdom
Dante	Man, the mortal pilgrim-hero striving to become fully God-realized. Comparable examples are Arjuna in the <i>Bhagavadgītā</i> of the <i>Mahābhārata</i> , Theseus in the Cretan legend
Lost in a dark wood	Bewilderment and despair at loss of purpose and direction in life. At a crossroads, not knowing which way to turn
Attacked by wild beasts	Buffeted by the passions, infatuation and conflicting thoughts
Unable to find the straight way	Unable to discern one's allotted path through life
Sun behind mountain	Inner focus and illumination eclipsed by turbulence in the personal life and circumstances
Realizing that he is degrading himself	Whisperings of the conscience — the silent Voice of the Higher Mind, <i>Nous</i>
Rescued by Virgil	Intervention by the Higher Mind, <i>Nous</i> , as parent, in disciplining and reclaiming its child — the recalcitrant personality
Love of Beatrice	The bond between the Monad (spiritual essence of each human being) and its temporary vehicle or personality
Labyrinth	The arena of life where it is all too easy to get lost
Minos	The judge of human deeds
Minotaur	Spiritually unregenerate man or the man under the domination of his sensual and animal nature, untamed by his human qualities

aware of the key of Analogy, in showing lost human beings the results of their misdeeds and at the same time enabling such wandering souls to retrace their footsteps back on to the path of righteousness.

Inspiration of the *Divina Commedia* on Future Generations

The *Divina Commedia* has profoundly moved generations of writers, painters, artists and composers. To mention but a few, we may cite, in the visual arts, Sandro Botticelli's illustrations during the Renaissance, Eugene Delacroix's *Barque of Dante* and William Blake's several watercolour illustrations of the Divine Comedy; then in literature, T. S. Eliot used extracts from the *Inferno* and Betty Ford's *Healing and Hope* which uses Dante's structure as an analogy for the stages of alcoholism; finally in music — the subject closest to my heart,

it would not be possible to close this essay without mentioning one of my favourite pieces of piano writing — Franz Liszt's 'Après une Lecture de Dante: Fantasia Quasi Sonata', written during Liszt's own pilgrimage through Italy with his Beatrice-equivalent, Countess Marie d'Agoult. A masterful rendition of Dante's poem transformed into a tonal tour de force, it has struck Dantian Hellfire into the heart of many a pianist unable to cope with its bravura octaves and other technical demands. One can easily identify musical elements that relate to hell (the famous tritone interval used as an opening figure) and to heaven (the F# tonality). But is it altogether surprising that Liszt, that supreme sinner-saint, philosopher-mystic and poet of the Romantic keyboard should be fired by Dante's magnum opus and transform its essential meaning in the language of musical poetry? ✧

Notes

¹ Also known under various terms such as the Ancient Wisdom, the Perennial Philosophy, the Esoteric Doctrine, *Priscus Sapientia* and Theosophy. They are principally, but by no means limited to, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, Rosicrucianism, *Theosophia* and Kabbalah in the West; and the Stanzas of Dzyan, the Veda-s and Upanishad-s in the East. For consistency we shall use the term 'Ancient Wisdom' throughout. From the huge mass of literature on this subject, we may cite the following three: *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, eds. R. van der Boek and Walter Hanegraaff, State University of New York Press; *Modern Esotericism and Spirituality*, eds. A. Faivre and J. Needleman, Crossroad Publishing Company; Faivre, A., *Access to Western Esotericism*, State University of New York Press.

² From the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*.

³ This term is from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.

The Attitude of the Enquirer

C. W. LEADBEATER

I HAVE received many letters from those who are put in the position of lecturers and teachers of Theosophy, asking how best to meet the constant demands of enquirers for proof of the accuracy of the Theosophical teaching. Another common remark of the enquirer is: 'You have a large literature: I am a busy man. Where am I to begin in all this? Give me the most important part first.'

Instead of writing a number of private letters, I have thought it best to put an answer, once for all, in the pages of the *Adyar Bulletin*, to which later enquirers can be referred.

What should be the attitude of the enquirer towards the wonderful mass of new truth which is put before him in Theosophical teaching? It should be an intelligently receptive attitude — not one of carping criticism on the one hand, nor of blind belief on the other, but of endeavour to understand the different facts as they are presented to him, and to make them his own. In Theosophy we strongly deprecate the attitude of blind belief, for we say that it has been the cause of a vast amount of the evil of the world. On this point the teaching of the Eastern

Masters is emphatic, for they regard superstition as one of the fetters which it is absolutely necessary that a man should cast off before he can hope to make any progress on the occult Path. They also regard doubt as a fetter, but they say that the only way to get rid of doubt is not by blind faith, but by the acquisition of knowledge. It would be quite useless for a man to exchange blind faith in orthodox Christianity for a similar blind faith in those who happened to be writing or speaking on Theosophy. To say: 'Thus saith Madame Blavatsky or Mrs Besant', is after all only a small advance on saying: 'Thus saith St Paul or St John.'

We who live in western countries have a bad heredity behind us in these matters, for the point of view of our forefathers has usually been either the blind faith of the unintelligent and biased person, or the blank and rather militant incredulity of the materialist. We have been too much in the habit of thinking that what does not happen in Europe or America is not worth taking account of, and that nobody outside of ourselves knows anything at all. Many of us have grown up in the midst of the ridiculous theory that there was only

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one religion in the world, and that the vast majority of its inhabitants were 'heathens', whom we had to 'save', and that if we could not do that, they must be left to 'the uncovenanted mercies of God'. It seems incredible that civilized people could ever believe anything so silly, but what I state is actually the fact. When we think that we may have had among our recent ancestors people who were capable of that, we see at once that we are but ill-prepared for the reception of a rational creed.

Again, we have been unfortunate in that we had not even the whole of Christianity, for history shows us that what has been taught to us is only a dismembered fragment of the original form of that religion. Before the Gnostic doctors were cast out, Christianity had a system of philosophy fully equal to that of the other religions, but after their departure it was but a truncated faith. Still its ethics remained to it, and they will be found to be exactly the same as those of the other great world-faiths. In Theosophy we hold that it matters little what a man believes, but much what he does; whether he is kind and noble, just and gentle, pure and true. It may be of interest to western readers to remember that on this subject the teaching of the Christian scripture is exactly the same as that of Theosophy. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew will be found a striking account, said to have been given by the Christ Himself, of what is commonly called the day of Judgement, when all men are to be brought before Him and their final destiny is to be decided according to the answer which they are

able to give to his questions. Remember that, according to the theory, the Christ himself is to be the judge on that occasion, and therefore He can make no mistake as to the procedure. What then are the questions upon the answers to which the future of these men is to depend? From what one hears of modern Christianity one would expect that the first question would be: 'Do you believe in Me?' and the second one: 'Do you attend Church regularly?' The Christ, however, unaccountably forgets to ask either of these questions. He asks: 'Did you feed the hungry, did you give drink to the thirsty, did you clothe the naked, did you visit those who were sick and in prison?' That is to say, 'Were you ordinarily kind and charitable in your relations to your fellow-men?'

And it is according to the answers to those questions that the destiny of the man is decided. So far as He, the Judge, has explained himself, any heathen who had done these things would at once pass into eternal felicity, for He says no single word about belief at all. As regards all these virtues the teachings of all the religions are identical. The daily life of a really good Christian will be found to be identical with that of a really good Buddhist or a really good Hindu. One will call his religious exercises by the name of prayer, while the others call them meditation, but in the nature of them there is little difference. Each enjoins the practice of the same virtues; each reprobates the same vices.

We must clear our minds utterly of the extraordinary theory that a man's religion

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is a question of importance. It depends entirely upon where the man happens to be born. You are, let us say, a Christian, and you cannot conceive it as possible that you could have been anything else; yet if you had been born in an Indian family, you would have belonged just as unquestioningly to the Hindu religion, or to the Buddhist if you had been born in Ceylon or Siam. Therefore we must entirely cast aside the curious prejudice that it is necessary for a man to hold some particular form of religion if he is to obtain final perfection.

On taking up the study of Theosophy it is necessary that we should adopt an entirely new attitude — that we should open the doors of the mind, and learn to treat religion as a matter of common-sense, exactly as we do science. On the one hand we must accept nothing which does not commend itself to us as reasonable, and on the other hand we must not expect proofs of a nature incongruous with the fact which we are considering. It is often impossible to give for psychological problems and theories a demonstration along mathematical lines, or a proof on the physical plane which a man can hold in his hand. The proof of any proposition must be congruous with the nature of the proposition, and consequently the final proof of some of the deepest Theosophical doctrines must lie in the experience of the evolved soul.

A common-sense attitude will enable us to determine whether we can know a certain thing positively, or whether it is necessary to take first what seems to be a

reasonable working hypothesis, and then see how far future experience supports or weakens it. Much of the Theosophical teaching must remain as a hypothesis for each man until he is able to develop powers by which he can see for himself; but in the meantime he may easily acquire practical certainty with regard to it, by weighing it against all other hypotheses and seeing how perfectly it, and it alone, accounts for the observed phenomena of life. This is exactly the ground on which are held a large number of what are commonly called scientific facts.

It is a valuable exercise for the student to think carefully which of his beliefs in ordinary life are really founded upon direct personal knowledge. He believes, for example, that the earth rotates upon its axis; yet all the evidence of his daily life goes to prove exactly the contrary. The ground is stable beneath his feet, and he cannot in any way prove to himself that the sun, moon and stars do not really move above him, exactly as they appear to do. There is proof available of the rotation of the earth. There is the Foucault pendulum experiment and the experiment with the gyroscope. If a man has seen those experiments tried, he knows that the earth rotates; if he has not, he does not know it, but only believes it. He believes it on good evidence, but it is not the evidence of his senses. A reasonable hypothesis is necessary in order to induce a man to work, and here his imagination comes into play. He must be evolved enough to imagine a thing as possible, or he must be able to abstract his ideas and deduce from them

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a working principle, before he can be induced to make an effort towards proving a fact as true. Theosophy presents to the student several working hypotheses which appeal to his reason, and at the same time it promises him success in demonstrating them to be true, if he will do certain things. It tells him that some men have already had success in this demonstration, that they have been able to develop in themselves certain powers which enable them to know that these things are true, and that therefore it is possible for him also to do this, though it does not conceal from him the difficulty of the undertaking.

Theosophy has a considerable literature, but it has no inspired scriptures. We who write books on the various branches of the subject, put before our friends the results of our investigations, and we take every care that what we state shall be scrupulously accurate as far as our knowledge goes; but the model which we set before us when we write is not the sacred scripture but the scientific manual. So far as the western world is concerned, the study of Theosophical subjects is comparatively a new one, although in the East many books have been written in which these matters are expounded; but these oriental books naturally do not approach them from the modern scientific point of view. Our plan in verifying the information originally given to us has been just what was adopted in the beginning of the sciences of chemistry or astronomy — a careful observation of all the phenomena within reach, their tabulation, and the endeavour to deduce from them the

general laws which govern them.

We are then in the position of the early students of a new science, and although, thanks to the information we have received from eastern Teachers, we have already grasped the main outline of our science, our own investigations are constantly adding to our knowledge of its detail, and this fact often makes it necessary for us to modify statements made in the earlier days of the movement, and to amend imperfect or premature generalizations. The details will increase in number and accuracy as the number of those who can make the investigations increases, but the broad outlines of principles which have been given to us will always remain the same.

Our attitude to Theosophy should, I think, be thus characterized:

1. We must not exchange the blind belief in the authority of the Church for an equally blind faith in personal Theosophical teachers.

2. We must preserve an open mind and an intelligently receptive attitude.

3. We should accept as working hypotheses the truths which are given to us, and should set to work to prove them for ourselves.

4. We should realize that this teaching sets before us the scheme of the Logos for his universe, and that the condition of making progress in that universe is to learn the rules of that scheme, and set ourselves to work with them and not against them.

5. We should seek development or progress not for the sake of ourselves,

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but in order that the knowledge we may acquire may be used for the benefit of humanity, and that we may fit ourselves to be the servants of that humanity.

6. We must change absolutely our point of view towards life. When regarding the sorrow and suffering of the world, we must put aside the despairing attitude of the theologian for one of hopefulness, because the teachings fill us with the calm certainty that everything will at last be well.

The Relative Importance of the Truths

Again, Theosophy lays before us a vast mass of new truths with regard to the constitution both of man and of the universe, and also with regard to their past and future. Though the outline is simple the detail is considerable. We have therefore to think in what order we shall consider these truths; what is their relative importance. It seems to me that they group themselves naturally into three great classes: first, the ethical teachings, and the reason for them; second, the explanation of the constitution of man and the planes on which he lives; third, the remainder of the teaching, the great mass of information about planetary chains and earlier races of mankind.

They come thus in order of importance because the knowledge of the ethical teaching and the reason for it is necessary for the daily life of man, because as he learns even a little of it he can instantly proceed to put it into practice. If, having learnt so much, something should occur to prevent him from learning more, he will

still have gained a priceless possession — one which will affect the whole of his future life, not in this world only but in others also.

The second block of information, with regard to the constitution of man and the world in which he lives, is also of great importance to him, as showing him how to do many of the things which the first division of the teaching has commended to him, as showing him also how to be much more useful to his fellow-men than he could be without this knowledge.

The third block of teaching, though keenly interesting, is less directly practical. It has its value; it has a great value; for from the past we may in many cases predict the future, and from it we may learn many a lesson which will be of help to us in that future. At that same time one must admit that a man might be just as loyal a subject, just as good a citizen, and just as useful to his fellow-men if he had never heard about the planetary chains, whereas it is not true that he would be just as good in any of those capacities if he remained ignorant of the first and second of our great classes of truth.

First, the ethics and the reason for them. The ethical teaching of Theosophy is precisely the same as that of any and all of the great religions. There is therefore nothing new for us to learn here; the only difference is that Theosophy gives us a scientific reason for our ethics, which most religions do not. This consideration of the reason for ethical teaching involves a very large block of the Theosophical teaching, for the ultimate reason for all good action

The Attitude of the Enquirer

is that it may be in harmony with the divine plan, the will of the Logos. That we may understand what will be in harmony with it, we must first try to grasp as much as is possible for us of that divine plan itself. This involves the consideration of the nature of God and the method of his working, and also his relation to man. Under this head we must speak of the Logos of our solar system, and the beginnings of that system, of the atom and planes, of the nature, of the formation, constitution and development of man, and of the methods appointed for that development, and the way in which he can hasten it, and of the obstacles which he will find in his way.

Under the second heading we must take up in greater detail the various vehicles of man and their relation to the different planes of nature. We must learn to understand ourselves, in order that we may direct intelligently the complicated machinery of the vehicles. This is an intensely practical consideration for us; we are living upon all these planes now, though most of us do not know it; we are using our mental and astral bodies as bridges to carry to the physical brain the messages from the ego, and to carry back to him in return the information which they obtain from external impacts of all sorts. Unless we understand those bodies we cannot use them to the best advantage, we cannot get out of them all that we might. Apart from the fact of that constant use of the vehicles, we all spend about a third of our lives in the astral body — in a state which we commonly call sleep. After

physical death we enter upon a long life in these higher vehicles, and it becomes once more obvious that the more we know about them the more efficient and the more comfortable will this life be. These higher bodies have their powers and their capacities as well as the physical body. If we understand them we can utilize all these for our own advancement and for the helping of our fellows, so that their study is eminently practical.

The third division is that which treats of the past evolution of man. It deals with the planetary chain of which our earth is a part, with its relation to other chains in the solar system, and with the successive life-waves which have passed over these chains. It takes up the question of the work of the great Official who superintends the formation of each Root Race and its subdivision into branch races. It explains how men come to be at such different levels in life, and accounts for the formation of classes and castes. Although this appears to be less practical than the other kinds, we shall find not only that it is intensely interesting, but that it has its uses as well. It is a remarkable fact that all religions have made it a special point to teach their followers something of the beginnings of the world and of man. In the Jewish scripture you have the extraordinary story of the earlier chapters of the Book of Genesis, which is unfortunately adopted just as it stands by the Christian Church; but each religion has some such story — even those of savage tribes. It is clear therefore that those who found religions must know that this

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information is of great importance for man. Madame Blavatsky has followed in the footsteps of her Teachers in that respect, for the whole of her monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*, is a sermon upon the text of the Stanzas of Dzyan, which give an account of the origin of man and of our system.

The point of first importance is that we should live the life; the second that we should understand our possibilities;

and when we have got so far, we may then take up with advantage the study of past history. In following out thoroughly that first block of teaching, we have arrived at certainty in regard to the rest. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.' The best way to prove to oneself the truth of these Theosophical doctrines is to take them for granted and to live as though they were true; then the proof will soon come. ✧

He was. Taaroa was his name, he stood in the void: no earth, no sky, no men. Taaroa calls to the four corners of the universe. Nothing replies. Alone existing, he changes himself into universe. Taaroa is the light, he is the seed, he is the base, he is the incorruptible. The universe is only the shell of Taaroa. It is he who puts it in motion and brings forth its harmony.

Polynesian Tradition

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

THE shaykh took my hand and led me into the convent. I sat down in the portico, and the shaykh picked up a book and began to read. As is the way of scholars, I could not help wondering what the book was.

The shaykh perceived my thoughts. ‘Abu Sa’id,’ he said, ‘all the hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets were sent to preach one word. They bade the people say, “Allah”, and devote themselves to Him. Those who heard this word by the ear alone let it go out by the other ear; but those who heard it with their souls imprinted it on their souls and repeated it until it penetrated their hearts and souls, and their whole beings became this word. They were made independent of the pronunciation of the word; they were released from the sound of the letters. Having understood the spiritual meaning of this word, they became so absorbed in it that they were no more conscious of their own non-existence.’

Abu Sa’id

Let Go the Ego for Freedom, Peace and Bliss

S. RAMU

ALL of us are concerned with suffering. Ego and suffering are strongly linked. The ego is the cause of suffering and an impediment to a spiritual state of being. A spiritual state of being means a state of liberation or freedom, peace, and bliss or joy. In understanding the problem, there is a hint of the solution. It will be therefore helpful to understand the formation and working of the ego and how it acts as an impediment to the spiritual state.

What distinguishes one organism from another is its level of consciousness. Even though the human being is positioned hierarchically higher amongst the various species because of a higher level of consciousness, it is of no beneficial significance if a dominant ego superimposes itself on such a consciousness. A lower level of consciousness with a less dominant ego may be far less harmful to the world and its living beings than a higher level of consciousness that is suppressed by a dominant ego.

The ego is a peculiar problem in the sense that it exists as the root cause of suffering and yet it does not have real existence! It is a phantom. *It is fictitious but a real problem!* J. Krishnamurti says

that the 'me' to which we cling is fictitious. That may be the root cause of fear, clinging to something that is non-existent. And that 'me' being uncertain of its very existence, in the very depths of one's being, may be the fundamental cause of fear. That does not mean that if you have no 'me' you cannot live in this world. On the contrary!

In recognizing the ego's fictitious nature, it can be made less of a problem. In other words, '*the ego is an activity, not an entity*'. This is an activity of self-preoccupation or self-contraction and to that extent mostly an unconscious or subconscious activity.

Let us look at the influence of the ego on behaviour. My behaviour is the mirror of my ego, or hopefully, its absence. External behavioural patterns based on attachments to notions, beliefs, bias and prejudices; and behaviour marked by intolerance and fear of insecurity are the attributes of the ego. Hence observing our behaviour is helpful, like a doctor keenly observes the symptoms and signs of a disease. When you observe its attributes and their manifestations, you understand the ego.

Mr Ramu is Manager of the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar .

Let Go the Ego for Freedom, Peace and Bliss

The ego's attributes and workings can be elaborated in terms of the internal state also. They are discontentment and the resultant dissatisfaction, restlessness, fear, insecurity, disappointment, hope, hatred, attachment and desire for power and continuity, discord and resultant suffering. The ego can never accept what is and constantly tries to seek something more desirable or to get rid of something else that it views as undesirable. Even if an 'ideal' situation is made available, the ego will create a new ideal and seek to enforce it and thereby create internal conflicts!

The ego is at the centre of much individual human misery as well as of collective problems such as climate change and environmental degradation because these are results of unnecessary human activities driven by the restless ego. This would need further understanding of the way the ego works.

Because the ego is fictitious and hence insecure, the ego thinks compulsively in order to be assured of its 'existence'. Thought is the tool for its security. The chief mechanism of the ego's working is the thought process. The ego puts to work this mechanism to overcome its sense of insecurity and towards the fulfilment of desires and ambitions. The ego and thought cannot be separated. Memory is also a tool of the ego. Another tool is entertainment which keeps the brain cells in a state of excitement. J. Krishnamurti said entertainment is an escape from oneself. The ego's tendency to gratify the brain cells grows by recalling memories of pleasurable past experiences with the

help of thought. The ego's tendency to overcome perceived threats and secure its existence is also through the recall of memories of unpleasant past experiences and threat perceptions. All these happen in the realm of thought, triggered by impressions of past experiences or *samskāra-s*. Therefore we do not have to fight *for* freedom of thought but we must seek freedom *from* thoughts. J. Krishnamurti said that freedom of thought does not exist and is sheer nonsense. The key learning from all these is to stop recalling memories of past experiences of pain and pleasure. When such thoughts come up, they should be nipped in the bud, as Ramana Maharshi says. There is no ego without thought. Ramana Maharshi said, the 'I' thought is the first thought which then starts having more thoughts.

Fear and greed are the twin basic qualities of the ego, which drive most of its activities. Fear is due to insecurity which in turn is due to ignorance of the truth that security itself is a myth and therefore insecurity is also a myth. Greed is due to discontentment which is again due to ignorance of the true nature of things. Recognizing the fictitious nature of the ego is an important step to overcome its dominance. Eckhart Tolle comments that to the extent that the ego is present in an individual, that individual is somewhat insane.

Why are children so joyful? An infant does not seem to have an ego. The child often refers to itself in the third person. The environment (school, parents,

society, etc.) stimulates and provokes what perhaps, at the best, may be a seed of a dormant ego in the growing child into a strong individual identity. The ego depends very much on identity. But identity itself is fictitious and none of us has a single identity. Each one has many identities — as son or daughter, parent, sibling, employee, employer, buyer, seller, etc. We behave quite differently in each of the roles we play in life. Therefore, the ego is not a real me because there is no 'single me'!

The ego's preoccupation is such that we make all possible effort to try to fill ourselves when we should be emptying ourselves. In medicine it is said that as long as the body eliminates there is hope! This applies to the ego too. The ego just wants to grab and accumulate more and more — whether it is wealth, position or power or knowledge! For many, immortality may actually mean perpetuation of the ego! How strange! It seems all the demons of mythological stories who strove for immortality through penances and boons, are metaphors for the ego's tendency to perpetuate itself. Even all of the modern world's problems such as climate change, violence and wars are all because of the human ego's activities.

Getting back to the workings of the ego, when troubled by its hyperactivity, the ego can resort to prayer, indulge in rituals and pretend to be religious and develop beliefs and dogmas for its comfort. The ego can award itself a (pseudo) spiritual status and in justification of such a status, it may involve itself in

'spiritual' discourses and write articles on spirituality. (This expression of mine may not be an exception, at least partly!). Even knowledge is a possession of the ego, including knowledge of matter and scriptures. Such knowledge of the ego can be terribly conditioning. Knowledge of past experiences retained as memories, invariably leads to comparison of current experience with the 'already-known' and thereby makes fresh experience impossible, making life dull.

How does one transcend the ego-state and pass to a spiritual state, so that bondage, conflicts and suffering are replaced by freedom, peace and bliss? How does one overcome the distressful thoughts created by the ego? Ramana Maharshi has two simple questions such as 'who am I?' and 'for whom does this troublesome thought occur?' It occurs to the ego! The next logical question is, am I the ego? Or is the ego-state my true nature? When a visitor asked Ramana Maharshi for his views on J. Krishnamurti's 'choiceless, effortless awareness', he answered that is our true state and nature. This is the ego-less state. Such introspection helps transcend the ego-state to a state of consciousness that is unaffected by the ego.

The important learning from all these is that one should observe one's own thoughts and behaviour. When they are marked by anger, intolerance, grudge, envy, fear, greed, any kind of selfish desire, aversion due to prejudice, insecurity, disappointment, hope, hatred, sentimental attachment and its bondage, bias, sense of possession or sense of loss,

Let Go the Ego for Freedom, Peace and Bliss

desire for control, desire for continuity, resisting change, religious compulsions and pressures, recalling and indulgence in memories of past experiences of suffering and pleasure, discontentment, conflict between what is and what should be as per one's ideals, notions and beliefs, and artificiality, one should know that the ego is at work. When behaviour is marked by acceptance, tolerance, contentment, peace, reverence for life, joy, spontaneous natural response to help others in suffering driven by compassion and intelligence, one's ego is subdued and one's state of being has the quality of spirituality.

Another important learning is to live in the present, moment to moment. The ego cannot be in the present and will be driven away. Ego can sustain itself only by memories of past experiences or by fantasizing the future, both in the realm of thought. Live in the present moment. Pay full undivided, unfragmented attention to the present moment (mindfulness), each moment. Drive away thoughts of the future as and when they come up, by suggesting to yourself that you will meet the future when it comes. Once you start practising negation of thoughts of the future by nipping such thoughts in the bud, you will easily be able to practise it more frequently and for a longer duration each time. The frequency and duration of thought-free states will increase over time. J. Krishnamurti said that Reality is in the gap between two thoughts. This attitude will not affect the future, as subconsciously, we do plan and prepare when necessary and we do it

more creatively because the brain is not clouded. Your performance will improve, actually. For day-to-day planning for appointments, shopping, etc., it does not require being caught in the network of perpetual thoughts.

This discussion started with the link between ego and suffering. Perhaps, suffering or the resultant sorrow has a role in subduing the ego. In the *Mahābhārata*, at the end of the war between *dharma* and *adharma*, Kṛṣṇa thanks Kunti for her cooperation, including cooperation extended in not revealing the fact to her other sons that Karna was her son and their eldest brother. Kṛṣṇa asks Kunti whether there is something she would seek from him as reciprocation. Kunti seems to have answered that because of her intense sorrow, she was constantly remembering the Lord and hence she had no regrets. Perhaps, her ego suffered so much that she transformed from ego-consciousness to God-consciousness. J. Krishnamurti says that to understand sorrow, there must be the actual experiencing of it. He also says if the mind is in that state of intense suffering, in which all the avenues of escape are blocked, then, intelligence will be awakened.

Many people complain of mental stress. Stress arises not so much from the external events and work but from the ego's resistance to what is, at thought level. Accept what is and do not exert yourself for what should be. Do not create ideals. There is no end to ideals.

The egoless state of being paves the way for the spiritual state of being,

characterized by freedom, peace and bliss. When the ego vanishes, spirit shines. When the dust is removed, the gem shines fully or the mirror reflects clearly. Many sages, realizing the spiritual state of freedom, peace and bliss, have emphasized 'Self-knowledge' as the quintessence of spirituality. The beginning of Self-knowledge is the ego's dissolution or negating the ego — 'neti' or this ego is not me! Though J. Krishnamurti asserts that liberation does not result from negation but from the perfection of the mind, I am attaching more importance to another assertion in the context of discrimination — that the false must be seen as false. This negation may appear like 'voidness' but is an emptiness that is most sensitively ready to receive fresh spiritual experiences at all times. There is no resistance of any kind for newness and change in this state, whereas the ego is resistance itself.

One can be ego-free and spiritual but one cannot become so by motivated efforts. As was said wisely, one cannot become a saint but one can be a saint. All efforts of self-promotion are that of the ego. When a visitor said to Ramana Maharshi, 'I want to be spiritual', the Maharshi said: 'Drop the words "I", and "want to be" and what remains is "spiritual".' It is a matter of letting go of the ego. That is the first step which is also the last step, in the sense there is nothing more required, to be in the right direction. The spiritual journey has to do with the

right direction and not pace (time) and place (locality in space) which are the ego's boundaries.

Having said so much about ego and intelligence, I may appear to contradict myself when I say that the ego-self and ego-less 'intelligence-self' are not two separate entities. Any one who converts thoughts into words and speaks cannot be without some contradiction. Only Lord Dakshināmurti is acclaimed to be free of contradiction because He teaches by silence. The ego-self and ego-less self are not two separate entities. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, it is said that the *manas* that is subdued or, shall we say, transformed, is beneficial while the *manas* that is 'unsubdued' or egotistic, is harmful. J. Krishnamurti speaks of the mind itself becoming intelligence. One can imagine the transforming states of steam to water to ice to snow to water vapour to water to steam again or any number of intermediate states. It is a question of self-transformation from one state to another, but effortless in the sense that it is without desiring to become better. One can be in the state of ego-self and go through all the miserable experiences or transform and abide in the ego-less spiritual state of being with its freedom, peace and bliss. Devoid of the ego-impediment, freedom, peace and bliss become the contents of consciousness or consciousness itself which is also the spiritual state of being. ✧

We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility.

Rabindranath Tagore

THE 135TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The 135th International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, from 26 to 31 December 2010.

All members of the Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates. *Non-members may attend by obtaining permission from the President. Requests for such permission, together with a recommendation from an officer of the Federation, should be sent to the Convention Officer before 15 November 2010.*

REGISTRATION FEES	<i>India</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>
Members	Rs 50	US\$ 30 *
Members under 21	20	...
Non-members	100	...
Non-members under 21	60	...

ACCOMMODATION CHARGES (SHARING)

(From 24 December 2010
to 1 January 2011 inclusive)

	<i>India (Members)</i>	<i>India (Non-members)</i>	<i>Other Countries (Members)</i>
Accommodation with mat	Rs 80	Rs 160	...
Accommodation with cot	150	300	...
Leadbeater Chambers (including service, furniture, and bedding, but no blankets)	2,000	3,000	US\$ 100 *

(Half rates will be charged for children under ten. No charge for children under three.)

* (or Euro or Pound Sterling equivalent)

ACCOMMODATION

Factors considered in allocating accommodation are active membership, health, age, priority of registration, size of family, etc. Rooms and bathrooms cannot be made available for anyone's exclusive use. Non-members and young persons should be prepared to stay in dormitories. No special facilities can be provided for members who are ill or for women with babies. Mosquito nets and bedding will not be available. No kitchens are available. Ordinary medical attention will be available for minor complaints but there will be no provision for serious or infectious illness. Such cases will have to be shifted from the compound.

Accommodation is available for delegates from 24 December 2010 to 1 January 2011, both days inclusive, but can be guaranteed only to those whose registration and accommodation payments are received *before 1 December 2010*. Delegates from India requiring accommodation should send *both the registration and accommodation charges together, but not before 1 September 2010*.

Please note that in the event of cancellation there will be no refund of registration fees, but other charges will be refunded if application is received before *10 December 2010*.

All communications and remittances should be addressed to the Convention Officer, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020. Remittance by bank drafts, duly crossed, should be made *payable to the Treasurer, The Theosophical Society, but sent to the Convention Officer*. Money Orders should be sent only to the Convention Officer. No cheques other than those drawn in Chennai will be accepted.

Mrs KUSUM SATAPATHY
International Secretary

Theosophical Work around the World

World Congress in Rome

The 10th World Congress of the TS, which took place in Rome, 10–15 July 2010 on the theme ‘Universal Brotherhood without distinction: a road to awareness’ was a great success, with 524 members from thirty-three countries. The main sessions were shown live on the Internet. At the opening session there were prayers of the religions as well as greetings from a number of Sections and individual members around the world, followed by a welcome address by Mr Antonio Girardi, General Secretary of the Italian Section of the TS. In her opening address, the International President, Mrs Radha Burnier, drew attention to the need for us to understand that the Society aims at Universal Brotherhood which implies a mind without barriers.

Lectures were delivered by the International Vice-President, Mrs Linda Oliveira, (‘Why do we Belong to the Theosophical Society?’); Prof. P. Krishna, Secretary, Rajghat Educational Centre, Varanasi, India (‘What Divides Us?’); and Dr Dara Tatray, National President of the Australian Section (‘The Scientific Basis of Universal Brotherhood’). There were two symposia, the first on ‘The Theosophical Society as a Regenerating Brotherhood’, with Mr Ricardo Lindemann, former National President of the TS in Brazil; Mrs Patrizia Calvi, Secretary to the

Italian Section; and Mr Jan Jelle Keppler, General Secretary of the Belgian Section, as speakers. The second symposium was on the subject ‘Brotherhood as a Road to Awareness’, with Miss Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, General Secretary, French Section; Mrs Lissette Arroyo, General Secretary, Mexican Section; and Mrs Ing-Britt Wiklund, former General Secretary, Swedish Section.

There were six workshops during the Congress: ‘Forgiveness and Interconnectedness: Two Key Elements in Brotherhood’ with Mrs Betty Bland, National President, American Section; ‘Challenges in Brotherhood’ with Miss Marja Artamaa, General Secretary, Finnish Section; ‘Living Brotherhood’ with Mrs Marie Harkness, Organizing Secretary, TS in Ireland; ‘Solidarity and Cooperation: Practical Expressions of Brotherhood’ with Mr Antonio Martinez and Mrs Julia Ballesteros, from the TS in Colombia; ‘Practical Brotherhood in Our Everyday Life’ with Dr Dusan Zagar, Organizing Secretary of the TS in Slovenia; and ‘Self-Knowledge as the Foundation for Brotherhood’ with Carlos Guerra, General Secretary, Portuguese Section.

Eight short lectures were delivered at the Congress: ‘The Discovery of the Self’ by Mr Colin Price, former General Secretary, English Section; ‘The TS on Probation’ by Mr Pedro Oliveira,

Theosophical Work around the World

Officer-in-charge, Editorial Office, International Headquarters; 'In the Beginning is My End' by Miss Mary Anderson, former International Vice-President; 'Self-Perception and Fraternal Action' by Mr Marcos Resende, National President, Brazilian Section; 'Love and Service — Twin Stars of Brotherhood' by Mr S. Sundaram, General Secretary, Indian Section; 'The Meaning of *nosce te ipsum* in the Practice of Universal Brotherhood' by Prof. Graziella Ricci, member of the Italian Section; 'Life: A Symphony of Art and Beauty' by Mrs Manju Sundaram, from the Indian Section; and 'The Plucking of a Flower Affects a Distant Star' by Bhupendra Vora, former General Secretary of the East and Central African Section.

Evening programmes included 'Musical Yoga — Study is Transformation' with Dr Edi Bilimoria; Italian bel canto with Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Piano; Italian Classical Music by the Rome City Band and a slide programme on Theosophical Centres around the World, including the International Theosophical Centre at Naarden, the Netherlands; the Kreivila Centre in Finland; the 'Olcott' Headquarters in Wheaton; the Krotona Institute in Ojai, California; the Brasilia Theosophical Institute in Brazil; the San Rafael Centre in Argentina; the Manor Centre in Sydney; the Springbrook and Canyonleigh Centres in Australia; and the International Headquarters at Adyar. The Theosophical Order of Service programme had as its theme 'Service as a Road to Awareness'

with Mrs Diana Dunningham-Chapotin, International Secretary, TOS; Mr Timothy Boyd, Vice-President, American Section; and Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr, National President, Philippine Section, as speakers.

At the closing session all assembled for the prayers of the religions, which were followed by impressions of the Congress by a few participants and a vote of thanks by Mr Antonio Girardi. He then presented a small memento to the International President as an expression of gratitude from the Italian members. In her concluding speech, Mrs Burnier said that although a Theosophical Congress generates joyousness and causes the participants to have a good time together, we must be mindful that it also must represent a reminder to all of us of the work we have to do as members of the TS. The world is desperately in need of a new understanding, the essence of which is Universal Brotherhood. Occasions like the World Congress, she said, should also be seen as moments of reflection and rededication to our essential work, which is to become real Theosophists, that is, real human beings, free from the pulls of the animal nature in us that tends to create divisions, confusion and separation. The TS has a very important work to do in the world which is to point out that only a fundamental change in the human mind can bring about a real change in the world. She wished all the participants the very best in their journey together towards wisdom, towards becoming true Theosophists, in order to bring to the world a new understanding. ✧

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