

## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS (CONTD)**

To the 138th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society  
Adyar, 26 December 2013, delivered by  
Mr M. P. Singhal, *International Vice-President*

### **The World of Over Population, Poverty, Pollution and Lopsided Development**

The population is expected to rise to 8.1 billion in mid-2025 and 9.75 billion in mid-2050. There is poverty which is a terrible social scourge. 46% of world income is owned by 20% of the wealthiest. Poverty is not natural. It is man made by the rich usurping wealth without sharing with poor people, sometimes paying less than they deserve. It is unethical. The two defining challenges of this century are overcoming poverty and managing climate change. It appears feasible to transform the poorest countries with proper management of natural resources. The world is suffering from intolerance, doubt, conflict and insecurity. Intolerance breeds violence. Can we have more mutual understanding, appreciation and adjustment?

Most members of the Theosophical Society, irrespective of their country, language or beliefs, reflect a rich

Theosophical culture, of friendliness, mutual consideration, courtesy, patience, tolerance, acceptance and helpfulness. Therefore, nothing disappoints and disillusiones outsiders more when some members behave arrogantly, unhelpfully or unkindly. We may remember that beautiful thoughts carry blessings, kind words lend strength and loving action reflects compassion.

We live in times where our scientifically trained graduates have no difficulty in recalling Newton's three laws of motion, but have no clue about the four Noble Truths of the Buddha. This has resulted in a lopsided development of humanity. Humanity is not merely the name of a species. It defines human values and sensitivity, his dignity and feelings, choosing ultimate good over sensual pleasures. It is necessary to ponder as to what human values we should seek to preserve in this technological world and how that could be achieved?

## **What are We expected to Do?**

In *The Key to Theosophy*, HPB listed five points to help the Society's work. By studying and comprehending the Theosophical doctrines, so they may teach others, especially the young people. By taking every opportunity of talking to others and explaining to them what Theosophy is and what it is not, by removing misconceptions and spreading an interest in the subject. By assisting in circulating our literature, by buying books when they have the means, by lending and giving them and by inducing their friends to do so. By defending this Society from the unjust aspersions cast upon it, by every legitimate device in our power. Finally and most important of all, by the example of our lives.

What is said is succinctly simple. It emphasizes comprehensive study of Theosophical truths, teaching those truths to the youth specially, living Theosophically and spreading Theosophical doctrines by our lives. The Theosophical Society is the vehicle of Theosophy. If the Society is strong, it will take Theosophy far and wide and spread it quickly.

## **From Good to Greatness**

In today's world mediocrity is unacceptable. Even good is not considered good enough. We have to embrace greatness which requires self-motivated and self-disciplined workers, capable of continuous innovations. Besides a comprehensive knowledge of Theosophy, they have to be sensitive and effective communicators.

Those leaders who aim for greatness

are dreamers first. Pursuing their dreams, they develop vision of the future. Vision becomes a concrete plan of action. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and Nelson Mandela can perhaps be put in the category of dreamers, who ultimately became achievers. Martin Luther King Jr, had many dreams. His vision of freeing African Americans inspired Rosa Parks who refused to vacate her seat meant for white people and that was the beginning of a crusade against discrimination. The momentum built slowly but finally brought victory.

Imagine that the Theosophical Society is a massive fly wheel. Our job is to induce motion by slowly pushing this fly wheel till it reaches a critical momentum after which it kicks in our favour, requiring very little effort. Members need to work with definiteness of purpose and deliberateness of action to reach such a momentum. Our long cherished vision of the TS as a corner stone, the foundation of future religions of humanity can perhaps be fulfilled if we remain focussed. Where there is a will there is a way. We want heroes who are self-motivated and can undertake any job for the benefit of mankind. They are the ones, who make people around them feel good by their cheerful and helpful temperament.

## **Proposal: What We Should Be Doing in the Next Three Years**

i) Infrastructure is not in good shape. We should prepare a Hand Book of works that will include systems of inspection, maintenance, quality control and

system of reporting at different levels. All works requiring attention will be tackled under a three-year 'Works Programme' committing yearly financial resources through the instrument of the budget.

ii) Induction of youth in the TS is important in a world, where median age is twenty-eight years, i.e., about four billion people are young and below twenty-eight years. They have energy and innovative ideas. Experienced members should help in channelling their energies in productive ways. Youth complain that senior members do not practice what they teach; they do not have gratitude to those who gave us beautiful literature. Why other organizations are able to attract youth for their work, it is something for us to investigate and apply.

iii) Propagation of Theosophy is presently the biggest challenge of the Theosophical Society because only a few have comprehension of Theosophy and they do not possess communication skills. The Theosophical Order of Service in the present situation is a wonderful tool that can overcome the existing deficiency and make brotherhood real.

iv) Research and Technology: As one Master of Wisdom said, 'Modern Science is our best ally'. Let us nurture this idea to explore and improve our work. C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant employed clairvoyance as the method of examination, but suggested testing by other physical methods to reconfirm clairvoyant findings. We should maintain a register of technically qualified

members and use their knowledge and skills. We may provide a computer in Maintenance, Garden, Sanitation and Security departments.

v) To harness solar energy and reduce the carbon footprint to control adverse effects of climate change and thereby help intergenerational equity for future generations.

vi) Manpower review as regards numbers, competence, fair wages followed by development and reform.

## **Conclusion**

If we stand united, acting impartially, keeping the interest of the TS uppermost in view, living and spreading the Theosophical doctrines, specially to the youth we can fulfill our great mission of transforming the humanity and thereby the whole world. In an inspiring message which Madame Blavatsky once gave, she said, 'There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, there is reward past all telling, the power to bless and serve humanity. For those who fall, there are other lives in which success may come.'

We should pay greater attention to developing the TS as an institution for disseminating Theosophy. By developing core values of Will, Wisdom and Love, the cause of Theosophy can be advanced rapidly. Love inspires the will; the will directs the wisdom which enables us to help. As we see here, Love is the inspirational trigger and so more important of the three. ✧

# THE URGENCY FOR A NEW MIND

Mr Ricardo Lindemann

(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 27.12.2013)

‘It is time for Man to set himself firmly on the *Nivritti Marga* (the Path of Return to the Spiritual Source), renounce the primitive will to survive and, as Madame Blavatsky puts it, learn a new alphabet in the lap of Mother Nature.’ These are the words of the wonderful and last article of Dr Radha Burnier, to whom I have to express my feelings of extreme gratitude for the perfume of Radhaji’s wonderful life of light and love which is still with us and so it will always be.

Madame Blavatsky also says that ‘the mind is the great slayer of the Real’ (*The Voice of the Silence*) but we humans do not seem to be aware of the illusions, limitations and sufferings we are subjected to in this earthly life, perhaps because we generally are not eagerly looking for a solution. We can also find in HPB’s *Practical Occultism*: ‘We are “worms of the earth” because we cling with all our aspirations to earth’ or we are like fallen angels that forgot how to use the wings.

The *Yoga-Sutras* of Patañjali says: ‘It (*Samadhi* or *Ecstasy*) is nearest to those whose desire (for *Samadhi*) is intensely strong.’ Therefore, this feeling of urgency was from ancient times considered a symptom of the awakening of a new state of mind. Are we really interested in that? The common man, on the other hand, seems to prefer to be accommodated with family and its survival, having not developed the right vision to understand *Dukkha Satya*, the

first teaching of Lord Buddha, generally translated as unsatisfactoriness or suffering, classically exemplified in the miseries of life: sickness, old age and death.

About the first stage on the Spiritual Path, Radhaji also considered:

A *parivrajaka* is *aniketa*, which means he has no home in the worldly sense. The worldly home is a place of shelter from the rest of the world, from where each one fights his battles against the world with allies in the form of husband, wife, children. So the home represents an exclusive, egocentric way of life. But to be a homeless one — a wanderer — means that fixations and attachments come to an end. . . . The *Samnyasi* severs his sacred thread, gives up ceremonies and his very name because he is no more attached. The world is his family; the earth itself is his home.

This eagerness is the aspiration of life looking for a better form of expression, which is the root cause of evolution even of the form. If we accept the idea that in all manifestation there is life and form, there could be arising the question: Which is better: life or form? Perhaps life has more affinity to our innermost Self, but without discipline working over the matter or form aspect of our manifestation we will also fail. From the point of view of life or consciousness, transformation of perception has this urgency, as

Krishnamurti considers:

Revolution is only possible now, not in the future, regeneration is today, not tomorrow. If you will experiment with what I have been saying, you will find that there is immediate regeneration, a newness, a quality of freshness.

On the other hand, bodies of matter take time to evolve. Therefore, it could seem to be a contradiction between the teachings based upon these two points of view, but Theosophy should embrace all points of view and solve

the seeming problem, taking no point of view exclusively, but seeing the question as a whole.

What can be new in mind is the perception and through it we can see that the seeming Snake is really a Rope, and so we ask how could we not see this obvious reality before.

In fact, the urgency of a new mind is seeking the new perception that we could be free, because all our suffering is illusory or unnecessary, if we only were able to see it clearly.

## **THE MIND: A VESSEL FOR IGNORANCE OR A VESSEL FOR TRUTH?**

**Mrs Linda Oliveira**

*(Summary of Short Lecture delivered on 27.12.2013)*

A powerful way of understanding human consciousness is through the use of symbols. The mind can be symbolized as a vessel, the word 'vessel' being derived from the Latin *vascellum*, 'small vase or urn' which, curiously, also means 'ship'. An urn is a container. A ship is also a container, but one with inherent movement — it has the capacity to travel from one shore to another. Both of these representations of a vessel provide quite vivid windows into the human mind, its present condition and its potential.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, there is mention of that state of consciousness described as the Hall of Ignorance or *avidya*. This is the disposition of the ordinary individual who is constantly turned outwards towards the world, who has no particular interest in life's

deeper meaning, who lives for the moment and is pulled here and there by many different attractions. Indeed, this hall is described strikingly with these words:

112. Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the Soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster, mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.

We can note well here the description of ignorance as a vessel — but with the qualification that it is closed and airless; the notes of the inner nature cannot be heard.

The great poles of existence — *purusha* and *prakriti* — are reflected in the polarities of our nature. When the sensate world does not satisfy sufficiently, a kind of reverse magnetism comes into play. This requires

reorientation, and a certain quality of focussed movement. Here we can relate to the image of the mind as a ship, part of the Latin derivation of the word 'vessel'.

The Mahatma KH wrote:

Is any of you so eager for knowledge and the beneficent powers it confers as to be ready to leave your world and come into ours?

This statement has a tremendous intensity of meaning and significance. What is Their world? One of the Mahatmas wrote to A. P. Sinnett:

. . . the adept sees and feels and lives in the very source of all fundamental truths — the Universal Spiritual Essence of Nature, SHIVA, the Creator, the Destroyer, *and* the Regenerator.

But what is Truth? A rather poignant description was provided by Brother N. Sri Ram:

Truth can be thought of as the meaning given to any body of facts by the Spirit within; and that meaning has an appeal and power that can enter into the very roots of one's being.

He mentioned that it can only be experienced when the mind *and* heart are completely open.

The legend of the Grail beautifully depicts how the mind can become a vessel of Truth. The Grail is a version of an urn, being a kind of cup or shallow vessel; but of a truly sacred nature in which the receptacle is transformed. Furthermore, the whole Grail legend can be thought of as denoting the spiritual Path.

The mind is a vessel for ignorance when the base of the urn, symbolically speaking, touches the earth and when it becomes a playground of the senses. But it is transformed into a vessel for Truth when the more rudimentary urn is transmuted into its full glory, the Grail within. When our consciousness moves more purposefully towards its spiritual pole it becomes like a ship, sailing with focussed energy and determination from stormier waters to calmer ones, towards the Further Shore — which is indeed a new world.

## VISITORS CENTRE

The Visitors Centre was formally opened to the public on White Lotus Day on 8 May 2012. The Centre has about 300 books on Theosophy and over 50 beautiful pictures of flowers, birds, butterflies, trees and buildings in the TS Estate. One visitor observed that it is 'truly a window to the Theosophical Society — a harmonious blend of Nature, visuals and books'. Some have noted the advantage it offers to sit and

study. A visit to the Centre also brings people in to contact with the work of the Social Welfare Centre, where many have observed the fantastic job being done for the underprivileged children.

**Visit:** The Visitors Centre in the Social Welfare Centre premises is situated outside the main gate and will remain open from 10.00-4.00 p.m. during the Convention.

## OPENING OF THE CONVENTION

About 1058 delegates from over twenty countries are attending  
the 138th International Convention

The Convention was inaugurated at 8 a.m. on 26 December with the Prayers of the Religions, and the Universal Prayer led by the Vice-President, Mr M. P. Singhal. The International Secretary, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, read out greetings received from overseas. The General Secretary of the Indian Section, Mr S. Sundaram, conveyed messages received from different parts of India.

General Secretaries and other representatives of the Theosophical Society in various countries presented greetings on behalf of their members, as listed below:

### General Secretaries:

Mr Ebrony Peteli, Africa, East and Central  
Mr Jack Hartmann, Africa, South  
Mrs Linda Oliveira, Australia  
Mr Marcos L. B. de Resende, Brazil  
Ms Marja Artamaa, Finland  
Ms Tran Thi Kim-Dieu, France  
Mrs Manuela Kaulich, Germany  
Mr S. Sundaram, India  
Mr Antonio Girardi, Italy  
Ms Angeles Torra Buron, Spain  
Mr Tim Boyd, USA

### Representatives:

Mrs Breda Zagar, Org.Secy, Slovenia  
Mr B. L. Bhattacharya, Presidential Representative, Bangladesh  
Mr N. C. Raghava, Asia, East and South East  
Mr Jan Jelle Keppler, Belgium  
Ms Norah Rocabado, Bolivia  
Mr Wim Leys, Netherlands  
Ms Sherry Clayton Park, New Zealand  
Mrs Agnes Gasemyr, Norway  
Mr Alex Besputin, Russia  
Ms Raisa Kalashnikova, Ukraine

Mr Bhupendra R. Vora, a General Council member, on behalf of the United Kingdom and Ms Maria Widjaja on behalf of Indonesia conveyed greetings. After welcoming the gathering, the Vice-President Mr M. P. Singhal released a book which is the Special supplement to *Brahmavidya* — The Adyar Library Bulletin: Commemorating the 125th Year of Publication of *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. First two copies of the book were received by Mr Harihara Raghavan, General Manager, and Mr C. A. Shinde, Librarian of the Adyar Library and Research Centre.

Mr M. P. Singhal delivered the Presidential Address which included a comprehensive report about the work of the Society around the world.



## MUSEUM

**Visit:** The Museum in the Headquarters Building is open to delegates between 1.30-2.30 p.m. to view valuable landmarks in TS history.

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Number of delegates registered Friday, 27 December: 1,070.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF THE ROUND TABLE**

The International Order of the Round Table was founded in 1908 by Herbert Whyte, and since then has spread to different parts of the world. It is a ceremonial organization where one can be admitted from the age of four. The ceremonies are based on the teachings of the great spiritual teachers of the world. Aspects of nature and the symbolism behind these also form the content of some ceremonies. There are four ranks among the members, with special qualities attached to each. A newly initiated person is called a Page (kindness); he goes on to become a Companion (helpfulness); then follows Squire (courageousness); and finally one becomes a Knight (righteousness). The activities of the Round Table include ceremonies, philanthropic work, study, gatherings, trips and cultural programmes.

The Round Table members always have an empty chair which they salute. The empty chair symbolises the Higher Self who is the God within or, in other words, the Ideal Man. The salute is an action involving the heart, head and hand. This means that it is the whole being that one dedicates to the service of the King.

On December 25, 2013 members from different countries gathered together in the Headquarters Hall and performed the Chalice Ceremony. Greetings were received from Round Table chapters in United Kingdom, New Zealand, Bolivia and Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai from India. There were Round Tablers from the age of 7 to 60 and the ceremony was attended by delegates of the Convention.

A long-standing member raised the question on how we could wean children away from the TV, mobile phones and video games, what could be the role of the Round Table? It is something we must all ponder about in the coming year.

## **PAINTING WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN**

### **Topic: Being Kind to Animals and Birds**

There will be a painting workshop for children at the Beauty Without Cruelty and Animal Welfare Centre stall on **Saturday, 28 January 2013 between 10-11.00am**. Children and their parents/guardians are requested to assemble at the BWC Stall near the Enquiry Office. Materials such as Paper, synthetic paint brushes and paints will be provided. Children are welcome to bring their own materials as well.



**The realization of beauty in all things is itself goodness, for it is the knowing of a universal truth. So Beauty is the Coustant companion of goodness.**

— Radha Burnier

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