

THE COMPASSIONATE MIND

Mr Bhupendra Vora

(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 27.12.2013)

The purpose of evolution is to enable consciousness to reach the height of perfection in human manifestation as selfless human beings possessed the qualities of love and compassion, in the image of the Divine Intelligence that is the source of all life. The compassion and love of this Intelligence is visible in all its creation that has been created with infinite compassion. This is evident in the myriad species of life with the special abilities provided to them by Nature for their survival.

Lord Mahavira, the great teacher and reformer of the Jain faith declared that it was not enough to declare non-violence as one's creed. He extended that principle to empathizing with and helping other life to live naturally in accordance with the Laws of Nature. The 'New Age' requires sensitivity and compassion bearing in mind the interconnectedness and interdependence of life at all levels.

In the Noble Eight-fold path of the Lord Buddha, the first step of 'Right View' has been considered of

paramount importance. This means an understanding of the Oneness of Life and the Laws governing the Universe. The Buddha taught that *trishna* or desire was the cause of suffering. Human beings bind themselves to the cycle of life through incessant desires that cause immense suffering. Ignorance of the purpose of life holds them in bondage.

The human mind conditioned by many things like race, religion, caste etc., is trapped into a prejudiced way of looking at the world. To understand this conditioning needs wisdom. This requires finding the causes of the conditioning that has contributed to the suffering in which it finds itself. Preconceptions about people, based on race, religion and innumerable other things are the causes of division that create conflict and suffering. With awareness this conditioning can be recognized and freedom from it realized. Dr A. P. J. Kaalam the former President of India, speaking before the European Parliament quoted the ancient Tamil poet Kaniyan Pungudranar:

I am a world citizen and every citizen of the world my kith and kin. Where there is righteousness in the heart there is beauty in the character. Where there is beauty in the character there is harmony in the home. Where there is harmony in the home there is order in the nation. Where there is order in the nation there is peace in the world.

The need therefore is for right values and right forms of education that result in responsible and compassionate individuals. There is much that is not right in a society that is based on material values only. Should there not be a sensitivity and compassion of the mind to share the limited resources of the world with those that are less fortunate than us! Extreme greed of politicians, corporate bosses and others using sharp practices are responsible for much inequity in the world.

This malaise is visible at the individual, societal and national levels of the world. There is much suffering in the continent of Africa, which is exploited for its natural resources and wildlife. The trade in 'blood diamonds' and other precious stones, fuels the armament industries that supply arms to opposing tribes and militias. These are responsible for killing, rape and looting.

Elsewhere in the world there is extreme cruelty against dogs and other animals that are boiled alive to cater for the culinary delights of people who enjoy eating such meat. Radha Burnier

in her book *The World Around Us* writes: Compassionate living in the modern world seems to be hardly an ideal as it comes in the way of making large and quick profits out of business and conflicts with the desire to find new pleasures and satisfactions.

The other cause of conflict and non-compassionate living is religious indoctrination that creates intolerant societies. In her speech at the UN the remarkable young girl Malala Yousufzai stressed the need for education that would foster liberal thought and non-violence, quoting the examples of the Buddha, Christ, Prophet Mohamed, Mahatma Gandhi and Pashtun leader Badshah Khan.

For the world to change, the individual must change. Dr Nelson Mandela the great humanitarian and statesman said:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is light, not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and famous?' Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world . . . We were born to make magnificent the glory of God that is within us.

A mind that has the sensitivity and compassionate concern for the well-being of all life should be involved in proactive action.



Although TS members are relatively few in number, if there is real earnestness in them, the world will be helped to change.

— Radha Burnier

MEMORIAL FOR MRS RADHA BURNIER

(Summary of the Addresses given on 26.12.2013)

A Memorial meeting for Mrs Radha Burnier was held at 5.00 p.m. to pay homage to our revered President who passed away on 31 October 2013, with the Vice-President, Mr M. P. Singhal in the chair. General Secretaries and members paid their tributes by reminiscing about their association with her, the dignity, grace and simplicity that she embodied and her uncommon wisdom.

Mr Ebrony Peteli (Africa, East and Central) remembered his first meeting with Mrs Radha Burnier as a young boy from Zambia in 1988. He said that on that occasion she had been honoured with a garland of flowers and she had immediately taken it off. When he had later asked her why she had done that, she had replied, 'Why don't we leave the flowers alone and let them remain on the plants?', showing her deep respect for Nature. Mrs Burnier had laid the foundation stone for Kitwe Lodge in 1988. They had later sent her the photographs of the hall and building which she had appreciated.

Mr Jack Hartmann (South Africa) said that he first met Mrs Radha Burnier seven years ago and had the opportunity of a short interview with her during his first visit to Adyar. In that short space of time he realized that here was a person who deserved the respect she received. He realized that she had a deep knowledge of the world and its concerns. Her books, especially *Human Regeneration* was

simple, yet complex and she always asked us to look at the cause and not the effects.

Mrs Linda Oliveira (Australia) who spoke next said that 'Mrs Radha Burnier was not an ordinary person by any measure'. She said that Mrs Burnier stood out from the crowd as a strong individual who was governed according to a deep, unswerving inner conviction of how a human life should be lived. Mrs Oliveira said:

Radhaji's moral concerns ranged across different areas: ethical living in general, international ethics, the ethics of research, consumerism, politics, science, women, the practice of restraint and animal welfare and more.

She possessed a natural simplicity and dignity. . . . She was a strong and sure leader with the greatest concern for the well-being of the TS and the International Headquarters. She kept the flame of enquiry and serious study alive and burning during her Presidency of our beloved Society, often demonstrating a rare fusion of heart and mind.

Mr Marcos Resende (Brazil) said that while we call the Adepts our Elder Brothers, Radhaji, though not yet an Adept was like an elder sister, a first ray person, who had dedicated all her life for the cause of the Masters. She had worked with J. Krishnamurti whom she respected and by whom she was respected. Mr Marcos mentioned that Radhaji had served the Indian Section for many years and was the longest serving

international President. He concluded, 'Thank you sister Radha, for your love and dedication.'

Ms Marja Artamaa (Finland) spoke about the passing of a President of the Theosophical Society as having an effect on the whole of the Theosophical Society, as leaders have a part in how Theosophy in practice is experienced in the organization. Radhaji first visited Finland in 1965 as the General Secretary of the Indian Section and had said: 'I feel that we are one family'. In 1972, she again visited Finland as guest speaker and danced for Finnish members the story of Krishna's childhood. As President, Radhaji visited Finland seven times. Her last visit was in 2007 the European Congress and the Centenary of the Finnish Section was held.

Ms Tran Thi Kim-Dieu (France) remembered that she had first met Radhaji in 1976 at a Summer School in Switzerland. She said that we must move from the personal to universal and that Radhaji's presence is not only in Adyar but all over the world. Kim-Dieu pointed out that consciousness was not limited to the physical body and that those who have passed on are not some where else but right here. She shared her thoughts on the significance of dying, what it means to the near and dear ones and for the person who has passed on. She said Radhaji had set an example in our consciousness and had realized the dharma of what it is to be a human being. She concluded by saying, 'Realizing freedom is *to be consciously above the servitude of matter.*'

Mr Antonio Girardi (Italy) pointed

out that only the future will be able to tell the significance between Mrs Radha Burnier's thoughts and J. Krishnamurti's teachings. Mr Girardi had first met Mrs Burnier in 2002 at the Centenary of the Italian Section which was held in Assisi. A historical exhibition had been organized in the City Palace in Assisi which Radhaji had inaugurated. He remembered her last visit to Italy in 2010 during the 10th World Congress.

Ms Angeles Torra Buron (Spain) had first met Radhaji in 1972 in the Summer School in Frankfurt, Germany. She observed that Radhaji travelled widely and mentioned how and when ever she attended the Summer Schools in the various cities in Europe, she found Radhaji present there! It seemed like she visited a large family which is the Theosophical family. She said that Radhaji was a great woman and a great soul. Ms Manuela Kaulich (Germany) said that she had met Mrs Radha Burnier for the first time in 2002 but not had the opportunity to know her personally. She, however, found Radhaji's writings inspiring and shared a few meaningful thoughts from various sources.

Mr S. Sundaram (India) said that Radhaji not only showed perfection in doing but also perfection in being. He mentioned that Radhaji had visited Varanasi, the Indian Section Headquarters, several times. He said her simple way of living, her dignity and grace generated confidence in others. She was well aware of all that was happening not only in the Theosophical

Society but in the world. He especially mentioned how she always showed concern and enquired about the well-being of the lowest socio-economic group of people with whom Mr Sundaram was involved through three projects for over a decade.

Mr Tim Boyd (USA) said it was a great honour to be able to say a few words about Mrs Radha Burnier, a great person in his estimation. He had first met Radhaji in 1975 during the Centenary of the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York. He said he had an opportunity to speak with her ten to twelve years later and how she had spoken about her life. He found it interesting that she was as surprised as others about the things that came in her way since she had never planned anything. He said that we became aware of her presence because of her absence and he hoped that we would go away from this meeting feeling larger than before.

Mr Ricardo Lindemann, a member from Brazil, said that Radhaji had first visited Brazil in 1983 as President of the TS. He was in his 20s and had noticed her uncommon wisdom and natural dignity. Over the years he observed that she was indifferent to praise or criticism.

Mr Dusan Zagar, a member from Slovenia, thanked Radhaji for her work and dedication. He said that she was often misunderstood, but, she went on with her work. She was always

concerned about the welfare of humanity, animals, etc. She was a great friend and was always ready to help. Her fine words found an echo not only in the mind but also in the heart. She was known for her firmness, strength and courage. She had visited Slovenia twice and he had noticed her humbleness and how she never complained about anything. He said that he was grateful to her for the work she had done for the Theosophical Society.

Mr Bhupendra R. Vora, a General Council member, remembered his first meeting with Radhaji in 1982 when he travelled with her and Mr Surendranarayan from Mumbai to Nairobi to attend the 7th World Congress. He said that he had several opportunities over the years to have conversations with her about the deeper aspects of Theosophy. She revealed a deep interest in Nature.

Mr A. L. Somayaji, Advocate-General, Government of Tamil Nadu mentioned that he had met Mrs Radha Burnier on several occasions in her residence. She was a person least affected by the modern materialistic world. She led a holistic life and had a clear vision, even temper and patient listening and a fruitful life. She was perfect in body as well as in soul because she had an unencumbered mind. Her life was a clear message of Theosophy. We were fortunate that she lived here in our times.

Mr M. P. Singhal gave the concluding remarks and the meeting was closed.



Number of delegates registered by Saturday, 28 December: 1085

ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mr T. S. Krishnamurthy

(Summary of the Public Lecture delivered on 28.12.2013)

Democracy as a concept is intellectually stimulating and emotionally attractive as it is based on the theory of maximum happiness of majority of the people.

Most of the democracies of today have only democracy in form rather than in substance. They seem to be interested in democratic form to impress the Western countries and the international donor and aid institutions for purposes of economic aid, international trade and geo-political security. Even Western countries have democratic deficiencies.

The merits of democracy are negative: it does not ensure good government but it prevents certain evils . . . it is possible in a democracy for the majority to exercise a brutal and wholly unnecessary tyranny over the minority. . . .

— Bertrand Russel

Democracies in Asia and Africa face critical challenges especially in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Uzbekistan, etc.

Democracy has inherent weaknesses such as violence, oppression, social conflicts, ineffective governance, tyranny of the majority and demagoguery. The fragility of democracy is far too evident everywhere.

Democracy has different shades and colours. The quality of success depends upon the leadership, bureaucracy,

vigilance, free and fair elections, independent media, independent judiciary and civic consciousness.

Huntingdon is of the view that there have been two previous waves of democracy in the world and the same number of reversals resulting in fascist, Nazi and Stalinist ideologies. The present trend can perhaps be described as a third wave.

Western democracies evolved from military power, material wealth and commerce — colonization, war etc. It is indeed an irony that some democracies are even now resorting to both commerce and military might: eg. Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and a few European countries. Democracy can succeed only if it is backed by internal economic progress, civic education, social welfare and patriotic feelings. No amount of foreign aid and political or military interventions from outside can by itself usher in democracy in any country. Democracy has to be nurtured within. No doubt, assistance can be provided.

The democratic experiment succeeded in some countries because of the moral authority of great leaders like Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, De Valera, Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Lech Walesa 'et al.

Democracy tends to be cyclical. Democracy has inherent, self-constructive

and self-destructing instincts. There are a number of negative forces which prevent democracies from functioning

in an ideal and desirable manner — they vary from country to country depending upon local factors.



RECEPTION

The Reception is held every year on the first day of Convention 26 December. It is an opportunity for members from all around the world to come together in a relaxed and informal setting. Delegates of all ages enjoyed themselves, taking refreshments and happily talking with each other amongst the trees and sunshine. Old friends were reunited and new friendships were forged. It was an opportunity for members to meet the international President and this year Radhaji's presence was missed. The Reception is one occasion where members strengthen the bond of kinship which is essential for those who are on the spiritual path to be linked for mutual support and encouragement.

HPB Hostel

This year the hostel accommodated 15 boys of different ages who are given the opportunity to study and live in an environment for overall development. The boys follow a daily routine that includes morning and evening prayers, meditation and completion of school

home work. Nutritious food is given to the boys and periodical medical check-ups are done. During the holidays, plastic removal campaign is undertaken along the River side and the beach to create awareness of a pollution free environment.

REGENERATING WISDOM

(Summary of a Symposium Lecture delivered on 28.12.2013)

Ms Femmie Liezenga

In *An approach to Reality* N. Sri Ram says:

Wisdom is a quality of the pure subject and lies in the way it sees and responds. It changes all the time, not in its own nature which is a pure potentiality, but in its action, because of its infinite pliability and inexhaustible initiative.

In the same page he says:

We might also call it the wisdom or knowledge of the One Self.

I would like to talk about LIVING Wisdom. Because there has to be a *connection* between the teachings we study in the TS and the life we are living.

Everything in life is related and to see this *really*, seems for most of us the most difficult thing. It is in our daily relations where wisdom can be a living, regenerating power or truth.

Are we aware of how we approach each others? Obviously there is no real

meeting when the 'me' is in between!
Can a change in the world take place?
Where do we have to start? Is it not right
here, where we are?

We might investigate questions like:
Am I ambitious? What is my motive?
These questions cannot be given an
immediate answer, but will *enrol* their
answer in daily life when we watch
carefully what is going on in our mind,
without making any choice.

Right relationship means to have *no
images*, no conclusions about anything.
Having an image *blocks* the living
energy; there is *no meeting at all!* It
means that there is lack of wisdom.

Life is always moving and we are told
to live in the here and now, never ever
with an image. As *Light on the Path*
points out: to live neither in the present
nor in the future, but in the *Eternal*.
Does this not mean to be open, receptive,
and vulnerable to all and everything; not
being afraid, but to trust oneself to life?
If we live in that way all our senses, our
total inner and outer being is alert,
open, receptive. Then there is *total*
feeling, sensing, listening.

It seems to me that J. Krishnamurti
meant this when he spoke of *listening*
as being the greatest art of all.

Although it might be *just a very
tiny moment*, do I realize that you and
I bear deep inwardly *a treasure?* Maybe

for the first time I realize that this
treasure is waiting in the process of life,
of many lives, to flower from within,
without measure! . . . Does not this
awareness *change my whole attitude?*
And does this not change the whole
world?

We have every moment the opportuni-
ty to watch with deep interest that,
which is hidden deep down in each one
of us. That, which bears an enormous
potentiality in it; and when we take away
the barriers, it enfolds and flowers with
all its glory.

Maybe we only feel just the beginning
of an expanding of the consciousness in
us, but even a small expanding fills one
with great joy and gives a feeling of
something very wonderful we cannot
grasp with our mind, but which bears
a great *promise* in it. This expanding
gives one a feeling of being connected
with something one cannot under-
stand, which is *beyond* the borders of
thought.

We could ponder about the Universe
outside us and about the universe
hidden inside us. By doing so we might
wonder if there is something behind all
this. Maybe we like to give it names and
call it God, IN-Ground, Parabrahman,
but all these words are not covering
THAT which we cannot name, nor reach
with our mind. . . .



**All of Nature reveals that unity is the quintessence of diversity. If diversity
were to vanish there would be deadly uniformity, not unity.**

— Radha Burnier

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