



# 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 Light Is in You**

Yoga has gained much popularity outside India. Many do exercises taught as part of the endeavour to keep healthy, and this has become the main objective in learning yoga. This is good as far as it goes. But Yoga is in fact a state of profound harmony, a state in which the consciousness is serene and at peace. Nothing is allowed to interfere with this essential of yoga. In fact yoga it is said *is* this state, a state which nothing can disturb (*samatvam yoga uchyate*).

The ordinary man is generally wanting something or other. Even if he does not want, he expects happiness through certain objects, associations, and circumstances which lead to security. Stimulation from knowledge is often sought for ego-satisfaction. But all this has no relevance to the condition of yoga.

The yogi seeks nothing and feels satisfied by nothing that comes from outside. 'Contented in the Self by the Self, he is known to be of stable mind.' He is always happy, and that happiness does not come through something else. This does not mean that he is slothful. He is restful without being inert or unaware; he is in this condition, normally and naturally,

being intelligent with clarity of mind and harmony in all relationships. This is a state of consciousness, that is, we may say, natural to the stable mind.

Wanting this or that, including that state of inward peace, cannot but lead a person into depression or disappointment, and the inner condition has thus outer manifestation: for instance a condition of difference can turn into anger or even collision with the outside world, because basically it is a condition of turmoil and anxiety. This unhappiness may appear normal, because it would seem unnatural if it were otherwise. Malaise or inadequacy could lie deep within and the person can be unaware of its existence.

The process of becoming is not only craving for material things, but also for psychological satisfaction. When there is a vacuum hidden within that internal condition, it can take many forms. This difference between man and other beings indicates that man can be internally wanting security and have low self-esteem. Most people feel dissatisfied when hearing opinions of this kind. When one wants to have relationship it is a sign of dissatisfaction. The ability to see oneself may create desire for security.

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When a person does not look at himself, steadily and carefully, the question will be answered by realizing that wants, whatever one asks, are a proof of a lack that exists.

We may put aside worldly things and think we are religious, but actually we may be merely seeking satisfaction of another kind, even desire to go from one guru to another one. Can one add by anything? This is an important question one must ask oneself. Nothing remains the same and what satisfies oneself now, may change into something else tomorrow.

Dependence comes of belief in outside agencies. The person who is dependent does not recognize what is happening to himself. Krishnaji says, 'You go to a teacher because you are confused. You choose the guru who will satisfy your demand again.' We are looking for something outside which will change us or change the conditions. Therefore, we can be sure that wisdom cannot be borrowed, nor be bought. Wisdom is of the nature of consciousness. Wisdom and peace are facets of the right condition of consciousness, dependent on nothing, and not asserted by anything.

### Our Seeing is Illusion

Illusion is created and sustained by various elements. These include the glamour of things outside, which could even give the impression that they are not outside. The sense of dependence, restlessness and attachments are part of the condition which obscures the pure light

from revealing itself. Other conditions like hidden thoughts and reactions, all of which are superficial, are also part of a person's condition. They too have much deception in what they experience. Just looking at objects does not produce illusions but the mind does this when connected to the object. It gets attached to a fragment and forgets the whole. It then comes to a conclusion. Its self-image is created by itself which is a long-standing source of wrong ideas. There is thus a continual source of illusion which can be shattered only by stopping all mental activity and seeing what *is*.

Pure vision is seeing 'what is' without distortion. It can then see that the outside scene is a reflection of the mind's own state. Our own consciousness becomes the basis of what we regard as experience. That is why in one of Śrī Śankarāchārya's well-known verses, he says that the whole Universe is shown by the mind as if it is a part of itself. If consciousness does not hear, music does not exist for it. 'Life itself has speech'; we do not listen to that but see things with a loss of clarity and sensitivity. The only source of light comes through when the mind is quiet, pure, undistorted by outside attraction.

Just as a lamp throws light on everything else and also on itself, pure consciousness fills the surrounding with light. *Ātmabodha*, a famous work by Śrī Śankarāchārya says: 'The lighted lamp does not need another to light it.' In fact it does not need any other to give it light; why go out, except as compassion?

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No teacher makes one see. He only suggests, points; and even when he speaks, the words are not the truth. Truth is not static; it is not an image. We cannot know God or Love by a picture. So *The Cloud of Unknowing* says: 'He may be well loved, but not thought.'

The mind must be empty of thought, desire, self. It must be quiet and pure, not seeking anything. It must be empty but not ambitious. 'When I pray for something, I do not pray. Really to pray, one must want nothing' (Eckhart).

We need to meditate on this and realize there is no outside source from which the truth can be known. It is realized when the mind becomes still, discovers its own depth and recognizes goodness exists there, which is not a measurable depth. Truth is not other than beauty, peace and love. All are itself because it is the Universal Life.

### True Culture

Annie Besant said: 'Spirituality does not know "myself or others". It only knows the One Self of whom all forms are a manifestation.' This is a very great statement and to the extent that it is understood in a person's life the One Self is known. There is a difficulty, because the word as understood means different things to different people. We mean by it what a person knows actually — not theoretically or partially — the truth of that Oneness includes all people and all the things that we may tend to put aside, the many relationships that

include what does not seem part of life.

When abandoning, which means giving up, recognizing mentally, or in any other way that there is a non-unity, we sustain the ego-sense. This is what happens when a person goes very far on the Path but drops from it because he has failed to recognize in himself that the ego-sense survives even when it seems that someone has gone beyond it. The one who has abandoned ego-sense in entirety is the one who is really travelling the spiritual journey. There is a unity with perfection beyond all imagining, which we can call 'culture', although the word 'culture' is also used for referring to very ordinary things.

In false culture, although one may not know the falseness of it, there is absence of truth. This means that there can be a hidden conditioning or conformity, a pursuit of self-distinction without knowing it. There are dangers on the Path all the way, when a person realizes that thinking is an art belonging to himself. True culture cannot exist along with any thought of self. It is a state of sensitivity often to the beauty and goodness of life. It is not a question of acquiring veneer but a state of being, of being free.

All intelligence, including beauty of every kind, is in nature and there is great power in laws and processes which are an expression of that inner state. A person who sees this realizes that the human being has a tiny part of a vast intelligence. How does a little bird know when to migrate, go a thousand or more miles away?

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How does a flower turn to the sun and become more alive? How is the building of a house possible for a little termite which to our eyes seems to know nothing? Countless phenomena display Nature's wonderful power; man's achievements appear puny to anyone who has gone so far. That is why it is said in the *Bhagavadgītā* that there is no end to the marvels which are hidden within the

heart of Nature. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who signifies divine power, says: 'Whatever is the seed of all beings, that am I, O, Arjuna!' This is a very difficult sentence to understand but as one ponders, it becomes clearer and a little more meaning is given to the same sentence. Its full meaning becomes well known, when one's own mind begins to thrill and enlarge by itself. ✧

Without stirring abroad  
One can know the whole world;  
Without looking out of the window  
One can see the way of the heaven.  
The further one goes  
The less one knows.  
Therefore the sage knows without  
having to stir,  
Identifies without having to see,  
Accomplishes without having to act.

Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

# The Root Cause of Conflict

P. KRISHNA

WE learnt from Krishnamurti that if we really want to understand an issue we must not form opinions about it, nor side with a particular viewpoint; one must start with questions and rely on observation of facts. Deep fundamental questions are explored with a passive awareness which can discover the truths which underlie a whole issue. Such an approach is necessary, especially for a Theosophist, because the motto of the Theosophical Society says that Truth is the highest religion. To explore into the unknown is important for a theosophist. Then the issue under consideration contributes to the wisdom in our mind; it transforms the vision with which one looks at life. Let us explore the roots of conflict in this way; one has to dig deep, not just understand the branches, for which study and intellectual analysis can be used.

What exactly do we mean by peace and conflict? Right now most people would say that we are going through a period of peace because there is no global war going on. So is peace just the interval between two wars? And what do we mean by war? Usually we call it a war only when guns start shooting and there is armed conflict. But is it really peace before a

war begins? Is the hatred between two communities — whether they be national, religious, caste or linguistic communities — not a form of psychological warfare which increases in its external manifestation and eventually leads to physical warfare? Where do I draw the line and say it is a conflict? There is no well defined border like that; there is a border only in the outer manifestation of that hatred. Since the one leads to the other, the roots of the conflict do not lie just in the specifics of the situation which has generated the conflict. Those facts are not irrelevant; they may be true, but they do not seem to be the root of the conflict.

So, if we are talking about a lasting peace and not just a temporary one, the question acquires a much deeper significance. We have to dig deep in order to understand. If we do not do that, then our existence becomes a series of conflicts and we have developed various mechanisms for conflict resolution. Conflict is not a new problem for humanity. We have read about the Mahābhārata, which is pre-historic, but as far as known history goes, we have always had war and conflict in different parts of the world and we are still

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**Prof. P. Krishna's** talk delivered at the Conference on 'Peace and Conflict' held at the Indian Section, Varanasi, March 2010.

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at it now. You solve it at one place and it erupts at another. When suitable circumstances arise, they will erupt into a new conflict, whether large or small. You may succeed in controlling it, but the root cause of conflict does not lie in those circumstances because circumstances are always variable.

So where is the root cause of conflict? Is it not important to examine from where these seeds come and whether they can be eliminated? We may not know the answer, but we must ask that question in earnest. Otherwise we are merely accepting it as an inevitable part of life. You may say it is innate to human nature, and it can never be got rid of. We have been doing that for five thousand years in various ways. We have tried political reform; we are trying economic reform; we have tried legislation; also organized religions around the teachings of a great sage, trying to follow the message of love and compassion, calling ourselves the followers of Gandhi, Jesus, of Buddha, and so on, but nothing has succeeded. At the end of all those attempts we are where we are today, revealed daily on the television screens and the newspapers. This is not a simple problem. Why have human beings not been able to solve this problem for thousands of years though we have progressed greatly in every branch of knowledge and skill? We think we are very intelligent and in some ways we are. But we have not been able to resolve the problems of conflict and war.

We may raise this question through an analogy: having a headache everyday and

taking aspirin each time to get rid of that problem. Would we say that is an intelligent way to live? One is not saying, 'do not deal with the symptom'. If you have a terrible headache, you may need to take an aspirin, otherwise you cannot even think clearly. So, aspirin may have a place; but if you become dependent on aspirin, you will never get rid of the underlying disease. So we are considering, what is the disease? Despite the fact that we think we are very intelligent, and that intelligence has shown itself in the field of knowledge, science and technology, and so on, why is it that it has not been able to solve this problem? We have evolved various forms of aspirin for dealing with the headache, but we have not been able to eradicate the disease. Would that always remain an utopia, never to become a reality? What can we try which we have not tried in the last five thousand years? Is it merely a question of trying the same thing in a better way?

It behoves us to ask the more fundamental and deeper questions which are concerned with educating oneself and perhaps educating also humanity to live more wisely. One finds it being said all over the world that human beings are the pinnacle of evolution, that we are far superior to all other forms of life which have gone before us. I think we need to question that assumption. Of course we are cleverer, we can understand more than animals, but have we used our capacities of thinking, of imagination, of planning, and so on, for the betterment of humanity, for the betterment of the earth, or have

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we been more destructive? About the damage to the earth, we are reading every day now: global warming, ecological catastrophes, and so on, but apart from the earth what have we done to our own species? No animals or plants have destroyed either other kinds of species or their own kind to the extent we have. And yet we feel we are superior, we are more intelligent!

Are we defining intelligence in terms of power? We are perhaps more powerful than the animals because we can kill them, and exploit them. If we call that intelligence, then it was not intelligent to send the British away from India. There is a biological definition given by Darwin which says intelligence is what leads to survival. Even by that limited biological definition, can we claim that we are more intelligent? Are we going towards survival or have we brought the entire earth and the environment to the brink of a holocaust which no other animal or other species did?

It will happen, for the very reason that Darwin gave, namely that a species disappears when it is not able to adapt itself to its environment and cannot live in harmony with it. Have we become too 'intelligent' for survival because survival does not require this kind of intelligence which we are cultivating. The ants and the cockroach have survived longer than us; they have not brought the world to the level of extinction. So are we really intelligent or have we just defined intelligence unintelligently? I leave you with that, a very fundamental question.

University education conditions our mind to think along certain narrow grooves. It alienates us from the ground realities of the world we are living in by compartmentalizing our knowledge. This kind of intelligence may not be the intelligence that leads to survival and therefore, may not be the true intelligence. I am not asking you to believe that. We have to investigate, find out if that is true. So there are a lot of questions we must ask if we really want to get to the root of this whole problem of conflict. We can keep on solving it at the superficial level but it becomes necessary to do so, precisely because we have not solved it at the root and therefore it never really ends.

Over the years the manifestation of the problem has grown. War is now much more dangerous than it was before, but the underlying disease is the same: the hatred between human communities from where conflict is generated. It is said that war begins in the minds of men and that is true. That is where the roots lie; and where we need to tackle it. The rest of it follows as logical causation. Just as there is causation in nature which science studies, there is also causation in our psyche. Unless we go to the root cause and eliminate it, the rest follows as a logical corollary, an inevitable sequence. Therefore, it is not mere philosophy to do this enquiry; it is an urgent necessity.

So where does this division between communities begin? It begins with saying, 'we are different from them'. Each community feels 'we are different from them'. How does the mind define and draw that

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line? That is another fundamental question. Who are the 'we' and who are 'they'? On what basis does the mind draw that line? Were the people in Pakistan our people before 1947 and we loved them as our brothers, and today, they are no longer our brothers? So is it just a matter of drawing a line on the earth or is the line here inside my head? I see that the dog crosses the border without need for any visa, the breeze blows across those borders, the forests cross the line, the mountain ranges go through. There is no such border on the earth! I realize that it is a creation of our own thinking and also, of course, of our history. Let us proceed further.

Even if I see that the other person is different from me, why does that create division? That is another question we need to examine closely. When does a difference turn into a division, and why? Difference is natural. We are all different from each other: in our age, in our wealth, in our knowledge, in our skin colour, in our size and shape. Everything in nature is different from everything else. So, difference is natural. Differentiation is also natural. If I cannot distinguish a tree from a building, there is something wrong with me. But when does that turn into a division? Is that an inevitable process or is that a psychological process created by my own mind? So, is it something existent in Nature, or is it an illusion built up by my mind?

Illusion is something which does not have an existence in Nature but is merely a creation of my own mind, my

imagination, or something to which I am giving tremendous importance when it is really not important. So, is the conflict coming from illusion or is the conflict coming from facts? The fact is we are all different from each other. Is the division also a fact, or is it a creation of my own mind, my limited form of thinking?

Is the Hindu really very different from the Muslim? That is a very major source of conflict today in our country. I am taking that as an example. Are these two human beings really different in fact, or is it they feel they are very different just because they think so? Thinking can be changed. If they find that their thinking is false, it will end. Illusion can end through the perception of the truth. If you discover that the false is false and the truth is true, then the false ends. Therefore, if the cause is rooted in illusion, the cause can be eliminated but when the cause is not rooted in illusion you cannot eliminate it. So, it is important to investigate that.

To give an analogy, if I fall down and break my bones, it causes pain. That is not a psychological pain; it is not the creation of my own mind. The sage suffers that pain as much as I do. But I also feel a lot of self-pity which the sage does not feel. So, psychological suffering has to be separated from pain, which is biological. Psychological suffering may arise from illusion, from a mental construct which has no reality, whereas the other is factual. When you examine that, you find there is desire, there is attachment, there is fear, there are all the instincts which are the same in all human beings. So, what is

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different? Just the knowledge, the superficial layer of conditioning acquired as you grow up in this life. It is different because I was born in a different family, different culture, a different country, and he was born in another. That superficial layer is called the conditioning of the mind, the knowledge acquired in this life. That alone is different.

So, the Hindu has been told something about God, he believes that and he propagates that as truth. He really does not know what God is. The Muslim has been told something else about God. He also does not know what God is, but he believes that and he propagates that as true. So, it is these illusions that divide us. If we have the humility to say to ourselves, 'I really do not know what God is', which is the truth, we would be friends inquiring together what is really meant by God! We do not know that we do not know. It is not important to say, 'I know'; it is more important to know that you do not know and to live with an exploring mind that posits the truth as the unknown. Therefore, it is important to recognize the value of doubt, to doubt one's own opinions, one's own conclusions. Otherwise, we will never have a learning mind; we will never come upon wisdom.

Peace requires a global mind which feels for the whole of the earth and the whole of humanity. That is the reality and all these divisions have come about for historical reasons and out of our own ignorance. That brings me to what the Buddha pointed out long ago. He said ignorance is the cause of sorrow;

ignorance not as lack of knowledge but as illusion. I see that these illusions run very deep, that even my feeling that I am very different from the Pakistani or the American or the Chinese is rooted in illusion. Nationalism is rooted in illusion and from there comes a lot of our division and conflict.

The root of conflict lies in illusion; therefore, conflict can be ended because illusion can be ended, and that is the motto of the Theosophical Society: Truth is the highest religion. When you discover what is true and what is false, the illusion ends. When the illusion ends, the narrowness in the mind ends. You are no longer a nationalist, you are no longer a narrow-minded Hindu; you know that you are not different from another human being who has come from another family. You see that difference only as a difference of skin colour, a difference in height, difference in the kind of food you eat, and it is not important. When you give tremendous importance to that, it creates division.

When the British came here, they looked down on the Indians because they eat with their hands and not with knife and fork. When the Indian goes there, he asks, 'why do these chaps have to eat with knife and fork when you have fingers?' Both are just opinions arising from the fact that one man was taught that and the other man was taught something else. That is all. There is nothing superior or inferior about it. So, does division arise when we attribute superiority or inferiority to a difference, which is a kind of value judgement? From where does the mind

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make that value judgement? All differences do not create division. We have not had a war between tall people and short people, at least not till now! We are not yet that stupid!!

We do sometimes see a difference only as a difference. But when you see a man doing Namaz and you see another man praying in the temple, you see more than just a difference and develop 'like and dislike'. Why does not the mind perceive that also as just a difference? When does the difference turn into a division, and why? It is a psychological process. Difference is natural; it is not psychological. If I did not notice that the man from Africa is black and the man from Europe is white, something would be wrong with my senses. But the day I say whites are superior to the blacks, I have turned into a racist and I have done away with the universal brotherhood of man! So, why does the mind say so?

If you examine that you will see that it comes because we approach things with some kind of desire in our mind. If I asked you if the peepul tree is superior to an eucalyptus tree, how would you answer that question? You would say a peepul tree is a peepul tree and an eucalyptus tree is an eucalyptus tree. What do you mean by superior? If you want shade, the peepul tree is superior. If you want eucalyptus oil, then the eucalyptus tree is superior. But if you do not want anything, what is superior? So I see that this feeling of superiority is connected with my wanting

things to be favourable to me, which is the essence of the ego process.

When we approach life egoistically, then our nationality, our religion, is used to build our ego, to find an identity. So can we cut out the psychological and remain with only facts? It is necessary to be aware of the danger of this psychological process, which means to be aware of facts and not to be trapped in illusion. Is not that intelligence? Because if you do not have that intelligence, you get trapped in illusion, you get drawn into division, you start hating and destroy love, destroy friendship. Even brothers who have grown together very closely, or intimate friends, fall apart fighting with each other because one does not have that wisdom. This ego process comes out of our own approach to life because we give tremendous importance to what we receive from the trees, from this country, from our friend.

The root of all conflict, both in our personal life and out there in society, lies in this ego-process within human consciousness. The ego is essentially a beggar, always asking for something for itself in every relationship. From there arises like and dislike, division and therefore conflict. We must find out if it is possible to approach everyone and everything like a true friend, not seeking anything from that relationship. Only then is there a relationship of true love in which there is no division and, therefore, no conflict. ✧

# Morality and Devotion

WAYNE GATFIELD

THE concept of morality is sorely outdated in modern society, so much so that young people are ashamed to admit their purity. It is thought of as natural to be involved in some kind of sexual activity from a very young age. This is mainly due to the fact that most religions will impose moral rules on their adherents without explaining the reason behind them. So the younger people finding more pleasure in their sexual pursuits than in the outmoded rituals and half-hearted sermons of their preachers will naturally rebel against the authority that attempts to administer such rules. The only way that people can be convinced to live a purer life is if they are shown that there is something better and that allowing themselves to give in to their baser emotions actually prevents them from experiencing this superior quality of existence.

Theosophy teaches us that the struggle we have with our lower nature is due largely to the actions of the Atlanteans towards the end of their time on this planet, when they had degenerated into sex magic and various perverted practices which are discussed at length in *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. II.410):

Nor was the curse of Karma called down upon them for seeking natural union, as all the mindless animal-world does in its proper seasons; but, for abusing the creative power, for desecrating the divine gift, and wasting the life-essence for no purpose except bestial personal gratification.

That this obsession with sexuality does not bring ultimate happiness nor does it improve the quality of life is a pointer to the fact that contentment must be found elsewhere. There is no way that physical processes can bring about a spiritual state of mind as believed by those who practise the lower aspects of the Tantra, for example. We must 'renounce this passing frame' before we can begin to live a transcendental divine life. It is only in this way that we can open the door to a much wider and more fulfilling view of the world and our fellow human beings.

To become 'recipient of the world soul', as Emerson said, we should learn to be devoted to the Highest within us. Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā* states that we should think only of 'Him' and that knowledge of 'Him' is the only thing worth knowing. If we think of Kṛṣṇa as the Higher Self then this has a less personal

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Mr Wayne Gatfield is President of Bolton Lodge, in the English Section of the Theosophical Society.

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interpretation and we can begin to understand that all that we learn in this life and all that we strive for in a material sense for the 'passing frame' is just a poor substitute for knowledge of our spiritual selves, which is the only kind of knowledge that is of permanent use. All else is just to adorn a temporary shadow.

Morality therefore should stem from a real preference for something higher and better within us that prompts us to discard all those things that prevent its full manifestation within us. There is no other way that people can be convinced to abandon their materialistic ways. As said, if they find more pleasure in the things of the world they will not abandon them under any circumstances. If the spiritual Path seems to them cold and austere they will not want to leave behind those things that give them happiness to follow a regime that they imagine leads to gloom and alienation from those friends and pastimes that have given them so much satisfaction for so many years. It is not true that most people feel a dissatisfaction with their lifestyles; on the whole people are contented to live a materialistic life; even if it is fraught with some suffering they will accept this as part of the process of living.

It is unlikely that these will leave their well trodden paths to follow a spiritual lifestyle. It is usually those who feel the need for something else, who have grown tired or bored with their lives, that will look for a different way of life. Or those who have suffered some tragedy. But even in this latter case it all depends upon the individual's reaction to the event; there is

a good chance that they may be embittered and pushed further into material avenues of thought and action. For those who are mentally ripe it all may become a learning process and a way to unfold through pain and the destruction of pain as *Light on the Path* tells us. It may indeed show us that nothing out of the Eternal can really help us.

A Hindu teaching says that just as we may dream that we are beheaded and then awaken to find that it never really happened, so is life in general. Terrible things may happen to us on the level of our lower nature — but our Higher Self is untouched and if we are devoted to and focused in the unchanging dimension to our Being we will realize that nothing really ever happens to the True Man or Woman. This kind of realization helped many of the adherents to different religions to withstand tortures and torments of various kinds. In many cases it may have been a belief that a personal God was helping them, but the effects were the same. For example the Christian Saint, Anne, was gored to death by a bull in the Roman arena but when asked, whilst dying, whether she had felt any pain when attacked by the animal, she replied: 'What bull?' She was so immersed in the 'love of God' or the Infinite that she had not noticed the incident. Gautama Buddha also says in the 'Diamond Sutra' that in a previous life the Prince of Kalinga had tortured him in the most terrible ways but because he was not focused in his lower self he was able to withstand the suffering and furthermore to have no feelings of

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hatred towards the perpetrator. It is a case of 'forgive them for they know not what they do' as Jesus was reported to have said. The tormentors are guided by ignorance and do not know that karmically they are due to suffer much more than their victims, who in the long run will receive compensation for their pain. So they truly do not know what they are doing!

We are on this earth for only a few fleeting years in this particular personality and therefore should not waste our time accumulating things, physically, mentally and emotionally that apply only to our life in this 'vale of tears'. Jesus in the gospels tells us not to store our treasures on earth where the thief may steal them or the moth and rust corrupt, but to store our treasures in heaven where the thief cannot steal them and moth and rust cannot corrupt. He is saying that what we regard as treasures are just so many baubles, but the real treasures are those that belong to the realm of the Spirit and are permanent — those things that we take from each personality that become a part of our real Self and help us to grow nearer to the Source of all things. Most of us do live in a fool's paradise, spending the few precious years of our lives pandering to a passing shadow.

Another reason that we are so confused and divorced from any genuine feeling for most of the time is due to our alienation from nature. One of H. P. Blavatsky's main reasons for producing *The Secret Doctrine* was to assign to man his true place in nature. We are as much a product of nature as a tree and we have reached a stage in our development when

self-consciousness has emerged and we can proceed on our Spiritual Journey by self-induced and self-devised efforts. There is a wealth of meaning in those few words. No book can convey the reality of the Path to anyone and indeed words can trap us and imprison us and root our feet to the spot so we become mere intellectual jugglers, seeming to be intelligent, but inwardly dry. If we take the view that books and words are only pointers, we may begin to discern their import. If we set off on a journey, signposts are essential at certain times or we would become hopelessly lost, but the actual walking we have to do ourselves. We do not stand in one spot admiring the signpost. Gautama Buddha said the same thing in the teaching of the raft. We need a raft to cross a river, but once across we leave it behind as it would then become a burden. It is just the same with intellectual teachings; they become a burden if we cling to them. Material books are all inferior to the Book of Nature wherein all that we know is contained, if we but learn to look for it. We do this by a sympathy with nature and by helping 'her' instead of hindering. Nature will regard us as a co-worker and reveal secrets to our inner 'eye' if we learn to commune with 'her'. *The Voice of the Silence* by H. P. Blavatsky puts this poetically:

Help Nature and work on with her; and  
Nature will regard thee as one of her  
creators and make obeisance.

And she will open wide before thee the  
portals of her secret chambers, lay bare  
before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the

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very depths of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied by the hand of matter she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit — the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms.

Then will she show thee the means and way, the first gate and the second, the third, up to the very seventh. And then, the goal — beyond which lie, bathed in the sunlight of the Spirit, glories untold, unseen by any save the eye of Soul.

Remember that books are human inventions and are meant to convey certain ideas and images by the use of shapes on paper. The ideographs of the Chinese and the Indian Sanskrit language express far more than their English counterparts, so that the translation of many sacred Buddhist texts give only a few hints as to the real meaning. We have to fill in the rest using our intuition. Words can often mislead and ideas be twisted out of all recognition by the lower mind but the intuition, once developed, can never err.

Devotion then can never be towards words or images; it is to something beyond all formulation and imagining. In the same way morality is not a set of man-made and imposed rules that a minority try to inflict on the majority by coercion or violence. This will only cause irritation and rebellion. True morality is the heart light that guides and tempers the soul and shows us what is real and what hampers us from the full manifestation of the Spirit in us, what prevents us from breaking down all the barriers that hide our Oneness with all things and what it is that transforms lust

into love. For in this world the two are certainly confused to the detriment of society in general.

So we give our allegiance to all that is temporary, whether that is another person or something material like money, fame or power or even a ‘guru’ or god and in the end we meet with disappointment. Yet within us there is something that will not, and cannot, give disappointment because it is beyond all such emotions and any designations. Though to our limited intellects it may appear to be nothing, it is in fact everything; and if we draw upon it, we find it to be exhaustless. But it does not appeal to our senses or emotions, so it will not be of interest to most people, who live their lives based upon physical, mental or moral experience. It will be difficult to explain to them that they must give up their lives to truly live; i.e., give up their limited material lives to find true freedom beyond self-made or man-made constrictions. The road to freedom begins and ends with the mind. We commence with intellectual knowledge and eventually our mind is illumined by the Spiritual part of our nature and goes through a kind of alchemical process where it is transformed into a pure devotee of what is natural in us — in contrast to the external images, ideas and concepts pushed on to us by the mistaken views of science, religion, philosophy — all reflected in the education system. We must be aware that brain–mind knowledge is a stage we pass through and we must not become rooted in that particular way of looking at life, which is in many ways erroneous and

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misleading. It is all about becoming real, seeing things as they are and not 'through a glass darkly'. If we merely gather information, then we are filling our heads with concepts that have no effect on the way we behave or conduct ourselves, unless we change them into active ways of life. But even then we are merely imitating what we have read and not acting spontaneously from our spiritual centre. Zen teaching says that when we start on the journey we see a tree as a tree, and then as we progress we see that the tree is not really a tree at all; but then at the highest level we see the tree as a tree again. This is because we have passed through the intellectual conceptualizing

phase and see the tree as it is in reality.

So it is beneficial to devote ourselves to the highest that we can conceive of and to trust that this devotion will one day take us beyond any conceptions. Morally we need to develop an awareness of what are the barriers to reaching that awareness and sacrificing them in the fire of a more spiritual understanding. We will eventually see through the masks that conjure up the illusion of separateness that 'weans us from the rest' and we will at last awaken to the true meaning of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity regardless of race, creed, sex, caste and colour.

May the Masters of Mercy speed that day on for all of us. ✧

For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

William Wordsworth  
*Tintern Abbey*, X.II.88–102

# Mrs Besant's Poems

C. JINARĀJADĀSA

THE other day a correspondent in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published a poem with the refrain: 'Whatever is is best', and attributed it to Mrs Besant. The poem is well known, but is by Ella Wheeler Wilcox; certainly the martial and reforming spirit of Mrs Besant would not endorse the bureaucratic doctrine that anywhere in the cosmos 'whatever is is best'. Mrs Besant has, however, written three, if not a few more, poems, and though they were written forty-two years ago, they are not without interest to explain her life today.

I well remember my great surprise when I discovered these poems ten years ago. No one in England was aware that she had ever written any poems, and I had heard nothing of her poetic ability in verse, though every one knew how wonderful a poet she was in thought and diction in oratory. One day, dipping into books in a friend's library, I chanced upon a book of hymns edited by the Revd Charles Voisey; in the book were three poems by Annie Besant.

In 1872, the young Mrs Besant was being tossed on storms of spiritual doubt, and finally felt the need to free herself from the crude forms of Christian thought,

rigidly held then by orthodox Christians as part of Christ's teaching. In 1872, there was preaching in London at the 'Theistic Church', by the Revd Charles Voisey, a clergyman of the Church of England, who had been expelled by his Church for advanced opinions on Christianity, which are the commonplaces of Christian thought today. An acquaintance between Mr and Mrs Voisey and Mrs Besant grew into friendship; Mrs Besant says in her *Autobiography*: 'I found their Theism was free from the defects that had revolted me in Christianity, and they opened up to me new views of religion.' Three years later, Mr Voisey published his *Revised Prayer Book*, and to it Mrs Besant contributed the three following poems. The first is now well known in India, because Mrs Besant has so well lived her own words, 'Brave action is the only prayer.'

## Prayer

Who pants and struggles to be free,  
Who strives for others' liberty,  
Who, failing, still works patiently,  
He truly prays.

Who, loving all, dare none despise,  
But with the worst can sympathize,

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Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, October 1956. The poems were first printed in 1917 in *The Bombay Chronicle*.

## Mrs Besant's Poems

Who for a truth a martyr dies,  
He truly prays.

Who, when a truth to him is known,  
Embraces it through smile or frown;  
Who dares to hold it though alone,  
He truly prays.

In musing, strength must come to dare,  
Petitions are but empty air,  
Brave action is the only prayer,  
Thus learn to pray.

The next poem is equally interesting, and can well be made a consecrating song of dedication for a patriot's child. It breathes the martial spirit with which Mrs Besant has inspired Young India today; and surely, as she has been working for Young India, again and again the thought must have been hers which is in the line: 'The banner that we bear shall tomorrow be thine.'

### For The Naming of a Child

To the joy, to the fullness and glory of  
life,  
To the sorrows and pleasures, the rest and  
the strife,  
Welcome, young soldier!  
Thrice welcome, O child, that we make  
our own,  
Whom we crown here today with  
Humanity's crown,  
Hailing thee brother.  
We charge thee keep stainless the name  
that we give,  
We charge thee be fearless, and honestly  
live,  
Be true to thine own heart;  
Be ready to follow the truth, though alone,

If the world smiles, it is well, but fear not  
its frown,  
Young soldier of freedom.

The hope that we work for, on thee it will  
shine,  
The banner that we bear shall tomorrow  
be thine,  
To carry on further:  
We enrolled thee today, may thy manhood  
still see  
Thy name in the ranks of the true and the  
free;  
Welcome, young soldier!

The last of the three poems brings out another phase of Mrs Besant, for, as we are well aware today, religion and politics are the same to her in spiritual value, and political liberty is only a reflection here below of that spiritual liberty which man is driven to discover in the process of evolution. No title is given to the poem, which reads like a chant from one of the Upanishad-s:

Never yet has been broken  
The silence eternal;  
Never yet has been spoken  
In accents supernal  
God's thought of Himself.

We grope in our blindness,  
The darkness enfolds Him:  
O fatherly kindness!  
That he who beholds Him  
May see with the soul.

Still the veil is unriven  
That hides the All-Holy,  
Still no token is given  
That satisfies wholly  
The cravings of man.

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But, unhasting, advances  
The march of the ages:  
The truth-seekers' glances  
Unrolling the pages  
Of God's revelation.

Impatience unheeding,  
Time, slowly revolving,  
Unresting, unspeeding,  
Is ever evolving  
Fresh truth about God.

Human speech has not broken  
The stillness supernal,  
Yet there ever is spoken,  
*Through* silence eternal,  
With growing distinctness  
God's thought of Himself.

It is remarkable that in these three

poems we have the aspiration on the one hand for heroic action on behalf of humanity, and on the other for the realization of 'God's thought of Himself'. Since the poems were written in 1875, forty-two years of storm and stress have passed, and heroic action, with aspiration for realization of the great Self of All, have been as the warp and the woof of Mrs Besant's life. The poems show how, if only Mrs Besant had cared to turn aside to poetry, what she might have accomplished. They also show why Mrs Besant is recognized as the greatest living orator, for when a soul is a hero in every fibre of her being, and an artist in every one of her instincts, that soul in action cannot but be poet and prophet, patriot and leader.

Is the world a dream?  
Is it intrinsic? Tell me! —  
Neither intrinsic,  
Nor dream, as far as I know.  
A Something, a Nothing in  
One.

*Kokin Wakashu*

# HPB and CWL

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

A NUMBER of theosophical pioneers, coming as they did from different backgrounds, were able to establish a deep and enduring connection with the profound purpose at the heart of the Theosophical Society. In spite of many difficulties and struggles, over many years, they found within themselves the necessary strength, understanding and equanimity to continue in their work for the Society. They were also able to inspire several generations of its members, thus laying a strong foundation for the future work of the organization. One of such pioneers was Charles Webster Leadbeater.

From the year he met her, in 1884, until her passing in 1891, the attitude of Madame Blavatsky to C. W. Leadbeater was always one of support, encouragement and affection. Her letters and messages to him, although few in number, express her warm and sincere regard for this young clergyman who travelled with her to India in 1884 and who devoted his life and energy to the cause of Theosophy and to the work of the Theosophical Society.

CWL was ordained a priest in the Church of England on 21 December 1879 and took residence in the village of

Liphook, with his mother, as Assistant Stipendiary Curate in the Parish Church of Bramshott, Hampshire. At Church he organized several activities for young people. He was also very interested in psychic phenomena and conducted his own investigations in the Scottish Highlands.

After he had read *The Occult World* by A. P. Sinnett he corresponded with the author and eventually met him in London. He was eager to meet Madame Blavatsky also, which he did in October 1884. In his short autobiographical book *How Theosophy Came to Me* he recalls their first meeting which was marked by HPB's outspoken sincerity:

Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott both accompanied our party to Mr Sinnett's house, and stayed there until a late hour, Madame Blavatsky expressing vigorous condemnation of the inefficiency of the officials in not managing the [London Lodge] meeting better. I was of course presented to her, and Mr Sinnett took occasion to tell her of my letter to the spiritualistic journal *Light* [which HPB later incorporated into her Scrapbook] on the subject of the spirit Ernest's disavowal

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**Mr Pedro Oliveira**, now a member of the Australian Section of the TS, has worked at Adyar and elsewhere.

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of our Masters. When she heard that little story she looked at me very searchingly and remarked:

‘I don’t think much of the clergy, for I find most of them hypocritical, bigoted and stupid; but that was a brave action, and I thank you for it. You have made a good beginning; perhaps you may do something yet.’

You may be very sure that after that I missed no opportunity of attending any meeting at which she was present; and though I was far too shy to push myself forward and ask questions, I nevertheless listened eagerly to every word that fell from her lips, and I think that in that way I learnt a very great deal.

Significantly, CWL also recalled another aspect of his impression about his first meeting with HPB: her capacity to see through people, to perceive them as they are, beyond appearances:

The impression that she made was indescribable. I can well understand that some people were afraid of her. She looked straight *through* one; she obviously saw everything there was in one — and there are men who do not like that. I have heard her make sometimes very disconcerting revelations about those to whom she spoke.

In March 1884, before CWL had met HPB for the first time, he had written a letter to Master KH offering to become his disciple and asking some related questions. He had sought the help of William Eglinton, a respected medium

who had lived in India for a short while and who both HPB and the Mahatmas admired. The letter was sent through one of Eglinton’s ‘controls’, ‘Ernest’. In his reply to CWL, on 31 October 1884, the Master pointed out that although the letter itself had never reached him, due to the agency employed, its contents had. He then proceeded to reply to CWL’s questions and suggested that he should go to Adyar for a few months. CWL then decided to show the Master’s letter to HPB on the very eve of her departure to India. He describes the events that then ensued:

Even at that hour a number of devoted friends were gathered in Mrs Oakley’s drawing-room to say farewell to Madame Blavatsky, who seated herself in an easy-chair by the fireside. She was talking brilliantly to those who were present, and rolling one of her eternal cigarettes, when suddenly her right hand was jerked out towards the fire in a very peculiar fashion, and lay palm upwards. She looked down at it in surprise, as I did myself, for I was standing close to her, leaning with an elbow on the mantel-piece: and several of us saw quite clearly a sort of whitish mist form in the palm of her hand and then condense into a piece of folded paper, which she at once handed to me, saying: ‘There is your answer.’ Every one in the room crowded round, of course, but she sent me away outside to read it, saying that I must not let anyone see its contents. It was a very short note and ran as follows:

‘Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it

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was *my desire* you should go to Adyar *immediately*, I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th, if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know that you are going, and may the blessing of our Lord and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

‘Greeting to you, *my new chela*.

KH’

The significance of this event cannot be overestimated. In a letter to Col. Olcott, before his arrival in London in September 1888, one of the Masters stated the following in regard to HPB: ‘*With occult matters she has everything to do. . . . She is our direct agent.*’ Therefore it was HPB who mediated the crucial contact that caused CWL to go to Adyar as a chela of the Master. Given the many testimonies about the integrity and uncompromising honesty of HPB, both as a person as well as an advanced Occultist, it would be simply impossible to entertain the notion that she would have acted towards CWL in the way she did were he not worthy of it.

He eventually met her in Egypt, travelled with her and her group to Ceylon, where he took the *Panchasīla* and became a Buddhist, and finally arrived at Adyar in December 1884. HPB, due to extreme ill-health, left Adyar in March 1885 and from 1886 until 1889 CWL helped Col. Olcott in his work for Buddhists in Ceylon. Mary K. Neff, in an article in *The Theosophist* (August 1928),

recollects CWL’s work during that time:

In 1885 he acted as Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, succeeding Damodar K. Mavalankar; but in 1886 he went to Ceylon to work among the Buddhists. Mr. Jinarājādāsa tells how he tramped from village to village on Sundays, teaching at the Buddhist Sunday Schools which he had organized; how he aided his (C.J.’s) brother and later himself, ‘helping them in their school work and doing all that could be done by an elder friend to help a younger’. It was he who founded the institution which is now Ānanda College, Galle; and it was while he laboured there that he erected the slab at Vijayānanda Vihāra. During his years in Ceylon, he went as a delegate to the Conventions at Adyar and spent there the three months of vacation from school work labouring at Headquarters. In 1888 he arrived from Ceylon to become a permanent resident at Adyar, and took charge of *The Theosophist*; on 28 November 1889, he sailed for Europe, taking with him his brother of earlier years, his pupil later, and now his co-worker; thus accomplishing his last and perhaps greatest work for Buddhism in this incarnation, by giving the Theosophical Society its Buddhist Vice-President, Mr C. Jinarājādāsa.

While in Ceylon he received a letter from HPB from Elberfeld, dated 23 June 1886. He had asked her to forward another letter of his to the Master, which she declined, saying: ‘I really do not take it upon myself to send it. I *cannot* do it, my dear friend; I swore not to deliver any

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more letters and Master has given me the right and privilege to refuse it. So that I have put it aside and send it to you back as I received it.' However, when CWL opened the envelope containing HPB's letter he saw the following message, written in blue pencil across the writing of the last page:

Take courage. I am pleased with you. Keep your own counsel, and believe in your better intuitions. The little man has *failed* and will reap his reward. Silence meanwhile.

KH

The subject of HPB's letter was the problems created by 'Bawajee', who was short in stature. His family name was S. Krishnamachary, a young Tamil Brahmin from Tanjore. He had left for Europe with HPB and Dr Franz Hartmann and Miss Mary Flynn on 30 March 1885. Mr Jinarājādāsa says in a note to the publication of the letter in the February 1927 issue of *The Theosophist* that 'Bawajee was sent to assist HPB, but he got his head turned by the adulation given to him by his western admirers. Finally, he suffered from such excessive "swelled head" that he considered himself superior to HPB'.

In the letter, while describing to CWL the extent of Bawajee's fall, HPB makes two references to CWL as a chela (disciple) of the Master:

Bawajee is entirely against us and bent on the ruin of the TS. A month ago he was in London and ready to sail back to India.

. . . Moreover, he has slandered persistently Subba Row, Damodar, Olcott and everyone at Adyar. He made many Europeans lose confidence in them. Subba Row, he says, never said a truth in his life to a European; he bamboozles them always and is a liar; Damodar is a great liar also; he alone (Bawajee) knows the Masters, and what They are. In short, he makes of our Mahatmas inaccessible, impersonal Beings, so far away that no one can reach Them!!! At the same time he contradicts himself: to one he says he was 10 y. [years] with Mahatma KH; to another three years, again he went several times to Tibet and saw the Master only from afar when he entered and came out of the temple. He lies most awfully. The truth is that he (B.) has never been to Tibet and has never seen his Master 100 miles off. NOW, I have the assurance of it from my Master Himself. He was a chela on probation. When he came to Bombay to the Headquarters, your Master ordered me to tell all He accepted Krishnaswami, and had sent him to live with us and work for the TS. . . .

When I showed him Master's writing in which your Mahatma corroborated my statement and affirmed that he (Bawajee) 'had never seen HIM or go to Tibet' — Mr B. coolly said it was a spook letter, for the Mahatma could neither write letters, nor would He ever say anything about his chelas. . . .

She ends the letter with a message of encouragement and affection for CWL: 'Good bye, my dear fellow, don't lose

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courage however. The Masters are with us and will protect all those who stand firm by Them. Write to Ostende, poste restante to me, I will be there tomorrow. Yours ever faithfully, H. P. Blavatsky.'

Writing in *The Path* (December 1886), HPB gives rather graphic statistics about how difficult it is to tread the spiritual Path, which helps us to understand the 'Bawajee' episode, referred to above: 'During the eleven years of the existence of the Theosophical Society I have known, out of the seventy-two regularly accepted chela-s on probation and the hundreds of *lay* candidates — only three who have not hitherto failed, and *one only* who had a full success.'

In the book, *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. I, CWL comments on the influence HPB had on him and on others that came into close contact with her, while also expressing his gratitude to her:

It is not the method of great spiritual teachers to make everything easy for us. I first came into touch with occultism through Madame Blavatsky. She gave occasional crumbs of knowledge to her people, but she constantly applied rigorous tests to them. It was a drastic method, but those who really meant business remained with her, while others very soon abandoned her. She cured us of conventionality, but there was much searching of hearts among her followers in the process. Many people said she did things which a great spiritual teacher ought not to do. My own feeling was always this: 'Madame Blavatsky has this occult knowledge, and I am going to get that

knowledge from her, if she will give it to me. Whatever else she does is her affair. I am not here to criticize her; to her own Master she stands or falls, and not to me. She may have her own reasons for what she does; I do not know anything about that. She has this knowledge, she speaks of these Masters. I intend to get this knowledge; I intend, if it is humanly possible, to reach the feet of those Masters.' I gave up everything else to follow her lead, and I have never regretted the confidence I placed in Madame Blavatsky. If one is critical by nature it is his karma; he will learn much more slowly than the man who is prepared to accept things reasonably.

After his arrival in London from Ceylon, at the end of 1889, she wrote a dedication on his copy of *The Voice of the Silence*, a book which had been published in that year: 'To my sincerely appreciated and beloved brother and friend, C. W. Leadbeater, H. P. Blavatsky'. And as if to ratify her feelings towards him for posterity, she wrote in his personal copy of *The Key to Theosophy* which she presented to him in 1891, the year she died: 'To my old and well-beloved friend, Charles Leadbeater, from his fraternally, H. P. Blavatsky.'

As Mr Jinarājādāsa pointed out in his article 'What HPB Thought of C. W. Leadbeater' (*The Theosophist*, February 1927), 'she did not call every Theosophist round her a "well-beloved friend".' The evidence presented in this article suggests that HPB considered CWL not only worthy of encouragement in his work for

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the Theosophical Society but also as a dedicated servant of the Elder Brethren who work for the regeneration of the human consciousness.

The young man HPB brought to Adyar in 1884 went on to become an international lecturer for the Society, a prolific writer as well as a seer, and to him was given to discover, in 1909, on the beach at Adyar a young boy, J. Krishnamurti, whom he predicted one day would become a spiritual teacher and a great orator. Some of his views were controversial, as were the views of many a theosophical pioneer when looking at life beyond the scales of human conditioning. Through his investigations on the subtler realms of existence and their logical presentation, countless people, over the past one

hundred years, in many countries, have found inspiration, solace and meaning that moved them to lead nobler lives of service and self-responsibility. His work helped the light of Theosophy to travel far and wide in the world.

As stated previously, when CWL first met HPB she said: 'You have made a good beginning; perhaps you may do something yet.' She was right for he was always ready to serve. When he became a Bishop in Sydney, in 1916, he chose as his episcopal motto the Latin expression *semper paratus*, 'always ready', ready to do the Master's work. He was one who endured until the end, for he had seen God's plan, and could not help 'working for it and making himself one with it, because it is so glorious, so beautiful'. ✧

**Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor. But, in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. . . .**

**The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.**

H. P. Blavatsky

# The Great *Tirukkural* and Theosophical Teachings

S. RAMU

THE Adyar Library and Research Centre has published its own large edition of the *Tirukkural* with English translation. The editor has this to say in the preface:

The *Tirukkural* of Tiruvalluvar (the author c. AD 1) is the most outstanding and inspiring popular work on general ethics, political principles and happy married life. It is the greatest treasure-house of wisdom in Tamil and the gift of Tamilnadu to the world. It is on par with the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Dhammapada*.

The beauty of the *Tirukkural* is seen in its crisp presentation of many elements of profound wisdom, neatly organized in 10 couplets each under 133 subject-chapters, thus totalling 1330 couplets. 'Tiru' is the auspicious prefix in Tamil for anything revered or respected and *Kural* is the couplet metre followed in this work. There are many *Kural-s* that deal with worldly wisdom but I am not covering them in this article since the aim of this study is to look at aspects of spiritual wisdom.

In Tamil, the letter '«' (as A in English) is the first alphabet and all other

letters are understood to have been derived from it. The very first *Kural* in the invocation chapter, says, just like '«' is the origin of all other letters, there is one Ādi Bhagavān, who is the origin of the universe; thus reinforcing the Theosophical message of the unity of all, originating from a single divine source. The sixth *Kural* in this first chapter crisply and clearly says that immortality (transcending above all limitations) is only for those who still their five senses and walk on the path of truth and righteousness. In *Kural* 21 of Chapter 3, Tiruvalluvar exhorts the greatness of renunciation as the one supreme quality that all scriptures affirm.

The ten *Kural-s* in Chapter 4 (heading: Dharma) most emphatically make many inspiring statements justifiably on the importance of dharma. The author starts challenging the disciple to answer whether there is anything higher than dharma. Dharma secures all else that is worth accomplishing. In the next *Kural*, he answers the question that nothing is higher than dharma and to forget it is to be wrought with the greatest harm. The rest

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of the eight *Kural-s* give many more inspiring messages on dharma — practise dharma on all occasions and at all times, utilizing every opportunity to do so; dharma is purity of mind, all else is but pompous show; conduct that steers clear of every desire, wrath and offensive behaviour is dharma; dharma never fails, and sustains even after death, and one must practise dharma now and not postpone it; dharma effectively blocks re-birth; true happiness springs only from dharma and all else leads to sorrow; our law (dharma) must be to do good and harm nothing.

Chapter 8 is dedicated to Loving Kindness, the most important quality of Brotherhood, from a Theosophist's point of view. Here are some samples of statements on loving kindness: 'Those who are full of themselves cannot love. ("Love is where the self is not" — J. Krishnamurti); the purpose of evolution through many incarnations is for the fulfilment of love; the joy of heaven is but the fruit of righteous life rooted in love; there is no benefit from one's outward conduct if one's heart is devoid of love; if love does not dwell in you, you are just a bundle of bones clad in skin.' Elsewhere, humility and loving words are mentioned as the only true treasures.

Chapter 11 has many strong statements on ingratitude and glorifying statements on gratitude and readiness to help without expecting anything in return. Chapter 12 deals with equity. In this chapter, emphases are on impartiality as a necessary element of equity, holding the scale

unmindful of prosperity or adversity for oneself, ruin caused by even one iniquitous thought, the wise are known for being like a well-poised balance and treating others' rights as one's own.

No student of Theosophy would have missed studying about the importance of self-control in one's conduct as to the mind and in action, given by the Master. Chapter 13 deals with self-control, though with a bit of generalization, unlike the way self-control is dealt with in *At the Feet of the Master*. But the essence is the same and the emphasis in the *Tirukkural* is on self-control in general with some added references to control of the tongue (speech). Tiruvalluvar includes the virtue of 'withdrawing the five senses like a tortoise' (*Gitā*) as part of self-control. Again, Chapter 14 deals with right conduct in a generalized way. Harmony is an essential element of Brotherhood and none whose relationship is marked by disharmony can claim to be a true student of Theosophy. Tiruvalluvar says that even learned people who cannot move in harmony with the world are but learned fools. Chapter 16, though with the heading 'Patience', also deals with the related virtues of endurance, forgiveness, tolerance and forbearance. One inspiring *Kural* herein is very insightful which says that like the earth bears and sustains those who dig her to any depth, we should bear with those who slander us, and that forgiveness is the crowning virtue.

Students of Theosophy are often cautioned against envy, as a danger against progress. Chapter 17, in a

## The Great *Tirukkural* and Theosophical Teachings

generalized manner, deals with the virtue of freedom from envy. One telling message in *Kural* 165, is ‘the envious need no enemies for their downfall because in their envy they have their mighty foe’ and the actions of the wise are never influenced by envy. Hindu mythology has it that fortune is bestowed by Goddess Lakshmi who emerged as one of the many auspicious outcomes of the ‘Churning of the Milky Ocean’ and misfortune comes from ‘Moodevi’ who emerged before Lakshmi, as one of many inauspicious things and is sarcastically called the elder sister. A *Kural* in this chapter says Goddess Lakshmi forsakes the envious in the care of the elder sister. Of course, the Churning of the Milky Ocean should be treated symbolically as the churning of our consciousness (*chit*) through introspection, etc., to remove its impure contents and purify *chit*. (Also: ‘The contents of consciousness make what consciousness is’ — J. Krishnamurti).

Slander and backbiting are known dangers pointed out to students of Theosophy to beware of. Chapter 19 condemns slander and backbiting in no unequivocal terms. Tiruvalluvar has to go to the extent of contradicting his earlier statement on the need for talking sweetly, when he says here to talk your bitterest to one’s face than indulge in wanton slander. He is very forthright in this chapter when he makes many strong statements such as: ‘One may be guilty of many wrongful deeds, but no one should be guilty of indulging in slandering another person; more heinous

than any sin is the deceitful smile of a slanderer.’ Tiruvalluvar shares his utter anguish on slander when he says in the last *Kural* in this chapter: ‘How could Mother Earth bear the slanderers, perhaps great patience is her virtue!’

The true Theosophist is a philanthropist. Chapter 23, though with a generalized heading, ‘Liberality’, deals with the virtues of charity, the joy of abating others’ suffering through philanthropy, and condemnation of miserliness in not helping the needy and the poor. In a spirited way, *Kural* 226 says that when you help the indigent poor, it is charity rendered unto yourself (perhaps, implying noble karma).

There is no Theosophy or any other wisdom if there is no compassion. Chapter 25, with the heading ‘Compassion’, deals again with compassion in a general manner but there are some inspiring messages. One such statement is ‘compassion is the pivot of all tenets’; others are ‘freedom from the dread of sin is only for those who are compassionate to all living beings’, and ‘the unfeeling are the unredeemed’.

Chapter 26 has many things to say on total abstinence from eating meat, which should inspire us further to propagate the virtues of vegetarianism. Perhaps, continuing from the earlier chapter, a *Kural* here says that meat-eaters cannot be compassionate. The author poses a question and defines sin as ‘what is sin but eating flesh?’ One *Kural* says, ‘do you realize that meat is got by wounding, and if you do, you cannot but restrain from eating

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meat'. *Kural-s* that should be heartening to students of Theosophy are those that say: 'Far nobler than thousand oblations is abstaining from eating meat', and 'The whole cosmos would fold its hand in reverence to one who kills not and abjures flesh.'

There is no religion (Dharma) higher than Truth. Chapter 30 is dedicated to 'Truth'. Some interesting messages in the *Kural-s* here are: 'Practise Truth, you need not practise anything else', 'Truth leads one to every other virtue', 'Water cleanses the body, Truth cleanses the soul', 'Truth is the only lamp needed', 'In all the scriptures I have read, there is no virtue greater than Truth'.

Renunciation of the ego is a basic qualification and cannot be overemphasized for living a Theosophic life. Chapter 35 lucidly deals with the importance of self-effacement and removing attachment. Tiruvalluvar points out that suffering seizes men of desire, caused often by what one is attached to, and suffering ceases with renunciation. Until one renounces, one gets entangled in endless births and deaths. He encourages early renunciation too, thus breaking the myth of associating old age with renunciation, the subduing of senses and giving up all cravings. 'Kill out desire' teaches Theosophy. A *Kural* herein says that clinging leads to delusion. Another firm message is to axe the 'I' and 'mine' to enter the abode of the gods. A *Kural* also encourages us to seek the company of those who are free from desire and who

have freed themselves from attachments. Chapter 37 is dedicated to 'Destruction of Desire'.

'True Knowledge' a Theosophist must seek, which is the heading of Chapter 35 of the *Tirukkural*. Tiruvalluvar comes straight to the point shared by Theosophists, when he says: 'Out of ignorance which makes things unreal look deceptively real, springs the wretched cycle of births.'

The first of the three sections of the *Tirukkural*, which deals with Dharma, ends with Chapter 38 which has the heading 'Fate' (or Destiny). Having said all that he has to say on using one's own efforts in practising Dharma, Tiruvalluvar does not rule out the invisible and unknowable forces beyond human intelligence and efforts.

The second section of the *Tirukkural*, from Chapter 39 to 108 is on worldly wisdom for all — kings, ministers, nobles, leaders, administrators, traders, healers, and many others.

The third and last section, from Chapter 109 to 133, gives ample coverage of the elements of conjugal relationship; some *Kural-s* contain a touch of sensuality, interesting and helpful to those who seek fulfilment of such type.

The *Tirukkural* aims to be helpful to all who want to understand the three Purushartha-s — Dharma, Artha (material) and Kāma, in line with an Indian tradition that speaks of this Trivarga of life on Earth, leaving Moksha mostly aside for those inclined towards the *nivṛtti mārga*.

## *Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom*

ONCE when I was living in the heart of a pomegranate, I heard a seed saying, ‘Someday I shall become a tree, and the wind will sing in my branches, and the sun will dance on my leaves, and I shall be strong and beautiful through all the seasons.’

Then another seed spoke and said, ‘When I was as young as you, I too held such views; but now that I can weigh and measure things, I see that my hopes were vain.’

And a third seed spoke also, ‘I see in us nothing that promises so great a future.’

And a fourth said, ‘But what a mockery our life would be, without a greater future!’

Said a fifth, ‘Why dispute what we shall be, when we know not even what we are.’

But a sixth replied, ‘Whatever we are, that we shall continue to be.’

And a seventh said, ‘I have such a clear idea how everything will be, but I cannot put it into words.’

Then an eighth spoke — and a ninth — and a tenth — and then many — until all were speaking, and I could distinguish nothing for the many voices.

And so I moved that very day into the heart of a quince, where the deeds are few and almost silent.

Kahlil Gibran, *Pomegranate*

# Solitude and Silence

TORAL PRADHAN

‘TRUTH it is that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places. How could I have seen you, save from a great height or a great distance? How can one be indeed near unless he be far?’ This is what Kahlil Gibran had to say when people criticized him for living in solitude for the most part of his life. It is therefore that he still lives amongst our thoughts and words.

Solitude has to be experienced to know how it feels, it can never be described in words. Its potential can never be known. Solitude means to put some time aside for a few days of retreat in quiet hilly places, by the seaside, or just by being with the self. In the fast-paced world and with hectic lifestyles, people have the need to be left alone, they need space for themselves. They need to be with their own thoughts and emotions. Solitude takes you to a mood of introspection, it enables a more dispassionate outlook towards life. Because it is only when a person is alone that he can see his personal perspective towards life. Solitude, the inner voice, takes charge. And this voice never lets you down. It only guides and enriches you.

For ages men have moved away from the madding crowds, into caves, islands, forests, for respite from day-to-day

distractions. To be by themselves, contemplating and understanding. It is only through these confinements that they came up with many substantial truths and philosophies of life, and that their thoughts and words appear valuable even today.

Therefore, the need is to go away from noise, commotion, from people, not physically but mentally. It can take you away from friction and turmoil, it can help you find answers to your questions and to be at peace.

By solitude, we mean loneliness. It is an essential factor for urban lifestyles, where it becomes difficult for a person to find a moment or two to pass in solitude, in the company of the self. Only these moments can soothe the mind, make it peaceful, when the external distractions and workloads only fill up the day to such an extent that it leaves one totally drained out, exhausted. The quality of work suffers and leaves one unsatisfied. It is not the person’s attitude that changes towards his work, but it is the physical and mental exhaustion that causes lethargy and monotony in work. At such times, a few minutes in silence and solitude can act as a boon. It provides the mind with the desired solitude, relaxing and

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rejuvenating the mind. It feels refreshed and active again. An excess of noise and activity are the root cause of this state of disturbed mind. Man should learn to go slow, to make a halt in the rat race. As the poem says:

What is this life if full of care, we have  
no time to stand and stare?

Although you have all the luxuries in life and it may appear to be a path of roses without difficulties, problems, then too the mind feels imprisoned. It lacks something. It needs freedom to be let loose, to be left alone, to roam as it wishes into boundless spaces, to places where it can find solace, to unknown frontiers and greater heights. Only to gain strength and efficiency. It means to be in solitude. To detach the self from the external world and be only by oneself.

Solitude makes the spirit soar. Solitude and silence help in achieving emotional balance, to organize thoughts, reflect and introspect. To feel light and rejuvenated.

Silence is energy giving. Emily Dickinson has said:

Saying nothing sometimes says the most.

Silence connects you to the self. It takes you beyond speech and thought. It is the time you stay without the ego. Silence lets go fear, anxiety and jealousy. It is well said in the Upanishad-s:

There is something beyond our mind which abides in silence. It is the supreme mystery beyond thoughts. Let one's mind and one's subtle body rest upon that and not rest upon anything else.

Speaking is more tolerable because it offers easy distractions from inner turmoil. Both stressed and distressed people may be silent but they could be screaming inside. Speech is the vehicle for social transformation, whereas silence is the vehicle for individual transformation. Silence is as deep as eternity, whereas speech is as shallow as time. Silence can work wonders at times when words become futile.

The younger generation is so accustomed to a noisy, hectic life, that for them solitude becomes a burden, a curse. They need constant company. They feel lost or abandoned when they are alone. The need for another person or the company of electronic gadgets gives them superficial happiness. Within them they have a void, an emptiness that disturbs them constantly. They cannot even think of living alone. They survive only on superficiality, illusion. Uniting with the self, seeking peace and solitude according to them are meant for the old and the ignorant people. They do not realize that this very solitude and silence can make their lives and mind calm, energetic, and can also give satisfaction in whatever they do. Satisfaction that they always crave for, satisfaction that they never seem to achieve and for which they are always chasing everything in life. They run after jobs, careers, partners, friends and relationships. But it all appears to them to be in a passing phase, as it is only their own self which is unable to halt, to rest at a place, at a relationship, at a certain stage of life. The disturbed mind does not allow the self to set the pace, to

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reflect on life, to retrospect, as it is always on the run.

This may be the reason why many youngsters today go wayward, losing their motives and goals in life. This may be the reason why many people of the developed countries have started deviating from professional, hectic, luxurious lifestyles to simpler ones. More and more people all over the world are practising meditation, yoga, etc., to achieve that peace, that knowledge of knowing the self, before trying to know the external world. That search for solace, for eternal bliss which

is not meant only for spirituality, but also for worldly peace. That search for solace which only solitude and silence can provide.

As Mother Teresa has very well explained:

We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature — trees, flowers, grass — grows in silence. See the stars, the moon, the sun, how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch souls.

**Meditate upon him and transcend physical consciousness. Thus will you reach union with the Lord of the Universe. Thus will you become identified with him who is One without a second. In him all your desires will find fulfilment.**

**The truth is that you are always united with the Lord. But you must *know* this.**

*Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, I.11–12*

# Books of Interest

YEARNING FOR THE NEW AGE: LAURA HOLLOWAY-LANGFORD AND LATE VICTORIAN SPIRITUALITY by Diane Sasson, Indiana University Press, 2012, pp. xx+347.

MRS. HOLLOWAY AND THE MAHATMAS: ARTICLES BY LAURA C. HOLLOWAY WITH LETTERS FROM H. P. BLAVATSKY, MASTER K.H. & MASTER M., compiled and edited by Daniel H. Caldwell, Blavatsky Study Center (<http://blavatskyarchives.com>), 2012, pp. 165.

These two recent books throw much light on Laura Holloway-Langford (1848–1930), a friend of the Founders,

BON, by Christopher Baumer, Shambhala, 2004, pp. 200.

Baumer's long-awaited book recalls the dominant religion and culture pervading Tibet until the eighth century. This fascinating persuasion was distinguished by shamanistic practices, a cult honouring the deceased, and historic roots sunk into the past. The author introduces the myths and culture effectively by employing approximately two hundred stunning photographs showing monasteries, lamas, and sacred places. He explains that from the second half of the eighth century, Bon became superseded by Buddhism which

George Arundale, A. P. Sinnett and other prominent Theosophists.

Dr Sasson's book is an extensive and detailed biography of Mrs Holloway and her background. It is the most extensive and well-documented treatment of this woman, who played an important role in early Theosophical history.

Mr Caldwell's book treats the specifically Theosophical aspects of her life and contains a number of Mahatma letters not previously published, as well as photographic copies of a number of such letters (many in colour). Together, these two books are a treasure trove of documented information about the early Theosophical Society.

JOHN ALGEO

spread from India into Tibet. These two religions influenced each other, especially in doctrine and ritual. Although Buddhism eventually gained dominance and secured status as the state religion, a reformed Bon survived and preserved the traditions in the monasteries. This rich Bon culture is symbolized with prayer flags and spirit traps, temples and mountain circumambulations, oracle techniques and death and marriage rites. By exploring Tibet's ancient religion, Baumer nurtures an appreciation for the persistence with which humans respond to the sacred.

DANIEL ROSS CHANDLER

# Theosophical Work around the World

## USA

Sharing between different Theosophical organizations rose to a new level during the 2012 International Theosophy Conference (ITC) which took place for the first time at the Olcott Centre in Wheaton, from August 9 to 12. Over one hundred leaders, teachers and students of Theosophy attended the four-day event. In addition to members of the Theosophical Society Adyar, there were many attending from the United Lodge of Theosophists, the Theosophical Society Point Loma, and the Krotona Institute.

It was a harmonious exchange between all Theosophical traditions. The Keynote Presentation was a panel on Theosophical 'Fraternization and Unity' with Michael Gomes (a well-known Theosophical author), Jerry Hejka-Ekins (Theosophical historian and archivist), Sally Colbert (past President of ITC), and James Colbert.

Outstanding speakers included Dr Gene Jennings who led a workshop on the Kalachakra Tantra; Dara Eklund who spoke on 'Blavatsky's Collected Writings: A Unifying Enterprise'; Prof. Carolyn Dorrance on 'Karma and Social Responsibility'; and Dr Ruth Richards on 'Empathy in the Kali Yuga'. Prof. Judy Saltzman spoke on Global Karmic Cycles and Garrett Riegg (ITC President) addressed the 2012 Mayan prophecies.

The conference also included time for

music, meditation, a film, an ice cream social, and a spontaneous celebration of Madame Blavatsky's birthday. After the conference, a scenic tour of Chicago by bus and riverboat took place.

## UK

More than seventy attended the Foundation for Theosophical Studies' summer school this year at Warwick University.

The varied and packed programme offered something for everyone in a convivial atmosphere. The Blavatsky Lecture, delivered by Erica Georgiades of the Greek Section, illuminated the idea of universal 'unity' by comparing the Hellenic perception of 'brotherhood' with theosophical concepts of individual and global interconnectedness.

She also spoke of the ancient Greek athlete's aim of physical perfection linked to the cultivation of virtues, and highlighted the importance of creating a balance between outer and inner attainments.

On Wednesday, Wayne Gatfield's citations from philosophers' reflections and his recitation of poetic verse cast a spell over the audience. On the last afternoon, Jenny Baker took the participants on a three thousand year journey, comprised of examples of the quest to understand the essence of human existence. The final evening included poetry

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readings as well as musical performances, drawing the week to a fitting end.

### India

The Indian Section organized a Workers' Training Camp, directed by Mr S. Sundaram, the General Secretary, in Adyar from 21 to 25 August. In his welcome address, Mr Sundaram said that such camps and gatherings are organized to strengthen ourselves in order to strengthen the work of the organization. They provide the opportunity to learn the various kinds of work which can help in promoting the cause for which the TS was founded. Ten Resource Persons and twenty-one participants from twelve Federations in different parts of the country attended the programme, in the beautiful environment of Blavatsky Bungalow. Themes included topics on the organization of the TS and its universal character; the Constitution of the Section, Federations and Lodges; financial and other practical work concerning Lodges; property management; types of meetings, study classes, seminars and so on; the need for libraries; books and TS literature for study; preparation for lectures and workshops; the application of Theosophy to daily life; enrolling new members and propagating Theosophy; etc. Booklets and pamphlets were distributed to the participants, including material on the Indian Section and the philosophy underlying Theosophy. Resource Persons provided handouts.

Mrs Radha Burnier inaugurated the

Camp, and addressed the participants on the implications of growing in understanding. It is not about learning more about a subject, but rather about understanding the whole of Life, from the tiny insects to an Adept or Buddha. Study of this sort is not a mental occupation. Study must take one to an inner growth, to examine what makes a person wiser and compassionate. The purpose of life is not to become a perfect professional; it is to grow in understanding. Experiences in life help the unfoldment of consciousness, the awakening of the mind. To what should we become awake? Hints are given in the Indian texts — Truth, Beauty and Goodness, integrated together. The purpose of life is to grow as the lotus, arising from the mud into the water, and through it to blossom in the sunlit air.

The Camp concluded with an address by Mr M. P. Singhal, international Vice-President. Mrs Manju Sundaram conducted Community Singing in the week, during which she taught selected Vedic and other devotional songs.

### *Theosophy Science Centre*

On 4 August, the Theosophy Science Centre held a meeting at the Headquarters Hall. The speaker, Mr Anoop Jaiswal, I.P.S., Additional Director General of Police, delivered a talk on 'Science beyond the Senses'.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Theosophy Science Study Group, which was inaugurated in 1962 by Mr N. Sri Ram. ❖

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