



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: Fire ball under the Banyan Tree - *Scadoxus multiflorus* (African Blood Lily), Adyar
— A. Chandrasekaran

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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.

Theosophy Must be Made Popular

RADHA BURNIER

I AM sure that many of us have heard the phrase ‘Theosophy must be made popular’. It is a very satisfying statement because it gives rise to the idea that to be a Theosophist you must do good works of some kind. You do not even have to dedicate yourself to learn activities. By doing some good work you are demonstrating that you are living Theosophy. Various statements which occur in Theosophical literature could be used to support this kind of thinking. In the letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, more than once one of the Masters says, we want deeds not words. And of course there is Madame Blavatsky’s book *Practical Occultism* and without reading it, if one were just to think of the title of the essay, it may all bolster up this idea. On the other hand, in HPB’s *The Key to Theosophy*, we find statements which are made from a totally different point of view, but the chapter itself is entitled ‘Practical Theosophy’, and there are sub-titles. There is a chapter which gives instructions about how to do good works.

Quintessence of Duty

Many Christian missionaries or some Hindu missionaries who have tried to imitate the Christian missionaries have engaged themselves in what are called

good works. They do very good work, without doubt. I remember long ago visiting a centre for lepers which was run by some missionaries, and it was quite wonderful to see the care they gave to the inmates, the concern they showed for their future, and so on. So I am not against doing good works. But in this context we should ponder over a sentence that occurs in *The Key to Theosophy*. HPB says: Theosophy is the quintessence of duty. Not duty is the quintessence of Theosophy. There is quite a difference between the two: if you say duty is the quintessence of Theosophy, it suggests that if you perform your duty, as you understand it — because each person understands words according to his own background — So if you perform your duty you are a Theosophist and nothing more is needed.

Let us think about it; if one performs one’s duty in a foolish way, the idea of what to do as duty may not be right. Forcing people to believe in the Koran or the Bible, for example, is considered by some people as teaching the ignorant what their duty is. But they may actually be doing more harm than good. Madame Blavatsky does not accept this statement or does not use this statement, that duty is the quintessence of Theosophy. She says

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Theosophy is the quintessence of duty. She never wrote in a very systematic way, but if we take sentences which relate directly to each other, we can understand the whole mode of thinking and instruction. If we learn how to be real Theosophists we will be doing our duty all the time. That is what is meant by saying things appear as the quintessence of Theosophy.

She says that most of the panaceas which people believe in for curing the ills of the world, have no guiding principles behind them, so they utterly fail. We can think of the present economic policies. Of course there are arguments for and against, but many thoughtful people are pointing out that since there is no true guiding principle behind the economic policies, they do not solve economic problems. On the other hand, the disparity gap between the rich and the poor is continually increasing. As we have mentioned more than once, in this world, where there is vast wealth and production, there are millions of people who are starving and dying of hunger, and the rich and the poor have not related to each other in their heart.

It is rather interesting to find statements of HPB which sound as if they are meant for today's world. For example, giving things in charity — if you are not a Theosophist and you say we must provide aid — aid from a nation or the European community to Africa or whatever it is, or, from an individual to others, when there are no guiding principles, she says, much of the money sticks to the hands of the people who are supposed to distribute them or hand them over. We have some

kind of a picture that there is a lowering of morality, there may be a change in conditions. Perhaps today's world is much more favourable to the dishonest man, the violent man, the greedy man, and so on. It gives opportunities for all these vices to flourish because of so-called progress. Progress gives opportunities for evil also. But what is important is that human nature does not change easily.

One of the Masters said that the human mind does not want to change, and does not like to see that kind of change which will bring about any lasting welfare even at the physical level. You can imagine that affluent countries are better off, but in fact they are not. There are so many problems and evils, rampant in those countries. It is not only in the hands of poorer or middle class people that money sticks; it seems to stick in the hands of people who draw enormous salaries. That is because human nature is greedy. And HPB points out, that all these evils which we see have their root in human character. When we see that, we see the absolute necessity for that inner change which will bring about an outer way of behaving and relating which is evidently helpful to others.

She points out that duty should not mean doing actions which are satisfying to oneself. By doing duty we may feel fulfilled, but that fulfilment is not the motive which should make one perform one's duty. This is very close to what the *Bhagavadgītā* says, that you have to perform duty which needs to be done, and really needs to be done. Whether one feels satisfied or not, whether one receives appreciation or

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not, whether people notice what one is doing or not, is of no importance at all. The Theosophist is a person who performs duties very often unknown to others. That is, he may be concerned with the condition of another, and takes steps to help without wanting anyone to know that he is doing it, or feeling pleased because other people say, 'oh you are very generous' or something like that. Alarming as it is, it is part of the sense of duty.

In fact the chapter itself is interesting because it does not say how you can avoid hunger in the world, how orphanages should be run, or anything like that. The sub-titles of the chapter are: Duty, Self-sacrifice, Charity, and the Relation of the TS to Political Reforms.

Therefore, HPB asks: what is duty? One thing she says is, 'a full recognition of equal rights' — that is duty, from the Theosophical point of view. A real Theosophist would be performing his duty if he recognized equal rights, not simply to acquire, cause, or live in comfort, but the right to express an opinion, the right to live and grow with dignity, even the right to die as one wants to die. We must recognize the equality in that self. There is a kind of equality which the *Bhagavadgītā* mentions more than once.

Krishnaji puts it in another way: respect for everything or everybody, for every creature, respect for its life, respect for its growth, not just physical growth, but every creature is in its slow way growing into a larger consciousness, if one may put it like that. The consciousness even in small creatures is expanding.

From the point of view of the vast processes of the world, of the universe rather, what we think of as time is very deceiving. Because we do not see growth without time sense, we cannot say it does not exist; everything is growing and has the right to grow, which unfortunately we are unable to understand. This is in the efforts that very good Theosophists have made in the field of penal reform, because when a person commits murder or does something terrible, the world thinks of this as a case for punishment. The worse the act is, the harder must be the punishment. If you think in terms of growth, it is not punishment but education into understanding the whole nature of life, which is necessary.

Annie Besant in the early days, was concerned among many other things with penal reform. They used to have punishments in the old days. One was to put a kind of steel hat on the prisoner; you can imagine how difficult it must have been for such a person to sleep with this steel thing on his head. They did all sorts of things like that. But punishing a person does not make him learn. He may become angry, resentful, frustrated; but, if behind the work for penal reform, it is the Theosophical understanding that all things are growing, we may say slowly — they are growing according to the laws of the universe into greater and greater wisdom, perfection of every kind, learning would take place. Duty as HPB explains, lies in helping others in that way, to become their own true selves, to help them to have a different character. There are these guiding principles which are necessary to

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find a true answer, a panacea for whatever group of ills that one has.

Theosophical Principles Essential

How can we have those guiding principles unless we study the Theosophical principles? It is not a kind of mental occupation, a mental activity, but it is something which gets imbued into our consciousness — those principles. HPB in this connection wrote about the principle of karma: if a person does not understand that there is no escape from the consequences of any kind of action, that the consequences occur tomorrow, at the end of this life, or perhaps after several lives, but they cannot be ignored. If a person understands this, then he could be helped to realize for himself the necessity to be dutiful. That means to think of the welfare of all others, not only of his own welfare. HPB says further that people feel satisfaction when they experience joy and pleasure, but these satisfactions are short-lived, and limited. Lasting satisfaction or fulfilment takes place only when we do something which is in

accordance with our own higher nature.

Theosophy therefore implies becoming more and more aware of what is necessary from the spiritual point of view, not merely the wants of human beings, or animals, or the earth itself, at the material level. In fact the two are closely connected. But the approach of the so-called practical person who deals with the material side hoping that everything will be put right is wrong, because the change has to come from within and not from outside. It does not mean that members of the Theosophical Society can be indifferent to the physical suffering, the extreme distress, which exists in the world, but it does mean that we see things in proper proportion, and unless the inner change takes place, the outer change will not be right and will not last. All this is meant in the statement 'Theosophy is the quintessence of virtue'. The more we can grasp of the essential principles of life, the more we understand the laws of the universe and the reason why various processes take place in nature, the better is our position to be true helpers, servants of humanity, and so on. ✧

(An article based on one of her talks)

One of the most striking advantages of Theosophy is that the light which it brings to us at once solves many of our problems, clears away many difficulties, accounts for the apparent injustices of life, and in all directions brings order out of seeming chaos.

C. W. Leadbeater

Sound: The Wellspring of Our Universe and Our Lives

LINDA OLIVEIRA

EVERY day, sound plays through our consciousness in various ways. Its vibrations shape our lives to a far greater extent than we may realize. Ranging from loud and discordant noises which force our attention, sound also ventures through myriad pathways to levels of subtlety of which we are not even aware in the world of everyday things. The very *life* of our universe is said to derive from sound, though, which gives pause for thought.

Let us consider some concepts from *The Secret Doctrine* which relate to sound, along with some complementary observations from other sources. The author of the following words was scientist Darryel Reaney, a microbiologist from the Antipodes. His book, *Music of the Mind*, is a fascinating blend of scientific thought on the one hand, and poetic mysticism on the other. Describing unity as the ultimate truth of the universe, the writer also mentions:

If we want to see the universe as consciousness knows it we should stop thinking of it as a machine or a process or

a system and start thinking of it as a song.

If the universe is a song, as the writer suggests, and if unity is true, then all sentient life must participate in that song (even unconsciously). Further, this song must be capable of being 'heard' by responsive individuals. Those with a reasonably sensitive disposition can become aware of the vast screen of vibration which underpins our world in all its fields; this is not just the preserve of great musicians, poets and artists.

We can think of everything in creation as ceaselessly singing its song. We each have our fundamental melody, although our 'lower notes' may be dissonant and out of harmony with the higher ones. Think of emotional and mental states which may be steady for a while, but which may also change quite dramatically in a moment. Thoughts, feelings and emotions are also sounds, being vibrations created in subtler fields. In general, sound can be thought of as movement or vibration, present at *every* level of the cosmos.

Dr Taimni wrote: 'The universe is

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created by vibration, is maintained by vibration, and at the time of *Pralaya* or dissolution is destroyed by vibration.’ In creation myths all over the world, sound is recognized as the source of *all* things visible and invisible. To a Christian the following words are likely to be very familiar: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (John I:1, The Holy Bible). We also find a counterpart in the *R̥g-veda* which says: ‘In the beginning was Brahman, with whom was the Word, and the Word was truly the supreme Brahman.’

Cosmic Sound

Anything which we perceive has different angles, depending upon the view from which we regard it. It is similar to the nuances of cosmic sound, which are portrayed in a number of ways in *The Secret Doctrine*:

Logos: According to ancient sages, the subtlest of vibrations is the so-called cosmic sound, the creative Word out of which all has evolved — Logos. In Theosophical literature, Logos is the term used for the Presiding Deity of a manifested system — ‘verbum’ or ‘the son’ or ‘The Word’; in fact, it is understood as the *collective* vibration behind a universe. The term itself is Greek, the ancient Greeks having used it in a variety of ways. For example, they regarded it as the basis or foundation of all harmony and stability, and also as Divine Reason. To them it also meant the highest aspect of any entity (e.g. a solar logos, or, our highest Self).

The *R̥g-veda*, the oldest of the Veda-s, was said to be the wisdom of the Word or Logos.

Ākāśa: This Sanskrit term refers to the subtle and ethereal fluid which pervades the universe and is the vehicle of life and sound, one aspect of space. It is often rendered as ‘brilliant, shining, luminous’. Space here refers not just to physical space as we know it in our three-dimensional physical world, but to that which contains, defines and is the basis of the universe, the macrocosm. *Ākāśa* is the sounding board of nature. Imagine that we are within a multi-dimensional, infinite, luminous field. Everything contained within that field makes an impression, writes on the cosmic pages, as it were. Our earth is only a very small aspect of this field. In *The Secret Doctrine* we read that *Ākāśa* is the ‘first-born of the ONE, having but one quality, SOUND (which is septenary in its nature)’. In other words, when the universe began, sound was the first thing to manifest.

Vāch: ‘*Vāch*’, another Sanskrit term, is used in the *R̥g-veda*. In one sense it has been described as speech — the feminine aspect of the Logos, by which knowledge is taught to humanity. In another sense it is regarded as the *mystic*, secret speech which descended upon the R̥shi-s of old. *Vāch* is also called the female creator. It is said to reside in mantra-s, or in the sounds produced by mantra-s. Four aspects to *Vāch* are mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine*, which we can relate to our own speech processes:

parā vāch — the *source* of all speech,

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pasyantī vāch — the *beginning* of speech taking form/an idea,

madhyāmā vāch — the *middle stage* between the idea and its utterance, and

vaikharī vāch — what we *utter*.

Furthermore, HPB equates *Vāch* with the ‘music of the spheres’ of Pythagoras. According to this, every atom is attuned to a musical note, being in constant vibration at speeds incomprehensible to the ordinary brain-mind. Each such speed has its own numerical quantity or note, and therefore each atom sings that note which is its speech. It is this which is called the ‘Music of the Spheres’. Furthermore, if we consider modern quantum mechanics, it is interesting to note the following statement on the string theory website: ‘In string theory, the elementary particles we observe in particle accelerators could be thought of as the “musical notes” or excitation modes of elementary strings.’

Śabda-Brahman: This term signifies ‘Word-Brahman’ — the soul of Brahman or the Creator, unmanifest sound. *Śabda* refers to sound in its most comprehensive sense, and *Brahman* is the Reality underlying the universe, hence the sound of that underlying Reality. *Śabda-Brahman* expresses itself as the Divine Logos, or Word, or Sound.

In *Man, the Measure of All Things*, Prem and Ashish described *Śabda-Brahman* in rather sublime poetical language, hinting at its phenomenal power:

śabda reverberates and throbs through the blue space of dazzling light like a great engine of resistless power, like mighty breakers on a shoreless sea.

This conjures up an image of a mighty cosmic steam train thundering through space!

Nāda — **Manifest Sound:** *Śabda-Brahman* is said to become *Nāda* or manifested sound in the course of manifestation, hence the term *Nāda-Brahman*, meaning ‘Sound-God’. It is from this manifested sound or *Nāda* that all the energies, forces and motions which lie at the basis of manifestation are derived. The consciousness of a Logos is therefore understood as being present at every point in the system, reminding one of a holograph in which small parts contain elements which are present in the whole.

Dr Taimni has provided a useful analogy to help us understand how consciousness is present in our solar system. Imagine light in the following description as being sound, for light is a manifestation of sound:

Just as the diffused light of the sun shining over a landscape, itself remains invisible but brings out from all the objects present in it all kinds of colours and forms . . . so the Consciousness and Life of the Logos pervading the solar system itself remains invisible, but brings out from all the objects, animate or inanimate, an infinite variety of expressions which are characteristic of the manifested universe.

One could use visual imagination to represent the five terms mentioned above in a diagram. Consider the circumference of a circle as Logos or ‘the Word’; *Ākāśa* as the entire interior of the circle,

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being luminous space; *Vāch* (the feminine aspect of the Logos, mystic speech) radiating inwards from inside the circumference; *Śabda-Brahman* (unmanifest sound) existing outside the perimeter of the circle; and *Nāda* (manifest sound) as the point within the circle.

***Oeaohoo* — the Great Breath:** Another term relating to sound in *The Secret Doctrine* which deserves mention is *Oeaohoo*, a Senzar term. We are told that Senzar is a secret archaic language once used in Central Asia and known to Initiates of old; being the progenitor of Sanskrit as well as Devanāgarī, the alphabetical script in which Sanskrit is written. *Oeaohoo* refers to the Boundless Immutable Principle, the ‘Great Breath’, the fundamental creative power or sound or the One Breath. Even during Pralaya (cosmic sleep before the current wave of life) it is said that there was ‘the ceaseless breathing of the Breathless One which went on in Absolute Consciousness — no consciousness’. Says Stanza II from the *Book of Dzyan*:

WHERE WAS SILENCE? WHERE THE
EARS TO SENSE IT? NO, THERE WAS
NEITHER SILENCE NOR SOUND; NOUGHT
SAVE CEASELESS, ETERNAL BREATH,
WHICH KNOWS ITSELF NOT.

These are poignant words. They indicate that motion, vibration, breath, is always present, even when the universe is ‘asleep’. This concept may be difficult to grapple with, but the law of correspondences may also assist us here. Referring to the above quotation, when we

are physically asleep can we actually hear? No! But breath goes on. Yet *Oeaohoo*, the Great Breath, is also said to be present *during* manifestation. Rather than being a specific word or name, it is a totality of vowel sounds. It may be pronounced as one, three or even seven syllables, each of which has a different meaning.

The terms mentioned above are all concerned with different aspects of sound: sound as the Word; sound as brilliant, shining, space; sound as mystic speech; sound as a primal power; and sound as the boundless, immutable principle or the Great Breath. Sometimes the masculine aspect of sound is emphasized, as in ‘Logos’, sometimes the feminine, as in ‘*Vāch*’.

HPB proclaimed sound as a tremendous occult power — a stupendous force which could raise the pyramid of Cheops into the air, or even revive a dying person at his or her last breath. She commented: ‘*As one saved thrice from death by that power [sound], the writer ought to be credited with knowing personally something about it.*’

Breath, Speech and Responsibility

Let us bring this discussion to the here and now, by considering breath and speech. Breath is an integral part of sound, for breath precedes sound as an in-breath and then the out-breath commences. Breath can be heard, for it is audible. In fact, breath is a word although we do not ordinarily think of it in these terms. What we call a word is only a more pronounced utterance of breath, fashioned by the mouth and

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tongue. We all make invisible forms in space by what we say from morning until night. Every syllable, he said, has a special effect. There may be some who can see these forms as colour. We produce an atmosphere around us, and in turn we feel the vibrations of others.

HPB wrote that '*the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in, by the modern "sages".*' The power of speech bestows *responsibility* on us. Hence there were two years of silence in the Pythagorean schools, for spoken energy can be so easily dissipated or wasted, or destructive. Also, the effects of idle gossip and chatter scatter energy. They frequently have an adverse effect on those at whom the gossip is aimed, for such thoughts are said to take on a life of their own. In fact, we can feel the life of our own thoughts when we strengthen them regularly and find, not surprisingly, that they return repeatedly to our awareness.

Words themselves, being a form of sound, have power. This power might be due to a number of things: the meaning of a word or set of words, the effect built up through repeated use, the vibration produced, who is speaking it, or the force with which the word or words are spoken. Yet it seems that there are cosmic energies behind our speech as well, for the power which forms sound into speech is sometimes considered as male. But the voice which produces sounds is female. Recall that the term Logos is masculine, being the Word which produces sound or forms. *Vāch*, on the other hand, is a feminine term — mystic speech. One can readily

understand how spoken words can have significant effects.

To illustrate how our mind influences our perception of the words spoken by others, Darrell Reaney likened words to stones which are dropped into a pond. What conveys meaning is not the stone, but the ripple it sends out. The surface of the pond must be still and flawless if the meaning we seek to convey is not to be corrupted when the words are conveyed. The waves can only transmit their message faithfully if the medium through which they move is undisturbed, otherwise the meaning is distorted. Imagine that the medium through which the words move is the person receiving the words. The mind of the receiver is almost certain to be in a different state, therefore the resulting ripples make a different pattern or idea. So it is remarkably easy for us *not* to understand exactly what somebody else is saying! Rather amusingly, Reaney wrote: 'Speech is an endless balancing act, forever falling off the edge of understanding.' We should not dismiss the value of language, though, which is profound and far-reaching, being a powerful medium in its own right.

We are constantly sounding ourselves, and our sound waves are not limited to what we say or sing. The body produces other sounds — heartbeat, circulation and digestion, for example. Sound occurs when we think, feel, breathe and act, because when we do each of these we set up vibration. Hence the significance and responsibility which surround what we *choose* to think, feel and do. As we learn

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to more truly articulate our life, its meaning will become increasingly apparent. By changing the vibration of our sounds, and by becoming a little more refined in the true sense of the meaning, we may align ourselves more with the cosmos.

Aum

Mention has already been made of the Word, or cosmic sound. This is not perceptible to our normal senses, although it is said that it can be experienced in very deep meditation. It is most closely approximated by the *Aum*. Uttering the word with awareness of its significance to some degree evokes the supreme Reality for which it stands, for 'Aum' is the perfect symbol of the impersonal aspect of the Divine.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, we read:

Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the AUM throughout eternal ages. (I.19)

The text refers to the GREAT BIRD which is the 'bird of life', the sacred bird. It is the creative word by which an entire manifested universe is called into existence, the utterance of a Logos. The *Aum* is said to be the most complete word which can be sounded, for to sound it in full we must use the entire gamut of the voice, of speech, from the throat to the centre or the mouth to the lips. Sadly, one hears some renditions of it from time to time which clearly do not respect its sacredness.

Silence

Many people today seem to have a fear of silence. Prem and Ashish com-

ment that the silence of desert and lonely mountain peaks, and the silence of mystic contemplation in the cave of the heart, symbolize the ever silent spirit, watching in calm until all things change and pass. Silence has a sound; it is a vibration which is discerned through our finer, inner senses. Perhaps it is through the experience of silence that we return to the Self just as the universe, when it finally sleeps again, returns to the silence in the cave of its heart — the ceaseless, eternal Breath.

We cannot prove with the aid of everyday mental processes the meaning of terms used in *The Secret Doctrine* which have been brought out in this discussion, although we may locate specific sources from which certain statements derive. In these situations our intuition may provide us with a sense of their truthfulness, or otherwise. And this, surely, was one purpose for the writing of *The Secret Doctrine* — to help awaken humanity's intuition, an inner sense which is probably still largely dormant.

The Cosmos — Still Only Partly Sung

All in all, Darryl Reaney's description of the universe as 'one grand song' does not seem too far off the mark. It is said that if we had the faculties, we could hear a flower grow or hear the stars which in their courses are constantly singing! With wisdom comes a deepening sensitivity to the subtler vibrations of life.

Indigenous Australians use the term 'songlines' to describe the interwoven pattern of time-tracks that criss-cross the landscape of their land, being a

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fullness of knowing over time. Perhaps this is another term for Soul Wisdom. Reanne wrote:

We are the songlines of our lives. We are only one chord in the songline of the universe and the cosmos does not culminate in this moment that is special to us only because we happen to inhabit it. The cosmos is unfinished business, a song still

only partly sung, a story only half told.

If sound is so vital to life, it can indeed be regarded as the wellspring of the universe and therefore of all that we have been, are, or will be. It is that from which we are derived, being both our progenitor and our substance, but is only partially revealed and therefore remains in many ways a mystery. ✧

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To know the science of music is nothing else than this, — to know how all things are ordered, and how God's design has assigned to each its place; for the ordered system in which each and all by the supreme Artist's skill are wrought together into a single whole yields a divinely musical harmony, sweet and true beyond all melodious sounds.

Hermes

Nature: Treat Me Gently

M. P. SINGHAL

THE two defining challenges of this century are overcoming world poverty and managing climate change. If we cannot manage our natural resources we may fail on both. At present, there is much plundering of our planet due to greed. Nature has enough to satisfy our need, but not the greed. Proper stewardship of natural resources is a matter of planetary urgency; we have the potential either to transform the poorest countries or to tear them apart. There is a middle path: to treat nature gently.

Someone sees a beautiful flower on a healthy plant. There can be three responses: firstly, indifference; secondly, the propensity to pluck and smell, watch and throw it away; and thirdly, to have a look wondering at its freshness and beauty, appreciate it and walk away with joy. That flower is saying: 'Don't pluck, treat me gently.' Those alone who are sensitive and know that there is life everywhere will hear that faint voice.

All sentient beings — humans, animals, fish, birds — respond to the way we treat them. The law of attraction and repulsion is not confined to the realms of physics alone. It is applicable to human

relationships and the whole Universe. If we treat animals gently, they respond with gentleness. It is now known that there is no such a thing as dead matter: everything has life and therefore emotions too. We must have the emotional intelligence not to hurt and instead, to treat all life gently.

Importance of Trees

An artist by the name of Worli was asked to paint freehand. The central picture that emerged was a huge Banyan tree with an imposing presence, with all aspects of life bustling with energy and happiness around the tree. The idea was simple, yet deep in concept, showing the importance of ecological sources which shape our very existence, as if the Banyan tree was the child of the muses.

Trees, plants and flowers are part of our cultural ethos. In all ceremonies for Devi, the most important aspect is assorted flowers that are offered to the goddess. Every deity in the panorama of Indian mythology has an important tree or flower associated with the deity — the Lotus with Lakshmi, Datura and Bilwa tree or flower with Śiva, Tulsi with Kṛṣṇa and Vishnu: the Banyan, Aśoka, Peepal,

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Neem, Bodhi and Tulsi have strong cultural and mythological implications. They are guardians of deities, protectors of righteousness.

A tree reflects with silent dignity both grace and sturdiness. It is there, lending itself beautifully for protection, shade, flowers and fruits. Also when aged and dying, it offers timber for furniture, boats, and decorations.

It absorbs carbon dioxide, replenishing oxygen by the process of photosynthesis, for our life. A tree is always ready to give all it has. The Banyan tree teaches us that the potential rather than the size of a seed is important. It also teaches us to go forward step by step, anchoring branches as roots into the soil for stability. If we cut open a tree trunk, we find life emanates from its centre outwards — a meaningful lesson for humans that the life resides in the inner core, and sensual experiences are all māyā.

Nature Inspires

Nature is alive and active all the time. It regenerates and renews itself from moment to moment and is a source of great inspiration at all times. Poets inspired by its beauty have composed exquisite poems, literary people have produced literature, artists and musicians have produced and performed beautiful pieces. Scientists have learned the laws of nature and used them to design flying machines for our benefit. They have successfully harnessed nature to develop instant technology for faster means of travel and communication — landing man

on the moon, the ability to forecast weather, earthquakes, peering into the universe, and so on. All this is fascinating.

Nature of Biodiversity

Biodiversity, as defined by the United Nations, is ‘the variety and variability of living organisms on earth, including all plants, animals and other habitats’. Biodiversity is both a measure of the variety of life and also an indicator of the overall health of our planet. There are three natural processes that produce biodiversity: mutation, natural selection and adaptation. In the process of mutation new species are formed without any similarity to the original. Natural selection is a mechanism by which advantageous traits of species are passed on to the succeeding generations. Adaptation means species acclimatize to a new environment, including camouflage, if required.

Biodiversity and Human Welfare

Biodiversity boosts ecosystem productivity where each species, no matter how small, contributes. As an example, a large number of plant species means a greater variety of crops. Greater diversity ensures greater sustainability for life forms and healthier ecosystems that can withstand and recover from a variety of disasters. Under ecosystem services we benefit by the protection of water sources, soil formation, purification, absorption, contribution to climate stability and recovery from adverse impacts. Under biological resource services we benefit by more food, wood products, medicinal

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resources, ornamental plants, breeding stocks, population reservoirs and diversity in the genes of species and ecosystems. Pollution breakdown, nutrient storage and recycling help healthy growth. We need to preserve biodiversity for human welfare by treating nature and life gently.

Nature is a four-storey house of concentric circles. First is the lithosphere (from the Greek word *litho*, meaning stone), a kind of rocky shelf of the planet. The next is the hydrosphere, i.e., water. The third is the biosphere, the abode of all life on earth. Surrounding these three is the fourth atmosphere which is a transparent, mobile and impalpable envelope, hundreds of miles thick. It is that niche on which every form of life must ultimately depend. This composite is powered by solar energy.

There can be no life without the sun, water, land and atmosphere. Without the atmosphere, there could be no weather, winds, clouds or rain; there would be no fire or sound. Vegetation could not grow, nor could birds or aeroplanes fly. There would be no rainbow and the beauty of the rising or setting sun. The atmosphere serves as a canopy that shields us from the scorching sun. We pollute the earth, the water and the atmosphere by emitting greenhouse gases, and reduce its capacity for neutralizing the adverse effects of pollution, resulting in global warming, and thus endangering life.

There is Life Everywhere

We think that soil is an inert and insipid material. *The Secret Life of Plants*,

jointly authored by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, says 'below its surface, the earth is churned by organisms, or earthworms, called "Annelida" after the Latin word for rings, acting as nature's plough, eating the soil as they move, ejecting again to produce rich and fertile topsoil'. These very organisms also help in nitrogen fixation, producing nitrates or plant nutrition. They help in completing the nitrogen cycle by returning nitrogen in the form of urea in their excreta, and free nitrogen by decomposing the dead tissues. The nitrogen cycle is thus dependent at every stage on organisms. They also purify water that falls on the earth as it percolates through layers before being stored as groundwater.

Species require a variety of genes to ensure healthy survival. CNN, in a science report (5 May 2000) said, one third of our food, in terms of fruits and vegetables, would not exist without pollinators visiting flowers. Honeybees which are the main agents for this work, have suffered a dramatic decline in recent years by afflictions 'persecuted by humans'. A German bee expert, Professor Juergen from Wurzburg University adds, 'bees are vital to biodiversity'. Many fruit plants require these pollinators.

Today, the biosphere is home to 7.2 billion human beings and several millions of animal and plant species. Its health reflects the health of life. A rapidly growing population, pollution of water, soil and air, as also exploitation of natural resources, forest clearing and emission of greenhouse gases, degrade the biosphere. We need to

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be thoughtful and work gently with nature so the balance is not disturbed.

Preserving Genetic Diversity

There are thirty-four hot spots, i.e. centres of genetic diversity holding germ plasma, which is essential to modern agriculture and world food production. Situations arise when scientists have to search these centres for an appropriate genetic variety to withstand viral afflictions of the current variety in their country. Crucial to any food supply is the genetic resistance of crops to sudden destruction from blight, pests and climate change. Maintaining genetic resistance requires the constant introduction of new strains of germ plasma, many of which are found in a few refuges. For example, the international storage centre for rice genes is in the Philippines which stores 86,000 varieties of rice. These hot spots ensure food security.

It indicates the need for genetic diversity in crops growing in the wild, proliferating into complex varieties in size, shape, colour and yield.

Nature Treated Harshly

The Aral disaster was due to human greed; in early 1980 Russia launched a project to boost cotton production in its desert. Water from the Amu and Syr rivers that fed the Aral was diverted. Until then the Aral Sea was the fourth largest sea in the world. The scheme was ill-conceived resulting in enormous loss of marine life leaving desolate seashores and losing a beautiful ecosystem.

Consequences of Climate Change

In 1957, David Keeling set up the first continuous monitoring of CO₂ levels in the atmosphere and found a regular year-by-year rise. In 1979, the first world climate change conference adopted climate change as a major issue and called on governments 'to foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate'.

Since monitoring began in 1957, 1987 was recorded as the warmest year. The decade of the 1980s turned out to be the hottest decade on record, attracting worldwide headlines. The meeting of climate scientists in Toronto called for 20 per cent cuts in global CO₂ emissions by the year 2005. The UN set up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to analyse and report on scientific findings. Its first report, in 1990, finds that the planet became warmer by 0.50 C in the past century and it recommended strong measures.

III-effects

Air pollution is the fifth leading cause of death in India, with about 6,30,000 premature deaths, the Centre for Science and Environment's analysis has shown. The number of deaths in this category increased sixfold over the last ten years.

According to an annual study undertaken by environmental research centres at Yale and Columbia Universities in 2012, of the 132 countries surveyed, India stands last in the air quality ranking. The pollution levels in India are five times above normal levels. Air pollution comes after indoor air pollution, tobacco smoking, high

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blood pressure, childhood underweight, low nutritional status, and alcohol use.

The warning is that vehicular pollution will continue to be the most important reason for concern in coming years as cities grow and get more densely populated.

We are at present exploiting nature in a way that it cannot replenish itself sufficiently. We are, being callous towards the future generations by plundering our planet day after day. Only firm action to implement the concept of David Bohm, that everything is internally related with everything else, may save it. Such a perception was reinforced when the Apollo 8 mission circled the moon in 1968, scouting for landing sites for Apollo 11. One of the astronauts aboard Apollo 8 snapped a picture which became known as *Earth Rise*. This image exploded into the human consciousness and Archibald McLeish wrote 'to see the earth as it truly is, small, and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers in that bright loveliness in that eternal cold — brothers who know now we are truly brothers'.

These images modified our understanding dramatically that all life, the human, the plants and the animals, is linked. A new relationship between men and the planet Earth came about, in the recognition that we are related intimately in the common future and with the global environment.

What We can Do?

Let us conserve water and energy and

try to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and chlorofluorocarbons. Let us avoid cutting trees; in fact, let us plant more. We need to save our rivers from pollution. We see that a rich variety of biodiversity depends upon a healthy environment. No water, no food or no energy — and we have no future. No environment — and we have a degraded future. All the elements have become intertwined in a spiral of degradation. The challenge is to slow down the spin and reverse the direction by adopting a holistic approach that will address such inter-relationships. Let us all become agents of this change.

The environment is impacted by everything that happens to the land, water and energy. The crisis stems from the fact that the natural balance has been disrupted, making sustainable development difficult. The situation clearly demands a strategy within a holistic framework.

Nature will not wait on our inertia. The crisis will further deepen if no action is initiated. With the degrading environment and ecology, the quality of life will decline, adversely affecting human welfare.

Outlook 2050

When we look at prospects for the earth in 2050, we are completely at a loss on how to visualize our planet in the middle of the twenty-first century, simply because changes and developments are taking place at breathtaking speed. The one thing that can be predicted is that if human society continues on a business-as-usual path then we certainly have

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challenges which may make it very difficult for us to ensure the well-being of every section of society on this planet. I believe change is essential, but change will have to be driven by knowledge and widespread awareness of outcomes resulting from a 'no change' scenario and those as the outcome of feasible solutions which are within the capacity of human society to implement.

In actuality we need to look at the year 2050, because only on that basis would our attitudes get shaped and our directions clearly illuminated to take us where the planet should be in 2050. For much too long we have been completely infatuated with short-term aspirations and desires and their fulfilment. In the bargain we have created problems, which are going to become increasingly difficult to solve. Our very concept of what constitutes

human progress would need to be re-defined. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said that 'speed is irrelevant if you are going in the wrong direction'. Setting our vision on 2050 will at least tell us about the directional change that we need to make. Since we have only one planet on which we can live, at least based on current knowledge, the future of the earth is part of our own future.

For too long, we have been formulating and implementing policies without a long-term vision. We need to plan for the projections of 2050 to save the planet from disaster. We need to remember that everything we do anywhere in this world affects all life on the entire planet. We need to treat nature gently, so that the changes are absorbed with the least disturbance, keeping the ecological balance and retaining sustainable development in the future. ✧

OFFICIAL NOTICE CONVENTION 2013

In accordance with Rule 46 of the Rules and Regulations of the Theosophical Society, the Executive Committee has determined that the 138th international Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the international Headquarters, Adyar, Chennai, India, from 26 to 31 December 2013.

Mrs Kusum Satapathy
International Secretary

A Vision of Free India — Is it a Mirage?

J. S. VERMA

Introduction

The possible answer to the query appears to have been given by Annie Besant in the Preface to the Third Edition (1908) of her Autobiography, wherein she said: The acknowledged success of the ‘great wave of spiritual life of which the Theosophical Society is the crest’ is that the ‘revival of old faiths has brought with it a new self-respect, a pride in the past, a belief in the future, and, as an inevitable result, a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation’. A century later we are facing the same dilemma. The fundamental duties of every citizen enumerated in article 51 A of the Constitution of India remind us that we are duty bound ‘to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom’ that realized Annie Besant’s faith in the rebuilding of our nation to attain independence.

The Free India visualized during the freedom struggle came to be encapsulated as the Constitutional promise in the directive principles of State policy containing the principles fundamental in governance

to build a welfare State with the machinery for the fulfilment of that promise. Recalling that promise, the actual working of the machinery, the deficiencies in its working, and the remedy of solutions to reach the goal is the focus of this talk.

Vision of Free India

In its Lahore session (1929), the Indian National Congress declared its aim of ‘Poorna Swaraj’ or total freedom; and in the Karachi session it spelled out the ‘fundamental rights’ to be secured therein. This was prior to the UN Charter (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The Constitution of India (1949) incorporated a Bill of Rights as the fundamental rights in Part III; and like the Irish Constitution (1937) it has in Part IV a more developed list of an individual’s economic and social rights shaped as the principles fundamental in governance, called the directive principles of State policy. Together, the fundamental rights and the directive principles correspond to the provisions in the DEHR and the two Covenants of 1976 — the ICCPR and the

Mr J. S. Verma was former Chief Justice of India. Besant Lecture given at the international Convention, Adyar, 2012. (We condole his unexpected demise — April 2013)

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ICESR. In addition, the Indian Constitution also contains in articles 32 and 226 the constitutional remedy of enforcing the fundamental rights. Some non-derogable rights enumerated in Article 4 of the ICCPR are also made non-derogable in India by the amendment of article 359 of the Indian Constitution after the Emergency (1975–77).

Thus there is consistency between the constitutional right in free India and those envisaged in the International Human Rights Law recognizing and reaffirming the global perspective of human rights.

The Free India envisaged by Dr Rajendra Prasad is reflected in the directive principles of State policy enacted in Part IV of the Constitution. Speaking in the Constituent Assembly on 15 August 1947 his vision at the threshold was summarized thus:

Let us resolve to create conditions in this country,

When every individual will be free and provided with the wherewithal to develop and rise to his fullest stature,

When poverty and squalor and ignorance and ill health will have vanished,

When the distinction between high and low, between rich and poor, will have disappeared,

When religion will not only be professed and preached and practised freely but will have become a cementing force for binding man to man and not serve as a disturbing and disrupting force dividing and separating,

When untouchability will have been forgotten like an unpleasant night dream,

When exploitation of man by man will have ceased,

When facilities and special arrangements will have been provided for the adivasis of India and for all others who are backward, to enable them to catch up to others, When this land will have not only enough food to feed its teeming millions but will once again have become a land flowing with rivers of milk,

When men and women will be laughing and working for all they are worth in fields and factories,

When every cottage and hamlet will be humming with the sweet music of village handicrafts and maids will be busy with them and singing to their tune,

When the sun and the moon will be shining on happy homes and loving faces.

Dr Sachidanand Sinha, the Provisional Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, in his inaugural speech, quoted the American philosopher-jurist, Joseph Storey:

Let the American youth never forget that they possess (in their Constitution) a noble inheritance, bought by the toils, and sufferings, and blood of their ancestors; and capable, if wisely improved, the faithfully guarded, of transmitting to their latest posterity all the substantial blessings of life, the peaceful enjoyment of liberty, property, religion and independence. . . . It has been reared for immortality if the work of man may justly aspire to such a title. It may nevertheless, perish in an hour by the folly, or corruption, or negligence of its only keepers, THE PEOPLE.

At the concluding session of the

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Constituent Assembly, its Chairman, Dr Rajendra Prasad, prophesied:

Whatever the Constitution may or may not provide, the welfare of the country will depend upon the way in which the country is administered. That will depend upon the men who administer it . . . and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them. . . . It requires men of strong character, men of vision, men who will not sacrifice the interest of the country at large. . . . We can only hope that the country will throw up such men in abundance.

Alas, the current scene suggests that the hope is belied!

Amartya Sen echoed that sentiment in *The Idea of Justice*:

There is no automatic guarantee of success by the mere existence of democratic institutions. . . . The success of democracy is not merely a matter of having the most perfect institutional structure that we can think of. It depends inescapably on our actual behaviour patterns and the working of political and social interactions. There is no chance of resting the matter in the 'safe' hands of purely institutional virtuosity. The working of democratic institutions, like all other institutions, depends on the activities of human agents in utilizing opportunities for reasonable realization. . . .

Granville Austin, in his *Working of a Democratic Constitution: The Indian Experience*, observes:

Citizens of India have taken this Constitution as the text — the scripture, even a new Dharmaśāstra — for public life.

Rule of law is a principle acting as a constraint on exercise of all public power. Governance by the rule of law envisages projection of the fundamental principles implicit in that doctrine. Public law enforces performance by public authorities of their public duties. This is the concept of legal control of government under the rule of law, which is the bedrock of democracy. This is firmly entrenched in our constitutional philosophy as a basic feature forming a part of the indestructible basic structure of the Constitution: *Keshavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, AIR 1973 SC 1461.

The goal of free India is the talisman of Mahatma Gandhi who indicated the acid test of public duty to 'wipe every tear from every eye'; that it should benefit the weakest in the society; and to make every village a self-sufficient unit of empowered people with gender society; and to make every village a self-sufficient unit of empowered people with gender justice. Jawaharlal Nehru in his emotional speech on the freedom at midnight, reeking with national fervour, promised to keep the 'tryst with destiny' and to redeem the pledge substantially. That pledge was made on behalf of all generations of 'We the People of India'.

It is time to assess the progress made towards redeeming that pledge; and to identify and implement the remedial measures to neutralize the shortcomings.

Current Scene

Two recent books fairly describe the current scene — far removed from the Free India envisioned during the freedom struggle. One is a book by Patwant Singh which labels the current *Fault Lines of Democracy* as the Second Partition; and the other by Gur Charan Das indicates that *India Grows at Night* when the governance sleeps. The state of ‘governance’, justified by the title, is succinctly described in it. Another contextual book by Gur Charan Das is *The Difficulty of Being Good*, which compares the dilemmas of modern life with those in the episodes of the epic *Mahābhārata*. As I read it, it indicates the duty of the good to act positively and not to remain a passive spectator of the evil; it rightly questions Bhishma’s inertia when Draupadi was being disrobed, under the mistaken belief that he was bound by the promise to the Kaurava-s to be with them. Edmund Burke had also said that nothing more is required for the evil to succeed than for the good to do nothing. The current scene appears to be a repetition of similar inertia in those whose voice counts, and, therefore, for them, silence is not an option in certain situations.

In particular, two areas need specific mention. One is the growing intolerance with arrogance of those in power or with pelf who consider themselves to be above the rule of law; and the other is the rampant corruption with vulgar display of the ill-gotten wealth. The right to freedom of speech of the common man is seriously eroded if it offends the powerful, with the state machinery ever willing to twist the

rule of law to flatter them. Sycophancy and arbitrariness are increasing. Harmless remarks expressing dissent are visited with illegal arrests generating an atmosphere of fear without declaration of Emergency under the Constitution. Several such arrests by ruling parties of all shades are becoming the current practice. Absence of any regret at the high-handedness coupled with brazen attempt at its justification makes it worse. It is flagrant erosion of the rule of law which is the bedrock of democracy. The threat to the inclusive democratic polity must be arrested forthwith.

The reaction to rampant corruption in public life has resulted in a crusade against it, mobilizing the public anger. The means adopted by a section of civil society with no accountability in this crusade is also becoming undemocratic. The frustration of the common man is seen to support even these means. There is threat to the democratic polity from this reaction also, which instead of strengthening the democratic national institutions tends to devalue them. People taking to the streets could lead to anarchy.

It is no satisfaction that the GNP level has risen or there is an increase in the number of High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) with many being among the richest in the world, when a large population in the country continues to fight for survival. It negates the constitutional promise of an egalitarian ethos with distributive justice. The quality and distribution of GNP growth is as important as the quantum of growth. The growth in GNP needs to be centred on the dicta of

distributive justice to redress the growing and disparate imbalance between those rich and poor, affluent and needy, by designing ambitious human development plans, schemes and programmes. This can no longer be delayed. If we fail here, all talk of honouring the constitutional promise would only sound a verbal jugglery and hypocrisy when a large section of people continue to suffer destitution and indignity.

It is unnecessary to describe the current scene by citing more instances, which abound and are in public knowledge. It is sufficient to say that the reasons enumerated by Edward Gibbon in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* are frighteningly similar in the current dispensation. The result is that the good are being sidelined, many a time, and the undeserving call the shots. This trend needs to be reversed forthwith. The progress made in certain fields in spite of the malaise indicates the unutilized true potential available to realize the dream of a Free India. The full potential needs to be tapped by reversing this trend.

Remedial Measures

The constitutional vision to be realized and preserved needs a vigilant 'People', who perform their participatory role in the governance of a democratic polity. This statement is based on the profound exhortation in Aristotle's *Politics* (325–322 BC):

The greatest of all means . . . for ensuring the stability of Constitutions — but which is nowadays generally neglected — is the education of citizens in the spirit of the Constitution. The education of a citizen in

the spirit of the Constitution . . . consists in doing the actions by which . . . a democracy will be enabled to survive . . . To live by the rule of the Constitution ought not to be regarded as slavery, but rather as salvation.

One clear message is for the good to not vacillate and to do the duty to prevent or undo a wrong whenever necessary. The people's participatory role in governance has this call of duty.

The fundamental duties of every citizen are enumerated in Article 51 A which was inserted by amendment as Part IV A of the Indian Constitution. It merely reiterates the values of the Indian ethos of which the citizens were to be reminded when decadence in them was witnessed a quarter century after adoption of the Constitution. Faithful adherence with commitment to these values by every citizen is the remedy to overcome the cynicism and frustration set in the civil society and to realize the vision of Free India. For this to happen we have to honour the advice of Mahatma Gandhi: 'Be the change you want to see in the world.'

C. Rajagopalachari, fondly called 'Rajaji', elaborated the above advice, emphasizing that individual rectitude is the foundation of national character, the improvement of which is the panacea for all the ills. He had said:

National character is the keystone on which rests the fate and future of our public affairs, not this or that 'ism'.

National character depends on, and in fact is, individual rectitude.

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Individual honesty must be brought into being before we can hope for improvement of national affairs.

If the parched field of Indian politics and administration has to get fresh green life and grow, we need the monsoon of purity in national character. And the monsoon consists of little drops falling and uniting to make the rain. Individual purity of character alone can revive the parched field; let's regain our good character quickly and all will be well — politics, administration and economic conditions.

The object and work of the Theosophical Society has been towards this direction. The need is to accelerate that work in which the civil society must contribute effectively. This method, in addition to improving the quality of the civil society, is of lasting impact and is consistent with the democratic ethos as against any extra-constitutional or undemocratic means of devaluing the democratic institutions.

Conclusion

To convert the mirage in the desert into an oasis, the vision of Free India encapsulated in the constitutional promise, must be realized with the means indicated — Renaissance of Values, which too is the constitutional mandate in the aforesaid fundamental duties enumerated in article 51A that are the same as the Theosophical philosophy. The answer to the problem

was given by Annie Besant a century back (1908) that the 'great wave of spiritual life of which the Theosophical Society is the crest' with the 'wave of patriotic life' is the solution. The debate can be resolved by every citizen practising the fundamental duty 'to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom'.

The observance of 26 November each year as Law Day has become a ritual. It needs to become a day of reckoning on which every citizen must pledge to realize the constitutional promise. On this Law Day, 26 November 2012, a large group of eminent persons drawn from different sections of society collected at the Constitution Club in New Delhi and pledged to realize the constitutional rights of every citizen, inter alia as under:

... we resolve to exercise the sovereignty bestowed by the Constitution on the people of India. We will use all democratic and peaceful means at our disposal to fulfil its obligations under the directive principles of the Indian Constitution of livelihood, employment, social security, and welfare, freedom from hunger and malnutrition, education and health facilities, living wage and equal opportunity irrespective of gender, ethnicities, religious faith and caste.

Renewal and honour of this pledge by every citizen would also be a fitting tribute to the memory and contribution of Annie Besant. ✧

The man who aims at his own aggrandizement underrates everything else.

Rabindranath Tagore

The Means Determine the End

RICARDO LINDEMANN

MR J. Krishnamurti emphasized that ‘the means determine the end’,¹ which would be obvious, if we truly understood the law of karma, but in the world of politics everywhere there seems to be a tendency to affirm that the end justifies the means, and so the world suffers the consequences.

It is unbearable to know that forty thousand children die by starvation each day, according to UNESCO by problems derived from malnutrition in the developing world; while the world spends one million dollars per minute in weapons. Therefore, for each child dying by starvation there is a corresponding amount of thirty-six thousand dollars spent irresponsibly in weapons, wars and violence. This whole situation of suffering is determined by the political means the world is using, because it is obvious that given such an amount for each child, his or her death by starvation need not happen. Surprisingly, in the newspaper, there was no inclusion about matters considered illegal such as political corruption, trafficking of drugs and other vices of the underworld where the money involved would be even much bigger.

There was only information about what is spent in the sales of weapons, which is considered in our world a normal and legal product of industry.

As the Mahachohan said:

To be *true*, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilized* races less than any other, have ever possessed the TRUTH. The right and the logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism, are as impossible to them now . . . as they ever were — but to these there *must* be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines prove their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first one to confess *that* must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives *truth* and nothing but the *truth*.²

The Mahatma KH also emphasized the philosophical importance of the law of karma, as follows: ‘we recognize but one

Mr Ricardo Lindemann, an engineer by profession, is a National Lecturer and former General Secretary of the Brazilian Section of the TS. Talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, December 2012.

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law in the Universe, the law of harmony, of *perfect* EQUILIBRIUM.³

It seems that at least half of the followers of the religions of the world are already being taught from the very beginning of their lives about the doctrine of karma. Moreover, an idea of a kind of divine justice is mentioned in every religion. So, what is lacking in the comprehension of karma in this world? Krishnamurti pointed out:

You really don't believe in karma although you talk a great deal about it. If you really, actually, vitally, believed in it, as you believe in earning money, in sexual experience, then every word, every gesture, every movement of your being would matter, because you are going to pay for it in the next life. So that belief would bring tremendous discipline — but you don't believe, it is an escape, you are frightened because you don't want to let go.⁴

Another example of a very common and convenient misinterpretation of karma is given by Dr I. K. Taimni:

In India, many people would shrink with horror if they were asked to slaughter a goat and yet they allow themselves to believe that they incur no karmic responsibility in taking meat because it is the butcher who kills the goat. This illustrates incidentally the enormous capacity for self-deception in the case of human beings where their prejudices come in or where their self-indulgences are at stake.⁵

Therefore, our perception of life generally seems to be superficial, and the

case of the law of karma is not an exception. Dr Besant said: 'Few things, perhaps, are so dangerous as a little knowledge of the Law of Karma. And unhappily many of us have stopped at the point of a little knowledge.'⁶

Even Science discovered in Nature the law of action and reaction, known as Newton's third law of mechanics, and Einstein revealed the mutual convertibility of energy and matter [$E=mc^2$]. The third law, discovered by Newton, governs the proper relations of the parts of a whole, or even of different bodies as follows: 'To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction: or, the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal, and directed to contrary parts.'⁷

So, the Universe could be described by analogy as an ocean of energy or light, symbolizing the fundamental unity of all. To perceive this ocean of light is enlightenment. Śri Kṛṣṇa, personifying the Universal Consciousness, in the *Bhagavadgītā*, says: 'He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me, of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.'⁸

In this immense ocean of light or energy, we could be perceived as living forms of condensation of that energy, like fragments of ice floating in an ocean. We are temporary differentiations within that immense ocean of light. In this analogy, ice could represent our body, liquid water our soul, and vapour our spirit, different condensations of the same thing. Karma, in such a picture, would be like a wave distributing disturbances all around and

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coming back by reflection from the margins of the ocean to the very particle where the disturbance was originated. This happens in order to preserve the unity of that lake of light, where all is interdependent. Can we see that karma is one of the ways of Nature to preserve unity in diversity?

Madame Blavatsky was able in some way to anticipate Science when she published, in 1888, in her *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine*, a similar idea that Matter is a condensation of Spirit:

These beings are the ‘Sons of Light’, because they emanate from, and are self-generated in, that infinite Ocean of Light, whose one pole is pure *Spirit* lost in the absoluteness of Non-Being, and the other pole, the *Matter* in which it condenses, crystallizing into a more and more gross type as it descends into manifestation.⁹

Another important idea found in *The Secret Doctrine* is that there is a Divine Plan, or in other words, a Universal Mind that shapes Matter in the Universe:

The Dhyan Chohans are dual in their character, being composed of (a) the irrational *brute Energy*, inherent in Matter, and (b) the intelligent Soul, or cosmic Consciousness, which directs and guides that Energy, and which is the *Dhyan Chohan*ic Thought reflecting the Ideation of the Universal Mind. This results in a perpetual series of physical manifestation and *moral effects* on Earth, during manvantaric periods, the whole being subservient to Karma.¹⁰

Therefore, Nature has its own intelligence, and this is expressed in its natural functions which we are to respect, and we are indeed invited to take the initiative to collaborate with the Universal Mind shaping Matter, and so shape the future from the present using the law of karma, creating right causes to attain right effects. So, we should choose the right means, even the right means of livelihood, if we are to attain the goal of human evolution. As Krishnamurti said, ‘the really important thing is this knowledge — the knowledge of God’s plan for men. For God has a plan, and that plan is evolution’.¹¹

This means we are not supposed to merely wait for the mechanical answer of karma, sometimes excusing inertia by saying that ‘it is the will of God’, but to use that margin of free will that we already have, to create a new *kriyamāna* karma (or karma being generated) to change the *prārabdha* karma (or ripe karma). As Master KH pointed out: ‘It is always wiser to work and force the current of events than to wait for time.’¹²

It is important to perceive that the final results of what happens to us are not absolutely predetermined, but they are really a complex resultant of a vectorial composition of forces of karma (Sanchita, Prārabdha, Kriyamāna and also different kinds of collective karma). As Dr Besant so clearly expressed in her analogy of the sailor’s skill in the change of the sails:

Exertion is always wise. No matter if it seems hopeless, you have diminished the weight against you. Every effort has its

The Means Determine the End

full result, and the wiser you are the better you can think and desire and act. If you think of karma thus, it will never paralyse you, but always inspire you. 'But', you say, 'there are some things, after all, in which my fate is too strong for me.' You can sometimes trick destiny, when you cannot meet it face to face. When sailing against contrary winds, the sailor cannot change the wind, but he can change the set of the sails. The direction of the ship depends on the relation of the sails to the wind, and, by careful tacking, you can nearly sail against a contrary wind, and by a little extra labour reach your port. That is a parable about karma. If you cannot change your fate, change yourself, and meet it at a different angle, and you will go gliding away successfully where failure seemed inevitable. 'Skill in action is yoga', and that is one way in which the wise man rules his stars instead of being ruled by them. The things that are really inevitable, and in which you cannot change your attitude — *endure*. They are very few. When there is some destiny so mighty that you can only bow down before it and yield, even then learn from it, and out of that destiny you will gather a flower of wisdom that perhaps a happier fate might not have enabled you to pluck. And so in every way we find that we can meet and conquer, and even from defeat may pluck the flower of victory.¹³

But even to choose the right direction for our ship in life to arrive at the goal of *nirvāna*, the end of human evolution and the beginning of a superhuman one, we must choose the right means to come to

Samādhi or ecstasy. According to the *Yoga-sutra-s*: 'On the clarification of memory, when the mind loses its essential nature (subjectivity), as it were, and the real knowledge of the object alone shines (through the mind) *Nirvitarka Samādhi* is attained.'¹⁴ This initial level of *samādhi* is reached by a preliminary development of spiritual discernment, through clarity of right memory, self-observation and purification of our motives. So, without this spiritual discernment, how can we even begin the spiritual path and choose the right means? Master KH pointed out:

How can you know the real from the unreal, the true from the false? Only by self-development. How get that? By first carefully guarding yourself against the causes of self-deception. And this you can do by spending a certain fixed hour or hours each day all alone in self-contemplation, writing, reading, the purification of your motives, the study and correction of your faults, the planning of your work in the external life. These hours should be sacredly reserved for this purpose, and no one, not even your most intimate friend or friends, should be with you then. Little by little your sight will clear, you will find the mists pass away, your interior faculties strengthen, your attraction towards us gain force, and certainty replace doubts.¹⁵

Dr Radha Burnier, international President of The Theosophical Society, comments: 'Krishnaji said "the first step is the last step", and the direction taken with the first step is what matters.'¹⁶

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Therefore, the first step must have in itself the nature of the last one; otherwise we will take the wrong path to the goal. It is not possible to reach the Supreme Truth walking in falsehood. It is not possible to reach the peace of Nirvāna walking in contradiction and conflict. The quality of peace must be present to some extent from the very first step if we want to reach Nirvāna. This is because affinity with the nature of the goal we wish to reach will be our compass; otherwise we will lose the path. This is why also Mr J.

Krishnamurti said, 'the means determine the end'.¹⁷ If there is no coherence between the steps taken, i.e., the means used, and the goal to be reached, we will lose the goal. Indeed, we will reach only another destiny determined by the nature or quality of the means used. The common saying so often used in the world nowadays, that 'the end justifies the means', is the very road to lose the real goal and to find suffering. It indicates deep ignorance of the Law of Karma. For we reap always only that which we sow. ✧

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Problems of Mind and Heart

HUGH SHEARMAN

MOST people are aware of two elements in their lives, a calculating element and a motivating element. The mind alone does not supply the force which results in action. There is a passional or emotive or desire element in our lives which keeps us on the move; and, since we like in this age to regard ourselves as rather reasonable people, the relationship between the mental and emotive elements in our natures — between mind and heart — is a constant concern to us.

It was David Hume, the Scottish philosopher of the eighteenth century, who told the western world that reason is and ought to be ‘the slave of the passions’. By this he did not mean passions that were necessarily evil. He was simply declaring that mind is set in motion by something in our natures other than itself. This has been a very disturbing teaching to those who try to regulate their lives by what they consider to be reason. The same teaching has been propounded once again, in its social implications, by Bertrand Russell in 1954; and certain Marxist writers have tried, with much evident warmth of feeling, to confute him.

Perhaps we can quibble a little over the definition of terms like mind and heart; but

it is certainly the experience of most people that it is not reason alone that ‘makes us tick’. Reason may analyse and elaborate and provide us with factual ground for modifying our course of action; but fundamentally our actions may all be referred back to desire for their driving force. Desire may be instinctual or intuitive. It may be, in our opinion, beneath reason or above reason. But it is different from reason.

Perhaps we sometimes find that this motivating element in our lives is somehow greater than mere calculating reason, that it can outpass reason without coming into conflict with it, that it can be what we call intuition and can impinge upon the world of reason with a noble and subtle comprehensiveness which creates harmony in that world and no discord. But unhappily there is often very considerable discord between the motivating and the calculating elements in our lives, a conflict between heart and mind.

Since this conflict of mind and heart makes us very uncomfortable, we try to solve it, and we eagerly take up any course of activity which may be proposed to us as a cure for our discomfort. In pursuing these various solutions of the conflict of mind and heart, we often find that we are

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merely rendered more acutely aware of the conflict and of our helplessness in it.

For example, we are told that meditation is a way of moving on to a solution of the conflict of mind and heart; and so we learn the methods of meditation and gain a clear mental idea of what has to be done. But we do not actually meditate, because, quite frankly, we do not want to meditate. The mind may present us with admirable facts and reasons on the subject of meditation, but the heart is not engaged by them, and so nothing is done. If this happens, meditation proves to be, not a solution, but just a further field in which we become humiliatingly acquainted with our conflict, our helplessness and our failure.

As we live in an age in which reason is very properly held in considerable respect, most of our attempted solutions of the conflict of mind and heart take the form of setting the mind to act as watchdog over the heart. It is because we do this that so many good resolves are betrayed and so many good principles are flouted in the lives of people in whom there is nevertheless a great yearning for something better. That setting of the mind to act as watchdog over the heart implies the indefinite continuance of that very division of mind and heart from which our conflict takes its rise.

To draw attention to this unsatisfactory process of setting the mind to be watchdog over the heart, and to recognize it, is not to eliminate it. A good many people have had their attention drawn to the fact that their efforts to live harmonious and moral lives have been based to a considerable

extent upon this process and have failed because of it; but frequently their reaction to the discovery is only to specialize a further department of the mind to act as watchdog over the watch-dog. One seems to sense such an operation taking place in some who have become self-conscious about the mind-heart conflict through studying or listening to the teachings of J. Krishnamurti.

It is a teaching of immemorial antiquity that beyond the mind and heart there is something greater, an intuition, a supernal integrator, in which mind and heart are harmonized and made one. But that is something which is not attained through methods of pursuit belonging to the worlds of reason or desire. What is beyond desire cannot be an object of desire.

Immersed as we are in the conflicts of mind and heart, is there no way of moving on from where we stand to a new and more happy outlook which belongs more to that higher world of intuition? Merely to be austere informed that that world is unattainable alike to mind and heart is not at all helpful. If there is a way of moving on and up to that true and harmonious way of regarding ourselves and our world, the first step must surely be from where we now stand. Mystagogues of the higher solemnities will perhaps tell us, truly enough no doubt, that we do not get there by steps at all and that to arrive there is to discover that we were there all the time. Nevertheless there is surely something that can be done by the simple spiritual flat-earther to whom these witty paradoxes bring no balm.

In effect, there does seem to be a way

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of resolving these conflicts by bringing every particular conflict and problem out of the limits of merely personal values and into a universal setting. This requires imagination and not just a cold mental process. In fact heart and mind have to join in it.

Let us say that I am in a state of conflict. I am lonely or angry or confused. Instead, then, of battling with this: conflict, let me contemplate all the other people who are lonely or angry or confused. Let me glance through many examples of their loneliness or anger or confusion, until I sense their condition as no longer personal to themselves but part of a vast world process. By groping in this direction, I have already entered into a state of mind and heart which is somehow superior to that condition in which my own problem seemed so acute. I find myself in a new condition of sympathetic good humour; and I now know better what to do about my own personal problem. Usually there is nothing to do. The altered focus of thought and feeling that has been brought about is all that is needed.

This method of looking at conflict is not a panacea. Other people will use quite a different approach. The important thing is that we should establish more and more clearly a pathway out of our own small selfhood. Most of the pathos of the condition of those who are psychologically sick is that we cannot reach them no matter how much we may want to help them. Each has constructed for himself a little closed box inside which he chases his own tail or laments or mopes. There is

no use breaking into the box from outside. That will cause him only to construct a smaller and stronger one. He must open the box from inside and step out himself. All our conflicts and unhappinesses have something of that character and are boxes in which we have imprisoned ourselves; and the coming out is always an impulse of sympathy which can lead us out to a greater knowledge of that one universal process which alone gives us any significance as individuals.

What is most likely to arouse our sympathy in the first instance is our own personal plight; but this impulse of sympathy has to be led on out into the wider world and not allowed to become fixed in the dangerous condition of self-pity — a condition which has served to justify nearly every crime that has ever been committed.

A readiness to turn imaginatively outwards to the universal and the general can help in many fields of life. It can certainly illuminate our studies. It can also render more effective many other things that we do.

For example, there is an increasing interest nowadays in the use of thought for healing; and a regrettable aura of self-seeking has gathered round some of this activity. People form what they call absent healing groups and try to think other people into better health. Almost certainly they would succeed better if, instead of setting out to heal individuals directly, they would try to heal the whole class to which the sick individual belongs. Thus, if instead of meditating earnestly to heal

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the rheumatism of one's grand-uncle one were to think healingly of all the rheumatic persons in the world, then something would come flowing back from that more universal effort which would be far more valuable to one's grand-uncle than if one had concentrated upon him exclusively. We cannot drive bargains with the universal, and too precise and personal a picture of the result which we wish to obtain, in return for so much good thinking, amounts to a market haggle with the gods.

The personal side of life, in which all conflict of mind and heart arises, is not to be condemned or neglected. But its

value and its delight lie in the fact that it can always form the starting point for an advance into something greater and larger and more stable.

Seen truly, no problem is really ever 'my' problem. There is only one Problem. It was propounded when the One became Two and the Universe was started. This is the only problem that we have to solve, and any particular problem is but a reflection of it. And for our encouragement we may perhaps listen to the paradoxical mystic who may tell us that that universal Problem was solved outside of time when it was propounded. ✧

If we can approach our problem without judging, without identifying, then the causes that lie behind it are revealed. If we would understand a problem we must set aside our desires, our accumulated experiences, our patterns of thought. The difficulty is not in the problem itself but in our approach to it. The scars of yesterday prevent the right approach. Conditioning translates the problem according to its own pattern, which in no way liberates thought-feeling from the struggle and pain of the problem. To translate the problem is not to understand it; to understand it and so transcend it interpretation must cease.

J. krishnamurthi

Reflections

N. S.

Nor would the ways of Karma be inscrutable were men to work in union and harmony, instead of disunion and strife. (*The Key to Theosophy*)

Can we relate to all with complete generosity, without a shadow of righteousness? Share the pain of those whom our limited vision judges to be in the wrong, as well as of those who have been wronged? Awaken to compassion instead of rejoicing in the 'well-earned' punishment that was meted out from within our closed-in hearts?

Why do we assume that a being just like ourselves — ignorant, sentimental and filled with vengeance — is in command of the Universal Law?

There is an all-encompassing view, far wider than ours; and unconditional love to which we are called to open our hearts.

One

Please consider all that is around and within you as your own soul-body.

Your sisters and brothers — the millions that you have never seen — all that lives and all that seems to be static, but moving very slowly; all the damage you inflict on this perfect world, your own soul-body: the pollution, the noise; please embrace all as your own and know that

there is not one fixed point anywhere from where you could gain momentum to escape the whole, not one fixed point that is outside yourself, from where you could launch yourself to rise above, and leave behind all.

You are responsible for the whole in its every detail and can only rise together *with* the whole. There is no individual salvation.

Invitation

As we are slowly coming to ourselves, waking up from our dreams, we find ourselves at the overflowing table of Life as cherished guests. We look around with increasing confidence and soon we feel at home and partake of the feast along with all that are invited, the entire universe.

Some may get too confident and assume that they — we — are the hosts of this abundant feast.

Some may remember old customs, and keep a place reserved for the most important of guests, The Unknown.

May we all realize, while still at the table, that the real and only Host *is* The Unknown and Unknowable, providing us all with all we ever need. May this abundance inspire gratitude, humility and increasing clarity. ✧

Theosophical Work around the World

Adyar

White Lotus Day was celebrated on 8 May in the Headquarters Hall to commemorate the passing of HPB and to pay homage to her. White lotuses were arranged in a brass bowl before the statue of the Founders, Mme Blavatsky and Col. Olcott. The international Secretary expressed the significance of the day in her opening remarks.

The programme continued with a short talk on Blavatsky's life of service to humanity. Extracts from *The Voice of the Silence*, *Bhagavadgîtâ* (Sanskrit verses and English translation) and a passage from *The Light of Asia* were read (as desired by HPB), and a ^aanti mantra was chanted.

The international President, Dr Radha Burnier, graced the occasion and flowers were offered by those assembled, to pay homage to the Founders.

Russia

The Second All-Russian Theosophical Conference, with the theme 'Spiritual Human Regeneration' took place in Moscow on 23–24 March. One hundred delegates from twelve cities and five countries attended the Conference. The subject of Human Regeneration was dealt with in several aspects. Jan Jelle Keppler, General Secretary of the Belgian Section, and Svitlana Gavrilenko, Chairman of the TS Council in Ukraine, and others

participated in the conference.

The first Congress of the Theosophists of Russia took place in Nizhny Novgorod from 19 April to 21 April 2013. The Congress was organized by Garuda Lodge (Nizhny Novgorod) and H. P. Blavatsky Lodge (Kemerovo). Special significance was given by the participants, to developing the Theosophical movement and to support and reconstruct the Russian Section of the international Theosophical Society that was interrupted in 1919. Purposeful work in creating standards and developing the legal and methodical conditions of the theosophical movement, and promoting a knowledge of Theosophy is being carried out. A significant increase in the number of members of the international Theosophical Society in Russia over the last five years is noted.

Ukraine

From 8 to 12 May, Mr M. P. Singhal, the international Vice-President, visited four Lodges and three Study Centres in Ukraine and attended White Lotus Day celebration arranged in 'Knowledge Hall' where about a hundred people were present. A seminar on 'Life's Deeper Aspects' was also held from 9 to 11 May at the outskirts of Kiev. Mr and Mrs Singhal also visited HPB'S house, her birthplace situated in Dnipropetrovsk, which has now been taken over by the Ukrainian Historical Society with the plan

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to convert it into a HPB museum.

Sister Svitlana, the Head of the TS in Ukraine, is helping to inspire the younger TS members in Ukraine.

Indo-Pacific Conference

Theme: Exploring the Aspects of Practising Theosophy.

The Indonesian Section is hosting a six-day Indo-Pacific conference from 1 to 6 November 2013 at Bali, Indonesia. The President of the Indo-Pacific Theosophical Federation, Mr John Vorstermans, invites members to the Indo-Pacific region. More details can be found on the website at <http://ipf-ts.org> e-mail to president@ipf-ts.org.

India

White Lotus Day was observed at

the Indian Section Headquarters, Varanasi, on 8 May. After prayers excerpts from *Bhagavadgītā*, *The Light of Asia* and *The Voice of the Silence* were read. The General Secretary Bro. Sundaram, while welcoming the members and the guests, highlighted the significance of H. P. Blavatsky's writings and mentioned that in October *The Secret Doctrine* will be completing 125 years of publication. So, it is being studied this year at several Theosophical Lodges. Bro. Adi Narayan Moorthi, former Secretary of Rayalaseema Federation, was the guest speaker on this occasion who spoke about the significance of the day. The members and guests paid their tributes by offering flowers at the portrait of HPB. Poor people were fed on this occasion. ✧

To understand the Divine Plan which is the power behind evolution, and to hasten the realization of that Plan are the two main objectives of Theosophists.

C. Jinarajadasa

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