



THE THEOSOPHIST

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On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

Seeing Correctly

In the East, the lower passions have been called the real enemies of man; because of them he ceases to be what he could be. He becomes irrational, finds arguments to justify the wrong things, and becomes an advocate of cruelty. For example, in a jealous individual the thinking principle is under the impulse of personal passion. We then see things wrongly, and act wrongly. The famous illustration of the rope and the snake suggests this. A person entering a room where he thinks he sees a snake may feel fear, become aggressive, or push people while he runs away. Wrong perception leads to misery and wrong action. In a manufacturing society, unreal things are continually promoted as a way to happiness. Then the whole of society becomes unbalanced, with many kinds of evil flourishing in it. Hence the importance of seeing correctly and thinking correctly and logically.

Other well-known illustrations are given in Eastern literature, for example, when a person sees a mirage in the desert and goes forward eagerly to find water because he cannot quench his thirst otherwise. Another person may try to become wealthy by using counterfeit money, but he will only be frustrated, not

wealthy. There are also many people who question nothing and take for granted what others, such as priests, say. We find terrible superstition in the world based on mirages of various kinds.

We should thus ask ourselves what we are really seeing. Is our vision distorted by the movements of our psyche, by hidden desires, subconscious ambitions, or other things in the mind? This is not an abstract or metaphysical question; it is a practical one. Even in daily life, people see the same thing in different ways. If there is an accident on the street and one asks those present what happened, probably there will be many discrepancies, because they cannot see alike. So who is right?

Let us say there is a beautiful calf in a meadow. Someone who looks at it may see a four-legged animal and say: 'This is a calf.' Another person sees an opportunity to make a profit, and immediately begins thinking of how to obtain it, the actuality of the animal fading into the background or disappearing altogether. Some time ago, while on a train in South India, where there are beautiful tropical forests, there was a woman next to me to whom I said, 'What a lovely forest!' She responded: 'Yes, we get very good wood out of it.' She was already seeing it as

dead, dry wood. That is what happens to a person who looks at a cow or chicken and thinks how much money can be made from it. Or someone may look at a living creature, but only as a nice gastronomic prospect. There are people who are very kind and nice to their pet animals, but who see nothing except food when meat is put on their plate. This is common — people see a living entity, but in terms of how they can use an animal, a forest, or anything else. The vision may be completely distorted, fanciful, or imaginative. For example, there are Hindus who see a cow as a sign of prosperity, worthy of attention and care, but they are cruel to some other animal. All illusions breed misery.

We know how terrible religious oppression can be because all over the world it is the same. In India there are millions of people doing ceremonies which they do not understand. They are told that if they do these ceremonies they will derive some profit, and that something bad can be averted. There was, for example, the case of a young woman who had a baby, and the priest said that a certain formation of hair on the baby's head was very bad. So they allowed the priest to spend a lot of their money to counteract the ill-effects of the baby's hair formation! Social convention and superstition compel people to be exploited in such ways. Illusions are not only religious, but political. Take, for example, Marx. Many thought they were going to create a new world of prosperity by following him, and they did the opposite. There can be tyranny through social compulsion, psy-

chological, financial, or other problems. Therefore to keep the mind unconditioned, free, is very important.

Indian tradition about conditioning

In Indian tradition, we are advised to watch for conditioning from three sources. One is the environment, the society in which we are brought up. From childhood we absorb certain ideas, and the mind begins to feel that truth is in what people generally believe. In *At the Feet of the Master*, we are told that nothing becomes true because a large number of people believe it. Thousands of people may believe that by going to war we can establish peace. They seem to be effective in arousing hatred, suspicion, etc., which are the basis of more wars and the suffering that war implies. So, one thing we have to be aware of is not to believe what everybody else believes, but we should think the matter over. The Buddha said: Do not go by what you have read in the scriptures or what people are saying around you, or what your parents may tell you or what I tell you. Think it over, use your reasoning capacity, look at it carefully, question it. That is why the Buddha's teaching has sometimes been abbreviated as the 'come and see' teaching. 'Come and see, and then find out for yourself.'

An important conditioning factor is words. The word 'tree' is not the tree. We do not understand this when we use words. We say 'I love you very much', and we think that is a fact, but it may not be a fact at all. It may be just a temporary

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attraction, or even a matter of self-interest which is in the subconscious mind. People say 'I am happy'. What do we mean by 'happy'? Is it pleasure, entertainment? We do not question what we mean. So words can be very misleading.

The third thing they spoke about is the conditioning of the body. Certain kinds of food make the body and brain rather dull, and other types of food make it restive. But there are also racial characteristics. We get conditioned by our genetic heritage. There are said to be three main sources of conditioning; the body, words, and the society in which we live. We are all free to think over other types of conditioning, such as, obviously, memory and very long-term memory. At a certain stage of evolution, prior to the human stage, almost all creatures have to learn to be afraid. There are little animals which will rush out of their home and their mother will punish them, otherwise they will become easy prey to predators. So fear is part of the conditioned brain, which we have inherited from the long past.

Perhaps we have to realize that the greatest deluder is the notion of 'I', that is, of a life separate from all the rest. This is egoism; it distorts, interferes, misleads. Does this feeling begin with the necessity for survival? Sometimes when we are reading a book we see a tiny little mite moving on the page. If we put our finger there, it will try to escape, for even such a mite is conscious that it needs to escape danger. It is not thinking, it is inbuilt in Nature. Is that desire

for survival what creates or promotes egoism? Animals do not seem to be egoistic, and they are the ones who are striving hard to survive.

Through wrong thinking, perhaps, human beings give a meaning to survival which is artificial. For example, a certain amount of money may be essential for survival, but in the minds of numerous people that becomes an endless aim. People with large amounts of money are still busy making more money, and multinationals are destroying the livelihood of very poor people. We should be able to see that survival is part of the game, because if nobody survives everything will end. There is a healthy sort of instinct towards survival. If a brick falls from above, we would all try to get out of the way. There is nothing wrong with that. But if survival becomes ambition, an obsession, then it is utter delusion. It does not seem as if the necessity of survival is what brings about egoism.

Is egoism a sort of sin? This is a theory put forward in some religions, implying that we cannot find out what is the source of egoism. But we can find a way to put an end to it. Egoism is perhaps the best way of creating unhappiness for oneself, because we are then out of tune with the entire universe. So we need not bother about the origin of egoism, we can see here and now that egoistic behaviour creates conflict. It is behind almost every human activity, this 'I'-ness which gives a sense of importance and makes a person feel hurt, rejected, or whatever it is.

How egoism works

Suppose somebody tells me: 'You gave a terrible talk.' I have two options. One is to feel hurt and say, 'That is very bad: I did say a few things that were worth considering.' I can adopt an attitude of defence, of opposition, dislike of the person, etc. Or somebody may say: 'Oh, it was wonderful.' If I accept that, it will bloat my ego. The curious thing is that both the flattery and the criticism increase my egoism. On the other hand, if a person says, 'Your talk was terrible', I can say to myself: 'All right, that is his opinion. There may be truth in it.' I can look at it, remedy something which needs to be remedied, or perhaps make some modification in my own belief about myself — all these are possible. But instead we react, and every reaction is a form of egoism. One of the things that we have to learn is the difference between an action and a reaction. Reaction is this personal self which is always defending itself, maintaining and building itself.

The freedom from opposites of which the *Bhagavadgītā* speaks is freedom from egoistic reactions. Look at everything without getting excited, agitated, etc. over it. That is not so easy to practise — to observe carefully the situations or experiences we go through in daily life. Look at anything — the roses in the garden, the hills all around. It is possible simply to look at it, to experience the beauty without feeling 'I am experiencing beauty'. The mind automatically feels 'I am experiencing that'. Can the experience be sufficient, without attributing

it to oneself — 'I have done it'. We have images like these because we do not examine whether there is only fiction or reality in 'myself'. I take it for granted, and go on with 'I am the person who acts', and so on. So we have images of ourselves as knower, actor, enjoyer, or teacher.

Somebody asked Ramana Maharshi, 'Should I not be patriotic?' Sri Ramana said: 'It is not your business to be anything. Just be.' You need not be patriotic, or enthusiastic or whatever. But the difficulty is that you cannot say: 'I want to be nothing.' But wanting to be nothing is also wanting to be something. So can the mind look at all this and become aware that the subconscious does not go on saying, 'I am this' or 'I am that'? Can one enjoy without creating an excuse for making an image of oneself as the person to whom enjoyment is due?

To be without the feeling of I-ness in regard to every experience must begin every day, by watchfulness. The *Dhammapada* is said to contain the original words of the Buddha. He said: 'Mindfulness is life. Unmindfulness is death.' Those who are not mindful are not aware of anything. When we are not aware, we are like the dead. It is not only what is inside — our own follies and stupidities — that one is insensitive to, but whether a plant is dying, or another person is contented or happy. It is easy to be aware of what we think are our own merits; most of us are. But it is not so easy to see how we get deceived all the time. If we go about as if in a dream, many things appear real to us that are false, and we end up suffering. ✧

The Nature of Love

WAYNE GATFIELD

THERE never was a time when love was more needed in the world than it is today, when religious intolerance, violence, and the exploitation of materialism and selfishness are at their peak. On the one hand there are those who misunderstand the true nature of love and confuse it with lust, and then there are those spiritually inclined who are apt to say that love is just another concept and needs to be transcended. Maybe in the final analysis the latter statement is true, but love still has a task to do in the world before she disappears from mortal sight! In *The Theosophical Glossary*, under the entry 'Kāmadeva', H. P. Blavatsky explains that although the word popularly refers to the god of love, esoterically:

Kāma is the first conscious, *all-embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE Force, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE. Says the *Rgveda*, 'Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind, and which

Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity', or *manas* with pure *ātma-buddhi*. There is no idea of sexual love in the conception. Kāma is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love; and it is only ages later, as mankind began to materialize by anthropomorphization its grandest ideals into cut-and-dried dogmas, that Kāma became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane.

In the very depths of our being we have this harmony that is a reflection of that first feeling of infinite tender compassion. It is the seed of Bodhisattvahood that many on this earth try to nurture. They attempt to burn away all obstructions so that all that is left is the flame of love in their hearts, a steady cool flame that has rendered all else void. This is the kind of life aspired to by the Mahāyāna Buddhists, Sufis and Bhakti Yogis in India.

This kind of love is sadly missing from modern society. Materialistic science has given us very little respect for human life. No matter how much science tries to defend itself, a tree is definitely known

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by its fruits! One of the saddest fruits of this society is the way in which life is regarded so cheaply. Almost every day we read of individuals being injured or murdered for the sake of a trifling amount of money or just for their mobile phones or jewellery. Another worrying trend is that certain young people are now saying that they will attack someone just for the 'fun' of it! They will even record it on their video phones and relay it to their 'friends'. This is far from Pythagoras' statement in his *Golden Verses* that we should 'take courage, the race of man is divine'.

This happens because we are far too shallow in our regard for each other. If we only realized that the same Light is shining in the heart of all beings, we would understand that any illusions of separateness are just surface manifestations. Separateness is indeed a 'great dire heresy' as *The Voice of the Silence* tells us. It is the cause of much of the evil and all of the selfishness in this world. If Oneness is the dream of all true Mystics, separateness is the nightmare. If the Golden Age is always within us, then the Dark Age is around us, created by the misunderstanding of who or what we really are and our relationship with our fellow human beings.

Society has developed based very much upon coercion instead of Love. Leo Tolstoy emphasized this point towards the end of his life. If we had developed a society based on the true teachings of Jesus, we would not have needed police forces, armies, courts of law, etc. Jesus

taught us to love our enemies and bless those that curse us, but how many in so-called Christian countries would even think of doing just that? Islamic and Christian fundamentalists seem to have forgotten the meaning of love and traded it to become children of this aggressive age, promoting the law of violence and separateness, and using coercion to get their message across.

Which of these two religions will be the first to follow the law of love that their Founders inculcated and therefore be an example before the world of true religious feeling? As it is now they both follow a path that is diametrically opposed to what their teachers wanted. This is not to say that the vast majority of Christians and Muslims are like this; many are trying to follow the fine examples of their teachers. It is unfortunate that the minority, the fanatics who completely misunderstand the subtleties of their scriptures, are the most vocal and somehow believe that the murder of innocents is just. I am sure that Karma will redress the balance in the course of time. It is perhaps the perpetrators that should be pitied as much, if not more, than the victims, as they will very soon discover that their expectation of eternal reward in heaven for acts of cruelty and murder will never come to fruition.

It is time that love entered the fray! It is the only thing that can make our hearts tender and bring us closer together as human beings. One can learn philosophical and spiritual teachings and not be one iota more compassionate and caring.

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The time has passed when we had the luxury of learning spiritual or esoteric teachings merely to further our own understanding. The world is in a crisis and only love can save us from the abyss that we individually and collectively face. A world without love cannot stand, no matter how advanced the technological achievements or how impressive the religious ceremonies. Nor can it survive on merely intellectual comprehension of spiritual teachings. Without love in its truest sense we are lost in the fog of selfishness and ignorance.

What is love then? In its highest sense it is our relationship with the highest. It is the reflection in us all of the harmony that lies at the heart of all things. It is the universal desire for good, for all that is beneficial to manifest in humanity. It is our link with the Divine and with our fellow creatures. It is the Supreme Attraction.

We all know that love comes to us in many ways. We have the love of parents for children, children for parents, the love of friends, and the love of a man for a woman and vice versa. All of these at their highest levels can be ennobling and beautiful. But, of course, they are also limiting because a mother would see countless people die if it meant her child would live and lovers would kill for their beloved's sake! Yet there is a positive side as in the case of a couple who are truly in love; their affection can reach out and touch others and so benefit humanity and add to the storehouse of pure love that needs to be drawn on by the benefactors of the planet!

There are those in the world who would warn us against analyzing love too much. It is something to be experienced and not scrutinized. This is true to a certain extent, but then there are those deep thinkers who find it impossible to accept something without first understanding it to the best of their ability. Once they have discovered the scientific nature of love as expressed in the quotation at the beginning of this paper, they will be able to relate it to the laws of Nature by applying the maxim 'as above so below', and therefore clearly see that love at any level is a vision of this eternal harmony in varying degrees, and any lack of love is due to a clouding of vision. Love indeed is present throughout the manifested universe and is the ONLY thing that can save us in the end.

The further we drift from love the crueller society becomes and the more we are plunged into the countless horrors that haunt us all nowadays. It has all to do with a lack of love and not particularly a lack of spirituality. We can have 'spiritual' people who love only themselves. So it is not necessarily lack of spirituality that makes the world so dark, but lack of love. To love one another is the highest we can achieve on this planet!

When H. P. Blavatsky was asked in *The Key to Theosophy* whether 'equal justice to all and love for all creatures' is the highest standard of Theosophy, she replied that there is a far higher one which is 'the giving to others *more* than to oneself — *self-sacrifice*'. But of course self-sacrifice would be impossible without love! If the giving was devoid of

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love it would just become an empty act performed mindlessly because it was written in some book or some authority recommended it. It is only the deepest love that inspires someone to self-sacrifice. Nothing else will awaken compassion in the heart. So, although self-sacrifice may be the next step up from love, it is only through love's gateway that it can be reached. There is no other way if it is to be meaningful and transformative on an individual and global level.

Love is the bright light that needs to be lit in our hearts, so that the world's suffering can be lessened and the bitter ocean of life's experiences sweetened just a little. It is something that all those who wish to ease the pain of humanity should cultivate in their hearts perpetually. It is not something that needs to be learned or added. We just need to remove the obstacles to its manifestation in us. All those man-made emotions and feelings, born of the illusion of separateness, create a barrier that prevents love from shining out from us and illuminating the lives of others. Therefore lust, anger, greed, and jealousy must be eliminated by soaking ourselves thoroughly in the teachings and meditation on love, and by also introducing it into our daily lives by our acts. The Buddha tells us

that anger is never overcome by anger; only love ever overcomes anger. The escalation of acts of violence throughout the world because of the totally mistaken and disastrous view that retaliation against violence will somehow end it, is the main cause at the moment of much of the misery in the world.

As Jesus tells us, we must learn to love our enemies and bless those that curse us if we are to get anywhere near to peace on earth. Someone needs to break the cycles of violence and it needs to start with each one of us. If we think that our contribution is too small, then we are giving in to another dire heresy — pessimism. Peace has to start somewhere, so let it begin with us and it will grow. Once the seeds are planted they will sprout! The process HAS to begin somewhere. Political legislation has proved futile, because it cannot effect a reform in human nature, so let love have its say because love truly can transform us all for the better! Once we realize the nature of true love extracted from its associations with sensuality and emotionalism, we will have a power that cannot be defeated by any force in 'heaven' or on this earth. Then we can surely lay the foundations for the return of a Golden Age that is so sorely needed and will only re-emerge when we really want it to. ✧

We can only know what intelligence is, when we know what love and compassion is. . . . Because we do not know what love and compassion is, we have to resort to cunning. . . . Love and compassion is the same thing.

J. Krishnamurti

Studies in *The Voice of the Silence*, 8

JOHN ALGEO

FRAGMENT II of *The Voice of the Silence* is entitled 'The Two Paths', and that title identifies its dominant metaphor: a road that branches into two paths, between which a choice must be made. Neither path is wrong, and ultimately both lead to the same place, but they pass through different landscapes on the way. However, the choice between the two paths is not an inconsequential one, and the Fragment is clearly urging us to choose a particular one of the two.

The importance of choice in our lives cannot be overstressed. The doctrine of karma tells us that every action has an inevitable consequence. But karma does not determine what action we will take. When faced with the need to act, we, like Arjuna in the *Gītā*, must choose what we will do. And our choice determines what follows; it also determines our own natures, for by choosing, we create or discover ourselves. In a fantasy story that is very popular around the world, a wizard guru tells a young boy who is in the process of discovering who and what he is, 'It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities' (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of*

Secrets, p. 245). That statement is neither fiction nor fantasy, but plain and sober truth. It is what Fragment II is about.

VERSES [101-111]. One of the great teachers said, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matt., 7:7). So now the candidates ask the teacher for instruction about how to proceed, just as Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*, and the teacher tells them about the two paths.

[101] And now, O Teacher of Compassion, point thou the way to other men. Behold, all those who, knocking for admission, await in ignorance and dark-ness to see the gate of the Sweet Law flung open!

The voice of the candidates:

[102] Shalt not thou, Master of thine own mercy, reveal the Doctrine of the Heart?¹ Shalt thou refuse to lead thy servants unto the Path of Liberation?

Quoth the Teacher:

[103] The Paths are two; the great Perfections three; six are the Virtues that transform the body into the Tree of Knowledge.²

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[104] Who shall approach them?

[105] Who shall first enter them?

[106] Who shall first hear the doctrine of two Paths in one, the truth unveiled about the Secret Heart?³ The Law which, shunning learning, teaches Wisdom, reveals a tale of woe.

[107] Alas, alas, that all men should possess *Ālaya*, be one with the great Soul, and that possessing it, *Ālaya* should so little avail them!

[108] Behold how, like the moon, reflected in the tranquil waves, *Ālaya* is reflected by the small and by the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the price-less boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent!

Saith the pupil:

[109] O Teacher, what shall I do to reach to Wisdom?

[110] O Wise One, what, to gain perfection?

[111] Search for the Paths. But, O *lanoo*, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the 'Eye' from the 'Heart' doctrine.

COMMENT. Fragment I ended with the *lanoo*, the learner, seated beneath the Bodhi tree, 'which is the perfection of all knowledge', having become 'the Master of Samādhi — the state of fault-

less vision'. The image is clearly that of the Buddha at his enlightenment. But enlightenment, like everything in this world, is a cyclical phenomenon. Having become enlightened in one cycle, the *lanoo* who has become Master assumes his new role in another cycle of enlightenment, in which he instructs other candidates to approach the same goal, but in different terms.

Thus, verse 101 addresses the figure beneath the Bodhi tree as a 'Teacher of Compassion' and asks him to point out the way to all the others who are still on the outer side of the door, trying to enter, waiting in the darkness of ignorance for him to open that gate. The allusion to the enlightenment of the Buddha is still being carried on. For after the Buddha attained enlightenment, he considered keeping what he had learned to himself and retiring from the world. But instead he arose from under the tree and went forth to teach the 'Sweet Law', that is, the dharma, to others.

The voice of the Candidates in verse 102 is that of those in ignorance and darkness, awaiting the light of knowledge. They ask the Teacher of Compassion to reveal the Doctrine of the Heart. A gloss on that term introduces the dichotomy that is the principal theme of this Fragment:

Gloss 1. The two schools of Buddha's doctrine, the esoteric and the exoteric, are respectively called the 'Heart' and the 'Eye' Doctrine. Bodhidharma called them in China — from whence the names reached Tibet — the *tsungmen* (esoteric) and

kiaumen (exoteric) school. The former is so named because it is the teaching which emanated from Gautama Buddha's *heart*, whereas the 'Eye' doctrine was the work of his head or brain. The Heart Doctrine is also called the 'seal of truth' or the 'true seal', a symbol found on the heading of almost all esoteric works.

The Teacher replies in verse 103 by beginning the exposition of the esoteric Doctrine of the Heart. He mentions two Paths, three Perfections, and six Virtues. The two Paths are the subject of this Fragment; their identity is unfolded as we read through it. The Sanskrit term *pāramitā* is translated as either 'perfection' or 'virtue', and there are several lists specifying various numbers of such perfections or virtues. In the third Fragment, one of the three Perfections is said to be 'entire obliteration of all earthly concerns' (gloss 34 to verse 306). The six Pāramitā Virtues are treated at length also in the next Fragment (verses 198, 207-13). They are said in verse 103 to 'transform the body into the Tree of Knowledge', explained as follows:

Gloss 2. The 'tree of knowledge' is a title given by the followers of the *Bodhi-dharma* (Wisdom Religion) to those who have attained the height of mystic knowledge — adepts. Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika school, was called the 'Dragon Tree', dragon standing as a symbol of Wisdom and Knowledge. The tree is honoured because it is under the Bodhi (wisdom) tree that Buddha received his birth and enlightenment, preached his first sermon and died.

Verse 106 refers to 'the doctrine of two Paths in one'. This alludes to the fact that, however different they seem, the two Paths lead to the same goal. A gloss explains that 'Secret Heart' refers to the esoteric Heart Doctrine:

Gloss 3. The 'Secret Heart' is the esoteric doctrine.

This verse also implies that, as Wisdom is taught by the esoteric Heart Doctrine, so learning is taught by the exoteric Eye Doctrine. The Wisdom of the Heart Doctrine reveals a tale of woe perhaps for two reasons. First, exoterically, the Buddha's teaching is that life in this world is woeful. Nothing has a stable core, everything is changing, and all is painful because greed, anger, and ignorance affect our perceptions of this world. It is only by blowing out the fire of our greed, anger, and ignorance that we can escape the world's woes. Second, esoterically, we are called upon not to abandon our fellow beings in this woeful world, even when we can escape it ourselves — not to forsake them, but instead, even when we can enter Nirvāna (the state of having blown out the fires of passion), to remain in this woeful world to help others.

Ālaya, first mentioned in verse 107, is said in *The Secret Doctrine* (1:47) to be the same as *anima mundi*, the 'soul of the world', and *The Theosophical Glossary* says it is identical with *ākāśa* and *mulaprakṛti*: 'it is the basis or root of all things'. The Sanskrit term means literally a 'storehouse'. Ālaya is thus the Fullness,

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the Plenum, the infinite potential of all that is, was, will be, or might be. We are all one with it because we are realizations or expressions of it. And because we come from it, we share its unlimited potential of being and becoming. Ālaya, the whole, is reflected in every part of the universe. When we know that we and all else in the multifarious universe are rooted in Ālaya, we have a right perception of existing things and a knowledge of the source of all.

In verses 109-110, the pupil wants to know what to do. Like all students, indeed like all of us, this pupil wants to be told simply and clearly the answer, be given unambiguous directions. But the Teacher answers, as all true teachers must, that the pupils must search for themselves, find the Path themselves. All the Teacher can do is give directions for the preliminary preparation. Those directions are to 'be of clean heart' and to 'learn to discern the real from the false . . . the ever-fleeting from the everlasting . . . Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom'. Those two directions are echoed by other guides to the Path. Thus in 'The Golden Stairs', the first and third steps are very similar to 'be of clean heart':

Behold the truth before you: a clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for one's co-disciple, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a loyal sense of duty to the Teacher, a willing obedience to the behests of TRUTH, once we have placed our confidence in, and believe that Teacher to

be in possession of it, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the secret science (Gupta Vidyā) depicts — these are the golden stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb to the Temple of Divine Wisdom.

And in *At the Feet of the Master*, the first qualification for entering the Path is discrimination (in Sanskrit, *viveka*), which is the ability to 'discern the real from the false' and in general to distinguish between alternatives. The second qualification is desirelessness or dispassion. The Sanskrit term for this qualification, *vairāgya*, means to be 'without passion or attachment', that is, 'of clean heart'. In effect, then, the Teacher is telling the pupil to practise the first two qualifications for entering the Path. This is all any teacher can do — not teach the pupil knowledge, but only show the pupil how to learn.

MEDITATION. 1. T. S. Eliot wrote: 'In my end is my beginning.' Meditate upon that sentence as a koan.

2. Robert Frost wrote a poem about a road that divided into two and about taking 'the road less travelled by', which made all the difference in his life. Visualize a road that branches. Think about the dividing roads you have encountered in your own life, the choices made, and the roads untravelled.

3. Visualize a moon reflected in tranquil waves. What is the visual effect of

the reflection in the waves? How many moons appear in them? How does that relate to the concept of *Ālaya*?

VERSES [112-122]. The next eleven verses introduce a series of vivid images, all relating to our need to establish contact between our personalities of this lifetime and our timeless Selves: a bird enclosed in a jar, a mirror gathering dust, a fool at the top of a high tower, and bread made from flour ground in a mill. They also continue the theme of head-learning and Soul-Wisdom, the Eye doctrine and the Heart doctrine, which appeared at the end of the last group of verses. The images are appropriate to that theme, for the Eye doctrine of head-learning pertains to the personality, whereas the Heart doctrine of Soul-Wisdom pertains to the timeless Self within us.

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

[113] But even ignorance is better than head-learning with no Soul-Wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

[114] The seeds of Wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space. To live and reap experience the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul.⁴ Seek not those points in *Māyā*'s realm; but soar beyond illusions, search the eternal and the changeless SAT,⁵ mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.

[115] For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects.⁶ It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek, O beginner, to blend thy mind and Soul.

[116] Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses; they are false. But within thy body — the shrine of thy sensations — seek in the impersonal for the 'Eternal Man';⁷ and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.⁸

[117] Shun praise, O devotee. Praise leads to self-delusion. Thy body is not Self, thy Self is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not.

[118] Self-gratulation, O disciple, is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. Thereon he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself.

[119] False learning is rejected by the wise, and scattered to the winds by the Good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The 'Doctrine of the Eye'⁹ is for the crowd; the 'Doctrine of the Heart' for the elect. The first repeat in pride, 'Behold, I know', the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, 'Thus have I heard'.¹⁰

[120] 'Great Sifter' is the name of the 'Heart Doctrine', O disciple.

[121] The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the Karmic heart.

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[122] True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. If thou wouldst eat the bread of Wisdom, thy flour thou hast to knead with *amṛta's* [immortality's] clear waters. But if thou kneadest husks with Māyā's dew, thou canst create but food for the black doves of death, the birds of birth, decay, and sorrow.

COMMENT. Verses 112-116 have as their theme a three-way contrast between ignorance, illusory information or 'head-learning', and true knowledge or 'soul-wisdom'.

Soul-Wisdom is the gnosis, true knowledge, knowing which, as the Upanishad says, one need not know anything else. It is Self-knowledge, knowledge that we are the one Self, which is in fact everything that is. Only the truly wise have this gnosis; they are the Masters of the Wisdom.

Ignorance is lack of the gnosis (literally: *in-* 'not' + *gnoscere* 'to know').

Head-learning or illusory information is having a store of facts without knowing what they mean. Today we live in what has been called an information explosion, but the explosion is of facts, not wise knowledge. Oscar Wilde said that a cynic is one who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. That is head-learning. It is mistaking illusion or fancy's false suggestions for real knowledge.

Of the three, Soul-Wisdom is obviously favoured by *The Voice*. But ignorance is preferable to mere head-learning, because those who have the latter are likely to suppose they know something im-

portant and therefore to be unaware of their own lack of Soul-Wisdom. On the other hand, the truly ignorant will be aware of their lack of knowledge and thus have the potential to acquire Soul-Wisdom. The genuinely ignorant will be looking for the truth. Those who are learned only in the head will suppose they know and hence will be closed-minded.

This three-way contrast is like that of the three *guna-s* (or qualities of matter), which are *sattva* (or harmony), *rajas* (or hectic activity), and *tamas* (or inertia). The *guna-s* traditionally are evaluated, with *tamas* being the least desirable because it is hard to get a static body to move. *Rajas* may be disorganized movement, but it is at least movement that can be converted into harmony. Head-learning is *tāmasic*. Ignorance is *rājasic*. Soul-Wisdom is *sāttvic*.

A related fourfold classification says that there are four kinds of people: (1) those who know and know that they know — whom we should follow because they are in possession of *sāttvic* Soul-Wisdom; (2) those who know but do not know that they know — whom we should awaken because they have a type of ignorance; (3) those who do not know and know that they do not know, whom we should teach because they have another type of ignorance; (4) those who do not know and do not know that they do not know, from whom we should flee because they have head-learning only and thus are a source of mischief.

The bird in the closed vessel of verse 112 is reminiscent of a Zen koan: There

is a bird in a jar with only a pin-sized opening at the top. How do you get the bird out of the jar without harming the bird or breaking the jar? Zen koans have no logical answers because they are not logical puzzles. One answer to this koan is, 'The bird is out of the jar'. That is, the bird got out of the jar the same way it got into it — by words. Many of our problems are artificial ones, created by the words we use. It is natural for the soul to come to wisdom, just as it is natural for a bird to fly free in the air.

Verse 114 mentions the 'Diamond Soul', that is, one who has soul-wisdom. A gloss explains:

Gloss 4. 'Diamond Soul', Vajrasattva, a title of the supreme Buddha, the Lord of all Mysteries, called Vajradhara and Ādi-Buddha.

Vajra means 'diamond' or 'thunderbolt' and, when used alone, refers to 'enlightenment', which is as sudden as lightning and as indestructible as the diamond. It is a term particularly associated with Tibetan Buddhism, one form of which is known as Vajrayāna, 'the diamond vehicle'. Vajrasattva is literally 'diamond harmonious nature' (*sattva* being the *guna* referred to above), which is the nature of the Buddha. Vajradhara is 'He who holds the *vajra*'. Ādi-Buddha is the first, original, or primordial Buddha, a term for the Absolute.

The same verse mentions *sat*, glossed as follows:

Gloss 5. *Sat*, the one eternal and abso-

lute Reality and Truth, all the rest being illusion.

Sat is the present participle of the Sanskrit verb for 'to be', hence 'being'. It is used, however, as a term for the Absolute, the nature of which is, as HPB calls it in *The Secret Doctrine*, 'be-ness', the ultimate essence of what is. It is what Soul-Wisdom is about.

Verse 115 contains the famous metaphor: 'mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects'. HPB did not invent the metaphor, but identifies her source for it in a gloss:

Gloss 6. From *Shin-Sieu's* doctrine, who teaches that the human mind is like a mirror which attracts and reflects every atom of dust, and has to be, like that mirror, watched over and dusted every day. *Shin-Sieu* was the sixth Patriarch of North China who taught the esoteric doctrine of Bodhidharma.

The metaphor is universal, being used also, for example, by St Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (13:11): 'For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' The 'glass' in that passage is a looking-glass, that is, a mirror. The idea, which is basically the same as that in *The Voice*, is that what we know is only a reflection of reality, subject to the distortions of an ancient mirror or the dust that gathers upon it. The dust is our accumulated experience of illusory

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head-learning, which obscures our vision of reality.

The reference in verse 115 to mind and Soul suggests another triplicity that matches the one treated centrally in these passages: namely, body, mind, and soul. The body is ignorance; the mind is head-learning, and the soul is Soul-Wisdom. We have all three within ourselves, and to be whole (holy or enlightened), we must blend them.

Verse 116 advises us to shun the ignorance (of the body) and the illusion (of head-learning) but, being in the body, to seek in the impersonal aspect of ourselves the eternal Buddha nature, that is, the persisting reincarnating self, which becomes enlightened through a conscious union with the highest reality. Two glosses comment on these matters:

Gloss 7. The reincarnating Ego is called by the Northern Buddhists the 'true man', who becomes, in union with his Higher Self, a Buddha.

Gloss 8. 'Buddha' means 'Enlightened'.

Verses 117-119 are cautions against pride, the special vice of head-learning. The image in verse 118 of a tower to whose top a fool has climbed may suggest the picture on the Tarot card of the Tower, which shows it collapsing and a figure, a fool perhaps, falling from its top.

The reference in verse 119 to the 'Doctrine of the Eye' and the 'Doctrine of the Heart' relates those to, respectively, head-learning and Heart-Wisdom, and gloss 9 on the former refers back to the

distinction between exoteric and esoteric teachings:

Gloss 9. [See gloss 1 on verse 102] The *exoteric* Buddhism of the masses.

The following gloss on the confession of those who follow the esoteric Doctrine of the Heart, 'thus have I heard', emphasizes the caution against pride and self-aggrandizement:

Gloss 10. The usual formula that precedes the Buddhist scriptures, meaning that that which follows is what has been recorded by direct and oral tradition from Buddha and the Arhats.

This confessional formula is not an appeal to arbitrary authority, but a disclaimer of personal authority. It says, as HPB did herself repeatedly in her writing: 'I have not made this up, but rather it is what I have learned from those who know more than I do.'

Verses 120-122 introduce a new metaphor, that of the mill which grinds the flour from which bread is made. The mill is the 'good Law' or the 'Heart Doctrine', that is, the esoteric teachings. It is operated by the hand of karma, that is, by the results of our own past actions. The grain which it grinds is human experience. The husks or refuse it separates out is that part of our life's experience that is not eternally useful — all that is shadowy, petty, narrow, and limited in our lives, and especially false learning or head-learning. The flour that the mill produces is true knowledge, gnosis, self-discovery. If we try to combine that flour of true knowledge

with Māyā's dew (the illusions of this world, head-learning), the result will not endure, being fit only as food for the doves of death. But if we mix it with the waters of *amṛta* (which HPB notes means 'immortality', or what survives an incarnation), the bread that rises is Wisdom, which feeds the soul.

These three verses are saying that we come to the esoteric teachings by our own self-created karma. If we submit ourselves to those teachings, they will separate what is transitory and worthless in us from what is of enduring value, which can be absorbed into our permanent reincarnating Self, and that is indeed the Bread of Life.

MEDITATION. The following verses contain a number of striking and dramatic images. Take one of these images and visualize it clearly. See every detail of the picture and of the action involved with the picture. Hold it firmly in mind. Let it speak to you.

- .. A bird shut into an airless vessel, from which it must escape.
- .. A mirror gathering dust, which is then brushed away by gentle breezes.
- .. A high tower to the top of which a haughty fool has climbed, where he sits alone.
- .. A mill grinding grain into flour, which is mixed with sweet water to make bread.

The goal of human life is perfection; not in the sense that we shall be able to manage or govern all things (which would merely constitute a great interference with other people's experiments), nor that we should know all the facts and laws of Nature (for the so-called facts are only fleeting forms, and the so-called laws are only their general qualities or properties), but that we shall not be carried away by circumstances, but always act from our own true centre. Such finding of the centre of our own being, and action from that centre, imply that, under any circumstances, will, love, and thought never fail, but rather they become free of effort — like the speech of a practised orator, or the touch of an expert pianist — so that all eccentricity is at an end.

Ernest Wood
Natural Theosophy

What is Theosophy?

PABLO D. SENDER

THIS is one of the most frequently asked questions in the theosophical milieu and, since the word ‘theosophy’ remains without an official definition, it will always be a matter to ponder over. We will examine the subject quoting H. P. Blavatsky’s words, because the theosophical movement as a whole accepts her as a common source of inspiration. Nevertheless, the same concepts may be found in many other theosophical writers.

The term *theosophia* apparently was first recorded during the 3rd century of our era by Porphyry, a well-known Alexandrian philosopher who belonged to the Neo-Platonic school. It is composed of two Greek words: *theos*, meaning ‘god’ or ‘divine’; and *sophia*, or ‘wisdom’, which may also be translated as the ‘wisdom of the gods’, ‘wisdom in things divine’, or ‘divine wisdom’. The term flourished among Neo-Platonists down to the 6th c. and was also used by certain Christians. In the course of time, several people and movements spiritually inclined also adopted the denomination of ‘theosophers’ or ‘theosophists’ for themselves. That was the case of Meister

Eckhart in the 14th c., a group of Renaissance philosophers such as Paracelsus in the 16th c., Robert Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, and Jacob Boehme in the 17th; and Emanuel Swedenborg and Karl von Eckartshausen in the 18th c., among others. Finally, the theosophical movement reappeared in the 19th c. with the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, and others. Through it, certain eternal truths were presented again in a suitable fashion to modern times and a rich literature has been produced by Theosophical Society members in its more than 130 years of activity.

But then the question arises: Is theosophy what the founders of the TS taught? Is it what every leader of the TS wrote? What is the relationship between the teachings given through the TS and those older ones also known as theosophy? Since people with different religious and philosophical backgrounds used the same word ‘theosophist’ to call themselves, the term ‘theosophy’ must represent something that unites them beyond concepts and beliefs.

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Theosophia as a state of consciousness

In her article 'What is Theosophy?' HPB attempts an explanation of the term 'theosophy', describing who a theosophist is. To that end, she quotes Vaughan's definition:

A Theosophist — he says — is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis.¹

A theosophist's knowledge about the Divine does not come from any external source. He does not gather information from books, teachers, etc., but from his own inmost nature. In fact, an essential common feature of every theosophist is his teaching about the possibility for a human being to reach the Divine at the moment of *real ecstasy*, or what is known as *samādhi* in Eastern philosophy. In her article 'The Beacon of the Unknown', HPB speaks about this as being a 'transcendental Theosophy', which, according to her, 'is true Theosophy, inner Theosophy, that of the soul':

The INFINITE cannot be known to our reason, which can only distinguish and define; but we can always conceive the abstract idea thereof, thanks to that faculty higher than our reason — *intuition*, or the spiritual instinct of which I have spoken. The great initiates, who have the rare power of throwing themselves into the state of *samādhi* — which can be but imperfectly translated by the word *ecstasy*, a state in which one ceases to be the conditioned and personal 'I', and becomes one with the ALL — are the only ones who can boast

of having been in contact with the *infinite*; but no more than other mortals can they describe that state in words

These few characteristics of *true* Theosophy and its practice have been sketched for the small number of our readers who are gifted with the desired intuition.²

And HPB herself had access to this kind of Divine Wisdom. Let us see what she wrote about her own source of knowledge:

Knowledge comes in visions, first in dreams and then in pictures presented to the inner eye during meditation. Thus have I been taught the whole system. . . . Not a word was spoken to me of all this in the ordinary way . . . nothing taught me in writing. And knowledge so obtained is so clear . . . that all other sources of information, all other methods of teaching with which we are familiar dwindle into insignificance in comparison with this.³

This kind of knowledge is much deeper than that acquired through books and lectures, because one deals with reality in a more direct way than through ideas — this perception is supra-conceptual. From this point of view, theosophy, essentially, is not a limited body of concepts, but transcends any verbal formulation. It is a *state* of Divine Wisdom, which is potentially in every human being. A theosophist, in his turn, is one who realizes that state of inner enlightenment, irrespective of his culture, time, or language:

In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of

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a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.⁴

Theosophia and theosophical teachings

But the word theosophy is also applied to the *theosophical teachings*; that is, the body of concepts taught by a theosophist as a result of his insight and wisdom. There is an important difference between *theosophy* as the state of *Divine Wisdom* and *theosophy* as the *teachings* that come through someone who has attained (whether temporarily or permanently) that enlightened state. The *Divine Wisdom* is the perception of Truth, but the teachings are a necessarily partial and conditioned expression of the real *theosophia*. They are, therefore, not the Truth, but a description of it. One may be in touch with the theosophical teachings and know them very well, but it is not the same as to realize the theosophical state of consciousness, because we cannot reach Wisdom through the accumulation of knowledge. When taken as an end in themselves, the theosophical teachings are of little value; but if the aspirant is earnest, their application will help him to live the right life, to develop self-knowledge, and ultimately to awaken the *Divine Wisdom* that is in his inmost being.

Now, the very nature of the theo-

sophical teachings accounts for their diversity. A theosophist will speak according to his own inspiration 'expressing his own independent opinions'. They are not brain-born ideas, but arise from a deep state of consciousness, where the individual is facing Truth in some of its many aspects. And in that state he does not learn through easily repeated concepts, but through 'images'. He has therefore the difficult task of putting into words his holistic comprehension of something which is beyond our known reality. We can imagine how faint must be the expression of a truth in our languages, and why many mystics refused to put into words that which is Sacred. Quoting again HPB's words:

One of the reasons why I hesitate to answer offhand some questions put to me is the difficulty of expressing in sufficiently accurate language things given to me in pictures, and comprehended by me by the pure Reason, as Kant would call it.⁵

Nevertheless, they have to communicate it as skilfully as they can if they want to point out the way to others. Thus, the expression of the theosophical teachings must necessarily be different from theosophist to theosophist according to his own temperament, intellectual background, and so on, giving to the theosophical exposition an extraordinarily dynamic nature that prevents it from becoming a creed. Therefore, although one person may feel more attracted by the theosophical teachings as expressed by a particular theosophist, if he has a right

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understanding, he will know that no verbal exposition is able to express the Truth (not even at an intellectual level) and that *theosophia* will not be attained by believing in any body of concepts. This is why, since its inception, the Theosophical Society has encouraged no dogmatism or belief.

Ancient Wisdom, a universal theosophy

There were theosophists and Theosophical Schools for the last 2,000 years, from Plato down to the medieval Alchemists, who knew the value of the term, it may be supposed.⁶

Theosophy transcends the Theosophical Society and was with humanity since its inception, not only in Western countries, but also in the whole world. Since 'every great thinker and philosopher is a Theosophist', Buddha, Zoroaster, Lao Tzu, Jesus Christ, Patañjali, Śankarāchārya, Nāgārjuna, and Rumi, among others, gave theosophical teachings, no matter how they labelled their teachings.

According to the theosophical view, every world religion is based on, and comes from, one and the same ancient truth known in the past as the 'Wisdom-Religion'. This *universal theosophy* we are talking about 'is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any'.

However, the pure and original teachings of religions became, in time, more or less corrupted by human ambition and selfishness, and obscured by supersti-

tion and ignorance. Thus, universal theosophy became entangled in a mass of confusion, and now a special effort is necessary to bring back its purity. One of the aims of the Theosophical Society is to encourage its members to investigate and discover the eternal truths enshrined in different religions, philosophies, and sciences, and to offer them to the public in a purified form.

Modern Theosophy and the TS

When the Theosophical Society was founded it had no literature of its own, and the main activity of its members was in the field of that universal theosophy. But today, after more than 130 years, the literature produced through the TS covers a wide field of subject matter. It has a metaphysical dimension that teaches the functioning and constitution of the Cosmos, the aim of sentient existence in different forms of life, the universal laws that rule its development, and so on. Besides, modern theosophical literature speaks about right living and the application of theosophical principles in daily life and, finally, there are also a good number of books revealing universal theosophy as present in different myths, philosophies, religions, and sciences. All this literature is known as 'modern Theosophy' (now usually written with a capital 'T').

Modern Theosophy offers a certain shared cosmivision, but since it was produced by some theosophists' own inspiration, it is not a definite body of knowledge, but a dynamic exposition

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that differs in many details or ways of expression from one author to another. Modern Theosophy is not based on revelation or the teachings given by someone considered special and infallible, and it constantly receives new additions, presenting different aspects and new formulations of the theosophical principles. In fact, that is the way the Founders originally meant it, as revealed in many of their writings, and even in those of the Masters of the Wisdom. For example, in her first letter to the American Theosophists assembled in the 1888 Convention, HPB wrote:

According as people are prepared to receive it, so will new Theosophical teachings be given. But no more will be given than the world, on its present level of spirituality, can profit by. It depends on the spread of Theosophy — the assimilation of what has been already given — how much more will be revealed and how soon.⁷

If modern Theosophy would have been given to the world only during the first years of the TS, the remaining members working for more than 100 years on a repetition of what had already been given, it would mean the failure of the theosophical movement, as HPB warns in *The Key to Theosophy*.⁸ But fortunately that was not the case. There were several theosophists in the Theosophical Society, and each one of them transmitted his insights and wisdom in a distinct and original way.

The role of the Theosophical Society

Theosophy is an all-embracing Science; many are the ways leading to it, as numerous in fact as its definitions.⁹

Many are the ways leading to that state of Divine Wisdom, because many are the different personal dispositions, states of development, and karmic bonds of every aspirant. The emphasis in every genuine theosophical association is not gathered around a single way but around *a single aim*. Thus, for example, J. Boehme's Christian theosophy, Mme Blavatsky's occultist theosophy, and J. Krishnamurti's psychological theosophy (if we can give them those labels), though different in language and concepts, are nevertheless theosophical teachings, since they all tend to awaken the Divine Wisdom in the aspirant. And this feature of the TS, the policy of allowing freedom of thought and encouraging its members' incessant searching with an open mind, is essential not only for the realization of *theosophia* in oneself, but also for the vitality of the modern theosophical movement. In HPB's words:

Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and healthy body, its many other ugly features notwithstanding. Were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergencies would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a

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narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge.¹⁰

Almost every sentence of this excerpt is worthy of deep thought, but we will leave that to the reader. We will only point out that to say *genuine* Theosophy is only HPB's and her Masters' teachings (for example) is not only based on a misunderstanding of what theosophy really is, but it also goes against the TS' own interests. One individual member may agree particularly with a certain exposition of theosophy, let us say, Mme Blavatsky's, and he has a right to do so. But he should neither try to force others to accept his view, nor claim that her particular expression of theosophy should be exclusively studied, at the risk of betraying the Founders' original aim. The Theosophical Society, aiming to become a nucleus of the *universal* brotherhood, must remain open to universal theosophy, to everything that may help to morally and spiritually elevate people who belong to different races, creeds, sex, castes, and colours. Otherwise, it will become a particular sect, promoting a 'stereotyped creed', suitable only to a portion of humanity sharing certain common characteristics. That would be the failure of the TS:

Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast

dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart.¹¹

Of course, this does not imply that where Theosophical groups as such meet should be a place to spread other traditions (see John Algeo's 'On the Watch-Tower', April 2007) nor that everything promoted as being a 'spiritual teaching' is really theosophy. That is, not everything promoted as being spiritual, philosophical or religious helps to elevate the human condition. As we said, sometimes the originally spiritual teaching was corrupted out of ignorance, thirst for domination, and so on. In other cases the teaching is offered by a 'false prophet' — someone whose intention is not at all to give a spiritual teaching, but to obtain personal profit. There are also some schools that spread a kind of 'spiritual materialism' leading to the psychic, to fanaticism, or other forms of selfishness, as is happening today in the New Age movement to a large extent. Therefore, each member of the TS must develop a deep understanding and discrimination in order to discover, in an open and non-dogmatic way, where theosophy is truly expressed and where it is not.

Summary

Thus it is clear that the term 'theosophy' is used in different contexts. To clarify this matter, we could apply the following classification to make a distinction among the different applications of this term:

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a) *theosophia*: the *transcendental theosophy*, that is, the state of consciousness of inner enlightenment.

b) *universal theosophy*: those theosophical teachings given by every great thinker, sage, and philosopher, modern or ancient. In this category we may add two subcategories:

b₁) *ancient theosophy*, sometimes called the Ancient Wisdom, meaning that ancient truth known in the past as the 'Wisdom-Religion'.

b₂) *modern Theosophy*, the Theo-

sophical teachings offered by members of the Theosophical Society.

Since the TS was not founded to promote any particular system, its members should not limit Theosophy to a definite set of concepts, if they do not want to create a new cult. It is our responsibility to preserve a space of freedom for every member to discover universal theosophy by himself so that, by living according to its teachings, he or she may realize the theosophical state of consciousness. ✧

References

1. *Collected Writings*, vol. II, p. 88, 'What is Theosophy?'
2. *Ibid.*, XI, p. 258.
3. *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 285, 'Knowledge Comes in Visions'.
4. *Ibid.*, II, p. 88, 'What is Theosophy?'
5. *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 285, 'Knowledge Comes in Visions'.
6. *Ibid.*, VII, p. 169, 'The Original Programme Manuscript'.
7. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 244, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the Second American Convention'.
8. *The Key to Theosophy*, Conclusion, 'The Future of the Theosophical Society'.
9. *CW*, vol. VII, p. 169, 'The Original Programme Manuscript'.
10. *Ibid.*, IX, pp. 243-4, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the Second American Convention'.
11. *The Key to Theosophy*, Conclusion, 'The Future of the Theosophical Society'.

You must remember that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation, both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgement is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences. If, then, they cannot be freed from such inherent bias, or at least taught to recognize it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off on to some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die.

H. P. Blavatsky
The Key to Theosophy

A Buddhist Life is a Green Life

K. KRISHNA MURTHY

BUDDHISM has something fundamental to say on the environmental issue, because it addresses the basic human attitudes that lie at the heart of our planet's problems.

The root cause of our problems — personal and planetary — is our view of ourselves as separate, isolated individuals, walled off from the universe around us. This view leads us to see selfishness as necessary. It leads us to put narrow limits on what we see as our responsibility. And it leads us to live a life that is out of harmony with the universe, so that we suffer and the world suffers with us.

But the Dharma tells us that this view of ourselves is mistaken. Our idea of separate selfhood is a delusion, and a profoundly damaging delusion. We are all part of each other and the world we inhabit, and whenever we harm another being or injure our environment, who we are hurting is ourselves.

Buddhism exists to help us break out of the prison of isolated selfhood and wake up to the true nature of reality, to help us to become enlightened. Enlightened people are fully aware that everything in the universe is interconnected, not just as an intellectual concept, but in

every fibre of their being. Such persons will inevitably live in harmony with the world around them. They will no longer willingly hurt another being or desecrate the environment, as no matter how far away such damage would take place, they would be hurting themselves. In a world of enlightened beings there could be no environmental problem.

This is not to suggest that the answer to the world's problems is for everyone to become enlightened, at least not immediately. Our problems are urgent, and something more practical is needed in the short term.

But Buddhism is above all a practical tradition. It recognizes that for most of us the state of 'Final, Unsurpassed Enlightenment' is still a long way off. It offers us ways in which we can invite some degree of enlightenment to take root in the midst of our delusion, gradually altering the way we think and feel, and, more importantly, from a purely practical point of view, immediately changing the way we act, so that the effect we have on the world around us becomes more like that of an enlightened being.

In the short term, Buddhism helps us live a more harmonious life in two main

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ways. Firstly, it offers us a vision of what it means to be a human being that is very different from the one our society trains us to accept — a vision in which life is a spiritual quest rather than a fight for survival or material goods. Simply changing our image of ourselves in this way does not add up to enlightenment, but it helps. We may not be able to transcend our egotism in one round; but we can quite quickly refine our image of ourselves so that we judge our richness by what we are rather than by what we own or consume.

And this change is vital. The only real answer to our planet's problems is for all who enjoy the affluent lifestyle of mainstream Western culture to own and consume much, much less. Our most important environmental problems are the result of the sheer level of economic activity in our societies. The greenhouse effect, for example, is due mainly to carbon from the burning of coal, oil, and gases — the fuels that power our economic machine. We have no large-scale alternatives to these fuels except nuclear power, which is not an option many people will relish. The prosperity that we largely take for granted is based on making major changes in the composition of our planet's atmosphere, and hoping that future generations will find some way of dealing with the problems we cause.

As long as we see ourselves as essentially material beings, judging the richness of our lives by our material 'standard of living', we will never willingly give up even a little of this prosperity.

Before we can persuade people to let go of the myth of economic growth as the way to human happiness, we need to put something in its place — something spiritual rather than physical.

As well as giving us a vision of what it means to be a human being that makes a return to a sustainable lifestyle possible, Buddhism also offers a set of practical guidelines to help us live in concord with our surroundings. As a way of moving towards enlightenment, the Dharma encourages us to behave as though we were already enlightened — as though we were already fully aware of the interconnectedness of all things in the universe, down to the very depths of our being. To help us do this, it provides examples of the way an enlightened being would behave, which Buddhists undertake to observe as training principles. We may not become fully enlightened tomorrow, next week, or next year, but if we make the decision to work towards enlightenment by living according to the Buddhist precepts, our behaviour will immediately become more like that of an enlightened person, and our life will be more in harmony with our environment.

The first and most important of these training principles is to refrain from harming other living beings, and instead to engage in acts of loving-kindness. This precept is basic to the Buddhist approach to life, and it is also basic to any solution to the world's environmental problems. It encourages us to soften our usual antagonism towards what is foreign to ourselves, and instead develop an attitude of

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caring, nurturing concern for the world around us.

At the practical level this precept has one clear implication for our everyday behaviour which could have far-reaching effects: that we should be vegetarian. If we are trying to develop and express loving-kindness towards other beings — including animals — we might do well to start by doing them the favour of not eating them. And if enough people made this gesture of goodwill towards their fellow beings, this would bring important environmental benefits.

It takes much more agricultural land to supply an individual's food needs through animal as compared to vegetable foods. If affluent Westerners opted for a vegetarian diet this would release an enormous amount of grain to feed the less fortunate. It would reduce the pressure to develop wilderness regions like the Amazon rainforests. It would mean that land now used for agriculture could be farmed less intensively, or even returned to the wild. It would mean less chemical fertilizers polluting our waters, less greenhouse carbon dioxide released from the energy-intensive manufacture of nitrates, and less herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides sprayed on our land. To limit ourselves to a vegetarian diet is one of the most significant contributions we can make to solving our planet's problems.

It is the absence of this attitude that: (1) leads people to destroy a rainforest for their own benefit, stealing it from the people and animals who already live there because they have no power to

resist; (2) leads people to feel justified because they are more intelligent than their victims; and (3) leads businesses and governments to discharge poisons into oceans which, if they belong to anybody, belong to all the beings on our planet, and especially to those that live in them.

Overcoming craving and achieving contentment are two sides of a coin. We crave because we are not content. We are not content because we crave. Somehow we must break the circle. One way Buddhists do this is by taking themselves away from the objects of their craving for a while, perhaps by going on solitary retreat, perhaps by attending a meditation retreat with other people. Often our immediate reaction to a much simpler life is a feeling of emptiness, boredom, and sadness. This is the feeling we are trying to hide by running on the treadmill. But usually this feeling passes surprisingly quickly, giving way to a sense of deep contentment and joy in simple, genuine things. Once experienced, this contentment is so much more enjoyable than our normal, hectic state of mind that we begin to see craving for the deadly trap it is, and even when we return to our normal life, it loses much of its power.

Everyone with an interest in environmental issues should try this for themselves. Learning to go beyond craving can be the key to a new, environmentally friendly way of life, a way of life in which we do not seek our pleasure from junk food or the latest consumer toys, but

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instead take delight in those things that will not cost the earth — in friendship, community, and meaningful, craftsman-like work, in a gentle appreciation of our planet's beauty, and in a sense of the sheer gladness of living.

Another aspect of mindfulness is constant awareness of our purpose in being on this planet, and of the ideals that guide our actions. Everything we do has wider consequences, but it takes effort to stay aware of this fact. It takes effort to be aware that every time we use a car rather than a bicycle or public transport we are contributing to the greenhouse effect. It takes effort to be aware every time we eat meat that we are condoning cruelty, and putting another nail in the coffin of the earth's rainforests. It takes effort to be aware every time we go shopping of the environmental damage caused by those not strictly necessary things we buy and to consider whether we might be able to live without them.

It also takes a major effort of awareness to look beyond the humdrum routine of

our lives to the great issues beyond, and to see that we ourselves have an important part to play in the saga of our age. We tend to think that heroic tasks are reserved for characters in fantasy novels. But the situation we face is just as dramatic and clear-cut as any myth. The earth and mankind face catastrophe. To avert disaster we need to forge a new kind of society, and we ourselves need to become a new kind of people. This is the great task facing our generation. It will require heroes willing to rise above petty personal concerns and act from a much wider, more noble perspective. It will require courage, strength, sacrifice, and personal change. The temptation will always be to back away from the challenge and opt for comfort and security. But the fate of the world quite literally depends upon our response.

FOLLOW BUDDHA DHARMA
AND BE HAPPY

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY
AND WELL



Just as a spider envelops itself with fibres emanating from its own body, so does the one God bring forth the world substance from out of His own being and covers Himself therewith. May that Lord gift us the sense of unity with Him!

Thou art woman, Thou art man, Thou art the boy, Thou art the maid, as Thou art old man totterest on Thy staff. Thou art born with a face everywhere.

The blue bird art Thou and so the green parrot. Thou art the thundercloud, the seasons and the seas. Thou art without beginning. Thou pervadest all things. From Thee all worlds have been born.

Śvetāśvataropaniṣad, VI.10, IV.3, 4

An Unpublished Discourse of Buddha

H. P. BLAVATSKY

(It is found in the second Book of Commentaries and is addressed to the Arhats.)

Said the All-Merciful: Blessed are ye, O Bhikshu-s, happy are ye who have understood the mystery of Being and *Non-Being* explained in Bas-pa [Dharma, Doctrine], and have given preference to the latter, for ye are verily my Arhats. . . . The elephant who sees his form mirrored in the lake, looks at it, and then goes away, taking it for the real body of another elephant, is wiser than the man who beholds his face in the stream, and looking at it, says, 'Here am I . . . I am I' — for the 'I', his Self, is not in the world of the twelve Nidāna-s and mutability, but in that of Non-Being, the only world beyond the snares of Māyā. . . . That alone, which has neither cause nor author, which is self-existing, eternal, far beyond the reach of mutability, is the true 'I' [Ego], the Self of the Universe. The Universe of Nam-Kha says: 'I am the world of Sien-Chan';¹ the four illusions laugh and reply, 'Verily so.' But the truly wise man knows that neither man, nor the Universe that he passes through like a flitting shadow, is any more a real

Universe than the dewdrop that reflects a spark of the morning sun is that sun. . . .

There are three things, Bhikshu-s, that are everlastingly the same, upon which no vicissitude, no modification can ever act: these are the Law, Nirvāna, and Space,² and those three are One, since the first two are within the last, and that last one a Māyā, so long as man keeps within the whirlpool of sensuous existences. One need not have his mortal body die to avoid the clutches of concupiscence and other passions. The Arhat who observes the seven hidden precepts of Bas-pa may become Dang-ma and Lha.³ He may hear the 'holy voice' of . . . [Kwan-yin],⁴ and find himself within the quiet precincts of his Sangharam⁵ transferred into Amitābha Buddha.⁶ Becoming one with Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi,⁷ he may pass through all the six worlds of Being (Rupaloka) and get into the first three worlds of Arupa.⁸ . . . He who listens to my secret law, preached to my select Arhats, will arrive with its help at the knowledge of Self, and thence at perfection.

It is due to entirely erroneous conceptions of Eastern thought and to

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ignorance of the existence of an esoteric key to the outward Buddhist phrases that Burnouf and other great scholars have inferred from such propositions — held also by the Vedāntin-s — as ‘my body is not body’ and ‘myself is no self of mine’, that Eastern psychology was all based upon non-permanency. Cousin, for instance, lecturing upon the subject, brings the two following propositions to prove, on Burnouf’s authority, that, unlike Brāhmanism, Buddhism rejects the perpetuity of the thinking principle. These are:

1. Thought or spirit⁹ — for the faculty is not distinguished from the subject — appears only with sensation and does not survive it.

2. The Spirit cannot itself lay hold of itself, and in directing attention to itself it draws from it only the conviction of its powerlessness to see itself otherwise than as successive and transitory.¹⁰

This all refers to Spirit embodied, not to the freed Spiritual Self on whom Māyā has no more hold. Spirit is no body; therefore have the Orientalists made of it ‘nobody’ and nothing. Hence they proclaim Buddhists to be Nihilists, and Vedāntin-s to be the followers of a creed in which the ‘Impersonal [God] turns out on examination to be a myth’; their goal is described as

The complete extinction of all spiritual, mental, and bodily powers by absorption into the Impersonal.¹¹ ✧

References

1. The Universe of Brahmā (Sien-Chan; Nam-Kha) is Universal Illusion, or our phenomenal world.
2. Ākāśa. It is next to impossible to render the mystic word ‘Tho-og’ by any other term than ‘Space’, and yet, unless coined on purpose, no new appellation can render it so well to the mind of the Occultist. The term ‘Aditi’ is also translated ‘Space’, and there is a world of meaning in it.
3. Dang-ma, a purified soul, and Lha, a freed spirit within a living body; an Adept or Arhat. In the popular opinion in Tibet, a Lha is a disembodied spirit, something similar to the Burmese Nat — only higher.
4. Kwan-yin is a synonym, for in the original another term is used, but the meaning is identical. It is the divine voice of Self, or the ‘Spirit-voice’ in man, and the same as Vāgiśvara (the ‘Voice-deity’) of the Brāhmana-s. In China, the Buddhist ritualists have degraded its meaning by anthropomorphizing it into a Goddess of the same name, with one thousand hands and eyes, and they call it Kwan-shai-yin-Bodhisat. It is the Buddhist ‘daimon’-voice of Socrates.
5. Sanghārāma is the *sanctum sanctorum* of an ascetic, a cave or any place he chooses for his meditation.
6. Amitābha Buddha is in this connection the ‘boundless light’ by which things of the subjective world are perceived.

An Unpublished Discourse of Buddha

7. Esoterically, 'the unsurpassingly merciful and enlightened heart', said of the 'Perfect Ones', the Jivan-mukta-s, collectively.
8. These six worlds — seven with us — are the worlds of Nats or Spirits, with the Burmese Buddhists, and the seven higher worlds of the Vedāntin-s.
9. Two things entirely distinct from each other. The 'faculty is not distinguished from the subject' only on this material plane, while thought generated by our physical brain, one that has never impressed itself at the same time on the spiritual counterpart, whether through the atrophy of the latter or the intrinsic weakness of that thought, can never survive our body; this much is sure.
10. *Course of the History of Modern Philosophy* by M. Victor Cousin, NY, D. Appleton & Co., 1854, vol. I, p. 374 fn. in translation by O.W. Wight.
11. Vedānta Sāra . . . translated by Major G. A. Jacob in *A Manual of Hindu Pantheism*. London, Trübner; Boston, Houghton, 1881.

. The veil is rent
Which blinded me! I am as all these men
Who cry upon their gods and are not heard,
Or are not heeded — yet there must be aid!
For them and me and all there must be help!
Perchance the gods have need of help themselves,
Being so feeble that when sad lips cry
They cannot save! I would not let one cry
Whom I could save!

The Light of Asia, end of Book III

**ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

Adyar

Theme: 'From Within Comes True Guidance'

26 to 31 December 2007

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 25 December

- 8.00 am General Council Meeting
- 2.00 pm General Council Meeting

Wednesday, 26 December

- 8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
OPENING OF THE CONVENTION
- 3.30 pm Reception
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'The Conscious, the Unconscious, and Modern Society'
Dr Satish Inamdar, *Director, Valley School,*
Krishnamurti Foundation India
- 7.30 pm Ritual of the Mystic Star

Thursday, 27 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
CONVENTION LECTURE
'Look Within — Thou art Buddha'
Ms Mary Anderson, *International Secretary, TS*
- 9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I
- 3.00 pm SYMPOSIUM: 'Seek Out the Way'
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'From Within Outwards: The Way of the Universe'
Dr John Algeo, *International Vice-President, TS*
- 7.30 pm Dance Drama: 'The Life of N. Sri Ram'

Friday, 28 December

- 8.00 am Devotional Meeting
- 10.00 am SYMPOSIUM: 'Light Comes from Within'
- 5.00 pm BESANT LECTURE
'Being an Accountable Citizen'
Dr Kiran Bedi, *Indian Police Service, Magsaysay Awardee*
- 7.30 pm Vocal Concert: Mrs Manju Sundaram and party

Convention Programme

Saturday, 29 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
SHORT LECTURES
‘The Dawning of Self-Illumination’
Mrs Linda Oliveira, *General Secretary, Australian Section, TS*
‘When the hour has struck they blossom forth’
Mrs Betty Bland, *General Secretary, American Section, TS*
- 10.00 am THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE
‘Inner Guidance, Outer Service’
- 3.00 pm INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II
- 5.00 pm THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE LECTURE
‘What can we Learn from Insect Societies?’
Dr R. Gadagkar, *Professor and National Fellow,*
Centre for Ecological Sciences, Bangalore
- 7.30 pm Vocal Concert: Mrs Nisha Rajagopal and party

Sunday, 30 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
DISCUSSION: Led by Mr Pedro Oliveira, *Education Coordinator,*
Australian Section, TS
- 9.30 am QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- 3.00 pm SYMPOSIUM: ‘Living in the Present’
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
‘The Quiet Mind’
Mrs Radha Burnier, *International President, TS*
- 7.30 pm J. Krishnamurti — Video

Monday, 31 December

- 8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION
- 9.30 am Admission of New Members

To have seen thy soul in its bloom is to have obtained a momentary glimpse in thyself of the transfiguration which shall eventually make thee more than man.

Light on the Path

Theosophical Work around the World

Olcott Memorial High School

The Olcott Memorial High School now has its own attractive website at <www.olcott-school-chennai.org>. It is also linked to the TS Adyar's website (<www.ts-adyar.org>) under the Headquarters page. The School provides free education for over 700 children from underprivileged families, and also free textbooks, uniforms, and a nutritious breakfast, and enriches a mid-day meal provided by the government.

More on the Olcott Centenary

Tributes to Colonel H. S. Olcott on the centenary of his passing have continued to be held around the world during the year:

Australia: The National President, Mrs Linda Oliveira, gave a talk to Blavatsky Lodge on Col. H. S. Olcott in February. The Section has on order with TPH, Adyar, copies of *Reminiscences of Colonel Olcott* and *The Buddhist Catechism*, both of which will be offered by the national headquarters to the members of the Section at a subsidized cost. The Section also sent a few complimentary copies of the February and March 2007 issues of *The Theosophist* (Olcott Death Centenary issues) to each Lodge, Branch, and Certified Group in the Section.

The Perth Branch scheduled a short talk on Col. Olcott with biographical details, followed by a play written by a

member called 'The Tea Party', in which the Founders were featured. It also scheduled a weekend retreat to study Olcott's work in August this year.

A number of other TS centres in the Section have included items in their newsletters on the centenary of Col. Olcott's passing, had talks about or meetings to discuss Olcott and his life, and prominently displayed and promoted books by the Colonel.

The Section also dedicated its *Theosophical Study Paper No. 11* to Olcott's memory by including three of his articles published in *The Theosophist* in the early 1890s: 'The First Leaf of TS History', 'TS Solidarity and Ideals', and 'Asceticism'.

India: The Section headquarters in Varanasi hosted three speakers in March, April, and July, as follows: Mr P. K. Jayaswal, former General Secretary of the Indian Section, spoke on 'Col. Olcott: His Commitment to the Cause of Theosophy'; Mr M. L. Gupta, national lecturer, delivered a talk on 'Col. H. S. Olcott, His Life and Work'; and Mr Navin Kumar, member of the National Executive Committee, spoke on 'Col. Olcott: His Past Incarnations'.

United States: The Section's Theosophical Fest, held at their Olcott headquarters on 8 September, featured a special presentation on the 'Centennial Commemoration of the Remarkable Life of Henry Steel Olcott' with Dr Anton Lysy, tenor Martin Pazdioch, and readings.

Theosophical Work around the World

On 1 November, international Vice-President Dr John Algeo gave a lecture on 'Olcott and Blavatsky: Theosophical Twins' (published in the last issue), highlighting their contributions and the contrasts between the two Founders.

Later in the month, to celebrate the 132nd anniversary of the founding of the TS and the centennial of Olcott's death, Ven. Sujatha Peradeniye, from Sri Lanka, founder and director of the Blue Lotus Temple in Woodstock, gave a talk on 'Colonel Henry S. Olcott: How He Influenced the Revival of the Buddhist World'.

Sweden: The General Secretary, Mr Pertti Spets, reports that they brought out a special issue of their magazine containing only articles about and by Col. Olcott. In October they had a whole day dedicated to Olcott and also a photographic exhibition about his work and contemporaries.

Italy: Special tributes to Col. Olcott were paid during the seminar held by this Section in conjunction with the European Federation in March on the theme 'Mind is Heart, Heart is Mind'; and at their national Convention in June, which had as its theme 'Tradition and renewal in the activity of the TS: Commemoration of Colonel H. S. Olcott's death centenary'.

Portugal: Centenary commemorations took place on Adyar Day, White Lotus Day and during special programmes. In May the European Federation Chairman, Miss Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu, paid a special tribute to our President-Founder in her public talk in Evora on 'Intelligence, the

Basis for Right Living', reminding us that the whole life of Col. Olcott was underlined by this quality of intelligence. The same remembrance was evoked in the Seminar at the TS headquarters in Lisbon while exploring the theme 'Theosophy and Citizenship: A Global View, a Local Application'.

France: At their headquarters in Paris, starting with regular programmes, tributes have been paid to our President-Founder throughout the year during courses, on Adyar Day, and White Lotus Day.

During the French Convention, which took place at the Paris headquarters on 16 and 17 June with the theme 'Devotion and Perseverance on the Spiritual Path', there was a symposium with two national speakers, chaired by the General Secretary, Miss Nano Leguay, followed by an exchange of views with members, a special exhibition of photos, documents, and information to commemorate the life and work of Col. Olcott, and his service to the world and the Society. The Convention ended with a public talk, 'The White Buddhist', given by the Chairman of the European Federation on the life and work of Col. Olcott, pointing out his qualities such as integrity, humility, perseverance, devotion, loyalty, fraternal love, and, above all, intelligence.

The Section celebrated once again this historical event on Foundation Day in November, and brought out a special issue of *Le Lotus Bleu* in the same month, as well as a translation of the text of the CD-ROM produced by TPH Adyar on *Eminent Theosophists*. ✧

RECENT REPRINTS

SEVEN GREAT RELIGIONS

Annie Besant

In this brilliant series of lectures, the second President of the Theosophical Society (1907–33) delves into seven great world religions to bring out, with immense depth and wisdom, their role in uniting and elevating humanity.

IN HIS NAME

C. Jinarajadasa

Although one may be engaged in a worldly career, it is possible to serve a higher ideal. Addressing all aspirants, the author says that when we train ourselves to be effective workers, we can help in serving the world.

MAN AND HIS SEVEN PRINCIPLES

Arthur Robson

A collection of articles on subjects discussed from both the occult and scientific points of view, with quotations from famous scientists, seers, and poets.

FORTHCOMING

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY (1875–1937)

Josephine Ransom

ANNIE BESANT, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY

(Simplified Adyar Edition by Clara M. Codd)

H. P. Blavatsky

THE WORLD AROUND US

Radha Burnier

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