



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: *Gayomard*, symbol of spiritual evolution. Zoroastrian Temple, Adyar — J. Suresh

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# On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

## Love is a Form of Knowing

Much of the Eastern world has been deeply concerned with the question of freedom for the human being. Unlike many modern people, they did not identify freedom with having money, buying things, travel to a particular environment, etc. They concentrated on inner freedom from compulsions, arising from within. Modern man is obsessed with the idea of becoming free of outer things that are supposedly unpleasant, while the Upanishad-s, the revered texts of the Hindus and others, proclaim that both bondage and freedom are within, not without. The mind creates fetters and then imagines that the problems are outside. Only when the mind realizes that the problems it meets are created by itself, then it becomes completely free.

Exact synonyms for freedom and some other related words have not been used in the East, but it is difficult to believe that they never thought of or spoke about this subject. Certain schools of thought in the East which have as their central focus what could be translated as self-surrender, probably have in mind freedom as their greater objective. Self-surrender could mean to some people a sentimental devotion or offerings to an image, either

physical or mind-made, something to their own liking. But self-surrender, that is the letting go of the self, is both freedom from inner shackles, and the way to spiritual realization. One cannot really discuss this, because the average person is unaware of the meaning of these words. Those who have thought about them can have a better concept.

According to Buddhist thought, spiritual intelligence, which is intelligence of the highest order, does not exist without compassion. The Buddhists are of the view that compassion and intelligence constitute wisdom. If there is no compassion, then the intelligence is not spiritual, but only of the intellect, sometimes nothing more than a sort of cleverness, or a kind of sentimentality.

Annie Besant, speaking about love, says in one of her lectures that love is a form of knowing. When there is love — real love, not what is often a mere passing attachment which is called love — there is the possibility of knowing something beyond the intellect. Her words suggest that knowing is entirely fused with love.

The Buddha is said to have pointed out that thoughts of love pollute the mind, while love itself cleanses and purifies. In fact, Krishnamurti also spoke about

this saying that when action arises from thought there is no love. In his *Commentaries on Living*, he says the sense of time and space, of separation and sorrow, is born of the process of thought, and it is only when thought ceases that there can be love. We compartmentalize everything, which is one of the reasons why we have created so much suffering. In the world we find appalling attitudes, utilitarian in spirit, callous, not compassionate and therefore a society which accepts violence and aggression.

This century is perhaps notable for regarding everything — animals, trees, earth, people — as objects of utility from which we can extract something useful or satisfactory. Our relationships with people are generally conditioned by the desire to gain something, maybe something emotional, like security, or other things. We attach ourselves to things to gain a better position in life, or to gain emotional satisfaction, and we take whatever we want from other lives, so we tear up plants, clip them, shape them, and plant them somewhere according to our fancy, as if they have no right to grow as they wish.

We teach millions of children in schools to cut up various creatures, and become indifferent to what they may feel. Thus we cultivate an attitude of selfishness and callousness, and we think that society should become non-violent and good. Is this possible? Can one divide life so that it shows both selfishness and love? In other words, are we completely free to act as we wish, and also have a good society which we no doubt want?

### **Thirst Arises from Attachment**

This is what the Buddha spoke about. The desire, the thirst for things — experience, security and so on is productive of sorrow. He did not explain in detail what love is, but he explained the cause of absence of love in the human being's life.

Krishnamurti's approach is very different, but aims at the same state of goodness and love. He urges us to find out that what creates bondage is not real love, but sentimentality or attachment to particular people in an emotional relationship with them. When there is this kind of sentimental feeling and self-promotion through another person it can easily change and become anger, frustration or cruelty. We can find many such cases in ordinary life, of so-called love turning into animosity and then hatred. So what we call love brings with it many complications and is a state of inner turmoil.

Krishnamurti says: 'What we are going to do is to find out the value of the known, to look at the known. When that is looked at purely, without condemnation, the mind becomes free from the known. Then only can we know what love is.' The test perhaps is in the sense of loss, of loneliness, of disturbance and so on, if that possession is no longer possible. The great test is in death, when it comes and brings the feeling that everything has been lost.

Madame Blavatsky in one of her writings says: 'When there is real love, there is no sense of separation at all.' One can look at oneself and examine whether the sense of separateness is really compatible with love, or if it comes when

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one wants to possess. When there is a feeling that some people matter tremendously, and others do not, is it really love or is it a form of self-seeking? Are we saying that our assessment shows that some people are important, and others are not, some people matter and others do not? Is there love when there is a discussion of this kind?

In the East, traditionally, they said that the five principal enemies are all within: desire, anger (which includes irritation, frustration, etc.), greed, self-conceit (or pride), jealousy (or envy). Each word can of course include many others which are similar or akin, and if we look at any one of them we find that they are based on thought.

Desire is thought. We probably know that desire does not exist when something that is pleasant is experienced. We may eat something which is sweet and nice, and if one cannot feel the sweetness at all it would be unnatural. If we look at a beautiful thing, but do not feel the beauty of it, something is wrong. Thought comes in a moment later when we remember the sensation of sweetness or beauty and project it further, and say to ourselves 'I will have it again'. Of course this process goes on and on. According to Krishnaji this process of moving from here to there is time. Saying 'I want' is time. Time is thought, desire, naming, and we are caught in that because when there is the sensation of something pleasant the mind holds on in memory to that sensation, and in the opposite case says it is unpleasant. The holding on is with the help of a word or

label so this whole process is connected with time, with memory and bondage.

They said in India that freedom comes from not labelling and categorizing, etc.; not from the form, which means the image. All these forms of time are absence of freedom and produce conflict. A's desire and B's desire are of course different. In what one national group wants and another does not, there is conflict and the absence of freedom. When there is no bondage inside, there is no conflict and there is freedom. The question of authority is involved in all this — the authority of one's own memory or one's own thoughts. Past thoughts may mean consciousness is subject to tradition and may be deeply embedded in it. All such things exert a compulsion from within.

So to understand freedom, the examination of these very subtle forms of compulsion from within must be explored. Krishnamurti once said that freedom is not escaping from something either inside or outside. It is rather to be able to look purely, objectively, honestly and clearly. Freedom to look and discuss is vitally necessary to really know and to find the unknown.

### One Big Family

Ida is the name given to the fossil discovered in Messel near Darmstadt in Germany which is said to be equivalent to the Rosetta Stone for understanding a critical stage of evolution. The fossil is extraordinarily well preserved, and was found in a pit where they have discovered many other important fossils, but none

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which has excited so much interest as this one. This particular fossil is almost complete, and may be a crucial link in the understanding of the evolutionary developments which took place. Apparently, the skeleton is that of a near-primate, providing a key to what Darwin called evolution, and, naturally, of unusual interest from the scientific point of view. The theory of evolution through natural selection was later called the survival of the fittest, when Darwin adopted it after hearing Herbert Spencer using it.

The survival of the fittest gives a picture of constant battle, competition, escape from danger and so on. According to Colin Tudge, who also has a short article in the *Guardian Weekly* on this subject, politicians and others glibly speak about competition being a good thing, because it is natural; that is in accordance with Darwin's mental picture. But the fossil also suggests that all people and all creatures spring from a common source: and hence are related. Some find this idea distasteful. Some religious people find it blasphemous. Many others do not. St Francis spoke of animals and plants as his brothers and sisters. This idea is emphasized by Darwin which now Ida further indicates. As Tudge emphasizes, all creatures living on this earth are related to each other. Further, if we once admit that the creatures we so insouciantly brush

aside are our relatives, we would treat them differently. That would be good for every living creature on the planet. This is a beginning. But human beings like to think that they are 'special'.

The idea advocated by Tudge is not new because from the Advaita philosophical point of view the reality is that all of life that we know, and perhaps what we have yet to know, is from the same source, from the invisible, eternally real truth. Therefore, any idea which goes against this fundamental proposition is wrong, and will bring only sorrow to human beings. This is not the place to give an exposition of Advaita knowledge, and therefore we satisfy ourselves with the basic truth, which has been known and accepted by many people.

Theosophy, or the wisdom of God, which is based on the above and other subsidiary truths, has to direct and lead us to realize this truth in our lives. The more we can follow this wise way, the less we suffer from sorrow. Wise people do not know personal sorrow in their lives because they are the ones who know without any doubt the truth of oneness. Oneness is what all important teachers of a spiritual nature are teaching. It has been taught from time to time in a way that people could understand by those who have gone ahead spiritually. This is what opening one's eyes to the light means. ✧

We love God with his own love; awareness of it deifies us.

Meister Eckhart

# Inspirational Writings of H. P. Blavatsky

WAYNE GATFIELD

MME BLAVATSKY wrote on many different subjects, providing a spiritual dimension to them all and thereby helping us to gain a wider view of the world that we live in and the worlds beyond. Scattered through her writings and articles are many highly inspirational teachings which discourage the idea that Theosophy is far too intellectual and provides no real food for the intuition. Besides the wonderful *Voice of the Silence*, the *Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled* it is worth perusing her many articles to find ‘hidden’ gems that illuminate our minds and souls.

This article contains little of my own words but consists mainly of a very few ‘hidden’ gems from HPB’s articles. The first is from ‘The New Cycle’, which was the opening article in a new magazine *La Revue Theosophique* in March 1889. Here, HPB gives encouragement to the aspirant in these words:

‘This spirit is a force that cannot be either checked or stopped. Those who recognize it and feel that this is the supreme moment of their salvation, will

be carried by it beyond the illusions of the great astral serpent. The bliss they will experience will be so sharp and so keen that were they not in spirit detached from their bodies of flesh, this beatitude would wound them like a sharpened blade. It is not pleasure that they will feel, but a bliss which is a foretaste of the wisdom of the gods, of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the fruits of the Tree of Life.’

Later on in the same article she continues this theme:

‘No one is so busy or so poor that he cannot be inspired by a noble ideal to follow. Why hesitate to blaze a trail towards that ideal through all obstacles, all hindrances, all the daily considerations of social life, and to advance boldly until it is reached? Ah! those who would make this effort would soon find that the “narrow gate” and “the thorny path” lead to spacious valleys with unlimited horizons, to a state without death, for one rebecomes a God! It is true that the first requisites for getting there are absolute unselfishness and unlimited devotion to

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the interests of others, and complete indifference as to the world and its opinions. To take the first step on this ideal path requires a perfectly pure motive; no frivolous thought must be allowed to divert our eyes from the goal; no hesitation, no doubt must fetter our feet. Yet, there are men and women perfectly capable of all this, and whose only desire is to live under the aegis of their Divine Nature. Let these, at least, have the courage to live this life and not to hide it from the sight of others! No one's opinion could ever be above the rulings of our own conscience, so, let that conscience, arrived at its highest development, be our guide in all our common daily tasks. As to our inner life, let us concentrate all our attention on our chosen Ideal, and let us ever look beyond without ever casting a glance at the mud at our feet. . . .

'Those capable of such an effort are true Theosophists; all others are but members more or less indifferent, and quite often useless.'

H. P. Blavatsky was no sectarian and taught us to see the wider picture and recognize that the Theosophical life had little to do with the membership of any society but everything to do with the way we live our lives. In an article titled 'The Cycle Moveth' (*Lucifer*, March 1890) she writes:

'Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they

do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal — the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective *orthodox* faiths, they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are devoting the rest of their lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than any intellectual speculation can give them. How few, in comparison to their numbers, and how rarely one meets with such, and yet their name is legion, if they only chose to reveal themselves.'

She taught us that only by developing our intuition and by our own self-induced and self-devised efforts could we make any real progress. As she states in the article 'What is Truth' (*Lucifer*, Feb. 1888):

'In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no *human* light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. *Tot homines, quot sententiae* — is an immortal truism. The sun is one, but



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its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. Polarity is universal, but the polarizer lies in our own consciousness. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely. But man's consciousness again, is only the sunflower of the earth. Longing for the warm ray, the plant can only turn to the sun, and move round and round in following the course of the unreachable luminary: its roots keep it fast to the soil, and half its life is passed in the shadow. . . .

'Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane we may use our mental polariscope; and, analysing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralysing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind — that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle*, the organic brain — the animal man in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in

us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the "divine man". This is what the great adepts, the Yogis in the East and the Mystics in the West, have always done and are still doing.'

And in 'What are the Theosophists' (*The Theosophist*, Oct. 1879):

'Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought — Godward — he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth, with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.'

Of course at the very beginning the Theosophical Masters had stated that they wanted 'a brotherhood of humanity, a real universal fraternity started' and this is the main theme that runs through all of HPB's writings. One such reference to this comes from 'The Beacon Light of Truth' (*La Revue Theosophique*, May 1889):

'I say it again; it is only theosophy, well understood, that can save the world from despair, by reproducing social and religious reform — a task once before accomplished in history, by Gautama, the Buddha: a peaceful reform, without one drop of blood spilt, each one remaining in the faith of his fathers if he so chooses. To do this he will only have to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication, which at the present moment are choking all religions and churches in the world. Let him accept but the essence, which is the same in all: that is to say, the spirit which gives life to man in whom it resides, and renders him immortal. Let every man



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inclined to go on find his ideal — a star before him to guide him. Let him follow it, without ever deviating from his path; and he is almost certain to reach the Beacon-light of life — the TRUTH: no matter whether he seeks for and finds it at the bottom of a cradle or of a well.’

In this society Theosophy is needed more than ever. It is certainly not the time to become complacent or to imagine that times have changed and Theosophy is no longer as valid in the modern world. In the article ‘Our Cycle and the Next’ (*Lucifer*, May 1889) she warns that:

‘If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy IS ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed.

‘But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted Western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.’

It is easy to see that Humanity did not

heed the warning and it can be argued that we are indeed immersed in this ‘sea of horror’ at this moment in time, in the wake of two world wars, countless conflicts throughout the world and the increase in selfishness and immorality throughout society. But also the encouragement in the above quotation rings clear as well and Theosophy still needs to ‘prevail in the struggle’ and has much work to do in the world, whether through the Theosophical Movement in general or similar organizations and individuals. We must not become complacent or overwhelmed by the seemingly insurmountable odds, but realize that all the problems arise in the realm of passing illusions and the Spiritual is untouched by all of this seeming chaos. In the first of her Five Messages to the American Conventions in 1888 HPB writes:

‘Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, goodwill to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one’s self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of goodwill; and the converse of this is true also, — he who preaches the gospel of goodwill, teaches Theosophy.’

Universal Brotherhood will never come about as a result of ‘cold diplomatic

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reasoning', or through political manifestos. HPB makes this clear later in the same Message:

'I am confident that, when the real nature of Theosophy is understood, the prejudice against it, now so unfortunately prevalent, will die out. Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor. But, in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. People say that Theosophists should show what is in them, that "the tree is known by its fruit". Let them build dwellings for the poor, it is said, let them open "soup kitchens", etc., etc., and the world will believe that there is something

in Theosophy. These good people forget that Theosophists, as such, are poor, and that the Founders themselves are poorer than any, and that one of them, at any rate, the humble writer of these lines, has no property of her own, and has to work hard for her daily bread whenever she finds time from her Theosophical duties. The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.'

It is this becoming truly human that is the basis of all true Theosophical teaching and it is something that HPB emphasized in all her works. As the Masters of Wisdom tell us: 'The Chiefs want a "Brotherhood of Humanity", a real Universal Fraternity started.' This should be the aim and inspiration of us all in the Theosophical movement in general, just as much as it was in those early days. ✧

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

**Mrs Kusum Satapathy was appointed International Secretary of the Theosophical Society from 24 July 2009, in the place of Dr C. V. Agarwal who passed to Peace.**

# The Unreality of Ideas

HUGH SHEARMAN

IT becomes necessary from time to time to question habits of thought which have long been assumed to be basic and unquestionable. This has been happening in the world of philosophical studies during recent decades. Metaphysics, for example, is almost entirely out of court now. One might say that it is out of fashion, but it is something much deeper than fashion. We have come to see that statements of a universal nature cannot be treated and talked about as if they were material objects or 'things' and that, if there is a transcendent reality, it cannot be used as a premise in the sort of syllogistic argument which we might validly pursue about things that are not transcendent.

Since this change has taken place in the climate of thought, we cannot ignore it in the Theosophical Society. It may often be convenient to go on using the old expressions, the old forms of words, but we need to come awake to what we are doing and saying. We cannot effectively address ourselves to the twentieth century if we go on using not only the language of the nineteenth century but also the values and assumptions associated with that language.

A glance through a fairly typical issue of the regularly published journal of one of the larger national sections of the Theosophical Society provides quite a number of statements and expressions which raise these questions of meaning. Thus it is said that in the Theosophical Society 'we are concerned with principles and not with personalities'. Is this really true? Can we for example, be concerned with brotherhood and not with brothers? Is there brotherhood apart from brothers?

Again, there is a reference to 'the ideas of the Adepts'. Is it really true to assume that, if somebody is an Adept, he will have what we call ideas or will be an exponent of ideas?

Or we come on the words 'Theosophical ideas'. In such a connection, ideas probably mean to us images of the truth. And if Theosophy or Theosophists are concerned with truth, surely our business is not with the accumulation or diffusion of ideas but rather with the dissipation of ideas so that truth itself may be known.

Of course it may be said that if we first give people ideas about truth they will presently find their way through those

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ideas to the actual truth. But is that really how human nature works, and do people often find their way to truth through ideas?

Then we read of people having 'a lively exchange of ideas'. When one is present at the sort of occasion that is referred to in this way, one often realizes that very little is exchanged. One sees a group of people taking part in a discussion. Each of those people is enclosed in a structure of ideas, images, opinions, conclusions, value judgements and so on. Peeping out furtively from inside these structures, they each try to maintain their own structure as intact as possible but try to make dints in the structures of other people. To be fair, if there is real goodwill, people are sometimes lifted a little out of their structures and are temporarily united in partially forgetting those structures. But in a few hours' time, if not sooner, they are back inside them again.

The things that we call ideas, even when we are referring to them in quite a favourable sense, are instruments of defence, enclosure and evasion. They are images of truth which are used as substitutes for and defences against truth itself. To say this is not to condemn them, still less to be free of them oneself. They are part of Nature, part of life, and are there for a purpose. They are an index of the incompleteness of our own reality; and if we examine them in that light they can tell us quite a lot about ourselves.

It is a pity if we make our own unreality still more unreal by regarding our ideas as something other than they are, imagining that they are goals of attainment,

final rewards of commendable endeavour. They are heavy luggage. Sometimes one is, as it were, psychically aware of this in other people. Unhappy individuals walk along the streets clad, not in overcoats or in auras, but in solid structures of opinions and ideas, as if they were walking inside their own coffins. They would certainly be happier without these structures. That is the happiness which our nostalgic eye sees in childhood. And in our lucid moments we become aware of similar structures hung around our own personalities, closing us in with an almost physical presence, waiting till we develop the courage to claim our freedom.

Sometimes it is believed that it is somehow more meritorious to utter large rhetorical generalized statements, to speak of freedom, honour, beauty and so forth, than to be concerned with mere 'things'. Some are prepared to imagine that to become rhetorical or metaphysical in this way is somehow to use the 'higher' mind. An experience of higher consciousness beyond personality, a glimpse, for example, of what in Theosophical literature is sometimes called causal consciousness, will at once dissipate this notion that generalized statements emanate from a part of our natures that is much 'higher' than the factual material mind. What we are seeing in such a case is only the 'lower' mind making images of qualities which it attributes to a higher order of experience and treating them discursively as if they were 'things'.

After all, there is no such 'thing' as truth, beauty or goodness or any of those

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other generalities in which rhetoric delights. They have no existential reality. Like the term brotherhood, each may be a valid classification of certain kinds of particulars which have been observed by individuals, but they have no validity when largely or completely dissociated from particulars. And when such terms are used there is often far more dissociation than people like to admit.

On the emotional side of life there is an activity which we call sentimentality. In sentimentality, emotional activity goes along more or less parallel to real human situations without achieving actual contact with them or any effective commitment or involvement in them. Similarly there is a kind of sentimentality of the mind in which large generalized statements are made without achieving any practical or effective contact with actual situations.

There is another sense in which, for some, 'ideas' have seemed to have a great reality. Dr Arundale, when he was President of the Theosophical Society, used to like to quote the lines from Rupert Brooke:

There the Eternals are and there  
The Good, the Lovely and the True,  
And Types, whose earthly copies were  
The foolish broken things we knew;  
There is the Face whose ghosts we are;  
The real, the never-setting Star;  
And the Flower, of which we love  
Faint and fading shadows here;  
Never a tear, but only Grief;  
Dance, but not the limbs that move;  
Songs in Song shall disappear;

Instead of lovers, Love shall be;  
For hearts, Immutability;  
And there, on the Ideal Reef,  
Thunders the Everlasting Sea!

This is an expression of a great and ancient tradition. What Brooke was referring to was much the same as Plato's archetypes, universals which are embodied in every particular. But if we live in a world of particulars and speak its language, it is only through the particulars that we can know any other world.

It may be noted in passing that the mysteries have always taken as their starting point, not a universal or an idea, but a particular, a 'thing'. In the Christian mysteries, for example, we are concerned with body and blood, bread and wine, not with some hypothetical generalized quality or idea such as love or life. When some members of the Theosophical Society have at times tried to devise ceremonial procedures based on ideas rather than on things, the result has not been very effective. However it may develop into ideas, a mystery has to begin with a thing.

In the larger sense of the word 'idea', there is what may be called a yoga of ideas. When we look at it more closely, however, *jñāna yoga* is not so much a yoga of ideas as a yoga of the dissipation or dispersal of ideas. What the practitioner of this kind of yoga may be said to do is to keep tidying up and amalgamating small concepts and ideas into larger and more comprehensive ones. In the end he will have created one vast concept or idea

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which contains the whole universe. He then achieves *Samādhi* by dropping that idea, so that nothing remains but the real.

It has been said that a true philosophy is one which gives such an account of life and the universe that, if it were true, everything would be exactly the way it is. Presumably when one achieves such a philosophy one can then abandon it, since one would no longer need it for any purpose.

What picture, what 'idea', does 'book' Theosophy give of the philosophical and psychological problems that we have here been reviewing?

Mind, we are told, is universal. Indeed we can see it operating all through Nature, giving to all organisms and to all the structures of matter their wonderful functions and patterns. It is this diffusion of mind through all things which provided the basis for 'natural theology', by which people have tried to infer the reality of God through a study of the works of His hands.

We humans, however, have separated ourselves from Nature. In doing so we have each appropriated to ourselves a portion, as it were, of that mind which is universal. Instead of giving expression to that mind, we think of 'my' mind and 'your' mind and 'his' mind and so on. This segregation is functional. It fulfils a purpose in the scheme of things. It is a means by which a creative consciousness is brought to birth in levels of Nature where mind could otherwise operate only unconsciously and to a pattern. In all Nature there is an 'unconscious' which is an

undeveloped 'conscious', and it is through the human mind that the transformation of this vast potential takes place.

Once the separate human individual is established, with what he believes to be 'his' mind, fulfilment for him lies in the direction of opening out that mind till once again it is one with universal mind, mind without frontiers or segregation. In *The Voice of the Silence* there is a description of one who has completed the course of human experience, a true Adept in living; and it is said that 'his mind like a becalmed and boundless ocean spreadeth out in shoreless space'. Such a one does not need to entertain 'ideas', exercise choices, convert others to opinions. For him the knower, knowledge and the known are one, as Patañjali explains (I.41).

But we in whom mind is still only a segregated fragment, dominated by the illusion of our separateness, can form no true image of that higher order of consciousness. All ideas of wholeness which we form with minds which we imagine to be 'ours' are necessarily more or less untrue, for we treat as a 'thing' that which is no 'thing' and regard as object that which, in our sense of those terms, is neither subject nor object.

If for us they are poetically evocative, those images of a higher order of consciousness can have their value. But they cannot be finalities. It cannot be demanded that they should be consistent with one another. And they cannot be upheld as definitive and authoritative statements of 'truth' or used as foundations upon which systems of thought or belief may be built.

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The language which we use is the product of our existing limitations of mind and it cannot effectively be used to describe an order of experience which outpasses those limitations. All statements imply their own values and are relative to the circumstances of their origins. All words carry a mass of conscious and unconscious background assumptions.

It is probably where Theosophical literature is most concerned with universal principles, as it was particularly in the last century and in the days of the Founders, that we are most likely to misunderstand it. Safety lies in dealing with 'things' and with that which existentially is. It is things that are the beginning of the road to true fulfilment, and not some image of what fulfilment is going to be like when we arrive there.

In some poetic sense these images —

which form a substantial part of Theosophical literature — may be helpfully indicative; but, if they are cherished and made into an authority, they become a device by which we try to prevent life from having its way with us, and thus we prolong our pain by remaining 'unredeemed'. Seemingly secure in our castle of ideas, conclusions and 'teachings', we can too easily turn our backs on life's readiness to welcome us back into itself.

We cannot instantly waft ourselves out of the world of ideas; but, if we can become increasingly aware of their unsubstantial nature and, if not of their unreality, at least of the very relative and qualified nature of their reality, we can become more and more open to what really is, and interpose fewer and fewer opacities between mind and reality. ✧

### Dr C. V. AGARWAL

Dr C. V. Agarwal, Secretary of the Theosophical Society, unexpectedly passed away on 19 June 2009. He was educated at the Theosophical National School, and later in the Banaras Hindu University and the University of Wisconsin, USA. He joined the staff of the Banaras Hindu University in 1950 and retired in 1986 as Professor of Applied Chemistry.

A second generation Theosophist, he was not interested in worldly success, being a student of the meaning of life; from childhood the life of the Buddha fascinated him. He later became a member of the Theosophical Society and the Maha Bodhi Society and held various positions in the TS: including General Secretary of the Indian Section from 1984 to 1993, Vice-President of the Indo-Pacific Federation and in-charge of the Theosophical Society in South East Asia. He was also head of the Archives of the TS. He lectured in several countries, and wrote a book on *The Chemistry of Engineering Materials* and also *The Buddhist and Theosophical Movements*.



# Studies in *The Voice of the Silence*, 18

JOHN ALGEO

WITH verse 281, the aspirant reaches the seventh portal, thus completing the journey mapped out by Fragment Three of *The Voice of the Silence* dealing with 'The Seven Portals'. What lies ahead is a life of active service on behalf of humanity. The ten verses below treat the passing of the seventh gate and the purpose of the Bodhisattva state, which that gate opens upon. These verses begin the summing up or coda of this fragment, which is also the culmination of the whole book.

## VERSES [281–290]:

[281] Know, conqueror of sins, once that a sowani<sup>23</sup> hath cross'd the seventh Path, all Nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms, the streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale; dark ocean-waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound, scent-laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper: 'A Master has arisen, a Master of the Day.'<sup>24</sup>

[282] He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising

sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.

[283] Yea, he is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is Himself, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the gods, above great Brahm and Indra. *Now* he shall surely reach his great reward!

[284] Shall he not use the gifts which it confers for his own rest and bliss, his well-earn'd weal and glory — he, the subduer of the great delusion?

[285] Nay, O thou candidate for Nature's hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathāgata, those gifts and powers are not for self.

[286] Wouldst thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru?<sup>25</sup> Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

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[287] If thou wouldst have that stream of hard-earned knowledge, of Wisdom heaven-born, remain sweet running waters, thou shouldst not leave it to become a stagnant pond.

[288] Know, if of Amitābha, the ‘Boundless Light’, thou wouldst become co-worker, then must thou shed the light acquired, like to the Bodhisattvas twain,<sup>26</sup> upon the span of all three worlds.<sup>27</sup>

[289] Know that the stream of superhuman knowledge and the Deva-Wisdom thou hast won, must, from thyself, the channel of Ālaya, be poured forth into another bed.

[290] Know, O Naljor, thou of the Secret Path, its pure fresh waters must be used to sweeter make the Ocean’s bitter waves — that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men.

COMMENT. The seventh path (verse 281) leads to the seventh gate, that of Ātmā or the ultimate Self within each of us. Ātmā is not ‘our’ ultimate Self, but the One Self that manifests through us. It is not a part of us; we are expressions of it. The terms *sowan*, *sowani*, and *srotāpatti* are from the Buddhist tradition. HPB explains in a gloss:

Gloss 23. *Sowani* is one who practises *Sowan*, the first path in Dhyāna, a *Srotāpatti*.

More particularly, *sowan* is the first of four stages in the Yogic practice of dhyāna or meditation leading to nirvāna. A *sowani* is one who is in the *sowan* stage, another term for whom is *srotāpatti* or *srotāpanna*,

meaning literally ‘one who has entered the stream’. Those who have become *sowani*-s or *srotāpatti*-s are assured eventually of reaching the goal. They are, as verse 280 says, ‘safe’. That is, the passage to the *sowani* or *srotāpatti* stage is a major step in spiritual progress, one that cannot be undone or lost.

There are several such irrevocable steps in evolution. One of them is ‘individualization’, when the life wave produces a separate unit of human consciousness; another is the first entering upon the Path, referred to in HPB’s statement ‘There Is a Road’, in the statement ‘I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore’. These major and irrevocable steps are, on a grander scale, comparable to those that mark off major stages of personal life, such as pubescence, ‘cutting the apron strings’, and so on.

The remainder of verse 281 and continuing into the following verses is a poetic and rhapsodic description of the state of one who has achieved the goal of human life in this great evolutionary period by becoming more than human: a ‘Master of the Day’, a phrase glossed by HPB:

Gloss 24. ‘Day’ means here a whole *manvantara*, a period of incalculable duration.

Those who have attained this state have completed the evolutionary task of the human species and are ready to pass on to new realms of evolution, which we can barely imagine. A person in this state is

called ‘a white pillar to the west’ — white because it reflects all the rays of the sun rising in the east. West is traditionally the direction of death, as east is of birth and new life. Our world is the land of the west, of those who have not yet been born spiritually. We need such pillars among us to reflect the sun of reality.

Those who have reached this state — who have passed the seventh path to the seventh gate, entered the stream, become pillars in the west — have a choice for their future. They may pass out of this world, having completed its course and achieved its goal, or they may remain in this world as pillars, guides, exemplars for the rest of us. Those who choose the latter option are known as *bodhisattvas*, meaning ‘beings whose essence is Wisdom’. They are also called by many other names, such as Mahatmas (literally, ‘great souls’) and Masters of the Wisdom.

The rest of *The Voice of the Silence*, from verse 283 onward, urges those who walk the Path to choose the bodhisattva option, when the time for their choice comes. A few comments on those verses:

Verse 283: Brahm(ā) and Indra are great gods in the Vedic tradition. Brahmā is the creator god and Indra is a warrior god; they are roughly like Jupiter or Zeus and Mars or Ares in Roman and Greek mythology.

Verse 284: The ‘great delusion’ is the illusion of separateness — that we are unconnected with one another and with the rest of the universe and so can seek our own welfare without being concerned about the welfare of others.

Verse 285: ‘Tathāgata’ is a title of Gautama Buddha, meaning ‘One who has thus gone’, that is, gone over the stream of life to the ‘other shore’, or nirvāna.

Verses 286–287: HPB identifies ‘Sumeru’:

Gloss 25. Mount Meru, the sacred mountain of the gods.

In Indic mythology, Mount Meru is the centre or navel of the universe. It is an analogue to the Greek Olympus, where the Hellenic gods live. From Mount Meru flow the waters of Wisdom; similarly in the myth of Genesis, a river that divides into four branches flows out of Eden. We should not seek to dam up or divert that river of Wisdom for our own selfish use, but rather help it to continue to flow so that others may benefit from its life-giving waters.

Verse 288: Amitābha (Amida in Japanese) is a personification in Northern Buddhism. He is the Buddha of Infinite Light, one of the five Dhyāni Buddhas (‘Meditation Buddhas’), who are so called because they are archetypal images that appear in meditation. As such, they personify aspects of the Ādi-Buddha or Primal Buddha, which is the ultimate reality of the Absolute. Amitābha is the personification of Compassion and Wisdom.

In the exoteric and theistic Pure Land school of China and Japan, Amitābha is the intermediary between Ultimate Reality and human beings, who are reborn in his Western Paradise or Pure Land if they have faith in him. Esoterically, according to Christmas Humphreys (*A Popular Dictionary of Buddhism*), Amitābha is our

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own higher Self and rebirth in his Pure Land is making the choice to become a bodhisattva upon passing the seventh path and gate.

In a gloss, HPB identifies Amitābha with Parabrahma, the Absolute. The same gloss identifies the ‘Bodhisattvas twain’, who are aspects of Amitābha:

Gloss 26. In the Northern Buddhist symbology, Amitābha or ‘Boundless Light’ (Parabrahma) is said to have in his paradise two Bodhisattvas — Kwan-shi-yin and Tashishi — who ever radiate light over the three worlds where they lived, including our own (see note 27 below), in order to help with this light (of knowledge) in the instruction of Yogis, who will, in their turn, save men. Their exalted position in Amitābha’s realm is due to deeds of mercy performed by the two, as such Yogis, when on earth, says the allegory.

The ‘three worlds’ referred to in verse 288 and in gloss 26 are identified by HPB:

Gloss 27. These three worlds are the three planes of being, the terrestrial, astral and the spiritual.

‘Terrestrial’ is the physical plane. ‘Astral’ probably is not just what is called by that term in second-generation Theosophy, but more broadly includes the emotional and mental worlds, especially as they are interrelated. ‘Spiritual’ is probably to be understood as the higher mental or causal and the intuitive or buddhic worlds.

Verse 289: ‘Deva-Wisdom’ is divine wisdom, such as the gods possess, or

literally ‘Theosophy’. ‘Ālaya’ is the storehouse or womb of the universe, the plenum or fullness, from which all things come, hence the source of wisdom. Those who have passed the seventh gate are the channels through which that wisdom flows outward to all humanity.

Verse 290: The expression ‘Secret Path’ hearkens back to the imagery of the second fragment on ‘The Two Paths’. The ocean of life is salty, made so by the salty tears that humans shed. Its salty brine is to be sweetened by the fresh, sweet waters of Wisdom flowing from Mount Meru and channelled to others by those who have taken the ‘Secret Path’.

MEDITATION. What is the ‘great reward’ (verse 283) that the aspirant receives after passing the seventh gate? Consider these words from HPB’s passage ‘There Is a Road’: ‘For those that win onwards there is reward past all telling — the power to bless and save humanity.’ Meditate on that reward.

Visualize the mountain in the centre of the world, from which flow the waters of Wisdom. See yourself channelling those waters to arid lands to make the desert places become fertile and bloom.

Verses 291–295 touch on a ‘darker’ or tougher side of the bodhisattva life — the difficulties (as they would be judged to be according to our ordinary standards of comfort and pleasure). The following verses again contrast the two paths, and verses 300–302 celebrate the supreme value of compassion on the spiritual path.

VERSES [291–302].

[291] Alas! when once thou hast become like the fixed star in highest heaven, that bright celestial orb must shine from out the spatial depths for all — save for itself; give light to all, but take from none.

[292] Alas! when once thou hast become like the pure snow in mountain vales, cold and unfeeling to the touch, warm and protective to the seed that sleepeth deep beneath its bosom — 'tis now that snow which must receive the biting frost, the northern blasts, thus shielding from their sharp and cruel tooth the earth that holds the promised harvest, the harvest that will feed the hungry.

[293] Self-doomed to live through future *kalpa-s*,\* unthanked and unperceived by men, wedged as a stone with countless other stones which form the 'Guardian Wall',<sup>28</sup> such is thy future if the seventh gate thou passest. Built by the hands of many Masters of Compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, it shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow.

[294] Withal man sees it not, will not perceive it, nor will he heed the word of Wisdom . . . for he knows it not.

[295] But thou hast heard it, thou knowest all, O thou of eager guileless Soul . . . and thou must choose. Then hearken yet again.

[296] On Sowan's Path, O Srotāpatti, thou art secure. Aye, on that Mārga, where nought but darkness meets the weary

pilgrim, where torn by thorns the hands drip blood, the feet are cut by sharp unyielding flints, and Māra wields his strongest arms — there lies a great reward *immediately* beyond.

[297] Calm and unmoved the Pilgrim glideth up the stream that to Nirvāna leads. He knoweth that the more his feet will bleed, the whiter will himself be washed. He knoweth well that after seven short and fleeting births Nirvāna will be his. . . .

[298] Such is the Dhyāna Path, the haven of the Yogi, the blessed goal that Srotāpatti-s crave.

[299] Not so when he hath crossed and won the Ārhata\* path.

[300] There *kleśa*<sup>29</sup> is destroyed for ever, *tanhā*'s<sup>30</sup> roots torn out. But stay, disciple . . . Yet one word. Canst thou destroy divine Compassion? Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal Harmony, Ālaya's self, a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.

[301] The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its Being, the more thy Soul unites with that which Is, the more thou wilt become Compassion Absolute.<sup>31</sup>

[302] Such is the Ārya Path, Path of the Buddhas of perfection.

COMMENT. Robert Louis Stevenson, in his book *Virginibus Puerisque* (For Maidens and Lads), spoke of life as being 'a field

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of battle, and not a bed of roses'. We might suppose that those who have passed the seventh gate would find themselves comfortably in a bed of roses. But those who take the bodhisattva path are still in the world of life. Their period of conscription is over, but they have volunteered for another term of enlistment, and so are still on the field of battle.

Verses 291–293 provide three metaphors for the bodhisattva life. It is like being a fixed star that gives light to the planets (or 'wanderers') in the heavens, but receives no light from others. It is like being snow in a high mountain valley, which protects the seeds in the earth beneath so that they will not be exposed to the rough winds and inclement weather but will eventually be able to sprout, grow, and bear fruit — though that snow must itself bear the harsh weather. It is like being a stone wedged into a wall that protects those whom the wall surrounds but that is built only with the struggle and life's blood of the builders.

The image of the 'Guardian Wall' is a powerful and a traditional one. It is used also, for example, in Freemasonry, which talks about every Freemason as a living stone in the wall of the Temple. Anglo-Saxon warriors formed a 'shield-wall' around their King or Lord when he was threatened in battle. A garden surrounded by a protective wall is a Medieval and Renaissance theme in literature and art. And verse 258 talked about a wall protecting the Holy Isle from being swallowed by the ocean. The protecting wall is an archetypal image:

Gloss 28. The 'Guardian Wall' or the 'Wall of Protection'. It is taught that the accumulated efforts of long generations of Yogi-s, Saints, and Adepts, especially of the *Nirmānakāya*-s — have created, so to say, a wall of protection around mankind, which wall shields mankind invisibly from still worse evils.

The *kalpa*-s during which the Guardian Wall stands are, as a note by HPB explains, immensely long periods: '\*Cycles of ages'. The point is that the bodhisattvas, also called *nirmānakāyas*, are engaged in that wall-building, not as short-timers, but for the long haul.

Although life is full of dangers and inconveniences — 'misery and sorrow' (as verse 293 puts it) — against which the guardian wall offers protection, verses 294–295 point out that most people are unaware of the very existence of that wall. The builders of the wall, who are themselves the stones of which it is built, work quietly in the background. They seek no thanks or acknowledgement, but only do the work that they have chosen for the common good.

Not everyone who has run the course and fought the good fight chooses the option of becoming a part of that wall. There are two possibilities. One is described in verses 296–298. It is the path leading to an immediate reward, which is to glide upon the stream toward the calm haven of *nirvāna*. It is called the 'Dhyāna Path, the haven of the Yogi'.

As observed earlier, *sowan* is the first of the stages of those who have entered



the stream in order to cross over to the 'other shore', and *srotāpatti* is one who has entered that stage. It is said that one who has entered the stream has symbolically only seven more incarnations before arriving at the other shore. That symbolism explains the statement in verse 297 'that after seven short and fleeting births Nirvāna will be his'. *Mārga* is Sanskrit for 'path', often used in symbolical ways, as the English word is also. The point here is that, having entered the stream, the aspirant who wishes to reach the other shore and be free of the limitations of this life will eventually arrive there.

The other option, however, is the 'Ārhata path'. HPB explains the origin of that term in a note:

HPB note: \*From the Sanskrit Arhat or Arhan.

The arhat or arhan (the terms are just variants, from a root *arh* 'to be worthy or holy') is one who has attained enlightenment. For the arhats both *kleśa* and *tanhā* are destroyed (verse 300). HPB glosses those terms:

Gloss 29. *Kleśa* is the love of pleasure or of worldly enjoyment, evil or good.

Gloss 30. *Tanhā*, the will to live, that which causes rebirth.

Kleśas or 'afflictions' are said to be either threefold (hatred, lust, and illusion) or fivefold (ignorance, egotism, attachment, aversion, and passion for existence). *Tanhā* is literally 'thirst', that is, a craving for the intoxicating liquor of existence.

They are negative, hurtful emotions. They do not include positive, helpful feelings like compassion. Indeed, verse 300 includes a paean to compassion: 'Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal Harmony, Ālaya's self, a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.'

Compassion for others does not bind us to the world, as the *kleśas* and *tanhā* do. On the contrary, as verse 301 emphasizes, the more compassion we feel for others, the freer we become because the more we have identified ourselves with the totality of 'that which Is'. This compassion must not be confused with sentimental emotion, however, and particularly not with some personified divine love:

Gloss 31. This 'compassion' must not be regarded in the same light as 'God, the divine love' of the Theists. Compassion stands here as an abstract, impersonal law whose nature, being absolute harmony, is thrown into confusion by discord, suffering and sin.

To follow the path of compassion is to walk the true 'Ārya Path, Path of the Buddhas of Perfection' (verse 302). *Ārya* is a Sanskrit word that means 'noble'. It was a term the ancient Indic peoples used for themselves. It is historically related to the name of the country *Iran*, whose ancient language was very similar to Sanskrit, and to the Greek term *aristos* 'best' (which English has in the word *aristocrat*). (Nazi use of the term *Aryan*



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in the early twentieth century was a perversion, like other ancient terms and holy symbols that they exploited.) The Buddha used the word in naming his 'Four Noble Truths', the last of which speaks of a 'Noble Eightfold Path'. *The Voice of the Silence* says that the truly noble path is that by which compassion leads us to realize our unity with all others.

MEDITATION. Meditate on these parts of

verses 300 and 301: Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal Harmony, Ālaya's self, a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal. The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its Being, the more thy Soul unites with that which Is, the more thou wilt become Compassion Absolute. ✧

Now, if asked, 'What is this spirit of meditation?' I reply that it is to have a sincerely benevolent and sympathetic heart at all times, whether one is talking or wagging one's elbow when writing, whether one is moving or resting, whether one's luck is good or bad, whether one is in honour or in shame, or in gain or in loss, in right or in wrong, bundling all these things up into one verse heading and concentrating your energy with the force of an iron rock under the navel and lower part of the abdomen. . . .

If you have this 'spirit' . . . your two-edged swords will be your desk or meditation table, placed always before you. The saddle you ride on will be the cushion on which you sit in meditation. The hills, the streams, the plains will be the floor of your meditation hall. The four corners of the earth and its ten directions, the height and depth of the universe will be to you the great 'cave' in which you are performing your meditation — they will be, in very truth, the substance of your real self.

Hakuin

# The Stable Mind

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

STUDENTS of Theosophy have been advised, again and again, to ponder and dwell on matters of deep significance. The sheer scope of theosophical literature is so vast that the temptation to get absorbed with details and descriptions may be sometimes quite overwhelming. Therefore we do need to remind ourselves that Theosophy, in its essence, is not just a description of vast universal processes and systems. In its own essential nature it is a living wisdom, an understanding that brings us to the very heart of our true identity, which is one with the very heart of existence.

The same theosophical teaching suggests that in order for the student to truly learn about life's deeper aspects, contentment, detachment and stability of mind become necessary. A mind that oscillates and fluctuates, allowing itself to be tossed around by experiences, inevitably becomes a prey to strong emotions and to self-aggrandizement. Under the sway of instability the mind can neither see itself nor the reality around it.

St Paul expressed this need to see clearly in his famous epistle to the Corinthians:

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. (1 Cor., 13:12)

Our perception of life, of ourselves and others, is darkened by conditioning. The source of this conditioning includes unresolved experiences, frustrations, anger, desire, separateness as well as deep-seated self-interest and self-importance. Our experience of life and its relationships is therefore mediated by the 'dark glass' of conditioning. However, St Paul in his letter pointed to the possibility of seeing 'face to face' — a direct, non-mediated perception, a true experience or insight. Such an experience can be profoundly transformative as it is an unconditional opening of oneself to the Other.

St Paul goes even deeper in his meditation on the nature of seeing. He says that now we know in part. Whatever knowledge we may have is bound to be a fragmentary knowledge so long as the background of conditioning is there in our minds. In its own essential form the nature of this conditioning has been called *avidyā*, ignorance, lack of wisdom.

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No amount of accumulation of knowledge can free us from ignorance which is the ultimate conditioning. As suggested by St Paul our liberation lies in the realization of our fundamental unity with the Other which is in itself all-knowing in its uncreated sacredness.

One of the important teachings in the *Bhagavadgītā* is about the nature of the stable mind. The Sanskrit expression *sthita-prajña* is translated as 'firm in judgement and wisdom, calm, contented'. The word *sthita* means 'firm, constant, invariable'. The following dialogue between Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (II.54–7) conveys the depths of understanding which are open to one whose mind is stable:

What is the mark of him who is stable of mind, steadfast in contemplation, O Keśava? How doth the stable-minded talk, how doth he sit, how walk?

When a man abandoneth, O Pārtha, all the desires of the heart, and is satisfied in the SELF by the SELF, then is he called stable in mind. He whose mind is free from anxiety amid pains, indifferent amid pleasures, loosed from passion, fear and anger, he is called a sage of stable mind. He who on every side is without attachments, whatever hap of fair and foul, who neither likes nor dislikes, of such a one the understanding is well poised.<sup>1</sup>

The ordinary human mind is activated by many desires. Each desire is born of the image-making that goes on within the mind all the time. What is called the

personal self, the 'me', may be described as this intimate relationship between the energy of desire and the images which are constantly created within the mind. Unaware of this process the mind identifies itself with such emotions as anger, fear, suspicion, greed, pride and so on. The refusal to look at itself becomes the source of constant instability in the mind. This may be the reason why so many people in the world today, after having tried all sorts of meditation 'techniques', remain restless and discontented. As long as the sense of individuality is placed on the emotional-field there cannot be peace within. In the language of *The Voice of the Silence*, the senses will continue to make a playground of the mind.

However, if it is possible for someone to see the above process clearly and objectively, then there would be no need whatsoever to cling to any desire. One would observe desires arising within the mind and naturally let them go, like waves that arise and break on the shore. The depths of the ocean remain unperturbed and at peace. There is a causeless joy in just being oneself. Perhaps the Indian tradition pointed this out when it maintained that one of the innermost aspects of the Ultimate Reality is *ānanda*. When one truly begins to know oneself all forms of artificial behaviour and mental habits come to an end, as well as all self-seeking.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also suggests that such an individual 'is free from anxiety amid pains, indifferent amid pleasures, loosed

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from passion, fear and anger'. As long as one lives in a body there is bound to be some degree of pain and pleasure. The extraordinary beauty of the above statement by Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that the sage of stable mind is free from anxiety amid the experience of pain. Those who were near him reported about how composed and calm Ramana Maharshi was when he was being treated for cancer. The same was true of Annie Besant's attitude during the crises she faced as President of the Theosophical Society. At the core of such stable attitudes we may find a very deep realization that everything temporal is bound to come to an end. Also that consciousness, in its own essential nature, remains unaffected by the fluctuations of time and matter.

It is difficult to differentiate between pleasure and the identification with it. While there are naturally pleasurable experiences in life, it is the clinging to them that coarsens the mind. And it is the false sense of identity (*asmīti*) that makes such clinging possible. Someone who has discovered a source of deep contentment within does not need to cling to any experience, pleasurable or otherwise. They are seen for what they are and the consciousness remains unaffected.

The other quality mentioned by Śrī Kṛṣṇa about the nature of the stable mind is that it is 'loosed from passion, fear and anger'. Passion, fear and anger are essentially reactions to experience. Perhaps they could be seen as the ways in which the ignorant self demonstrates its own unwillingness to learn. They

also constitute deep undercurrents that maintain restlessness, anxiety and conflict in the mind. But they cannot grow in a stable mind for it is free from the reactions that have their source in self-centredness.

Finally, Arjuna's Teacher clarifies even further the precious nature of the stable mind. He says: 'He who on every side is without attachments, whatever hap of fair and foul, who neither likes nor dislikes, of such a one the understanding is well poised.' It is a fact of life that we do not have control over external circumstances nor over other people's behaviour. Yet a number of people live and behave as if they could have such a control, which is a form of illusion. The most enduring form of attachment, therefore, is attachment to our own sense of a separate self. When this attachment ends through insight into its vacuous, illusory nature, there is a profound sense of stability and real security. There is a peace that passes all understanding.

What does the stable mind see? What is the nature of its relationship to life and the universe? Kṛṣṇa, the Blessed Lord, says to Arjuna:

He attaineth Peace, into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean, which is filled with water, but remaineth unmoved — not he who desireth desires. Whoso forsaketh all desires and goeth onwards free from yearnings, selfless and without egoism — he goeth to Peace. This is the Eternal state, O son of Pṛthā. Having attained thereto none is bewildered. Who, even at the death-hour, is established

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therein, he goeth to the Nirvāna of the Eternal. (II.70–2)

Such an individual can contribute to the transformation of the human consciousness not by being vocal, by writing or making speeches. Such a person, by being who he or she is, enables the whole world to come nearer to peace, brotherhood and compassion. Such a person transcends all the stereotypes, all barriers, all beliefs, all labelling, and can touch the heart and soul of many towards awakening and liberation.

In the Gospel of Thomas, which is a Gnostic text containing the inner or

esoteric teachings of Jesus, we find the following passage:

His disciples said to him, ‘When will the kingdom come?’ Jesus said: ‘It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying: “here it is” or “there it is”. Rather, the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it.’<sup>2</sup>

The stable mind sees what is always present, always near, never far away, never lost: the blessedness alive in every form of life. In it the seen, the seer and seeing are one. For it, there is no other.

## References

1. *Bhagavad Gitā*, trans. Annie Besant, The Theosophical Publishing House, Chennai, 2003, pp.38–9.
2. ‘The Gospel according to Thomas’ in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. by James M. Robinson, Harper, New York, 1988, p.138.

. . . we must separate the brain from the mind. The brain is the centre of all our nerves, all our knowledge, all our theories, opinions, prejudices; from college, university, all that knowledge is gathered in the skull. All the thoughts, all the fears are there. Is the brain different from the mind? . . . The brain will always be limited. . . . The mind has no relationship with the brain; it can communicate with the brain, but the brain cannot communicate with it. . . . This brain, which is conditioned by knowledge, by experience, by tradition, cannot have any communication with the mind which is totally outside the activity of the brain. That mind can communicate with the brain, but the brain cannot communicate with it because the brain can imagine infinitely; the brain can imagine the nameless; the brain can do anything. The mind is too immense because it doesn’t belong to you; it’s not your mind.

J. Krishnamurti

# Who Am I?

PABLO D. SENDER

*ĀTMA-VIDYĀ* is a Sanskrit word that literally means the ‘Knowledge of the Self’. This ‘knowledge’ is not intellectual; it is a direct, spiritual knowledge that has a revolutionary effect on our consciousness. An inquiry into discovering one’s real nature is a central concern for anyone whose endeavour is to become a real Theosophist.

The actual treading of the path should never be replaced by the mere study of the teachings. We must work on them and seek to verify them in our daily life, to the extent of which we are capable.

The one element in human beings that is eternal is *Ātman* — the Spirit, the real Self. This principle is not personal but universal. There is only one Spirit, which is the common source of everything in the universe.

## The Reason for Our Confusion

The very fact that we are asking the question ‘Who am I?’ indicates that we do not know our real nature. Is it not strange? To understand this we have to examine three fundamental Theosophical teachings:

*i)* The universal Self, *Ātman*, in order

to manifest itself in all cosmic planes needs vehicles of consciousness fitted to interact in each one of these realms. For example, it is obvious that in order to have to function on the physical plane the Self needs a physical body. The same applies to other planes of the cosmos. The problem is that in using these vehicles of expression the Self becomes identified with them.

*ii)* These bodies, however, are not inert, lifeless vehicles. Everything in the universe is alive and has a consciousness of its own. The Self is using ‘living entities’ as vehicles of expression. We could use an analogy and say that the Self is not driving a car but riding a horse — usually a wild one — with its own life and inclinations.

*iii)* These vehicles, although with a consciousness and life of their own are, ultimately speaking, but an expression of the Self in the different cosmic planes.

As a result of this a certain sense of *being* is present in each one of these bodies or vehicles and we naturally feel ‘I am this body, these emotions and these thoughts’. However true that may be in the field of Unity, on the manifested

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planes they are also different from the Self. In *At the Feet of the Master* it is said:

Do not mistake your bodies for yourself — neither the physical body nor the astral nor the mental. Each one of them will pretend to be the Self, in order to gain what it wants. But you must know them all, and know yourself as their master.

Examining our body we see that it is a living entity with an instinctive or elemental consciousness of its own. It has its likes and dislikes and also its own needs. It is restless or lazy, suffers from hot or cold weather, is very sensitive or dull, and so on. In the Theosophical literature this consciousness of the body is called the *physical elemental*. It is not 'we' who want to eat and drink, breathe or sleep. It is the physical elemental. Thus, we live and interact with the environment through a vehicle that has its own tendencies but, being identified with it, we say 'I can't stand this heat', 'I like this food', or 'I want to sleep'.

The same applies to our astral or emotional body. It likes certain things and rejects others. It seeks to feel different emotions because they are its very life and activity. It looks for excitement, variety, and new vibrations to experience — a constant need for new forms of stimulation, new possessions, relationships, situations, etc. Our emotions and desires are not 'us', rather, they happen in our emotional body, but we identify with them.

Our mind has also a consciousness of its own. The *mental elemental* tends to be restless to feel alive. Endless production of thoughts is its very nature and life,

hence our difficulty in concentration. It also creates certain patterns of thoughts, reactions and prejudices, and sees the world from that perspective.

In our identification with the bodies, we become their slaves. If we could only realize we are not these vehicles, we would be free to use them in the right way. But here again, who are we?

### Looking for the Permanent within Us

One thing we know is that there is in us a constant sense of identity. We feel we are the same person during our whole life. When we say 'I have changed during these years', we mean that the essence of that 'I' remains in the midst of constant changes. It is like the changes of colour, shape, temperature, etc., that any object may undergo without ceasing to be the same substance.

Our physical body changes over time. However, we recognize ourselves as being the same person during the stages of childhood, youth and adulthood. It is obvious then that our sense of identity is beyond the physical body. Otherwise it would change as the body changes.

Our emotional body is also constantly changing. We can even have opposite emotions within a very short time. The way we felt in our childhood is for the most part different from the way we feel now. In spite of all these changes there is still a sense of being the same person, which means that the sense of identity cannot be based on our emotional body.

The same can be said about our thoughts. They change continually (even though there may be some tendencies or



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habits of thought) and yet our sense of identity remains. Thus, thoughts cannot account for this constant feeling either.

However, when we examine this sense of identity, we discover that it is strongly based on our mental aspect. It is through the mind that we recognize ourselves and say 'I am me and not anybody else'. What is the element in our mind that produces our sense of identity? Memory has, undoubtedly, a lot to do with it. Memory ties all past experiences to the present, playing an important role. In fact, when a person loses his memory, he also loses his self-identity. But, even in extreme cases, there is something that still remains there: he may not know who he is, but he knows *that he is*. There is a *sense of being* that goes beyond the sense of identity.

If we go deep in our self-investigation, if we observe our mind when in silent meditation, we can discover that there is a non-conceptual knowledge or intuition, a feeling of 'I am', even when there are no thoughts or words to define it. It is an obscure, abstract, unformulated feeling that permeates the different levels of our personality and transcends them all. It is only when that pure and simple feeling of *I-am-ness* identifies with the vehicles of consciousness that it is turned into the sense of identity and we say: 'I am *so and so*'.

### Beyond the Personality

As HPB explains in *The Key to Theosophy* (ch. 2), the source of the pure sense of being transcends the personality.

It comes from what in Theosophical teachings is called the Causal body or Higher Ego, the individual Soul. HPB used the term 'Higher Ego' because this element in human beings is the source of our self-consciousness. The Higher Ego is our real Individuality, the relatively permanent principle beyond life and death, whose ray incarnates in different personalities. But this transcendental Ego is not affected by personal emotions or thoughts and is the source of all spiritual aspiration in the personality. We can say therefore that this is a link between our personality and the higher principles in us.

We have to bear in mind, however, that the Higher Ego is not the highest principle in human beings, the Spirit or Ātman which, being but a ray of the Absolute, is beyond any sense of 'I'. The Higher Ego is in a process of evolution to merge with the spiritual nature, thus becoming a Spiritual Ego, self-conscious and yet one with all. How can we, then, conceive Ātman? In the *Mahatma Letters* (No. 44) we read:

Spirit or LIFE is indivisible. And when we speak of the seventh principle it is neither quality nor quantity nor yet form that are meant, but rather the *space* occupied in that *ocean* of spirit.

This concept can also be found in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* where HPB explains that the only mental formulation we can have about the highest reality in the universe, the Absolute, is that of being Space.

Space has no real boundaries. We

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create limits when we identify ourselves with the personality, but those limits expand as we become less self-centred and integrate others in our consciousness. The mystic realizes that everything is within him and he is in everything. In that process of ever-increasing expansion, the day will come when the One Universal Self is realized, and it is then that we will know our real nature. The first stage is to cease our identification with the personality and to unite our consciousness with the Higher Ego.

### The Practice

Mahatma KH said (*ML*, No. 12):

The truths and mysteries of occultism constitute, indeed, a body of the highest spiritual importance, at once profound and practical for the world at large.

How are we going to proceed to break this identification with the personality? They are ultimately based on two elements that have their origin beyond the personality and yet are within our reach: the pure sense of *I-am-ness*, and the sense of *space*.

While engaged in our daily activities we should stay with this pure, non-conceptual sense of *I-am-ness* as frequently as possible. We are not referring to the sense of 'I am the one who acts, feels and thinks' because in that case we feel 'I am the producer of thoughts, emotions and actions', because the one who acts is the personality, the aggregation of elemental consciousnesses. It is only when we cease identifying with the doer that the pure sense of *I-am-ness* shines. We must

develop an attitude of being the witness of the action to develop a silent, passive awareness of everything that happens, inwardly and outwardly. It is not that we do not have to act; we cannot act. We, as pure consciousness, can only be aware. When facing any situation, *let* the personality ponder, look for the best response, and choose, act or restrain according to the highest good it can perceive. But do not be confused by assuming that all that is being done by you. You are only the awareness that embraces both the doer and the doing.

This attitude can be developed with the help of some meditative practices and the effort to apply them to daily life.

#### *i) Abiding in the simple and pure sense of I-am-ness*

Nisargadatta Maharaj used to say: 'All you have to do is to hold on to *I am*.' In this approach to meditation we do not have to *do* anything but to sit and *be*. We just sit completely relaxed — physically, emotionally and mentally, and rest — aware in that sense of being, of existing. The difficulty we may find in this approach is that we may be distracted by the movement of thoughts and feelings and soon be completely engaged either in the distraction or in a struggle trying to control the thoughts. When this happens just notice the distraction and come back to that pure sense of *I-am-ness*, gently, naturally, without struggle. It is an exercise of letting go of distractions, and the 'effort' is made to remain aware in the original nature of the undistracted mind.

Now, for those 'addicted to thinking',

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as Ramana Maharshi would say, there is an alternative approach that is more active, but eventually leads to the same state. He recommended the use of the question 'Who am I?' as the seed of inquiry:

When thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire: 'To whom do they arise?' . . . The answer that would emerge would be 'To me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?', the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent. With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the skill to stay in its source.

Here we are using thought to transcend thought since, according to Ramana Maharshi, the question of 'Who Am I?' will itself get destroyed in the end along with all other thoughts (See *Who Am I*).

### ii) *The sense of being Space*

The goal of this technique is not to silence the mind, to manipulate, or to control thoughts and emotions. After all, the one that controls is just another thought, and our real nature is beyond thought. We sit and let the emotions and thoughts rise and fall by themselves while we are merely aware of them. Some meditative practices that work in this way are the Tibetan Buddhist Mahamudrā and Dzogchen, and the approach of J. Krishnamurti.

There seem to be two subtly different ways of positioning our mind here. We can either feel we are the space *beyond* any psychological movement, i.e., our presence *transcends* it; or we can feel there is nothing but this psychological

movement and therefore our presence or awareness is *within* it, i.e., it is immanent. These two options may be related to Mme Blavatsky's statement in her *Diagram of Meditation*:

First conceive of UNITY by Expansion in Space and infinite in Time. (Either with or without self-identification.)

We have to remember that the concept of *Space* in Theosophy is not one of empty space, but one that contains everything.

a) Transcendence: In this approach we shift our identification with the psychophysical activities to a state of witnessing *all* that happens, without choosing any feeling or thought in particular. We observe how every action is performed within the field of consciousness, and establish ourselves as being the space that embraces them rather than as the content of our consciousness. There is not the feeling of 'I think, I feel, I want, I wish' but a sense of 'There are thoughts, feelings, desires, etc., moving in the field of consciousness'. We watch the movement of our psyche as we watch a river flowing or the clouds moving in the sky — detached. The movement is independent of us. We just witness it. We also find this concept in the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tsu:

Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind become still. The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their movement.

b) Immanence: Here one begins almost in a state of non-duality. 'The first step is the last step', as Krishnamurti said. There

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is no difference between the meditator, or enquirer, or witness, and the contents of his consciousness. The observer is the observed. In this approach there is not even the attempt of 'positioning' our consciousness in any particular way, because the very attempt is done by a psychological entity which is separating itself from the rest of the psychological movement. There is only pure non-dual, non-self-conscious awareness. When that state happens there is spontaneous integration within the consciousness. We are one with thoughts, emotions, and the whole field and space of consciousness. It is said in the *Mahatma Letters* (No. 69) that this is a spiritual state where real knowledge may come:

The Real Knowledge here spoken of is not a mental but a spiritual state, implying full union between the Knower and the Known.

The difficulty in this approach is that we cannot access that non-dual state through any effort of our will, which works within the dual consciousness. The very attempt to do something (even the 'attempt' to be aware) introduces duality. So, how is that state to come into

being? The way seems to be a negative one. It is not that we have to do something but we have to stop doing. That non-doing, however, cannot be merely inaction. Most people do not try to meditate and yet, this spontaneous state of integration does not happen. The stopping of the effort must come by transcending effort, that is, through the *realization* that any attempt on our part is introducing duality and is therefore useless for our present purpose.

Practically speaking, we could start by making an intelligent effort to deal with whatever psychological movement is present, introducing duality. We should examine it, question it, be aware of it, and at the same time, be aware of the one that is making the effort. Eventually we realize, we actually see as an experience (not as a concept read somewhere), that the very effort gives birth to the psychological entity, the 'I', that introduces duality. We then see that there is only psychological activity. The observer is not different from the observed. When we realize this there is a spontaneous 'dropping' of any effort and the consequent cessation of duality. This 'uncaused' insight, in which duality vanishes, has a transformative quality. ✧

**The Self being all-extensive there can be no fixed spot for its solitary state:  
however to be still is to remain solitary.**

Śri Ramana Maharshi

## THE 134<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The 134th International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, from 26 to 31 December 2009.

All members of the Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates. *Non-members may attend by obtaining permission from the President. Requests for such permission, together with a recommendation from an officer of the Federation, should be sent to the Convention Officer before 15 November 2009.*

REGISTRATION FEES	<i>India</i>	<i>Other Countries</i>
Members	Rs 50	US\$ 30 *
Members under 21	20	”
Non-members	100	”
Non-members under 21	60	”

### ACCOMMODATION CHARGES (SHARING)

(From 24 December 2009

to 1 January 2010 inclusive)

	<i>India (Members)</i>	<i>India (Non-members)</i>	<i>Other Countries (Members)</i>
Accommodation with mat	Rs 80	Rs 160	N.A.
Accommodation with cot	150	300	N.A.
Leadbeater Chambers (including service, furniture, and bedding, but no blankets)	2,000	3,000	US\$ 100 *

(Half rates will be charged for children under ten. No charge for children under three.)

\* (or Euro or Pound Sterling equivalent)

### ACCOMMODATION

Factors considered in allocating accommodation are active membership, health, age, priority of registration, size of family, etc. Rooms and bathrooms cannot be made available for anyone's exclusive use. Non-members and young persons should be prepared to stay in dormitories. No special facilities can be provided for members who are ill or for women with babies. Mosquito nets and bedding will not be available. No kitchens are available. Ordinary medical attention will be available for minor complaints but there will be no provision for serious or infectious illness. Such cases will have to be shifted from the compound.

Accommodation is available for delegates from 24 December 2009 to 1 January 2010, both days inclusive, but can be guaranteed only to those whose registration and accommodation payments are received *before 1 December 2009*. Delegates from India requiring accommodation should send *both the registration and accommodation charges together, but not before 1 September 2009*.

Please note that in the event of cancellation there will be no refund of registration fees, but other charges will be refunded if application is received *before 10 December 2009*.

All communications and remittances should be addressed to the Convention Officer, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020. Remittance by bank drafts, duly crossed, should be made *payable to the Treasurer, The Theosophical Society, but sent to the Convention Officer*. Money Orders should be sent only to the Convention Officer. No cheques other than those drawn in Chennai will be accepted.

Mrs KUSUM SATAPATHY  
*International Secretary*

# Theosophical Work around the World

## **2010 World Congress at Rome**

The next World Congress of the Society will be held from 10 to 15 July 2010 in Rome. Its theme will be 'Universal Brotherhood without Distinctions — Road to Awareness'. The Italian Section is preparing to host the Congress. The venue will be the Summit Roma Hotel which is comfortable and spacious. Registration forms will be sent out by the Italian Section within the next few months. The Section also intends later this year to send a poster, logo, and information about the Congress to the various countries around the world; members are encouraged to meet with brother and sister Theosophists from many countries. Preliminary enquiries regarding attendance may be sent to Mr Antonio Girardi, General Secretary of the Italian Section: [sti@teosofica.org](mailto:sti@teosofica.org).

## **Visits of Vice-President**

The Vice-President, Mrs Linda Oliveira, accompanied by Mr Pedro Oliveira, who was formerly the International Secretary, travelled to a number of countries in Europe during June and July. In Slovenia, Mrs Oliveira gave talks to both members and the public and visited several Lodges. She led classes at the Slovenian Summer School based on writings of Mr N. Sri Ram. The School had as its theme 'The Way of Wisdom'. While staying at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden she was

invited by Mrs Wies Kuiper, the General Secretary of the TS in the Netherlands, to visit the TS Headquarters in Amsterdam where she was warmly welcomed. In Rome, she had detailed preliminary discussions with Mr Antonio Girardi, the General Secretary of the Italian Section, and Mrs Patrizia Calvi, his assistant, regarding the coming World Congress. Mrs Oliveira gave talks in Athens, and was interviewed by a Greek national metaphysical magazine. Mr Pedro Oliveira gave a number of talks in all the places they visited.

## **Brazil**

The first Portuguese-Spanish Theosophical Gathering was held at the Theosophical Institute near Brasilia, 15–19 July 2009. Over 200 members participated, fifty of them being from overseas, including Colombia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba, Honduras, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Spain and Greece. The theme was 'Theosophy in the Twenty-first Century'.

Each day a particular theme was selected which was explored through relevant questions by several working groups. The themes and some of their accompanying questions were: 'The TS and Spiritual Living' (What is the importance of such a living in theosophical work?); 'The TS and its Members' (Theosophy for Theosophists or for the world?)



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What is the significance of the phrase 'to be prepared?'); 'The TS and Mass Communication Media' ('Are the present methods of dissemination adequate for making Theosophy more widely known? What are our ideas about the Internet? Should the language of our publicity leaflets change?); 'The TS and its work in the world' (Should the TS work change? Do lectures, courses and seminars continue to be useful? Why few young people come to the TS?). There was also an exhibition of a number of Section magazines, publicity leaflets, web sites, blogs, new publications, study courses, etc.

In her message to the event, the International President, Mrs Radha Burnier, wrote: 'The world is in a state of crisis caused by man's lack of understanding of certain fundamental truths and principles. The most important of these truths is that of unity. All living beings are part of the Divine Existence and the well-being of every creature is linked to the well-being of all others. The Theosophical Society as a whole, and every one of its branches is meant to proclaim this fundamental truth and the other truths and principles which are realized when unity is known to underlie all existence. May the Theosophical Society in Latin America continue to be a flaming centre where members gather and

learn to live in brotherhood as a result of deeper glimpses into the unity of existence, lessening thereby the prevalent confusion and chaos which has been detrimental to all living creatures.'

### **New Secretary — Mrs Kusum Satapathy**

Following the unexpected passing to the higher life of Dr C. V. Agarwal, Mrs Kusum Satapathy was appointed as International Secretary of the TS. She joined the Society as a young teenager and soon after that began reading a number of Theosophical books. She is a third generation Theosophist. Her grandfather had joined the Society after hearing Dr Besant speak in Allahabad. Her father, Mr S. S. Varma, after his retirement from the Central Government service, worked at Adyar for several years, as Assistant Treasurer and as head of the Archives. He was also Deputy to the President on several occasions. Mrs Satapathy was greatly benefited in her Theosophical studies by frequent discussions with her father. She has worked for many years in the Customs and Central Excise Department, Government of India, and together with her family, she has visited and stayed at Adyar many times. She is a member of Mayfair Lodge, Kolkata, and has also helped in TOS activities in that city. ✧

**To help but to be unconscious of helping, not to know that one is blessing, but to convey the fullness of every possible blessing — is that not the marvel which takes place when a person is truly and altogether kind and helpful?**

*(Source Unknown)*