



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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**The Theosophical Society** is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

**Theosophy** is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

# On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

## **Māyā Everywhere**

The spider's web has a pattern to its construction but not a given shape. It attracts most people because it is not fixed. We have seen that beauty is not a quality which belongs to any particular material, design, function, and so forth. If one looks carefully, without previous ideas interfering, beauty is everywhere, in everything. Man can interfere and make something beautiful for his own eyes. But this is not actually the beautiful miracle of loveliness that we see if sight is pure. Every insect, mineral, plant, the sky and waters are such miracles of loveliness. This is made obvious in the spider's web, which has been used to demonstrate all of nature, including human beings. They are part of one great miracle. Beauty in shapes, in colours, sound, and everything else that is seen or known through the senses, are part of the one Beauty. Beauty is also in function, in mutual relationships. It comes through in growth, birth and death. J. Krishnamurti had, as usual, a special way of pointing this out:

You saw a dead leaf, yellow and bright red, a leaf from autumn. How beautiful the leaf was, so simple in its depth, so lively, full of the beauty and vitality of the whole tree and the summer.

More than anything else beauty is hidden significance, a mysterious thing in Nature which adorns it. Thomas à Kempis says: 'There is no creature so small and abject that it represents not the goodness of God', because beauty is of the very nature of life; it inheres in the source of life. This is so, whether a person denies it or not.

Human beings are part of this world. But mostly they do not believe in this; to them the world includes only what they discover, what they create — the ugliness which one can see everywhere, that man takes a hand in creating. The urbanization of the world does not help to get nearer to knowing the reality. Nature is of course far away because we are all the time far away in the atmosphere of the city. The population of the world by human beings, with its poverty, ignorance, conditioning and self-centredness is also the 'reality' for keeping those who are ambitious and greedy in the struggle, with the attendant cruelty, anxiety, etc., which the game played according to artificial rules breeds.

The more intensely the game is played, the less a person sees the ugliness of society, as well as the beauty in creation. The loveliness of forest and lake, insect and birds is far from such persons because

of their own false pursuits and aims. Their own occupation and ideas mislead their minds just as heavy clouds shut out and block the sunshine. How do we penetrate and rise above the world of *māyā*?

The very word *māyā*, which is often translated as 'illusion', makes us think of what is sane and true. This is perhaps the reason why man has to come to the point of questioning whatever he sees. What is true? It means that we have to *see* what is logical. The truth is what actually exists, not what a thousand people, or even ten thousand, think of as non-existent. So, that which is sane is what we have to discover, even though everything that we do may appear to be part of an existent world. But it is all *māyā*, temporarily part of a passing world.

### Never do Harm

We are usually interested in our own images, which we think represent the truth, things as they are. We can see that people are in varying circumstances, and each one thinks that he sees the truth. We are so much used to this that we do not regard it as strange at all. We think it is normal.

Nature's plans may be very different from what man thinks. We human beings live in a state of illusion (*māyā*), which we imagine is the same as reality, but it is very different. Animals for instance do what nature tells them to, otherwise they keep quiet. But when man takes a hand in shaping the world as a whole, he makes the world of animal life into what it is not.

A scientist in Oxford University has

written about evolution in which he points out that evolution is one process although many species are involved in it. But they all bring about growth which takes shape as we proceed from vegetable to animal and then to human existence. We do not know that the animals we despise and kill, the creatures we ill treat, are all part of one process, which includes our own evolution. If we understood this, the world would be different. We would then see that the creatures we think of as lower or despicable are not really like that. In fact, our treatment makes a lot of difference to their growth as it does to ours.

In our tradition the best people know that this is so and therefore their treatment of all that we think is lower has a very precious and beautiful role to play. Some of our tradition points to this. I was told when visiting Central India that there was a hermit who felt at home passing through forests and lonely places. Some people he was acquainted with knew him because his behaviour elicited great respect. He would pass through the jungles in his area without fear or the feeling that wild creatures could attack him. He slept in caves, sometimes very near what are known as dangerous animals and nothing happened to him. He knew, and the animals round about, dangerous or otherwise, also knew he was one of them. They would not think of hurting him because he was a holy man.

It is also said that Razia, a Muslim saint, sat in lonely places, and animals and other creatures liked to be near her for their own reasons. Perhaps they knew that

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she was a saintly person and did her no harm. One day, a visitor, who did not understand, came to see her, and all these creatures ran away out of fear. He expressed his astonishment that they were all there, surrounding her in tranquillity and affection, but he could not understand why they ran away when he came. She told him that it was because they knew that he was afraid, ready to injure them, looked down upon some of them, etc. He could not understand that they were her brothers and sisters; they were animals but knew more than he did and would not hurt her, so they stayed.

It is said that some animals help weaker beings when needed. *The Guardian* magazine had a picture of a very large monkey with a little kitten which it was looking after like a mother. This was the attitude that many animals had until man began to harm them — as a sport, unnecessarily destroying them — which they do even now when they are taken to be slaughtered as prey and eaten. This behaviour has spoiled our entire relationship with creatures of a different kind.

Many examples can be given about man's attitude in the present day. He is destroying animals, vegetation, birds and so on, according to his convenience and pleasure. So the world has become different.

How different was the attitude of Chief Seattle! He said to an audience of Western people some beautiful things. One of the things he spoke about was the relationships he and his people, that is the human beings he knew, had for animals and

other living creatures. He said that they were his brothers and sisters. They killed them only when necessary for food, otherwise they looked after them. They never did harm to them or considered them as their enemies.

So there was a kind of unity even when there was some killing, which was inevitable in those days when the world was different. It is now our duty to change our lives again, to be guardians of the varied life in the world; not kill for any or no reason at all. Today huge numbers of animals are killed in slaughterhouses and then people use or throw away what they cannot use. We will not go into the many forms of injury to other creatures that the human being does. But this attitude must change.

There are quite a few persons, especially in America, who refrain from killing, because they think the kind of slaughter and injury that is being done today is going to bring untold miseries. That is true and the more deeply we realize it, even when we believe in harmlessness (*ahimsā*), the better it will be. *Ahimsā* is one of the marks of a human being who will not do harm and we must belong to that category until the world changes its direction.

### Relation to Lower Kingdoms

C. W. Leadbeater has written about our duty towards animals . . .

No one is obliged to keep a dog or a cat, but if he does so he incurs a much greater responsibility towards that animal than the farmer has towards any member of his flock. It would be unpardonable

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selfishness for anyone who keeps such an animal to think only of his own pleasure in connection with it, and not of the animal's development.

The domestic animal is in fact a kind of younger child — with this difference, that whereas the child is already an ego and has to be helped to control his new vehicles, the animal is not yet a separate ego and has to be helped to become one. The process of the individualization of an animal has been often described; notes upon it may be found in *A Textbook of Theosophy*, *The Inner Life*, *Man Visible and Invisible* and *The Christian Creed*. A perusal of what is there written will show at once along what line our duties to the animals lie. We must endeavour to develop their affection and their intellect, and the principal factor in both those developments is the affection which we feel for them.

I have written at considerable length, in *The Inner Life*, vol. ii, upon mistakes which are frequently made by men in their relation to domestic animals. All those mistakes are due to a selfish attitude with

regard to the animal, an endeavour to employ him for the gratification of our own evil passions — as, for example, when a dog is trained to hunt, and made in that way to do vastly more harm than his forefathers ever did as wild beasts in the jungle. For the wild beast kills only for food, when impelled to do so by hunger; but the dog is trained to kill for the pleasure of killing, and is thereby degraded in the scale of evolution instead of being raised.

C. W. Leadbeater understood it seems something of man's 'long' journey to perfection and he has written a great deal about it. We may conclude by a few words which he said:

When once we realize that what we commonly call our life is only one day in the real life, and that we may have just as many of such days as are necessary for our development, we see that the command of Christ, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect' is no vain hyperbole, but a plain direction which we may reasonably expect to be able in due time to obey.

**I believe all suffering is caused by ignorance. People inflict pain on others in the selfish pursuit of their happiness or satisfaction. Yet true happiness comes from a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. We need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and the planet we share.**

Dalai Lama

# Mind Management

V. V. CHALAM

*THE Voice of the Silence* declares: ‘The mind is the great slayer of the Real . . . slay the slayer.’ We have to annihilate the mind. We have to silence the mind. We have to empty the mind. We have to go beyond the mind.

In the *Yoga Vāsishtha*, the sage Vasishtha also advocates *mano-nāśa* or ‘destroying the mind’. Vasishtha also says: ‘An unrestrained mind alone is the cause of degeneration, while a controlled mind causes progress.’ We have, therefore, to rein in the mind. The mind has to attain to ‘no-mindedness’ or *amani-bhāva*. Only then can we have the peace and harmony that we seek. Mind-management is, therefore, of the utmost importance for spiritual growth.

The Buddha taught us how to still the mind, to stop it from making attachments and discriminations and feelings of aversion. When this state of calmness is attained, the darkness of ignorance will be dispelled and the mind can see the underlying unity. The core of Buddha’s teaching is self-development and self-purification leading to self-realization.

In *At the Feet of the Master*, it is said: ‘You are not this mind; but it is yours to

use. . . . You must watch unceasingly, or you will fail.’ We should, therefore, guard the mind. There is need, therefore, for self-scrutiny and self-awareness for managing the mind. Only then can we gain mastery over the mind.

We have to scrutinize the mind all the time and understand how it works. The mind is invisible; it is intangible. It is outside the realm of the physical world. It is not something which can be put to any scientific test.

It is said that if the mind is comprehended, all things are comprehended. The Buddha said: ‘Mind precedes all phenomena. Mind masters most. Everything is mind-made.’ We should, therefore, turn inward into the deepest recesses of our minds. All human problems are mind-based. Only the quiet and silent mind can realize that happiness is not in external things, but in our own selves. We do not look within. We rarely examine thoughts, words and actions. By self-examination, we gain insight into our own nature. This demands sustained effort.

The mind is disoriented because it is drawn constantly by many forces. One should explore one’s condition

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objectively, detachedly and dispassionately. Meditation opens the way for the resolution of the most complex human problems. Psychological toxins are flushed out. This cannot be done by intellectual gymnastics, emotional stimulations or religious dramas. We have to educate the mind to a new perception, with patience and alertness.

The mind is restless because of the presence of many impurities. The Buddha declared: 'I know not any single thing that brings such misery as the mind uncontrolled, unguarded and unrestrained.'

The root causes for mental defilement are: craving, hatred and delusion. To be liberated, one has to totally eradicate these impurities. The mind of such a person is not troubled by the ups and downs of life. The Buddha said: 'Happiness results from acting with a pure mind. Suffering is caused by acting with an impure mind.' By handling the mind in the right way, we can find effective cures for all human ills. Mind-management is, therefore, an urgent need.

In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Arjuna comments: 'The mind is restless, turbulent, powerful and obstinate. To control the mind is as hard as to control the wind.' Kṛṣṇa replies: 'Undoubtedly the mind is restless and hard to control. But by sustained practice (*abhyāsa*) and detachment (*vairāgya*), the mind can be controlled.'

The same is said by Patañjali: 'There is no other way of controlling the mind except through systematic and persisting practice and dispassion.'

When the mind is purified and

balanced, we can see into the deepest depths of ourselves. We should be ceaselessly watchful and have strong will power to purify the mind.

If the mind is filled with evil thoughts, then Patañjali advises filling the mind with opposite thoughts. If we have anger arising in the mind, we can counteract it by a strong wave of love. This contrary wave of love should be generated at the very instant when anger is just rising, even before anger becomes powerful and hurts oneself and others. We should, therefore, keep an eye on the mind always. We should be unceasingly vigilant.

One should develop constant mindfulness. Krishnaji asks us to have a state of mind which 'looks at everything with complete attention, totally'.

This is constant awareness or mindfulness. The Buddha said that the 'fire of mindfulness' destroys all fetters. Krishnaji says that the 'flame of attention' burns away all impurities.

Mindfulness means to be on one's guard, to be awake and never to be taken by surprise. If one is mindful, one can change each thought, each action, each word. When the mind is protected by mindfulness all the time, then external things do not disturb the mind.

The Buddha advises that the only way to conquer the impurities of the mind is to go on examining the contents of the mind again and again, so that evil tendencies are rooted out and only the good intentions are allowed to flourish in the mind.

Mindfulness is the guard that protects

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the mind from all negativities. If there is no mindfulness and awareness, then the mind gets agitated, resulting in acts that hurt oneself and others. When the mind is protected by mindfulness all the time, then external senses do not disturb the tranquillity of the mind. This leads to a further perfecting of moral practices, thus generating higher spiritual qualities. Mindfulness, and looking inward, are the essence of spirituality. Āchārya Śāntideva of the eleventh century asks: 'Except for the conduct of guarding the mind, where is the need of many conducts?' A Tibetan Master said: 'I have no other practice except standing at the approach point of trouble-makers, waiting for them with a spear of antidote.'

All the impurities of the mind must be understood by awareness, directly, completely, and as a witness. By constant awareness, we can also get rid of bad habits. However, we must realize that whatever impurity we want to vanish will try to 'fight' to survive in the mind. So, we have to patiently, and perseveringly kindle the light of mindfulness again and again until we are able to get rid of that defilement. Awareness or mindfulness is our only strength.

A story always cited as an example of constant mindfulness may be retold: A meditation teacher was invited by a family to their house for a day-long recitation of scriptures. At some point of time, the family members went out of the house for some work, leaving the teacher alone in the house. Suddenly, he had a craving for some sweet. Looking around,

he found none in his part of the house, so he walked into the kitchen and found a container full of sweets. He decided to take one sweet. As soon as he put his hand into the container, his mindfulness came into play. He became aware of this act of stealing and started shouting, 'Thief! Thief!' Just then, the family members walked in, and they were surprised to find him holding his own hand and shouting: 'I have caught the culprit.' Here is, therefore, an example of awareness and self-restraint. He 'caught the thief' because he was displaying constant watchfulness and mindfulness, which are really prerequisites to master the mind, that it may not indulge in wrong things; and if there is the slightest deviation from the right path, there is an instantaneous correction and the mind is restored to a wholesome state of peace and harmony. This is *adhyātma vidyā* or 'inner science' which helps us to maintain calm and serenity by overcoming all negativities instantaneously.

Purification of the mind must take place in the entire mind. The mind operates at three stages according to modern psychologists:

1. The Conscious mind
2. The Unconscious mind, and
3. The Super-conscious mind

These are not three different minds, but refer to only one mind. Normally, we are aware only of the conscious mind. The unconscious mind lies just under the conscious mind, like an iceberg in the sea. Only a small portion of the iceberg is seen above the water level. The portion

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submerged in the water is a very large part. What is seen above the water level is the 'conscious mind'. That large portion hidden under the water is the 'unconscious mind'. It is a very powerful and important part. The 'super-conscious mind' lies above the 'conscious' and 'unconscious' levels. When the mind rises above the conscious and unconscious levels, it reaches the 'super-conscious' stage.

Even though many things happen as per the dictates of the 'unconscious' mind, we are not aware of this mind. When we are sleeping, we may drive away a mosquito on the basis of the decision of the 'unconscious' mind; the 'conscious' mind does not know of this at all.

The unconscious mind is filled with *samskāra-s* (impressions) of very many earlier incarnations. Many desires also are hidden in it. When a chance arises, old *samskāra-s* and hidden desires suddenly manifest themselves. The conscious mind is totally unable to think or act. That is why purification of the mind must take place at the unconscious level. If we limit it only to the conscious level, it will not be of much benefit. The hidden *samskāra-s* are to be handled for proper purification of the mind. So, our effort must be to reach the depths of the unconscious mind. We must adopt that meditation technique which takes us to these deep levels where lie layers of impurities. Some meditation methodologies work only at the surface level and purification of the mind does not take place, even though there may be some peace and calm.

The unconscious mind is like the basement in the house. All the old and unwanted articles are filled in the basement over a long length of time. There must be cleaning up of all the undesirable stuff, if the basement is to be made liveable. Similarly, the unconscious mind must be cleaned up. Choiceless awareness, as advocated by Krishnaji, can help.

All defilements must be uprooted and destroyed thoroughly. Only then will the mind be purified and we can have mastery over it. One way of cleaning up is to fill the mind with sublime ideas and holy thoughts. One of the early pioneers in the study of human consciousness was F.W.H. Myers. He once said that the unconscious mind is 'not only a rubbish heap, but also a gold mine'.

The unconscious is, of course, a source of unwanted symptoms and hard-to-break habits. But it is also the source of insight, creative genius and spiritual impulses which enrich our lives. We should, therefore, learn to control and draw from the unconscious. Whenever we desire, by our self-effort, faith and strong resolve, we can awaken all the hidden powers, by breaking down the barrier between the conscious and unconscious mind. We should, therefore, understand the total mind and not just parts.

Those who have gained mastery over the conscious and unconscious mind can reach the super-conscious state. The super-conscious state is the purest state and is in communion with the Ātman.

The super-consciousness is our true state of being. From a super-conscious

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perspective, all life is unity. To live super-consciously is to maximize our abilities in all aspects of life. The super-conscious has a broader, more intuitive view. Intuition is rooted in the super-conscious. There is a flow of a higher wisdom. One can act with this inner guidance. There is greater clarity, also.

By relentless effort, the mind can be elevated to this lofty and pure state. At this stage, man becomes divine. Meditation is the only way to reach

this stage. Meditation silences the mind. Meditation leads to inner purification and one can discover one's true state of *Ātmānanda* or real joy, which is within ourselves and we experience it by deep meditation.

All we need is a deep desire to transform ourselves and be open to the light of wisdom or *prajñā*. A silent transformation takes place. As meditation deepens, one experiences bliss, and one has glimpses of enlightenment. ✧

**In spring, hundreds of flowers;  
in autumn, a harvest moon;  
In summer, a refreshing breeze;  
in winter, snow will accompany you.  
If useless things do not hang in your mind,  
Any season is a good season for you.**

Anonymous

# The Dharma or the True Work of Man

MARY ANDERSON

ACCORDING to *The Theosophical Encyclopaedia*, Dharma is, in the first place, ‘in Hindu social theory . . . that which upholds society, i.e., what the West would consider the social and moral law’.

As far as I know, in traditional Indian society dharma was associated with the caste system. The dharma of the Brāhmana or priestly caste was to study and to teach. The dharma of the Kshatriya or the ruler caste was to rule and, if necessary, to fight to defend one’s subjects. The dharma of the Vaiśya or merchant class was to do business. And the dharma of the Śudra or servile caste was to farm and to work as labourers.

I think that the establishment of these castes may have been appropriate if at some time in the distant past people had actually been born into the caste that suited their stage in development. But this was certainly, in the course of time, no longer the case. Many Brāhmana-s neglected their duties; young Brāhmana-s, being educated abroad, often ceased to be vegetarians, etc. And many belonging by birth

to the Śudra caste and therefore poor, have nevertheless been enabled to attend university and become eminent scholars.

This would apply to the history of India. But the article in *The Theosophical Encyclopaedia* continues to point out the Theosophical interpretation of Dharma as follows:

Theosophists tend to use the term in its social or moral sense, although often giving it a more extensive interpretation: what one ought to do in any specific situation, given one’s present state of evolution and the obligations one has to one’s family and associates as well as to the . . . neighbourhood, city, state or nation.

Before we turn to the dharma or true work of man in this sense, let us consider what man is. This is a subject which concerns us deeply. Whether we realize it or not, we are most interested in ourselves. This is natural and it is right, but not in a selfish sense. The Delphic oracle commanded: ‘Man, know thyself.’ Pope wrote: ‘The proper study of mankind is man.’

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**Miss Mary Anderson** is a former international Vice-President of the Theosophical Society and has lectured widely in several languages.

## The Dharma or the True Work of Man

This is not an easy study, for in a sense we are standing in our own light. Man is an integral part of the universe. Thus he is divine. But he is conscious in a physical body. This is true of other beings also. But man is able to think (even if he does not always do so). And he is self-conscious, that is, he is aware of himself. Thus he is conscious of his body at the physical level. He is able to feel and to think. And at the deepest level of his nature, he is a divine being. Annie Besant stated that where subtlest spirit and coarsest matter meet, there mind arises, and mind is the mark of man. But man is contradictory. On the one hand, he may be a genius, he may be capable of heroic deeds, of self-sacrifice. On the other hand, he may be selfish, brutal, cowardly. Sometimes these traits appear in the same person, because man is pulled in two directions, by the spiritual and the materialistic aspects of his nature and because he is ultimately a free agent.

Mme Blavatsky speaks of:

Man, the culmination of the deity on Earth, whose body is the cross of flesh, on, through and in which he is ever crucifying and putting to death the divine Logos of his *Higher Self*. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. 36)

Thus man is a contradictory being, an unsatisfied and often an unhappy being. He is incomplete. According to Mme Blavatsky not all his brain cells are active. His consciousness is active above all at the physical, the emotional and the mental levels.

This is man as known to science and psychology. Science works from the body inwards and has the mind–body problem. The spiritual or Theosophical view of man works from what is within to what is without. Intelligence came first! Man is above all a spiritual being. But his spiritual nature is as yet not fully developed. To quote again, Mme Blavatsky:

It is not in the course of natural law that man should become a perfect septenary being before the 7th Race in the 7th Round. Yet he has all these principles latent in him from his birth. (*Abridgement of the Secret Doctrine*, edited by Elizabeth Preston and Christmas Humphreys, p. 190)

The internal struggle in humanity is also explained by the fact that man has three elements in his nature: the body, the spirit and the mind, which is the link between body and spirit. Mme Blavatsky speaks of three streams of evolution in man:

There exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme or rather *three separate streams of evolution*, which in our system are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point.

These are the *Monadical* (or spiritual), the *Intellectual* and the *Physical* Evolutions. Each of these has its *own laws*, and is ruled and guided by different sets of the highest Dhyani-s or Logoi. Each is represented in the constitution of man, the Microcosm of the great Macrocosm, and it is the *union* of these three streams in him which makes him the *complex* being he now is. (idem., p. 86)

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So man is a trinity, one of innumerable trinities in Nature. He is the scene of a struggle between his bodily needs, his psychological and psychic wants, his mental reasoning and his spiritual will.

To attempt to understand man, we must look at his past. In the infinitely distant past, in previous chains, many, many millennia ago, man — each of us — evolved through the other kingdoms of Nature and we retain perhaps certain skills from that distant past. To our sojourn in the mineral kingdom we owe the characteristics of our physical body; from our experience in the plant kingdom we inherit our sensitivity, our feelings. To our lives in the animal kingdom we owe the foundations of our thinking process.

The knowledge of what we owe to our lives in those kingdoms of Nature should give us understanding and sympathy for the beings who are now at those stages through which we ourselves have passed, just as parents should and mostly do feel and express sympathy with the next generation, their children, who are going through the process of growing up and as teachers should and often do, out of past experience, feel sympathy and understanding for their pupils.

This is certainly part of the Dharma of man. How often — alas! — is that Dharma, that duty, towards our younger brethren in the other kingdoms of Nature neglected or we fulfil it in a one-sided way. The sculptor may care above all for the material with which he works, but may have less concern for plants or animals

— or humans. The gardener may care for plants and have less concern for minerals and animals — or humans. The animal-lover may care above all for animals and much less for minerals, plants — or humans.

As Theosophists, aware of our own past, though mostly not consciously and not in detail, we should feel sympathy for the kingdoms of Nature to which we have also belonged or the life which is now us that has belonged in the distant past:

I died as a mineral  
And was born a plant  
I died as a plant  
And was born an animal  
I died as an animal  
And was born a man

In a certain sense, we owe our physical bodies to our past in the mineral kingdom; we owe our feelings, or sensitivity, to our past in the plant kingdom; and we owe the foundations of our thought to our past in the animal kingdom. And now we belong to the human kingdom and must add to our experience and what we have learned in the distant past the lessons we can learn as human beings.

We have a debt to pay not only to Nature in the sense of the mineral, the plant and the animal kingdoms but also to our fellow human beings. We owe debts of gratitude to those of our fellowmen whom we do not meet for the first time in this life, but whom we have known in past lives. Our past acquaintances may arouse pleasant or unpleasant feelings in us and may even awaken happy or unhappy memories and joy or suffering.

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For both we should be grateful, for the Law of Karma is infinitely merciful. Its effects may be painful, but they are just and they are instructive. Karma is a just judge and Karma is above all a teacher. Part of the dharma of man is the acceptance of the blows of fate in the spirit of the learner. Man has a dharma or, we might say, a duty towards himself as a spiritual being.

The Cosmos and Man as humanity and as the individual human being have often been compared to a lotus plant. Mme Blavatsky writes (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 57–8):

One of the symbolical figures for the Dual creative power in Nature . . . is *Padma*, the water lily of India. The Lotus is the product of heat (fire) and water (vapour or Ether); fire standing in every philosophical and religious system as a representation of the Spirit of Deity, the active, male, generative principle; and Ether, or the soul of matter, the light of the fire, for the passive female principle from which everything in this Universe emanated. Hence, Ether or Water is the Mother, and Fire is the Father. Sir W. Jones (and before him archaic botany) showed that the seeds of the Lotus contain — even before they germinate — perfectly formed leaves, the miniature shape of what one day, as perfect plants, they will become; nature thus giving us a specimen of the *preformation* of its production . . . the seed of all *phanerogamous* plants bearing *proper* flowers containing an *embryo plantlet ready formed*. . . .

The Lotus, or Padma, is, moreover, a very ancient and favourite simile for the Cosmos itself and also for man. The popular reasons given are, firstly . . . that the Lotus seed contains within itself a perfect miniature of the future plant, which typifies the fact that the spiritual prototypes of all things exist in the immaterial world before those things become materialized on Earth.

Secondly, the fact that the Lotus plant grows up through the water, having its root in the *ilus*, the mud, and spreading its flower in the air above. The Lotus thus typifies the life of man and also that of the Cosmos; for the Secret Doctrine teaches that the elements of both are the same, and that both are developing in the same direction. The root of the Lotus sunk in the mud represents material life, the stalk passing up through the water typifies existence in the astral world, and the flower floating on the water and opening to the sky is emblematical of spiritual being.

To summarize, the lotus has its roots in the mud, symbolizing man's physical body or the physical plane of matter. Going or growing higher within man's nature, his emotions, *kāma*, are symbolized by the water in the lotus pond and, mounting still higher within man, his thought, *manas*, may be symbolized by the air through which the lotus stem passes and, finally, the beautiful lotus flower opens itself to the sun's rays, symbolizing man's spiritual nature, *Ātma-Buddhi*.

The ultimate dharma of man, to return

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to his true nature, is expressed in Buddhist terminology in the words: 'The dewdrop slips into the shining sea.' This ultimate dharma may frighten us. Is this the end, the undoing, the destruction of all we have built up through many lives? But may it not also be expressed in the words: 'The dewdrop becomes the shining sea', which it has always been?

Just as the prodigal son in the Christian biblical story returns home, having wandered many years, having squandered his inheritance, having wasted his time, probably gambling and feasting! Suddenly he remembers his father and he decides to return home. At least his father will accept him as a servant. Thus, in all humility he leaves the path of outgoing, the 'Pravṛtti Mārga', and he enters the path of return, the 'Nivṛtti Mārga'. But his father sees him from afar and runs to welcome him. He rejoices. He favours him more than his other son, who has remained at home.

The prodigal son represents humanity, and his story indicates the importance of humanity. What of the son who has remained at home? It is said that this son represents the angels. But their day of trial will surely come or perhaps has come in the past. I quote again from *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. I, pp. 106–7):

The Doctrine teaches that, in order to become a divine, fully conscious god — aye, even the highest — the Spiritual INTELLIGENCES must pass through the human stage. And when we say human, this does not apply merely to our terrestrial

humanity, but to the mortals that inhabit any world, i.e., to those Intelligences that have reached the appropriate equilibrium between matter and spirit, as we have now, since the middle point of the Fourth Root-Race of the Fourth Round was passed. Each Entity must have won for itself the right of becoming divine, through self-experience. Hegel, the great German thinker, must have known or sensed intuitively this truth when saying, as he did, that the Unconscious evolved the Universe only 'in the hope of attaining clear self-consciousness', of becoming, in other words, MAN . . . This explains also the hidden Kabalistic meaning of the saying: 'The *Breath* becomes a stone; the stone, a plant; the plant, an animal; the animal, a man; the man, a spirit; the spirit, a god.' The . . . Ṛshi-s, the Builders etc., were all men — of whatever forms and shapes — in other worlds and the preceding Manvantara-s.

Mme Blavatsky states further that 'all in Nature tends to become man':

From the beginning of the Round, all in nature tends to become Man. All the impulses of the dual, centripetal and centrifugal Force are directed towards one point — MAN. The progress in the succession of beings, says Agassiz, 'consists in an increasing similarity of the living fauna, and among the Vertebrates, especially, in the increasing resemblance to Man . . . Man is the end towards which all the *animal* creation has tended from the first appearance of the first Palaeozoic Fishes'. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, p. 170)

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It is interesting that, in the ancient Postojna Caves, discovered and excavated in Slovenia, particularly in the early nineteenth century, there is, in the very heart of the mountain, a pool containing fishes found nowhere else on earth and known as 'Human Fish'.

Considering the importance of humanity, it is essential that, with our knowledge of Theosophy, we should realize our responsibility, the importance of finding and fulfilling our Dharma, our true work.

We have already considered our responsibility towards the kingdoms of nature to which we belonged countless ages ago. We have also a responsibility towards our fellow-men, Humanity in general. It is said that anyone who advances on the spiritual path makes it easier for humanity in general also to advance.

Thus it may seem a noble and unselfish aim to strive to become a pupil of a genuine Spiritual Master, that is, of one who has reached the next stage in evolution, so that we ourselves can advance to that stage, and we may believe that, in order to do so and also once this aim of discipleship is attained, we have only to follow instructions to the letter. But in *The Mahatma Letters* it is emphasized that the human being, who is a thinking being, has FREE WILL, even if and when — or rather, especially if and when, he becomes a pupil of a genuine Master.

As man develops spiritually, he has to learn to use that free will, to listen to his own inner voice and not to follow instructions blindly. This point is repeatedly

emphasized in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*:

To the last and supreme initiation, every chela . . . is left to his own device and counsel. . . . He is . . . a responsible agent who is left to perform his task by the light of his own sagacity, and he will never receive 'orders' which seriously conflict with that principle. (see Joy Mills, *Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom*, Letter 18, p. 63)

We have no right to influence the free will of the members in this or any other matter. Such interference would be in flagrant contradiction to the basic law of esotericism that personal psychic growth accompanies *pari passu* the development of individual effort, and is the evidence of acquired personal merit. (idem., Letter 122, p. 459)

The exercise of free will and bearing the karmic consequences of our resultant actions is part of the dharma of man. It is through the lessons of such karmic consequences that man learns.

After this cautionary advice, let us revert to more general, more positive advice.

In the little gem written down by Krishnamurti as a boy and a pupil of a Master, *At the Feet of the Master*, four qualifications for the spiritual path are listed:

*Discrimination*: between the real and the unreal, right and wrong, the important and the unimportant, the useful and the useless, the true and the false, and the selfish and the unselfish;

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*Desirelessness*: above all, also no desire for spiritual progress or for spiritual powers;

No desire to speak too much or to meddle with others;

*Good Conduct*: above all; Control of thought and action; Tolerance; Cheerfulness; One-pointedness; Confidence; and finally, and most important: *Love*: Avoiding hurt to others through Gossip, Cruelty, and Superstition.

Of all the qualifications, Love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest, and all the rest without it would never be sufficient.

There is a story of a lady who was very selfish and who never gave anything away. But one day she gave a carrot to a beggar. When she died, that carrot bore her up towards heaven. However, someone attached himself or herself to her, so as to be borne aloft with her. This made her very angry, and she shook that person off. In so doing she lost her grip on the carrot and could not continue towards heaven.

At the end of *At the Feet of the Master* the qualifications are listed as Will, Wisdom and Love, the three aspects of the Logos. Perhaps a diagram is useful in the form of a cross. A cross points in three directions: upwards, downwards and outwards. We can imagine Will as striving upwards, Wisdom as going into the depths and Love as going outwards, around us, towards our fellow-men and fellow-creatures.

It is related that a Christian priest once visited Krishnamurti. On leaving him, he said that Krishnamurti had shown him the real meaning of the cross. It is the 'I', the little selfish ego, crossed out! This would be our ultimate dharma as human beings.

In the Second Discourse of the *Bhagavadgitā*, Arjuna asks Lord Kṛṣṇa:

What is the mark of him who is stable of mind, steadfast in contemplation, O Keśava? (v. 54)

And the reply is instructive:

When a man abandoneth, O Pārtha, all the desires of the heart, and is satisfied in the SELF by the SELF, then he is called stable in mind. (v. 55)

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. (v. 56)

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. (v. 57)

When, again, as a tortoise draws in on all sides its limbs, he withdraws his senses from the objects of sense, then is his understanding well poised. (v. 58)

The objects of sense, but not the relish for them, turn away from an abstemious dweller in the body; and even relish turneth away from him after the Supreme is seen. (v. 59)

He attaineth Peace, into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean, which is filled with water, but remaineth unmoved

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— not he who desireth desires. (v. 70)

Whoso forsaketh all desires and goeth onwards free from yearnings, selfless and without egoism — he goeth to Peace. (v. 71)

This is the ETERNAL state, O son of Pṛthā. Having attained hereto none is

bewildered. Who, even at the death-hour, is established therein, he goeth to the Nirvāna of the ETERNAL. (v. 72)

This is the ultimate and the true Dharma of man: The spark returns to or becomes the flame. The dewdrop returns to or becomes the shining sea. ✧

**In truth, that which puts off the human and puts on the divine is transformed into God, the same as iron in the fire takes on the appearance of the fire and is changed into it. But the essence of the soul thus deified subsists, just as the red iron does not cease to be iron. Thus the soul which before was cold is now ardent, which before was dark is now shining, which before was hard is now mollified; all is coloured with God, because the divine essence is infused in its being, all is consumed in the fire of divine love, and all is melted and passed into God, and united to him without mode, and become one single spirit with him: just as gold and bronze are melted together into an ingot of metal.**

François Louis de Blois

# Science: Modern and Occult — I

PABLO SENDER

**I**N ancient cultures there was not a clear separation between religion and science. Astronomy, mathematics, architecture, medicine . . . all were religious activities. Although the ancients did not have the exact measuring instruments of modern science, they possessed a great deal of scientific knowledge, some of which is still being ‘rediscovered’ today. Philosophical thought was also closely associated with scientific knowledge, and civilizations such as that of the Greeks, used their reason (instead of experiments) to explain the observed facts in Nature. Many of their scientific conclusions have often been found to be right.

It was during the Christian era that problems between religion, philosophy and science began. Science could only be practised under the supervision of the clergy, and all scientific conclusions had to be adjusted to the Christian creed. At the same time, philosophy was used as a means to justify the orthodox belief. The Inquisition was introduced in Europe in an attempt to impede every possibility of freethinking, and anyone expressing ideas that were outside the orthodoxy was persecuted as a ‘heretic’.

In this context, the birth of modern science in the Middle Ages could only have happened as a rebellion against religious orthodoxy, which created a wide gulf between religion and science. In the beginning, this development had a positive effect — it shook the foundations of rigid dogmas and blind beliefs. But with time, science developed its own orthodoxy based on positivism and reductionism, which has also become quite dogmatic.

Today, there is a great need to build a bridge between science and spirituality. Is this reunification at all possible? This does not seem feasible as long as science remains materialistic, religion dogmatic, and philosophy dialectical. But we find evidence of the existence of a more holistic knowledge in what the Theosophical literature calls ‘occult science’.

This first part of the present article will show how this occult science can assist modern science in the research of the physical dimension of the universe. In the second part, to be published later, we will explore how modern science, with the help of its occult counterpart, can expand its field of research to more spiritual dimensions, thus bringing a revolution in

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our understanding of life, human beings, and the universe.

### Occult Science

What is occult science? Is it really a science? And why is it called ‘occult’? Modern Theosophy proposes that there are non-physical dimensions in the universe that are *occult* (that is, ‘hidden’) to normal perception. Accordingly, in addition to the five senses we know, human beings possess non-physical senses, by which they can perceive this hidden aspect of the universe. These senses are the basis for what is called extrasensory perception, a topic towards which science has an ambivalent attitude.

Theosophical literature states that the possibility of this non-physical perception is latent in most human beings and, when properly trained, it can be used in a scientific manner. H. P. Blavatsky claimed that the ‘occult knowledge’ she presented in her writings was obtained by using the scientific method, but applied to non-physical realities, and therefore using non-physical means of perception:

The system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another . . . That for long ages, the ‘Wise Men’ . . . had passed their lives *in learning, not teaching*. How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the

independent visions of great adepts; i.e., men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual organizations to the utmost possible degree. No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions — so obtained as to stand as independent evidence — of other adepts, and by centuries of experience.<sup>1</sup>

This article will present some of the teachings found in Blavatsky’s book, *The Secret Doctrine — A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, written in London in 1888. I will concentrate only on some physical and astronomical discoveries that *The Secret Doctrine (SD)* anticipated, while leaving aside other facts related to the fields of Biology, Anthropology, History and Psychology, that this book also foresaw.

### Some Instances of Occult Knowledge

#### 1. *The State of the Universe*

The accepted cosmological theory during Madame Blavatsky’s time was that of a stationary universe, where galaxies were fixed in infinite space. However, she wrote about a universe alternately expanding and contracting, which aroused much controversy then. One of the stanzas presented in the *SD* says:

Father-Mother spin a web . . . and this web is the Universe . . . It expands when the breath of fire is upon it; it contracts when the breath of (Matter) touches it . . . The expanding and contracting of the Web . . . expresses here the pulsatory movement; for it is the regular contraction

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and expansion of the infinite and shoreless Ocean.<sup>2</sup>

Almost thirty years later, when in 1917 Albert Einstein applied his newly formulated General Theory of Relativity to the universe, he found that it should be either expanding or contracting. Since this idea was not accepted in science, he added another term to his equation (known as the *cosmological constant*) to maintain a static universe. Some years later, the astronomer, Edwin P. Hubble, discovered that the universe is actually expanding, as all of the galaxies are getting farther away from one another. Einstein abandoned this extra term in favour of the earlier and simplest form of his equation, and later regarded the addition of the cosmological constant as his 'greatest mistake'.

Although the *SD* foretold some concepts associated with the theory of the Big Bang by some sixty years, overall its teachings seem to be more in tune with the new model of a cyclic universe, which explains some difficulties found with the Big Bang theory.

### 2. *Nature of the Sun and Origin of the Planets*

At the end of the nineteenth century, the origin of the planets of our system was explained as being the result of an accidental collision by a passing star that drew a filament of hot material from the Sun. This material then condensed to form the planets. Blavatsky spoke against this theory and in favour of the nebular origin of the planets, which

denies the pre-existence of the sun:

The Occult Doctrine rejects . . . that the great planets have evolved from the Sun's central mass . . . The first condensation of Cosmic matter of course took place about a central nucleus . . . but our sun, it is taught, merely detached itself earlier than all the others, as the rotating mass contracted, and is their elder, bigger brother therefore, not their father.<sup>3</sup>

It is now universally accepted that the Sun and the planets were formed together from a rotating and contracting nebula. At a stage where the material around the centre (the protostar) is quite cold, there begins a process of 'accretion' that finally forms the planets. This theory, called Solar Nebular Disk Model, was accepted by modern science over one hundred years after Blavatsky's writings.

Also, at the end of the nineteenth century, the most accepted scientific view about the nature of the Sun was that it was a mass of ignited gas. Mme Blavatsky said:

Occult philosophy denies that the Sun is a globe in combustion, but defines it simply as . . . a glowing sphere.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding this, in 1882, one of Blavatsky's teachers, Mahatma KH, wrote in a letter to an Englishman:

[The Sun] contains . . . less of anything like 'gases', mineral matter, or *fire*, though even we when treating of it in your civilized tongue are compelled to use such expressions as 'vapour' and 'magnetic matter' . . . The Sun is neither a *solid*, nor

a *liquid*, nor yet a gaseous globe; but a gigantic ball of electromagnetic Forces.<sup>5</sup>

We know today that the Sun is not burning in the sense of ordinary combustion, but suffers a process of nuclear fusion with a great liberation of energy. Its constitution is neither solid, liquid, nor gaseous, but an electromagnetic state of matter called plasma.

### 3. *Gravitation*

There are many phenomena in our Solar System that make one wonder how it began in such a coordinated manner. The planets revolve round the Sun uniformly. Their orbits are slightly elliptical and nearly on the same plane, while their orbital speeds vary as per the inverse square-root of their distance from the Sun. A century ago, the motion of the planets was explained on the ground of Newton's Law of Gravitation, something that Blavatsky denied. Indeed, she went further than that to claim that gravitation was not even a real phenomenon. She wrote:

That magnetism exists in nature is as certain as that gravitation does not; not at any rate, in the way in which it is taught by Science.<sup>6</sup>

In Newton's enunciation of the Law of Gravitation, nothing is stated about its cause. The accepted concept in the nineteenth century was that gravity was an inherent property of matter. Blavatsky wrote:

Astronomers who see in gravitation an

easy-going solution for many things, and an *universal* force which allows them to calculate thereby planetary motions, care little about the Cause of Attraction. They call Gravity a law, a *cause* in itself. We call the forces acting under that name *effects*, and very secondary effects, too.<sup>7</sup>

Some decades after the publication of the *SD*, Newton's theory of gravitation was revised by Einstein, who postulated that gravity is not a property of matter itself, and reinterpreted this physical phenomenon as due to the distortion of the space-time continuum. In addition, the force of gravity is the only one of the four fundamental forces of physics that cannot be formulated from the standpoint of Quantum Mechanics. The postulated 'graviton' cannot be found. All this supports the criticism of Blavatsky about a subject that was unquestionable for many years.

### 4. *Nature of Atom and Force*

When the *SD* was published, materialistic science was at its peak. Its philosophy was based on the view that the fundamental building block of the universe was some hypothetical particle called 'atom' (from the Greek *atomos*: *a-* 'not' + *tomos* 'divisions') which was the smallest possible unit of matter. Thus, the atoms were thought to be little compact balls of a given element — indivisible and impenetrable. Blavatsky strongly opposed this view, and said that Occult Science supports the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of the so-called 'atom'. As she explained:

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The atom *is* elastic, *ergo*, the atom is divisible, and must consist of particles, or of *sub*-atoms. And these *sub*-atoms? . . . They are *elastic* also; and in that case, they, too, are subject to divisibility. And thus *ad infinitum*. But infinite divisibility of atoms resolves matter into simple centres of force, *i.e.*, precludes the possibility of conceiving matter as an *objective* substance.<sup>8</sup>

Today, we know that atoms are composed of subatomic particles which, in their turn, are also divisible. Actually, in quantum physics, particles are not even regarded as objective tiny pieces of matter but rather ‘excitations of quantum fields’, a definition not too far from Blavatsky’s ‘centres of force’ in the previous quotation.

The other concept put forward by Blavatsky was that, in spite of the apparent stability of matter, its atoms are in constant motion:

Occultism says that in all cases when matter *appears* inert, it is the most active. A wooden or a stone block is motionless and impenetrable to all intents and purposes. Nevertheless, and *de facto*, its particles are in ceaseless eternal vibration which is so rapid that to the physical eye the body seems absolutely devoid of motion . . . But to physical Science this will be an absurdity.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, Mme Blavatsky knew there was energy ‘hidden’ in the atom. She used the word ‘atomic energy’ on a couple of occasions:

Anyhow Occultism is audacious enough

to maintain that electric or magnetic fluids (the two being really identical) *are due in their essence and origin to that same molecular motion*, now transformed into *atomic* energy . . .<sup>10</sup>

Blavatsky was not referring here to nuclear energy. She would call the atoms of the physicists ‘molecules’ because they were divisible. The ‘molecular motion’, which she claimed was the origin of electricity, was obviously the motion of the electron — a source of energy in the so-called ‘atom’. But electrons and other subatomic particles were unknown at the time, and the nature of forces such as light, magnetism, electricity, etc., was not understood. Mme Blavatsky said that what we call forces were still ‘material’, although of a subtler nature:

But what is in reality Matter? We have seen that it is hardly possible to call electricity a force, and yet we are forbidden to call it matter under the penalty of being called unscientific!<sup>11</sup>

It is not in the least *unscientific* to speak of the substantiality of the so-called *Forces*. Subject to some future specific name, this force is *substance* of some kind, and can be nothing else.<sup>12</sup>

[But] the Occult Sciences do not regard either electricity or any of the forces . . . as matter, *in any of the states known to physical Science*; to put it more clearly, none of these ‘forces’, so called, are either solids, gases, or fluids.<sup>13</sup>

It was only at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth that

Science discovered that phenomena such as light, heat, chemical affinity, electricity, and so on, were mediated by subatomic particles such as electrons, photons, etc. But accepting the substantiality of forces and the energy within the atom made the boundaries between matter and energy too blurry, something that the materialistic paradigm of the nineteenth century was not ready to accept. This paradigm eventually came to an end with Einstein who, in 1905, showed the equivalence between matter and energy. Today, we know that matter is but ‘condensed energy’, and that energy is mediated by subatomic particles. This discovery was foretold by one of Blavatsky’s Adept Teachers when he wrote that:

[Force is incapable of] existing *per se* . . . independent of, or in any other wise than *through* matter; in other words that *force* is . . . but matter in one of her highest *states*.<sup>14</sup>

In a century of discoveries, modern physics has come very close to the Theosophical view of (physical) matter and energy. Even recently, with the evidence about the existence of the Higgs Boson (the so-called ‘god-particle’) the Theosophical concept of *ether* may be brought back into the scientific awareness!

### The Future of Science?

Modern science is limited to facts that are measurable within the physical realm. Mme Blavatsky maintained that only when science moves beyond these limits will it be able to attain a holistic vision:

To make of Science an integral *whole* necessitates, indeed, the study of spiritual and psychic, as well as physical Nature.<sup>15</sup>

But the question arises, is it possible at all to bring within the field of science that which is beyond the physical realm? Theosophy says that it is. Just as every human being can verify the postulates of current science if he undergoes proper scientific training, Occult Science also asserts that all its teachings can be corroborated, when one is properly trained.

Examples of this are the English Dr Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, two well-known Theosophists, who underwent an occult training, developed clairvoyance, and took some pioneering steps in this direction at the end of the nineteenth century.

In 1895, they began to research the nature of atoms by extra-sensory means, and published their findings through several articles in this journal. Their gathered observations were published in book form in 1908, under the title of *Occult Chemistry: Investigations by Clairvoyant Magnification into the Structure of the Atoms of the Periodic Table and Some Compounds*. They continued their research in this field intermittently up until 1933, and two more editions of *Occult Chemistry* were published.

During their research, they were able to observe the nucleus of different atoms and saw they consisted of different subatomic particles, before the scientific discovery of the proton (which was reported in 1919) and the neutron

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(discovered in 1932). By counting the amount of subatomic particles, they found five previously unknown atoms (*protactinium*, *technetium*, *francium*, *astatine*, and *promethium*) which were eventually isolated by modern science between the 1920s and 1940s. They also noticed some unknown variations in the atoms of neon, argon, krypton, xenon and platinum.<sup>16</sup>

In 1913, five years after the first publication of *Occult Chemistry*, the existence of these variations in atoms (called 'isotopes') was demonstrated by Professor Francis W. Aston, who was later awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for this.

It is interesting to note that Professor Aston was aware of the researches carried out by Besant and Leadbeater, and even admitted having used one of the names they chose for one of the isotopes. In a footnote to the paper announcing his discovery to the annual meeting of the British Association, he stated:

By theosophic methods entirely unintelligible to mere students of physics [Besant and Leadbeater] claimed to have determined the atomic weight of all elements known and several unknown at the time. Among the latter occurs one to which they ascribe an atomic weight of 22.33 (H=1) and which they called 'Meta Neon'. As this name seems to suit as well as any other what little we know of the properties of the new gas, I have used it in this paper.<sup>17</sup>

In 1943, C. Jinarājadāsa, who assisted Besant and Leadbeater in their research, contacted Professor Aston at Cambridge

University, but he answered he was not interested in Theosophy. This is an example of the strong reluctance the scientific community shows to dealing with non-physical means of researching.

These were not their only or most important discoveries. According to theoretical physicist, Stephen M. Phillips, PhD, their findings match generally the Superstring Theory that modern science developed in the 1980s.<sup>18</sup>

So, how could modern science and its occult counterpart work together? It is clear that science cannot regard clairvoyant findings as proof for anything, until physical means to measure these discoveries are developed, so that any scientist in the world can make the measurement. However, the findings of Occult Science could be taken as theoretical hypotheses to direct further research. After all, this is common in the field of physics. Many of the theoretical predictions in Einstein's Theory of Relativity remained unproven for years, until the methods to test them were developed. And the same is happening today with many facts postulated in the current models of Quantum Physics, which our technology is still unable to measure. The Higgs Boson was proposed by Professor Peter Higgs in 1964 and only this year are scientists in a position to test whether it exists or not by using the LHC, a gigantic particle accelerator at CERN, near Geneva, Switzerland.

Actually, Dr Phillips himself is a living example of how this cooperation can work. In his early interpretation of the

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findings published in *Occult Chemistry* he postulated that Besant and Leadbeater observed the fundamental particles of matter at the level of sub-quarks. Taking these observations as a basis, he developed a mathematical model predicting the existence of ‘sub-quarks’ that he called ‘omegon’, and describing the characteristics this new particle should have.<sup>19</sup>

Whether his scientific predictions turn out to be right or not is of secondary importance, because in science there are many models built on the interpretation of sound data that turn out to be inaccurate. But this serves as an example of how psychic abilities, when well trained, can be useful for research in the scientific field.

*(to be continued)*

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# True Social Service

D. P. SABNIS

**S**Ocial work is the outgoing impulse to help the less fortunate — either by almsgiving or through other forms of service to ameliorate the condition of a suffering fellow human being.

The ideal of social service arose with the decline of religion and rise of science. Though they are involved in laudable projects, most advanced social institutions are lacking in many of their schemes — slum-clearance, housing for the poor, rehabilitation of prostitutes, rescue homes for homeless boys and girls, etc. Social service experts are not unanimous about the real cause of the problems they are trying to solve, but almost all are of the view that every effort to reform these produces its own new problems. Richly endowed social settlements and institutions, and the most ardent social workers find that paucity of money is not their greatest difficulty. On the present world scene, the usual problems of poverty, lower life expectancy, malnutrition, etc., are not so much a concern, as mental and moral problems. Today a social worker is more concerned about helping people combat loneliness, competition, stress, etc.

Today, the majority of people going

to a psychologist are not ‘sick’ in a conventional sense. What they really suffer from is ‘an inner deadness’. They live in the midst of plenty and are joyless. It is found that the majority of suicide cases take place because life seemed meaningless. This happens within affluent societies and welfare states. People cannot be happy, just by improving their socio-economic condition. The truth is that as the struggle for survival has subsided, the question has emerged: survival for what? More people have the means to live, but no meaning to live for.

HPB writes: ‘Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all those movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind.’ But we must not lose sight of the fact that man is not just his body, nor just his mind, but something more. Instead of laying emphasis on mere material charity — providing food, clothing and shelter, or amenities for the diseased — more importance must be given to alleviating mental and moral suffering. Physical problems are only skin-deep. Mental and moral suffering are the deepest.

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HPB shows that philanthropists who sought to make people happy by improving their physical conditions or external environment — by building homes, starting soup kitchens, etc. — were ultimately disappointed. Those who had spent their lives doing such work confessed that ‘as a matter of fact, misery cannot be relieved. It is a vital element in human nature, and is as necessary to some lives as pleasure is to others — that misery is not just endurable, but agreeable to many who endure it. A woman who worked all her life for the amelioration of prostitutes, confessed in the end that it was not possible to better the condition of these girls, because they seemed to ‘love the very state which wealthy people may call misery’. Blankets are given to the poor during winter; they sell them off. Houses are built for the poor; they sell those and go back to living in the huts. HPB advises the exercise of discretion even in helping others. A highly developed adept in life may grasp the nettle, and by his intuitive powers, know whom to relieve from pain and whom to leave in the mire that is their best teacher. We, not having such intuitive power, have to exercise discrimination even in physical charity.

HPB suggests the ‘true basis’ for social work: For the efforts towards social amelioration to be fruitful, they must be based on four principles:

‘Universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; Reincarnation. These are the four links of the golden chain which should bind

humanity into one family, one universal Brotherhood.’ As we are all pilgrim-souls, what each one of us needs to do, she suggests, is to ‘give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim-soul’. It shows that we must not only give comfort — physical and mental relief — but also give ‘light’, i.e., ‘right knowledge’ or the ‘bread of wisdom’, to the distressed. A man, besides being a businessman, a sweeper, a teacher, is a pilgrim, in the ultimate analysis, as one side of his nature is toiling towards human evolution.

The Laws of Karma and Reincarnation are doctrines of responsibility and hope. When people are taught that they cannot escape the consequences of their actions — thoughts, words and deeds — then, ‘besides feeling in themselves the true dignity of human nature, they will turn from evil and eschew it as they would a physical danger’. When people feel that this life is the only life, they struggle to keep body and soul together at any cost.

It must be realized that mere changes of outer circumstances without a change in inner attitudes will not solve the problems; that psychology is needed more than physiology for treating social issues. Just psychology is not enough. Unless our very soul is lighted up, there cannot be a real and permanent transformation. Educate the soul, and the mind gets educated; renovate the soul, and the heart and character get renovated; and that education and renovation are permanent in their effects.

This, in short, is the true basis of social work. ❖

# Universal Brotherhood to Save the Earth

S. K. NANDA

**B**ROTHERHOOD is an important aspect of Theosophy where 'One Father-Life' is realized. All living beings are united by compassion, tenderness, sympathy, etc. By all these divine qualities they attain the Buddhic plane. The *Kathopanishad* (II.2.9) mentions that 'like the fire, being one, conforms to many shapes, so also the Super-Soul, being one, attains many shapes'. In the *Gītā* (XV.15), Śri Kṛṣṇa has mentioned: 'It is I who remain in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all'; and in verse XIII.29: 'Indeed he who sees the same Lord everywhere equally dwelling, destroys not the Self by the Self; therefore, he goes to the Highest Goal.' In *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky has indicated the 'fundamental unity of all existence'.

The Theosophic attitude is meant to help one become superhuman by a gradual expansion of consciousness through meditation, and also to improve the relation of brotherhood. Meditation is meant for improving the inner realization of individuals, whereas brotherhood is meant for the mass approach in the physical plane through altruism.

It works as a social reform and also can work with the outcast, depressed classes, etc.

Man is a social animal. Of all the elements, man is the supreme in utilizing the mind, whereas the dog is supreme in smell, the vulture and eagle in sight and the bat for its remarkable navigation system through supersonic sounds in the dark. Most animals excel in their sensory activity over man. Since man is well developed in mind activity, he rules over animals, birds, plants, and whatever else is seen around him.

Nature also helps in the evolution of consciousness. Life evolves from the lower kingdoms in nature to higher forms, i.e., from minerals to vegetables, from vegetables to animals and subsequently, from the animal to the human kingdom. Thus the group souls of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms transcend to individual human souls. According to science, humans are first animals, then mammals, then primates. Early hominids diverged from apes through a combination of adaptation to arid and dry open habitat and increased tool use. Paleontological and genetic evidence indicates

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that the divergence time between humans and chimpanzees is about five million years.

At present, gradual expansion of consciousness in the nature of animals and birds is seen. Circus animals and birds are found to obey their master. The parrot, mynah and cockatoo speak like humans. An octopus in Germany used to predict the winner of games. Sheep in New Zealand predicted the victory of New Zealand's first match of the Rugby World Cup.

Brotherhood has been seen to exist between different species but there are very rare examples. A female monkey used to take care of a pup and allowed it to suck milk from her. While remaining as part of her group, she used to jump and take the pup to tree branches and high-up places. Recently in Cambodia (Kampuchea), a twenty-month old boy suckled directly from a cow as his parents left for service in Thailand. In a village in Orissa, a man kept a dog, cat, poultry birds and their chicks, all of which were taking their food from the same place at the same time. The dogs and cats protected the chicks from scavengers like the crows and kites. A tiger in the national forest of Mayurbhanj refrained from harming anybody. There was perfect harmony between the 'eater and its eatables'. Besides all these, the domestication of animals and birds, and agricultural farming for commercial ventures, and the planting of trees are seen throughout the world.

The mineral, vegetable, animal and

human kingdoms are very useful for sustaining the planet Earth. Brotherhood should mostly be linked between these kingdoms. Men, being superior in consciousness, utilize these kingdoms for their service. Men are responsible for both the improvement as well as the destruction on Earth. There is a lack of proper understanding between man and man, as a result of which, envy and fighting take place in most of the places throughout the world. Animals and birds are utilized for food, milk, manure, etc. Cows are worshipped by Hindus and the dragon by the Chinese. Manure is helpful for the growth of plants. Plants are very useful for the purification of the air by providing oxygen; they regulate the climate and provide food for the sustenance of humans and some animals and birds; also shelter, shade, fuel, medicines, etc. Plants like the *tulsi*, *bel*, etc., are worshipped by Hindus. Widespread weeds like grass, help reduce the heat radiation on Earth. Plants obstruct tornadoes, etc., coming from the sea towards land. By worshipping plants and animals, people usually do not destroy those species and the conservation of such species took place automatically in the past. People conserve plants for worship and medicinal purposes.

The current man-made global crises in sustaining living species are:

1. Pollution of air, water and earth;
2. Depletion of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, global warming;
3. Disturbed ecology; changes in the environment that affect the lives of the

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plant, animal and avian species and have already exterminated some of them from the earth.

Owing to the above-mentioned circumstances, it is questionable whether living organisms can thrive on earth.

Therefore, the conservation of animal and plant life is urgently required. Emphasis should be placed on plant life, as it is basically meant for food, climate, environment and the prevention of global

warming. Merely planting seeds and seedlings is not enough to serve the purpose; nurturing them until they become useful to human society should be considered as being in brotherhood with them. Similarly must we behave with animals and birds.

By taking into consideration the above facts, and by observing brotherhood with plants and animals, we can live and let the planet live. ✧

**If thou conceivest a small minute circle, as small as a grain of mustard seed, yet the Heart of God is wholly and perfectly therein: and if thou art born in God, then there is in thyself (in the circle of thy life) the whole Heart of God undivided.**

Boehme

# Nicholas Roerich — Russian, Artist, Genius

A. E. ADAIR

**B**EFORE me lie three books: *The World of Roerich*, by Nina Selivanova; *Roerich*, issued by Corona Mundi; and *The Messenger* published by the Brahmavidyāshrama, Adyar.

## *The World of Roerich*

In this book, which in its dressing, bears the artistic imprint of 'Corona Mundi' Publications, Nina Selivanova essays to interpret the art of Roerich as well as to sketch the outlines of his life; because, she says, his art and his life are inseparable. The period covered ends with his departure for India. She begins with a very striking image. 'On the *East* borders of the *New Land* (the borders of the Arctic Ocean) stands *Mount Roerich*' . . . and regards these three, the *East*, the *New Land*, and the *Mount* as the symbols of the source of the great master's inspiration. As one reads these reverent, loving and illuminating pages, the truth of her imagery is borne in upon one. Roerich's inspiration does come from the *East*, in both meanings of *Oriental* or of *Spiritual East*. It is the *New Land* that calls forth his highest enthusiasm, whether the new land bordering the Arctic Ocean of

his own dearly loved motherland, or the *New Land* in the West, expressed in his desire to bring America and Russia together, or again, in the highest octave, and in the later and most spiritual phase of his creative work, the *New Land* which will arise from the appearance in the world of a great Spiritual Teacher — a land in which will reign Beauty, Truth and Love which is right Action. Finally, what a large part the mountains play in the master's life and work! Not a country that he visits but he flies to them as a bird to its nest; canvas after canvas portrays them in many different lands; in his hours of creation he dwells apart, preferably on the mountains; and who that knows his work can fail to feel the pure currents that stream from *the Mount*, towards which his inner eyes are turned.

Roerich is not only a painter, though in that his genius lies; he has been a writer from early youth, mastered the ancient Russian language of the northern epics and written in it; he has spoken to large audiences in many parts of the world; he has done remarkable service in the cause of archeology; he is a born leader and organizer, the highly esteemed

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collaborator of architects, musicians, theatrical and ballet producers; he is [one may venture to say it] the greatest living exponent of the philosophy of Beauty. In short, he is a genius. It is not only in big things that he shows himself great; it is in little things also. The master-painter does not find it beneath his dignity to make designs for ceramics, embroideries, book decoration, etc.; for him, the fine arts are not divorced from the applied arts. Though he loves the mountains he does not despise the plains; though he aspires to the heavens he never loses contact with the earth; always kind, thoughtful of others, simple, humorous, smilingly quizzical, a keen observer of life; yet at the same time, wise, logical, reserved, more inclined to silence than to speech, though never chilling, and apparently imperturbable. It is a finely balanced character. The same balanced power is apparent in his work, the same altruistic leanings, the same spaciousness.

The authoress writes of his youth, education, marriage, appointments and all the other outward circumstances of his life. She especially concentrates upon the evolution of his style, of the gradual revelation of the growth of his inner life in his works! How versatile he is! In how many mediums he works! In oil, in tempera, in gouache, in water-colour, in pastel and in crayon. How diverse are his subjects! Landscape, Architecture, Fairy-Tale, Sorcery, Lives of the Saints, Opera and Ballet, Religion, Fantasy, the Remote Past and the unknown Future: all these have given material for his art. Nina

Selivanova classifies his works in two ways, one according to subject and another according to periods; and very many of his paintings are described in detail. Various influences are intelligently traced; and the series of conquests by which Roerich added to his experience in technique and in the perfecting of his unique gift of colour are recorded with discrimination and lucidity.

Fragments only of the great wealth of material contained in this informative and sympathetically written book could be and have been touched upon in this short review.

### *Roerich*

This second volume — quite a small book — is like one of the old tumuli that Roerich delighted in exploring in his boyhood; it is full of hidden treasure, treasures of imagination, of emotional delight and of spiritual inspiration. It contains sixty-two illustrations of his paintings, and though the greatest of all his gifts to art — his *colour* schemes — is absent, there is so much left. With the help of Nina Selivanova's descriptions in *The World of Roerich* and the exercise of one's own imagination, it is possible to partially, at least, fill this hiatus. The books are mutually helpful to the study of Roerich's art. The selection has been admirably made to cover a great diversity of subject and of composition and *motif*; and one can spend hours with it, and return to it again and again always to find some new experience, some fresh source of delight.

## Nicholas Roerich — Russian, Artist, Genius

From ancient Pskov one can travel to Maine in America, from Mexico to India, from Arctic regions to the great Atlantic coasts; one may dream in fairyland or watch the working of spells, one may see the rocks spring to life and the clouds reveal their soul, one may find God in nature and God in man, walk with kings, commune with saints and behold, with the prophet, the glorious aura of the Coming Lord. Such is the world which has become known as 'Roerich's realm'.

Other creators have found their happiness in making a record of their days — of a moment of infinity. Not so Roerich; his art bears to other paintings the same undying aspect as Scripture to men's writings. He concerns himself not with the temporary but with the immortal. The gaunt shadows which now creep over the earth distorting the real visage of man do not disarm him. He sees beyond and knows with full faith that dawn is ahead and with it, victory and universal peace.

### *The Messenger; Roerich's Paintings*

Though a silent man himself and not seeking notoriety, in some way Roerich inspires others with the desire to write about him; for there is no mistake about it, to meet Roerich is not only to meet a great artist but to meet an unusual personality. If you cannot understand his art, at least the man himself will charm you. This small volume, in a pleasing binding with Roerich's own sign manual in the cover block and an illustration of 'The Messenger' as a frontispiece,

contains articles by seven of these enthusiastic admirers of the master. Quotations from these articles will be found in many writings about him, but in this volume, they are for the first time collected together and printed in English. Three of the articles are by Russian writers, among them the late Leonid Andreyev, and each brings out an individual note in connection with the artist and his work.

It is known generally that Professor Roerich has donated 'The Messenger' to the Blavatsky Museum, which is to be erected at Adyar, to the revered memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky when funds are available. A further act of generosity on his part is the gift of the net income derived from the sale of this book to the fund for that museum. Every copy that is sold will therefore not only give pleasure to the reader, and acquaintanceship with perhaps the greatest living artist, but will help to build a memorial to one who brought, into the materialistic darkness of the end of the nineteenth century, what was most greatly needed by humanity — Light. In this way may he in gratitude honour the great personality to whom humanity of the nineteenth century owes so great a debt. What more fitting period to begin than the fiftieth year of the existence of the Society she founded? May *The Messenger; Roerich's Paintings* receive a cordial welcome from everyone who has loved and learned from the Messenger of the Great White Lodge and wishes to honour her memory! ✧

# Theosophical Work around the World

## Adyar

Speaking on the occasion of Dr Annie Besant's birthday on 1 October in the Headquarters Hall, Mrs Radha Burnier described Dr Besant as a person who took interest in a wide field of activities. Both Colonel Olcott and Dr Besant brought quality education to economically deprived sections of society. The Olcott Memorial High School is still active, and the Olcott Education Trust proposes to implement Annie Besant's vision of working for the sake of the work and not for monetary gain. Mrs Burnier remarked on Dr Besant's love for children and the caring attitude she extended towards all who approached her. She was especially helpful to those needing financial help for education. She was also concerned about animals. Mrs Burnier recounted a few incidents in the life of Dr Besant and stated that she had been a person of extraordinary gentleness combined with strength.

Dr Besant said of herself: 'I give myself without reserve, seeking nothing, asking nothing, hoping nothing for the separated self, content to be in the light or dark . . . my only wish to be what They need as an instrument for their mighty work, to fill whatever post is vacant in their household.'

## Prof. Rinpoche Visits Nairobi

Ven. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, for long Prime Minister of the Tibetan

Government-in-Exile and a Life Member of the TS, gave a public talk entitled 'Non-Violence', hosted by the Nairobi Lodge on 29 September. Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche stated that humankind has become more violent because of today's educational system. Comparison leads to competition, and right from a young age people are encouraged to compete. Competition makes us violent. Competition is to be found everywhere — in school, games, business, social standing, in our possessions (the type of house or car we have, jewellery), the way we dress, the places we visit. The urge to come out at the top makes one more violent. Competition leads to greed. Gandhiji said there is no end to greed; Ven. Rinpoche referred several times to Gandhiji's non-violent approach to life.

Ven. Rinpoche spoke of the relevance of the Theosophical Society which was founded to be the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood and to inculcate respect for all religions. Wars have been fought in the name of religion, the true nature of which has not been understood by those who profess their religions.

Two trees were planted in the Lodge garden by Ven. Rinpoche, one of the trees to welcome him to the Lodge and the other to commemorate fifty years of the official opening of the current premises of the Lodge. The Chairman of the Nairobi Lodge, Bro. Narendra Shah,



Tree Planting by Ven. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche



The President with workers at the ITC, Naarden, earlier this year

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welcomed the public with a recitation of the Golden Stairs, and Bro. Navin Shah, the General Secretary of the East and Central Africa Section, presented Ven. Rinpoche with a token of appreciation.

### The Netherlands

There were several activities over the past few months, all of which took place at the European Home of the TS, which is at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden. These included a Silent Retreat based on *The Voice of the Silence* (the Pāramitā-s); a Summer School of the Latin countries hosted by the ITC, with the theme 'Theosophy in Daily Life'; a seminar with Martin Leiderman entitled 'The Creation of the Cosmos as Described in the Stanzas of Dzyan'; and a talk by Ms Els Rijneker, the General Secretary, about H. P. Blavatsky which approached the Stanzas of the Cosmogogenesis in a meditative way. On 22 September, the Dutch Section contributed to the Meditation for Peace at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

### India

The Centenary of the founding of the Akola Lodge and the eighty-first Annual Session of the Marathi Theosophical Federation were held from 7 to 9 September. The International Vice-President, Mr M. P. Singhal, inaugurated the event and spoke on the innocence of children, illustrating his talk with many examples. Dr Ajay Hora, President of the Bombay Federation was the Guest of Honour and gave a talk on the medical

ethics of ancient India. Prof. C. A. Shinde, National Lecturer of the Indian Section, and Mr Ashok Lokhande, President of the Marathi Theosophical Federation, participated. About 110 members registered for the Conference.

### The School of the Wisdom

The School of the Wisdom will take place from 5 November 2012 to 1 February 2013 in Adyar. Prof. R. C. Tampi will conduct a session on 'The Secret Doctrine' from 5 to 23 November. Mr P. K. Jayaswal, currently a National Lecturer, will direct the next session from 26 November to 7 December on the theme 'The Science of Yoga'. From 10 to 14 December, Prof. C. A. Shinde will direct a session entitled 'The Science of Life'. From 9 January to 1 February 2013, the last session, 'With K-shna in the Battle of Life — Life Lessons from the *Bhagavadgītā*', will be conducted by Dr Ravi Ravindra, retired Professor of Comparative Religion and Physics, Dalhousie University, Canada.

For information about the School of the Wisdom classes, visit the TS website <http://www.ts-adyar.org>

The School of the Wisdom gives an opportunity to members to see various subjects afresh. This opportunity results from taking the time not only to study a little, but to be free from other preoccupations. Students can encounter great beauty and peace on the grounds, ponder over subjects and live in the silence if they can. ❖

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