



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.

Beauty and Goodness

RADHA BURNIER

IN Plato's works, Socrates is described as teaching the disciples by questioning them as to the meaning of words of fundamental importance, like love and beauty. As definitions were offered, he critically examined them and pointed out the fallacies in the conceptions leading to the definitions. Such a method and critical evaluation was also adopted by the Buddha and other teachers of ancient times.

Most of us, if we were asked to do so, would find it difficult to define such words as beauty and goodness, so as to take in the depth of implication and the true import of the terms. But an attempt along this direction can be extremely rewarding, enabling us to journey into fields of thought till now unknown and into a validity of experience which brooks no contradiction, for it is only meditative experience of the quality in question which makes it possible to give a true definition.

We will briefly try to examine what is art and what is the place of beauty in it. One could say that ordinarily art refers to creations by man intended to be beautiful. It is obvious that all that is beautiful is not art, for we do not refer to natural beauties such as the trees and the flowers, the sky and the stars, or the beauty of character in a human being or the loveliness of

innocence in a child as art. Art is the artificial creation of man as opposed to the works and wonders of nature.

In the museums of the world, many curious works find a place among objects of art — patches of colour jumbled up, a caricature of the human figure with an eye in the stomach, or a nose at the back of the head, and works of so-called sculpture which are incomprehensibly unattractive to all except the few. There is also music which sounds like noise, or shatters the nerves. A modern poet remarked:

He fiddles with the works of God
And makes them look uncommon odd.

In many of these cases, one may find an exhibition of ingenuity or skill and the desire for intellectual or emotional stimulation, resulting in ugliness, not beauty. A true work of art may show extraordinary skill, but in addition it has to arise from a state of mind which is aware of beauty and is able to communicate it to others. Where the quality of beauty is lacking, although there may be intellectual or moral satisfaction, the pleasure of the emotions, the fulfilment of self-expression or anything else, the activity or creation is not art.

Poetry has been described as 'lyrical

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intuition' — lyrical because it is imbued with feeling. Vālmiki, the first among poets in the Sanskrit tradition, was able to create his magnificent work of art, the epic *Rāmāyana*, when he was moved by a strong feeling for the sorrow of a bird which had lost its mate. The at-one-ment he experienced with the bird led him into a meditation out of which resulted the poem which has inspired and still inspires millions of people all over India. Such an outflow of sympathetic feeling can exist for even the inanimate things of Nature. It is possible in some way to enter into the very being of things.

To imagine things as they are for themselves is tantamount to imagining what they would be if they had an obscure consciousness of their own existence. Now we have only one way of thus imagining things from inside, and that is, to put ourselves inside them. (Souriau)

The possibility of putting ourselves 'inside' things and feeling as they do, is not limited to creatures which are akin to us, that is, other human beings. Even birds which sing in flight may seem akin to us, or a tree which grows and expands, enjoys the warmth of the sun or is buffeted by a storm. But it is possible to enter into the inward being even of a rock or stone, or the earth as it receives rain after a parched day.

We [can] project ourselves not merely into the forms of the tree, identifying our life with that of the slender shoots which swell and stretch forth, feeling in our soul the

delight of the branches which droop and poise deliciously in midair. We extend equally to lifeless things these feelings which lend them meaning. And by such feelings we transform the inert masses of a building into so many limbs of a living body, a body experiencing inner strains which we transport back into ourselves.

(Lotze)

So the artist has the capacity to feel from the inside. But as we all know, he can do this without being a thinker, without understanding what he does, and without manifesting a virtue he portrays. He may sing of a courageous soul in inspiring tones although 'he may not be endowed with great practical courage; he may even betray signs of timidity and cowardice'; but for the time being he feels the dignity of courage.

This 'lyrical intuition' or feeling of oneness is a limited form of goodness. It exists adulterated with a desire for fame or immortality, envy and jealousy, instability and insensitivity, and other traits commonly found in artists. The artistic temperament is well known to be volatile and uncontrolled. It is also a curious thing that an artist who sees and creates beauty in a particular object or field can be totally incapable of responding to beauty in other things or in another field. He can be quite insensitive to the charm of Nature. Even within a particular field, whether it be that of music, painting, or any other art, his response may be limited to a form or style to which he is accustomed.

We have to conclude that art arises out

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of seeing the truth of a thing from the inside, but it is also the product of a conditioned consciousness. The conditioned mind circumscribes or limits itself by identification with various experiences and experience-born desires. It is therefore selective in its approach to things, rejecting or ignoring some things, liking and embracing other things, or, in other words, reacting for or against according to the desires of the senses.

But neither the virtue of goodness nor the quality of beauty, in the highest sense, are selective. Plotinus said that virtue exists in the soul when the soul tends to unity. Shelley also spoke of this:

Let us recollect our sensations as children.
. . . We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt from ourselves. They seemed as it were to constitute one mass (or whole). There are some persons who in this respect are always children . . . [they] feel as if their nature were resolved into the surrounding universe or as if the surrounding universe were resolved into their being.

Such a childlike purity of consciousness that does not create barriers around itself, separating itself from others, is alone capable of realizing the universal and enduring quality of Beauty. Separateness is to circumscribe oneself. The circumscribed mind can only see circumscribed beauty. It desires, as Plato said, to express or immortalize itself in many ways, by leaving behind artistic or intellectual progeny, poems, songs or the constitutions of States.

But as long as the desire to attain

the One Beauty is envisaged as satisfied by the production of entities other than ourselves, there is imperfection, said Plato, for the desire which impels such productions is rooted in the pleasures of the circumscribed self. 'Pleasure is the greatest of impostors', to quote Plato again. The beauty that is known and created by the conditioned and limited mind, that chooses the objects with which it unites itself, has necessarily a perishable quality. The goodness such a mind knows is also limited to the moments of lyrical intuition. It is 'Beauty that is appended to folly', to quote Blake.

But the quality of Beauty as such, not merely confined to the products of art, is uncircumscribed and universal in nature. Ruskin said that it stands related to all things:

The new virtue which constitutes a thing beautiful is a certain cosmic quality, or, a power to suggest relation to the whole world, and so lift the object out of a pitiful individuality. . . . All beauty points at identity.

So Beauty may be described as the passage out of the limitations of individuality, out of the selectiveness of a conditioned self into the vastness of universal sympathy. Beauty is, therefore, liberty and love. It is to be free of the captivation of the senses and sense objects, and the lure of all perishable things. In such liberty, which is true sympathy for all, not for some selected objects only, there is the goodness which may be called love, which does not choose; it embraces all.

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For love and beauty and delight
There is no death, nor change; their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

(Shelley)

Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward
course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and
weak);

Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught that doth on time depend.

(Michelangelo)

He who would know beauty may study

musical harmony, the blending of colours,
the balance of forms, but he must not be
under the lure of these perishable forms,
or confine himself to them.

‘The good we get from art . . . is what
we become through it,’ said Oscar Wilde.
He who does not love beauty in all things
does not love it at all. The realization
of beauty in all things is itself goodness,
for it is the knowing of a universal truth.
So Beauty is the constant companion
of goodness.

‘The search for beauty is inseparable
from a life of purity, self-control and
tenderness’, to quote Mr C. Jinarājādāsa.

(Printed earlier in 1970)

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
Others will love, and we will teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

William Wordsworth
The Prelude, Bk. XIV, 11.444–54

The Future is Now

P. KRISHNA

WE could divide the world as a whole into two parts: the material world which is studied by science and the inner world of our consciousness which is mostly beyond science at present. If we look at the material world of space, time, matter and energy, which is studied in detail by science, we certainly find that there is tremendous order throughout the universe, that definite causes produce definite effects and these are governed by very definite laws. So, whatever may be the present condition, the future development of it is dictated by those laws and the only place where there is some uncertainty is in the subatomic world of elementary particles. The extent to which they deviate from certainty is also defined by science. Most of the time we are not dealing with subatomic particles, except in specialized laboratory experiments, so the laws are fairly deterministic.

Scientists have worked out most of these laws, physical, chemical and biological, governing both inanimate and animate matter. They are able to explain to a large extent the behaviour of the bodies of plants, animals and also human beings. If you start with different initial conditions

the development would be different, but it would be governed by the same laws. Science maintains that these laws are universal, they are eternal and on the basis of these assumptions they are able to trace the entire development of the universe. It is not yet completely accepted in all its details but the broad framework is reasonably certain, because it explains and even predicts so many observed facts correctly. There are of course situations in which there are multiple forces operating and then it becomes difficult to predict what will happen in the future but that does not mean that the laws break down or that the present does not shape the future.

Einstein says: 'Everything is determined by forces over which we have no control; it is determined for the insects as well as the stars, human beings, vegetables or cosmic dust. We all dance to a mysterious tune intoned from a distance by an invisible Pied Piper.' I think it is not entirely true of human beings. I think Einstein did not take into account the human consciousness, because if that was also all predetermined, then there would be no such thing as morality or immorality or right or wrong. If a tiger kills another

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animal it is just governed by its other instincts and there is no decision on its part. In the case of human beings the instincts have become tendencies. That is why when a dog barks at us we do not feel insulted, but when your boss barks at you, you jolly well feel insulted! This brings us to the question? is there such a thing as free will or not? Is there some freedom given to a human being or do the laws of Physics, Chemistry and Biology completely determine, not only our body but also our thoughts, our decisions and our behaviour?

The scientists themselves are saying that if the carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere goes beyond a certain limit, the consequent global warming will have such proportions that the polar caps will melt, the seas will get flooded; and there will be a major ecological catastrophe if we continue to live the way we are living at present. They have even predicted the date by which this will happen. Therefore they are urging that we should give up fossil fuels and stop contributing more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by using alternative sources of energy.

So while biological evolution is a fact and material evolution also seems to be a fact, is it true also of our consciousness and psyche? We need to examine that in greater detail. The scientists are studying biological evolution. They have been able to date the origin of different species and the period for which these have existed and described these developments in time. Biological evolution is supported by the study of fossils found in rocks and that

evidence cannot be refuted. So there is evolution in knowledge, there is evolution in the material world and there is biological evolution over long periods of time.

Is that so also in our psyche? Is the psychological state of a human being today significantly different from that of the primitive man or the man of, say, a thousand years ago? They were forming groups, they had attachments, they had ambitions, they had desires, they had fear, authority, and domination, and all of which is still there in human consciousness. After a thousand years have passed, what we desire now may be different from what we desired then, our groups may be now around big nations and not around tribes or clans, but we are still divided into groups. Each human being is still attached to his own group, working for the prosperity and betterment of that group and willing to exploit other groups for that purpose. Universal brotherhood has remained a noble idea propounded thousands of years ago but it has not become a fact. So it seems that psychologically we have not grown; there has been very little, if at all any, psychological evolution. Certain forms of manifestation of the ego or extreme forms of selfishness may have disappeared; colonialism and military occupation of other nations has more or less disappeared; but violence, war, rioting, crime, are very much there. Constantly the governments and the United Nations and other organizations are at pains trying to control the manifestation of this psychological state. That means whatever is our psychological state causes certain

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things in society to happen; those things do not change in society. So there are certain areas in which there has been hardly any development with time.

Let us take a few examples. If we look around ourselves we find that every human being has access to certain things, a certain amount of knowledge, of relationships, of money and so on, and beyond that are things which he does not have. Every one of us is standing on a line; on this side of the line are the things that he has access to, and beyond that are things that he does not have access to. Every human being is making a great effort to push that line and bring another object into this side of the line so that it becomes available for his pleasure or convenience. But that is what he was doing also ten years ago. So, psychologically, the whole of humanity seems to be in the same state: discontented with what we have and seeking something which we do not have. The unmarried man is looking for a wife and the married man is probably wanting to get rid of his! So the object of desire varies, but desire is still there.

Before starting out on his conquest of the world, Alexander went to Diogenes, who was known to be a very wise man in Greece, to take his blessings. He said: 'I am venturing out into the world and will begin with the conquest of Iran and the Middle East.' So Diogenes asked him: 'What will you do after that?' Alexander said: 'Well, after that I will conquer Afghanistan.' 'What will you do after that?' and Alexander replied: 'I will conquer

India.' Diogenes again asked: 'And what will you do after that?' So Alexander said: 'I will conquer China.' 'What will you do after that?' 'Well, then may be I will come back home.' So Diogenes asked him: 'What prevents you from doing that now?' Like Alexander, we are also ambitious. Our society is promoting ambition, competitiveness, and all the consequences of desire. When we have desire for something which we do not have and are working ambitiously to get it, then either we will get it or we will not be able to get it. If we are not able to get it, that will produce frustration, a state of depression. If we are able to fulfil our desire there is temporarily a sense of achievement which feeds the ego. Then there follows a period of stagnation, of low energy, because the desire is gone and it was energizing you. This is so until a new desire is born which then energizes you. And this cycle repeats itself!

Watch that in yourself and all the people around you, and you will see that this is the normal human state. So all the consequences of desire and ambition have been there, from the time of Alexander till today! Therefore, in those respects, society has not changed. Groupism, fighting, war, building armaments for defence, all that which arises out of the psychological state of dividing 'we people' from 'other people', continues.

We have not understood on what basis our mind defines who 'we' are and who 'they' are. Why do certain differences turn into a division and create hatred, whereas other differences are perceived only as

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differences. For example we have not had a war between tall people and short people, at least not so far. We are not that stupid! But we have had war between one religious group and another, between one national group and another, and so on. Human beings have not been able to understand this psychological process which converts differences into division and which therefore destroys brotherhood. Because when you hate somebody and you feel he is your rival you cannot feel brotherly towards him. We may talk of universal brotherhood but so long as the mind is not free of this identification with the 'me' and the 'mine', brotherhood will never become a fact. Indeed it has never become a fact; it has remained an objective even in the Theosophical Society. Simply believing in it does not make it into a reality.

So, are we psychologically, inwardly, in our consciousness, significantly different from the man of one thousand years ago? It does not appear to be so. In that sense, psychologically the future is now. Because if we are psychologically the same as the man of a thousand years ago, then another ten thousand years can go by and if we survive, we will continue to be the same. For the same reasons for which we have not changed in one thousand years we will not be able to change in the next thousand.

This means time does not help to change the psychological state of a human being. In that sense the future is now and we cannot depend on time for change. Transformation of consciousness requires

a mutation which is not a time process. What does that mean? It means there is causation in consciousness which does not change gradually with time. All these negative emotions, like selfishness, competitiveness, rivalry, enmity, hatred, anger, jealousy, sorrow, etc., result from certain illusions in our mind and unless those illusions are ended they will not go away. This is what the Buddha pointed out more than two thousand years ago. He gave three psychological laws like the scientists have the three laws of Newton. The first law is that 'sorrow exists'.

This is a statement of an observed fact. If we look at human consciousness we observe that there is a lot of psychological suffering which human beings go through. The second law says, it has cause: ignorance as illusion is the cause of sorrow. The third law was the result of his own experiments and learning. He said the cause can be eliminated. It is because the cause lies in illusion that it can be eliminated. If it were an organic cause, it cannot be eliminated. You cannot get rid of bodily pain which is a biological reaction built into the body; but emotional, psychological suffering, is born out of illusion and can therefore be ended. Illusion has no existence in nature; therefore it is not governed by the laws of nature. It is something constructed by human thought and imagination. Only the human consciousness is capable of that; the animal is not capable of it. That is why you do not find animals creating war; you do not find a tiger decimating other species and destroying them.

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Illusion can be ended by discerning what is true and what is false. That is why Theosophy says, 'Truth is the highest religion': 'Truth' as a perception, not the idea of the truth or the knowledge of the truth which is easy to get. You can read Buddha's book and books written on the Buddha and become a Professor of Buddhist philosophy, but that will not transform your consciousness. The Professor of Buddhist philosophy has the same consciousness as you and I. He has sorrow, he has fear, anxiety, and he has ambition; his psychological state is not different from that of others. What was different about Jesus or the Buddha was that they actually underwent a transformation of consciousness. For that, what is necessary is not just agreement with an idea or an opinion but an actual perception, like when we perceive the danger of fire or the danger of a truck coming towards us. Then you do not need any argument to move away from it!

Mr C. W. Leadbeater wrote an article saying no engineer ever makes a model or a plan which assumes that water will flow up the hill because he is so clear that the model would not work; it will break down. But when we listen to religious discourses we find people making all kinds of noble statements when their life shows they live just the contrary. That means it is not clear to them; they are just indulging in ideation, in conceptualization at the level of thought. It will not become an actuality until they perceive the truth of it for themselves. The religious quest is for coming upon that realization, which

means sensing the danger directly and not through argument or agreement. Truth at the level of ideation is just mental property; property can be accumulated but it does not transform consciousness. Realization of the truth means it becomes real for you and is no longer an idea. That is actually the essence of the religious quest which is the quest for wisdom, as distinct from the quest for knowledge. There is very little wisdom in a mind that lives with all kinds of illusions, for it is living in an imaginary world of its own creation and is not really in contact with the real world of Nature.

Let us examine the nature of these illusions in order to see the truth of this. One finds there is the immense problem of female foeticide; people are killing the female child either before it is born or soon after it is born. Why are the females disappearing, producing an imbalance which will eventually have disastrous consequences? Men will not find women to marry and that will lead to all kinds of violence, which has already started to happen. What are the illusions behind all this? If you examine it, you will find that we have all kinds of false notions in our society just because we have accepted them without questioning. We accept that because everybody around us believes in it. An Indian thinks his children must marry only within his caste; and that it is his responsibility to get his daughters married within the caste and the latest by the age of twenty-five. In his caste he may have to pay a large amount of dowry in order to get a husband for his daughter.

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Because he accepts all these notions he feels that the birth of a daughter is a great burden on him whereas the birth of a son is an asset as he will look after the whole family in the future. The son will belong to his own family, whereas the girl will go away to another family after marriage. All these appear to him to be facts though they are just constructs of the human mind without any reality in Nature. Therefore, they are all illusions.

Somebody introduced casteism in India, perhaps five thousand years ago. It is mentioned even in the *Gītā*. It may not have been in the form it has today but what is now in society is the reality; what it was before five thousands years, we do not know and it is no use speculating about that. The fact is this is how it is functioning now and it is creating a lot of discrimination, injustice and cruelty. So, can we not free ourselves from it? It is just something attributed to the child when it is born; it has no existence in Nature. When it is born, it is just a human child: it is neither Brāhmana nor Śudra nor Christian nor Hindu; all these are imposed upon the child by society and our mind accepts all this. Therefore an Indian feels bound by all this. It is because of this he is killing his own daughters. If only we realize that we do not have to accept all this, we can break through this as it is false. But the average man is not aware that all these illusions in his mind are actually the cause behind the killing of his own child. The natural instinct which even an animal has is to protect the child, to love the child, not to endanger the child. In fact man

works very hard to collect a dowry for his child because he thinks that is good for her. This is the nature of illusion: that the man who is in illusion is not aware that he is in illusion.

So all this fear and injustice and sorrow arises just out of illusions in the mind.

That is an example of what the Buddha taught: that we are the authors of our own sorrow. We think that the sorrow comes to us from outside. We have not learnt to look at ourselves and ask ourselves why this sorrow has come, from what illusion in our mind? Illusion means I am taking something to be true when it is not true, not a fact in nature. Or I am giving tremendous importance to something which is not really important.

But the man in illusion is not aware that he is in illusion. That man is you and me. We may be able to see the illusion of somebody else but that does not mean that we do not have illusion. Just as that man who is giving a dowry for his daughter and endangering his child, is not aware that he is in illusion, you and I are also not aware of the illusions we have — unless we examine our own feelings, watch from where they arise and if it is a negative feeling arising out of an illusion, we end that illusion. That is the real Theosophical quest. Otherwise, we are not free. You may believe in universal brotherhood, you may believe in this or you may believe in that, what difference does it make?

I will give you a question to think about: if a man is selfish, violent, greedy and hateful, what difference does it make whether he is a Hindu, a Muslim, a

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Christian, a Buddhist or an atheist? And if a man is wise, kind and generous, non-violent, large-hearted, compassionate, what difference does it make whether he is a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist or an atheist? So why do we give such tremendous importance to the affiliation of a human being?

I read an interesting parable. It reveals how this kind of classification of human beings into different religions and different castes, produces absurd conclusions. Jesus Christ had never seen a football match so he asked Saint Peter: 'Can you take me to see a football match?' St Peter said: 'Yes sir, I will arrange it.' And he took him to see a football match in Ireland, where the team of the Catholics was playing a match against the Protestants. Jesus started watching the game and felt very interested as he had never seen a game of soccer or football before. After a little while the Catholics made the first goal and he felt very excited and said, 'Hurrah!', threw his cap in the air and clapped to show his delight. Then the game began again and again he watched it with great interest and this time it was the Protestants who made a goal. Again he was very excited, said, 'Hurrah!', clapped and threw his hat up in the air. Seeing this, a man sitting behind him was puzzled by his behaviour. He touched Jesus on his shoulder and said, 'Just a minute sir, which side are you on?' Jesus said, 'I am not on any side, I am just enjoying the game!' So the man said: 'Ah! An atheist!'

We continue with these divisions, with ambitions and desires, as an inevitable

part of life because we have not examined seriously the consequences of it and do not know whether things can be done without ambition and desire, just for the love of it. So the mind continues with these illusions and therefore all the divisions and other consequences continue in society and there is no fundamental change. In that sense, the future is now. The only way it can actually change both in our personal life and therefore in our society is if we erased these illusions from our mind; but the difficulty is that we are not aware of our illusions. Those illusions which we know to be illusions do not create disorder: fairy tales, for example. We know that they are not true and when you know they are only imaginary, you can indulge in them for fun. Similarly you can have fine poetry and metaphors and all such imaginary things, so long as you do not mistake them for reality. If you mistake them for reality it becomes an illusion and creates disorder in the consciousness. As Theosophists it is important for us to come upon a learning mind which discerns what is true from what is false. That means whenever I experience a negative emotion, whether it is sorrow, fear, jealousy, anger or hatred, I could ask myself: 'Krishna, where did that come from, where am I approaching life wrongly? What illusion in my mind has given rise to this negative emotion?'

It is not so important to get rid of the external cause as it is to end the inner causation in our psyche. We have been trained to deal always with the external cause and therefore the inner causation continues.

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The inner learning is far more important as it frees us for ever. The sorrow is not looked upon as a great misfortune but as an opportunity to learn about myself.

I am the author of my own sorrow, and therefore I alone can undo it. It is arising from my own thinking, my own assumptions and if I discover the consequences of it the illusion breaks and therefore there is the possibility of a real change. This change will not happen with time; it does not happen gradually. Either you have perceived the truth or you have not perceived the truth. One does not come upon twenty percent of the truth, and then fifty percent, and gradually rise to hundred percent, like going spirally up a hill. Truth enters the mind like a sudden revelation, a deep perception, which creates a mutation in consciousness; when that happens you are set free. The problem ends, so there is no need of trying to control it. We need to control the problem only so long as it is still arising, which means the cause has not been eliminated.

So, wars in the world exist because their cause has not been eliminated. Look at the situation in the Middle East between the Arabs and the Jews. The Arabs tell their children that Jews are our enemy and the Jews tell their children that the Arabs are their enemy. When the old people die the children are infected with this enmity right from birth. So how will that division due to the hatred between these two

communities end? It has not ended in the last sixty-five years; the situation remains exactly the same. Every time the conflict flares up, the United Nations goes there to create some dialogue, make some compromise, but each time the compromise breaks down. Surely there is a deeper causation behind it and as long as we do not get rid of that causation the effect will continue to arise. The fact is that there is no great difference between the Arab and the Jew. They think so because their religion, their beliefs, their attachments, their food habits and so on, are different. But these are very superficial things; deep down they have much in common. They have the same instincts, the same problems of desire, jealousy, ambition, fear and sorrow because they are both human beings. They feel very different only because they give tremendous importance to these superficial differences, and that is an illusion.

The Buddha taught that the truth is that the other man is yourself. If it does not appear so, it is because the mind is caught in all these illusions which divide us and as long as those illusions persist there is no change in the psychological state, there is no psychological evolution; therefore the future is now. There is real change only when we perceive for ourselves what is true and what is false. That is why the quest for truth is the highest religion and the learning mind is the real religious mind. ✧

To finish the moment, to find the journey's end in every step of the road, to live the greatest number of good hours, is wisdom.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Eternal Now

MARCOS RESENDE

IT is always a great joy to be present at the International Convention, breathing the spiritual atmosphere in Adyar and living moments of communion and fellowship with brothers and sisters from all over the world.

The theme of this Convention, ‘The Present shapes the Future’, is a call to action and makes us reflect on how we live and act. The topic, ‘The Eternal Now’, is fundamentally important for us to understand time and its implications, which is vital to spiritual transformation and the need to act now.

In general, we are slaves of time. Our life, in most cases, faces outwards, to the fulfilment of external commitments and challenges. From the moment we wake up until the time we go to sleep, we live in a perpetual coming-to-be, in search of fulfilment, satisfaction and success in the material world. When we realize that material things matter, at best, to this life only, we begin to seek the spiritual life as something that supposedly would be more lasting. We often use for this search the same concrete mind, which is usually acquisitive and a slave of time.

Does time exist? Life in the material

world is created, maintained and destroyed through time. Nothing survives that is related to time; even the planet — according to Theosophical literature — once its cycle has ended, is finite. For external accomplishments in life, we need time. I plant today to harvest tomorrow, which I will be able to do if I am still alive in this physical dimension. If I want to build a house, I need time. If I want to learn a new language, I also devote time for this purpose. This is the chronological time that, according to Krishnamurti, is a fact and, therefore, we should organize our material life in accordance with it.

But in the world of consciousness, in the spiritual world, does time exist? Master KH, in *The Mahatma Letters*, says that ‘no effort is ever lost’ and that ‘to the occultist there is no past, present or future, but an Eternal Now’. The assertion that ‘no effort is ever lost’ is a call to action, in the Eternal Now.

Understanding time, not just intellectually, but in its deeper reality, which consists in the mode of manifestation of the Universe, is something profoundly transformative.

The only time in which life can be

Mr Marcos Resende is General Secretary of the Brazilian Section of the TS. Talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, in December 2012.

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manifested is the active present. A time machine, which would allow us to go to the past or to the future, interfering in events beyond the present moment, only exists in fiction. Clairvoyants' searches allow access to the Universal Mind, to the *ākāśic* records or to what the Logos designs for its manifestation, but there is no way to express life out of the present moment. Life is always now. Therefore, action must be now.

Human beings in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been developing the concrete mind to a point which generates fantastic technology, but have not been able to, through time, solve their own problems, physical or psychological, such as those relating to poverty and suffering.

This same concrete mental capacity, misused and misunderstood, has stolen from the human being the sense of the Sacred, which can only be perceived in the active present, now.

Thought creates tomorrow and yesterday, but life is now. Yesterday exists only as memory or as physical or psychological results of actions taken. As already said, everything in the physical world is done and is destroyed through time and there is no way not to suffer the effects of past actions. But in the world of Freed Consciousness, time does not exist, but only the Eternal Now.

The present shapes the future. This is the theme of our Convention. For material achievements, this is an absolute truth, that should be carefully considered in relation to others, because ethically and

spiritually, the ends do not justify the use of incorrect means for the achievement of external goals.

For the spiritual life, in which the becoming is a misleading illusion, whether I move towards either liberation or slavery also depends on what I do now, on the intensity of my interest in discovering the truth at every moment, seeing things as they are and not as they are projected by thought.

Attention means to be awake now. Travelling in thought is carelessness, distraction and lack of tuning, of perceiving the Sacred that is always here and now.

When it is said that external life is *Māyā*, or illusion, this means that the material reality is always transitory, consisting of a testing ground for the manifestation and awakening of the consciousness. Therefore, how we do things and how we react to events, in most cases, is much more important than the results that we can obtain in the material world. In external life, which is transitory, we are always building castles of sand that, with the passage of time, are naturally shattered. But if we devote our energy, in the active present, only to the achievement of external goals, we are moving towards the slavery and attachment to things that are by nature transitory. They will be undone at any time, either by the movement of life, or by the forced abandonment of all external things occasioned by death.

We must understand that life consists in the Eternal manifesting itself in the transitory. Both are within us and in everything. Knowing how to distinguish

The Eternal Now

between what is eternal and what is transitory is a synonym for wisdom. The manifestation of the Eternal always occurs in the Eternal Now.

If, by realizing the transitory nature of everything that is external, we devote our energies to free inquiry and a search for the truth, in the little things in life, in relationships, as well as in trying to understand the deepest mysteries of the universe, we create conditions which shape a future of freedom, growth, fulfillment and happiness.

We must know ourselves, at every moment, so we can understand that which has no form or substance and cannot be fully expressed by any name, but which gives meaning to life, making us feel deeply tuned and touched by the feeling of the Sacred, which is, at the same time, love, wisdom, peace and harmony, here and now.

When we learn to live in the now, we take a great weight off our backs and we start to allow life to flow naturally, with wisdom and harmony. Life is always much wiser than us, and our action, in the Eternal Now, must be attuned to the Universal Will. We need to trust in Life so we can be useful instruments of Universal Consciousness, surrendering ourselves to it.

How to do this tuning? How to subordinate our personal will to the Universal Will? This demands submitting our thinking to the heart.

The intellect, the creator of duality, is not able to give the suitable musical note or tune to the action if it is not inspired

and guided by the heart, where *buddhi* manifests itself. For the heart to flourish, we need much care, attention and affection towards all things and all beings.

We must realize how narrow our intellect is. Without the light of *buddhi*, it tends naturally to coldness, to self-interest and to egocentrism. It is important for practical life, but totally inappropriate for the spiritual life, serving merely for its expression and the faithful execution of its designs. Love can only come to us when there is an absence of time, when our consciousness is no longer caught in the mesh of thought.

Learning is endless and always takes place in the active present, and not as the accumulation of information or knowledge, but through the revelation of all the nuances and idiosyncrasies of our psychological being which, when exposed to impartial observation, reveals itself to be irrelevant and insignificant. This simple observation of life, of ourselves, of people and relationships, without any kind of judgement, serenely reveals the nature of things and brings Wisdom.

Our presence in the world is a dive into matter. We are well aware that we are passing by here to learn and to perform good works, whether physical, intellectual or spiritual, while being directed to the next, to the whole. We must act in the present in order to produce works not for ourselves, but as a beneficial legacy for future generations. The Theosophical Society itself, for example, is a precious heritage that we have received from the Masters and brothers who worked in the

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past, not only for our benefit, but primarily as an opportunity for service. We must act in order to pass it on to future generations as a living and healthy institution, which can bring together people with an open mind and a pure heart, so that those who come can go even further, doing more extensive and comprehensive work for the benefit of mankind. If we do not act now, decisively in this direction, probably there will be a strong tendency towards the crystallization of our institution, which can lose the capacity to be an important instrument in favour of evolution.

Our mission, however, does not consist solely of achievements. The discovery of the Sacred, here and now, presupposes the perception that we, personally, are nothing. The feeling of self-importance is the most futile and misleading illusion of all. But only from the perception of this feeling and its insignificance, can arise a deep humility for being nothing, but a light

feather in the hands of the whole.

Let us wake up, brothers, life is now, always now. At this very moment, we can put aside all that is personal and subject to time, and offer ourselves in communion, as a group of people of goodwill, who want to subordinate their small personal lives to the universal will. At this present moment, which is sacred, we can channel the high blessings derived from the ultimate source of energy and pour them into the world, with all our love and sincere wishes that all beings may regenerate, recovering the awareness that they are cups to receive the divine life, which is the same in everything and everyone.

Internally united, let us be this centre of power, love and peace, which purifies and elevates our personal lives, and let us be channels for the world's unconditional love poured out by the Holy Beings who live for the benefit of humanity.

Peace to all beings. ✧

If we once realize that behind the changing marks of Time the Eternal is hidden then however alien or even repellent the Spirit of the Age may at first sight seem to be, we shall accept it as the present revelation of the One, and seek to learn its meaning instead of fighting against it as a foe.

Annie Besant

The Study of *The Secret Doctrine*

MARY ANDERSON

THE study of Mme Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* is by no means easy. Ianthe Hoskins, who was a well-known theosophist and an excellent teacher, gave many suggestions in her booklet, *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy*, which may help beginners — and others.

She quotes extensively, sometimes in abridged form, from *The Secret Doctrine* as well as citing in full the notes of one of Mme Blavatsky's students, Commander Bowen (*The Secret Doctrine and its Study*). I shall in part quote and in part try to summarize some of these quotations or their contents.

I. 'ONE FUNDAMENTAL LAW' stresses the unity of the inmost nature of everything and every being.¹

II. 'FOUR BASIC IDEAS':

(a) 'The fundamental unity of all existence.' There is only one being, which has two aspects: positive (consciousness) and negative (substance or matter).

(b) 'There is no dead matter.' Every single atom is alive.

(c) 'Man is the microcosm', all the hierarchies of the Heavens being within

him, but there is really no Microcosm or Macrocosm but ONE EXISTENCE.

(d) The Hermetic Axiom: 'As is the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great, so is the Small; as it is above, so it is below; there is but ONE LIFE AND LAW, and he that worketh it is ONE.' Nothing is high . . . [or] low in the Divine Economy.²

III. 'THREE FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITIONS' (with which the student should be familiar before undertaking the study of *The Secret Doctrine*):

1. 'An Omnipotent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE, on which all speculation is impossible', since it is beyond the reach of thought, 'unthinkable and unspeakable', the Rootless Root of all that was, is or will be. This principle has two aspects: Absolute Abstract Space (subjectivity) and Absolute Abstract Motion (Unconditioned Consciousness) — the Great Breath.

This is Absolute Being and Non-Being, the One Reality, the unmanifested Logos.

2. 'The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane, periodically "the playground of numberless Universes

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incessantly manifesting and disappearing”.’ The law of periodicity . . . ebb and flow . . . day and night, life and death, sleeping and waking, etc.

3. ‘The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul . . . and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation . . . in accordance with cyclic and karmic law . . . ’ passing through every elemental form . . . ‘ascending . . . from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest Archangel . . . The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric Philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit . . . ’³

IV. ‘SUMMING UP — SIX NUMBERED ITEMS’ (to follow the study of the Three Fundamental Propositions)

1. ‘The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages . . . recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs . . . an uninterrupted record, covering thousands of generation of seers, whose respective experiences were made to test and verify the traditions . . . of the teachings of higher and exalted Beings . . . How did they do so? . . . by checking, testing, and verifying . . . the traditions of old . . . No vision of one Adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions . . . of other Adepts, and by centuries of experience.’

2. ‘The fundamental law in that system . . . is the One Homogeneous Divine SUBSTANCE-PRINCIPLE, the One Rad-

ical Cause . . . the omnipresent Reality, impersonal, because it contains all and everything. . . . It is latent in every atom in the universe, and is the universe itself.’

3. ‘The universe is the periodical manifestation of this unknown Absolute Essence . . . neither Spirit nor Matter, but both. . . . One in reality, yet two [in manifestation].’

4. ‘The universe, with everything in it, is called MĀYĀ, because all is temporary therein, from the ephemeral life of a fire-fly to that of the sun. Compared to the eternal immutability of the ONE . . . the universe . . . must be necessarily, in the mind of a philosopher, no better than a will-o’-the-wisp. Yet the Universe is real enough to the conscious beings in it, which are as unreal as it is itself.’

5. ‘Everything in the universe . . . is CONSCIOUS . . . with a consciousness of its own kind . . . There is no such thing as . . . “dead” . . . matter . . . ’

6. ‘The universe is worked and *guided*, from *within outwards*. As above, so it is below; as in heaven, so on earth; and man, the microcosm and miniature copy of the macrocosm, is the living witness to this Universal Law . . . The whole Cosmos is guided, controlled and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings . . . devoid of the feeling of personality . . . “perfected” . . . “They have no individuality” . . . are conscious of no . . . distinct separateness . . . ’

‘Every so-called spirit is either a *disembodied or a future man*. As from the highest Archangel . . . down to the last conscious “Builder” (the inferior class of

Spiritual Entities), all such are *men*, having lived aeons ago . . . so the inferior . . . Elementals are all *future* men . . . a Spirit endowed with intelligence . . . must have been a *man* . . .’

‘The whole order of Nature evinces a progressive march towards a *higher life*’.⁴

V. ‘FIVE PROVEN FACTS’:

1. ‘The Secret Doctrine [i.e. Theosophy] teaches no Atheism, except in the sense [of] the Sanskrit word *nāstika*, a rejection of *idols*, including every anthropomorphic god [i.e., God in the image of man]. In this sense every occultist is a Nāstika.

2. ‘It [the Secret Doctrine] admits a Logos, or a collective “Creator” of the Universe; a *Demiurgos* [artificer], in the sense implied when one speaks of an architect as the “creator” of an edifice, whereas that architect has never touched one stone of it, but, furnishing the plan, has left all the manual labour to the masons; in our case the plan was furnished by the Ideation of the universe, and the constructive labour was left to the Hosts of intelligent Powers and Forces. But that *Demiurgos* is no *personal* Deity – i.e., an imperfect, *extra-cosmic God*, but only an aggregate of . . . (certain divine) forces.’

3. The Dhyān-Chohans [Lords of Light, cf. archangels] are . . . composed of (a) the irrational *brute energy* inherent in matter, and (b) the intelligent Soul, or cosmic Consciousness, which directs and guides that energy, and which is the *Dhyān Chohan*ic Thought reflecting the *Ideation of the Universal Mind* . . . neither

the collective Host (*Demiurgos*), nor any of the working Powers individually, are proper subjects for divine honours or worship. All are entitled to the grateful reverence of humanity . . . man ought to be ever striving to help the divine evolution of *Ideas*, by becoming to the best of his ability a *co-worker with Nature* . . . The ever unknowable and incognizable *Kāraṇa* alone, the *Causeless Cause* of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart — invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through the “still small voice” of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls, making their Spirit the sole mediator between them and the Universal Spirit, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*.’

4. ‘Matter is eternal . . . [the] physical basis, for the One Infinite Universal Mind. . . there is no inorganic or “dead” matter in Nature . . . the material of the world is in its essence eternal, but . . . before . . . “becoming”, it is in a passive . . . condition.’

5. ‘The universe was evolved out of its ideal plan . . . in the unconsciousness of . . . Parabrahman. . . [cf.] the “Ideas” of Plato . . . an infinite and eternal Energy, from which all things proceed . . .’⁵

VI. THE SECRET DOCTRINE: CONCLUSION

Evolution in general, events, mankind, and everything else in Nature, proceeds

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in cycles. We have spoken of seven Races, five of which have nearly completed their earthly career . . . Every Root-Race, with its sub-races . . . was entirely distinct from its preceding and succeeding race. This will be objected to . . . that man descends from the same unknown ancestor as the ape . . . is logically impossible . . . The Secret Doctrine . . . confronts the purely speculative hypotheses of modern Science, based upon the experience and exact observations of barely a few centuries, with the unbroken tradition and records of its Sanctuaries.

‘Our general proposition will not be accepted. It will be said that whatever forms man has passed through in the long prehistoric Past, there are no more changes for him . . . in the future. Hence our Sixth and Seventh Root-Races are fictions. . . . How *do you* know? Your experience is limited to a few thousand years, to less than a day in the whole age of Humanity . . . Meanwhile, such is the prophecy of the Secret Books and their no uncertain statements: Since the beginning of the Atlantean Race many million years have passed, yet we find the last of the Atlanteans . . . mixed up with the Āryan element, 11,000 years ago. This shows the enormous overlapping of one race over the race which succeeds it . . . Even now . . . the new Race and Races are preparing to be formed . . . In America . . . the transformation . . . has already silently commenced . . . the germs of the *Sixth* sub-race . . . that race which must succeed to the present European or fifth sub-race . . . After this, in about 25,000

years, they will launch into preparations for the seventh sub-race; until, in consequence of cataclysms — the first series of those which must one day destroy Europe . . . the Sixth Root-Race will have appeared. . . . The Fifth will overlap the Sixth Race for many hundreds of millenniums . . . just as the Fourth overlapped our Āryan race, and the Third had overlapped the Atlanteans.’

‘The final cataclysm will be preceded by many smaller submersions and destructions both by wave and volcanic fires . . . there will be no more Americans . . . no more, in fact, than Europeans; for they will now have become a *new race, and many new nations*. Yet the Fifth will not die, but survive for a while: overlapping the new Race . . . [becoming] transformed with it . . . the Sixth [Root-Race] will be rapidly growing out of its bond of matter, and even of flesh.

‘Thus it is the mankind of the New world — one by far the senior of our Old one . . . whose mission and Karma it is, to sow the seeds for a forthcoming, grander and far more glorious Race than any of those we know of at present. The Cycles of Matter will be succeeded by Cycles of Spirituality and a fully developed mind . . . the majority of the future mankind will be composed of glorious Adepts . . .’⁶

VII *THE SECRET DOCTRINE and its Study* (Notes by Commander Bowen):

‘*The Secret Doctrine* is only quite a small fragment of the Esoteric Doctrine . . . as much as can be received by the World during this coming century. “The

The Study of *The Secret Doctrine*

World” means Man living in the Personal Nature . . . She [HPB] implies unmistakably that another may well find knowledge in it which she does not possess herself. . . . She is telling us without a doubt not to anchor ourselves to her as the final authority, nor to anyone else, but to depend altogether on our own widening perceptions.

‘Reading the *SD* page by page as one reads any other book (she says) will only end in confusion. The first thing to do, even if it takes years, is to get some grasp of the “Three Fundamental Principles” . . . Follow that up by study of the . . . *Summing Up* to vol. I. Then . . . the *Preliminary Notes* and the *Conclusion* (vol. II).

‘There is no such thing as a future “coming” of race. “There is neither COMING nor PASSING, but eternal BECOMING” . . . The Fourth Root Race is still alive. So are the Third and Second and . . . First . . . Their manifestations . . . are present . . . So likewise the Sixth . . . and the Seventh, and even people of the coming ROUNDS. . . . from even the Sixth Sub-Race . . . She hinted at “dangers and delusions” coming through ideas that the New Race had dawned definitely on the World. . . . the duration of a Sub-Race . . . coincides with that of the Sidereal Year . . . about 25,000 years.

‘She says: “If one imagines that one is going to get a satisfactory picture of the constitution of the Universe from the *SD*, one will get only confusion from its study. It is not meant to give any such final verdict on existence, but to LEAD

TOWARDS THE TRUTH. . . . See in study a means of exercising and developing the mind never touched by other studies.

‘Let the mind hold fast . . . to the following ideas:

‘(a) THE FUNDAMENAL UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE . . . different from . . . a nation or an army . . . united . . . The teaching is . . . that existence is ONE THING, not any collection of things . . . Fundamentally, there is ONE BEING . . . [that] has two aspects, positive [Spirit or CONSCIOUSNESS] and negative [SUBSTANCE]. . . This Being is the Absolute . . . there is nothing outside it. It is ALL-BEING . . . ONE EXISTENCE . . . REALITY.’

Commander Bowen said this is difficult to grasp. HPB: ‘Theosophy is for those who can think, or . . . drive themselves to think, not [for] mental sluggards.’

‘The Atom, the Man, the God . . . are each separately as well as collectively . . . Absolute Being . . . This idea must be held in the background of the mind to form the basis for every conception . . . from [the] study . . . the idea of SEPARATION supervenes, and the study loses its value. . .

‘(b) The second idea to hold fast to is THERE IS NO DEAD MATTER. Every last atom is alive . . . every atom of substance . . . [is] itself a LIFE.

‘(c) Man is the MICROCOSM . . . all the Hierarchies of the Heavens exist within him. But . . . there is neither Macrocosm nor Microcosm but ONE EXISTENCE.

‘(d) The Great Hermetic Axiom [see above, II(d)].’⁷

This is a fatiguing mental exercise — calling for ‘the carving out of “new brain

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paths”. . . . If forced injudiciously it may do serious physical harm to the brain. This . . . is . . . Jñāna Yoga.’ Mental pictures form but then grow dull and are discarded.

But one must work on. No picture can represent the Truth. The mind and its pictures will be transcended and the learner enters ‘the World of NO FORM’. ✧

References

1. *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 2005, p. 9.
2. *Idem.*, pp. 13–15.
3. *Idem.*, pp. 19–24.

4. *Idem.*, pp. 29–38.
5. *Idem.*, pp. 41–45.
6. *The Secret Doctrine*, TPH, Adyar, 7th edn., 3rd Reprint, 2010, II. 443–46.
7. *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy*, pp. 76–83.

The higher nature in man always seeks for something which transcends itself and yet is its deepest truth; which claims all its sacrifice, yet makes this sacrifice its own recompense. This is man’s dharma, man’s religion, and man’s self is the vessel which is to carry this sacrifice to the altar.

Rabindranath Tagore

Work for the Common Cause

(Extract from HPB's message to the American Section, 1889)

H. P. BLAVATSKY

MANY are the energetic members of the Theosophical Society who wish to work and work hard. But the price of their assistance is that all the work must be done in their way and not in anyone else's way. And if this is not carried out they sink back into apathy or leave the Society entirely, loudly declaring that they are the only true Theosophists. Or, if they remain, they endeavour to exalt their own method of working at the expense of all other earnest workers. This is fact, but it is not Theosophy. There can be no other end to it than that the growth of the Society will soon be split up into various sects.

Is this prospect one to look forward to for the Theosophical Society? Is this 'Separateness' consonant with the united Altruism of Universal Brotherhood? Is this the teaching of our noble MASTERS? Brothers and Sisters, it is in your hands to decide whether it shall be realized or not. You work and work hard. But to work properly in our Great Cause it is necessary to forget all personal differences of opinion as to how the work is to be carried on. Let each of us work in his own way and not endeavour to force our ideas of work upon our neighbours. Remember how the Initiate Paul warned his correspondents against the attitude of

sectarianism they took up in the early Christian Church: 'I am of Paul, I of Apollos', and let us profit by the warning. Theosophy is essentially unsectarian, and work for it forms the entrance to the Inner life. But none can enter there save the man himself in the highest and truest spirit of Brotherhood, and any other attempt at entrance will either be futile or he will lie blasted at the threshold.

But Karma will reconcile all our differences of opinion. A strict account of our actual work will be taken and the 'wages' earned will be recorded to our credit. But as strict an account will be taken of the work which anyone, by indulging in personal grievances, may have hindered his neighbours from doing. Think you it is a light thing to hinder the force of the Theosophical Society, as represented in the person of any of its leaders, from doing its appointed work? So surely as there is a Karmic power behind the Society will that power exact the account for its hindrance, and he is a rash and ignorant man who opposes his puny self to it in the execution of its appointed task.

Thus, then, 'Union is Strength'; and for every reason private differences must be sunk in united work for our Great Cause.

Core Teachings of Buddhism

BINAY KRISHNA

‘**T**HAT we the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrows, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the TS to represent the embodiment of selfishness, the refuge of the few, no thought of them for the many, is a strange idea, my brother’, thus wrote The Mahachohan, about whom it is said that the future lies before him like an open page (C. Jinarājadāsa, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series). Such an eloquent statement by the Mahachohan should carry great significance to us Theosophists to study and emulate the teachings in our life.

Buddhism can be distinguished from other traditions and philosophical schools by four ‘seals’. These are the marks or characteristics of Buddhism.

The first of these states that all conditioned things are impermanent and transient. This we know intimately as we watch ourselves grow older. Impermanence is not limited to the eventual wearing out and disintegration of things. It is, or can be, subtler than this. Things exist only momentarily, each moment

causing the next, which in turn, causes the next. If one takes the example of an apple: for a few days it remains quite similar in appearance, then over time, it ripens and eventually, it will be totally decomposed and cease to be an apple; and it becomes difficult to claim that there is an underlying apple possessing the quality and characteristics of an apple.

The same transient characteristic is applicable to ourselves also. We live momentarily. Each moment causes our next moment of existence, a process that proceeds from day to day, year to year, and maybe from lifetime to lifetime. This is true of the environment as well. The seventh century Buddhist logician, Dharmakirti, stated that ‘all phenomena arising from causes and conditions are naturally impermanent’. This suggests that whatever has come into being due to the aggregation of various causes and conditions is by its very nature subject to change.

The causes and conditions of our own existence go back to the moment of birth, and further back, to the moment of conception. It is at conception that our physical bodies are caused to form by the union of our father’s semen and our

Mr Binay Krishna is a member of the Indian Section, living in Patna.

Core Teachings of Buddhism

mother's egg. The very substances from which our body is formed are impure in themselves. What is our body but the quintessence of a thousand generations of evolution of sperm and ovum! These come together in the lower regions, between intestines full of excrement and the bladder full of urine, bound up in the darkness of the womb. The body grows for nine months, bound and constricted all around. We lie as though strapped in a tight leather bag experiencing intense heat when our mother eats or drinks hot food and intense cold when she eats or drinks cold food, and we shiver. If she moves suddenly we feel that someone is beating us with a stick. The mother also experiences much suffering at this time. Towards the end of her pregnancy she feels that she is about to burst. At the time of actual delivery, her suffering is so intense that she wails in unbearable pain.

Nagarjuna writes in *Precious Garland* that if we do not use the unworthy body as a boat for spiritual development, this is what it is — a useless sack of blood, pus, excrement and bones.

The root cause of unenlightened existence is our grasping at a sense of self. The Buddhist views of self-grasping ignorance is an essential subject, as Buddhism understands its removal to be the way to our true peace and happiness. Master KH echoes the same idea: 'It is esoteric philosophy alone, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with nature that, by revealing fundamental truths, can bring that much desired mediate state between the two extremes of human Egotism and

divine Altruism, and finally lead to the alleviation of human suffering.'

Craving causes us to wish for more and more. We subsequently are reborn in a situation of need and dissatisfaction. Aversion diminishes our patience and increases our tendency to anger. Similarly, our affliction of pride and jealousy undermines our peace of mind and causes unhappiness. These have dominated our actions over infinite past lives. Our conditioned existence is therefore, according to Buddhism, in our thoughts, contaminated by afflictive emotions. As long as we are under the influence of these emotions, we are not free and our existence is in suffering.

Soon after attaining enlightenment, Gautama Buddha taught about suffering. He identified suffering as divided into three levels. The first and most immediately evident level is mental and physical pain. The second, a subtler level, is that which is created not by painful sensation, but by pleasurable ones. Pleasures cause suffering because they eventually cease, leaving us anxious for more. But the most important level of suffering is the third which pervades the whole of our lives. It is linked to the second characteristic of Buddhism: All contaminated phenomena, all things that exist, are bound up in the nature of suffering. The third of the four characteristics or seals of Buddhism is that all phenomena are devoid of selfhood. What is meant by selfhood and the lack of it? All component things, be they air, stone, or living creatures, are impermanent; they

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are in the nature of suffering, and all phenomena are selfless. Our ignorance of the selfless nature of all that exists is the fundamental cause of our unenlightened existence. It is in this selfless nature of all, that we have the potential for ending our miserable existence. The force of wisdom, cultivated gradually, enables us to diminish and eventually eliminate our fundamental ignorance that grasps at a sense of self. The cultivation of wisdom will bring about a state beyond sorrow — ‘Nirvāna’, in Sanskrit. The fourth characteristic of Buddhism is that Nirvāna is true peace.

According to Buddhism there is no personal enduring self. The mind is essentially pure and luminous. The afflictive thoughts and emotions that pollute our everyday surface self cannot touch the essential mind. Being adventitious, these pollutions are removable. Buddhist practice is aimed primarily at cultivating the antidotes to these afflictive thoughts and emotions. The technique employed to do this is meditation, in order to transcend ordinary goodness, which is tinged with grasping. By replacing the mundane level of goodness with transcendental wisdom, one is able to cut the root of all compulsive *samsāric* conduct and enter into the blissful serenity of Nirvāna.

The force that cuts off the inborn process of grasping at true existence is the higher training in wisdom. This is the most important method in the quest for eternal liberation. To stabilize the higher training in wisdom one should cultivate higher training in meditative

concentration and ethical self-discipline.

Any desire to pursue a spiritual path of inner transformation will arise only when we realize the miserable state we are in. The Buddha, therefore, initially taught the first Noble Truth, establishing suffering as the actual state of our existence. The second Noble Truth explains the origin of our suffering. Our misery is caused by afflictive emotions, provoking us to behave selfishly. Our self-centred acts, in turn, cause non-virtuous behaviour that causes misery. The third Noble Truth that the Buddha taught is that all suffering ends when we bring about a cessation of its causes. To bring about any change in such habitual behaviour demands a process of training over many years. In the fourth Noble Truth, the Buddha taught the way we must engage in the training leading to liberation from *samsāra*.

The Buddha actually taught the four Noble Truths from three different perspectives. He identified the individual truths:

This is the truth of suffering;
These are true origins (of suffering);
This is true cessation (of suffering);
This is the true path to cessation.

In the second set of statements, the Buddha established a system by which the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths can be implemented in one’s practice. He stated:

Suffering to be recognized,
Its origin eliminated;
Cessation must be actualized.

Core Teachings of Buddhism

The third set of statements reflects the ultimate nature of the Four Noble Truths: their emptiness of any inherent existence. A more practical interpretation might be that the Buddha was presenting the consequences of our implementing the four Noble Truths. By internalizing the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths we can overcome suffering to the extent it is no more; we can eliminate the origin of suffering so that there is nothing to eliminate; we can actualize cessation so that there is no cessation; and we can cultivate the path so there is no longer a path to cultivate. The Buddha stated:

Although suffering is to be recognized,
there is no suffering to recognize;
Although its origin is to be overcome, there
is no origin to overcome;
Although cessation must be actualized, there
is no cessation to actualize;
Although the path must be cultivated, there
is no path to cultivate.

J. Krishnamurti's statement, 'Truth is a pathless land', has become a cliché. But he has raised more questions than he ever showed the way, causing considerable confusion to those who could understand and emulate his teachings. The statement of the Blessed One, 'Although the path must be cultivated, there is no path to cultivate', has the question and answer for the wayfarer on the path of holiness.

Nagarjuna demonstrated that the concept of 'me' is to be understood as merely a label designated to the collection of parts — physical and mental — that make me up. If something is designated,

it evidently does not exist independently, as that designation depends upon the basis of its designation. If something possesses a dependent nature, then it cannot exist independently, as dependence and independence are mutually exclusive. Hence the concept of 'me' is not independently or inherently existent; given that something is dependently existent contradicts its existing independently. Similarly, in viewing ourselves, we must recognize that 'I' exist merely in dependence of a self to the mental and physical parts that are the basis of the identification of 'me'.

Emptiness is a quality of all phenomena. As Nagarjuna states: 'There are no phenomena that are not dependently originated; there is nothing that is not empty.'

Once we understand emptiness in the sense of dependent origination — and dependent designation in particular — we know that things exist by mere designation and labelling. A table is labelled as being in dependence upon its base of designation: the parts are not the table. They are the basis upon which we identify something as 'table'. There is no inherently existent table among the parts. If we search among the parts — the table top, its side, legs — we will not turn up an identifiable table hidden among those parts. Also, the idea of our table turning up separately from those parts is absurd. How can a table exist devoid of any parts?

The 'unfindability' of the table is a quality that applies to all other things as well. We can look for the car in its parts, the house among the parts, and we will

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find no car or house. The status of phenomena is their emptiness. This is not emptiness in the sense of an empty room; it is the emptiness of any findable quality of roomness among the parts that make up the room.

As Nagarjuna states in his *Commentary on the Awakening Mind*, if we understand all phenomena to be empty, the relationship of cause and effect — Karma and its fruits — becomes tenable. This is indeed a great wonder, more wondrous than the most wonderful; more amazing than the most amazing.

In understanding emptiness in terms of dependent origination, we can establish the functionality of things. We can recognize the relationship between cause and their effects to be interdependent and therefore necessarily independent of each other. If something were to possess an inherent objective existence, it would become a self-enclosed reality that would prohibit it from interacting with other phenomena. Hence it is this lack of inherent existence — this emptiness — that enables a thing to function, to be produced, to produce, and to interact with other things. The principle of dependent origination — *pratitya-samutpāda* — is a defining characteristic of Buddhist philosophy. There are different levels of understanding of *pratitya-samutpāda*, beginning with the dependence of things and events on their causes and conditions. All Buddhists accept this level, which only applies to conditioned things. Next is the understanding of dependent origination in respect to the relationship between parts

and the whole. Ultimately we come to the concept of dependent designation that has earlier been discussed.

We recognize that just as something can only be identified as an effect in respect to its cause, the reverse is also true. A cause can only be identified as a cause in respect of its effect. How could something be a cause if it were not the cause of an effect? Its causal identity is therefore dependent on its subsequent effect.

Though a cause cannot be the effect of itself, nevertheless it is necessarily the effect of cause other than itself. The sprout is the effect of its causal seed while also being the cause of the future tree. This demonstrates that no cause is an absolute cause, in and of itself. Nothing has the slightest inherent quality of being either a cause or an effect, as this would prohibit the cause being anything but cause, or effect being anything but an effect.

Taking the example of a wooden chair, one can understand that because of the tree out of which it is made, its existence is dependent on the tree. The tree, however, cannot be said to depend on the chair.

Taking a further step, today's chair results from the chair of yesterday; it also causes the chair of tomorrow. Hence today's chair is not inherently a resultant chair. It is only dependently so, designated so in dependence upon its being the effect of the causal chair of the earlier one, just as it needs the chair in future to be a causal chair. The concept of emptiness as a mere designation enables us to understand better and in a deeper way the dependent relationship between things and their parts.

Core Teachings of Buddhism

As we develop insight into emptiness as a mere designation, it enables us to better understand the dependence relationship between things and their parts. This will deepen our understanding of emptiness. We must purify the motive for perusing the wisdom aspect of the path to enlightenment. Wisdom alone will not lead to the ultimate state of Buddhahood.

For traversing the Path, the wayfarer has to avoid excessive attention to lifestyles, and balance rather the spiritual concern with worldly responsibilities, mind training on the disadvantages of self-cherishing and the advantages of working for the well-being of others. By calmly scrutinizing and contemplating

these notions for months and years, eventually we shall perceive others to be more important than ourselves. When we are praised, there is danger of pride and self-inflation. Let us avoid conceit in success; instead let us use the opportunity to ensure our commitment to others. When faced with adversity, let us consider the countless incidents of suffering in similar circumstances. The following inspiring quotation is from Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*:

For as long as space remains,
As long as sentient beings remain,
May I too remain
To dispel their misery.

Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, this Self forever dwells within the hearts of all. When a man is free from desire, his mind and senses purified, he beholds the glory of the Self and is without sorrow.

Though seated, he travels far; though at rest, he moves all things. Who but the purest of the pure can realize this Effulgent Being, who is joy and who is beyond joy.

Formless is he, though inhabiting form. In the midst of the fleeting he abides forever. All-pervading and supreme is the Self. The wise man, knowing him in his true nature, transcends all grief.

Katha Upanishad, I.2.20–22

Why Be Vegetarian

THIS statement occupies the minds of many people who have begun the journey of enlarging their consciousness into the world of truth and spirituality.

The way in which the statement is formulated is from the point of view of the vegetarian. It invites self-reflection. Explanations have to be given about the motives of one who lives on a vegetarian diet.

This statement could have been formulated in another way: 'Why not to be vegetarian'. It would then be posed by the non-vegetarian, who has not yet seen sufficient reasons to change his habits of meat eating.

Vegetarianism exists in many different forms. The most common is that in which vegetarians do not eat meat or fishery products. There are many lacto-vegetarians who use milk products, and ovo-vegetarians who use eggs, as well as non-meat-eating vegetarians who eat fish. These last three categories can be seen as preliminary phases before one becomes a vegetarian. Most vegetarians though will continue to use milk products.

Those vegetarians who do not eat animal products, including milk products and honey, are called vegans. The Jains

are vegans, who do not eat even roots, potatoes, carrots or entire plants, but often use milk.

When one becomes a vegetarian, it can be from birth or from any later stage in life. For those who are born vegetarians, the question usually does not arise. Those who become vegetarian later in life can have different reasons for becoming so. If it is for economic reasons, the question is not really important in the context of this article, which is written in the scope of the theme of the School of the Wisdom on 'The Art of Living' — although, in certain extremely rare cases of chosen poverty the vegetarian diet would have to be considered as to be willingly included in the life resulting from the choice of poverty.

One person became vegetarian because he was infertile and his physician advised him a vegetarian diet in order to have children. Others, like athletes and persons who practise competitive sports, become vegetarian because they know that their results will become better.

However, in most cases the vegetarian diet is caused by the fact that, at a certain moment in life, the person becomes conscious of moral values like respect for

Presentations made at the School of the Wisdom, Adyar, 2012. **Mr Jan Jelle Keppler** is the General Secretary of the Belgian Section of the TS. **Mrs Vimal Balachander** is a member of the Indian Section.

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the life of sentient beings and the non-violence principle. In Indian philosophy this last principle is called *ahimsā*. The *Yogatattvopaniṣad* states, that of the Yama-s (interdictions) and the Ni-yama-s (obligations) there are only two that are important, one being *ahimsā* and the other a dietary rule, which says that if the yogi after having made progress, wants to become really successful, he should eat only cooked wheat, green gram and rice. This is one of the most extreme vegan diets.

The Gnostics were vegetarians and most of them even vegans. Also the Nazarenes, who did not cut their hair and lived an ascetic life in the Middle East during the time of Jesus Christ, were vegetarians. Jesus was a Nazarene, and if he was born, it was not in Nazareth, but in Bethlehem.

Buddhists often follow a vegetarian diet. Jewish dietary rules say that if the Jew visits a place and wants to eat meat, meat can be eaten, but the rules and conditions, which are then imposed, are so strict, that it would be easier to follow a vegetarian diet. The Baha'is believe that in the future, man will live on a vegetarian diet. Roman Catholics used to follow the rule of not eating meat on Fridays.

There seem to be several thousands of people who have stopped eating altogether, or who eat only very little and still survive physically, because they have developed their higher faculties and are capable of transmuting energies from higher planes to the physical world. Saint-Germain, the European Master or

Prince Rakoczi, was never seen eating in public.

For our common fellow-men who become vegetarians, the question 'Why become and remain vegetarian?' is really a question of conscience and consciousness. When a child becomes aware of how animals suffer when they are hunted and caught, or when they are kept in captivity and abused for the pleasure of man, it can easily develop an aversion for meat and fish. Many children even have such an aversion by nature.

It is sufficient to take a school class to visit a slaughterhouse or preferably show them a movie about such a terrible place to turn a number of them into vegetarians.

There is one convincing, economic argument, which states that to produce the same quantity of animal protein as vegetable protein the agricultural surface needed is eight times bigger. Thus if the whole world would become vegetarian, and estimating that for different reasons half of the world population is already eating no meat or almost no meat, four and a half times more, or over 30 billion people, could be fed with the same agricultural surface, which now feeds 7.5 billion.

A vegetarian lifestyle is more peaceful, not only because of the *ahimsā* or non-violent effect spreading out into the world, but also because the vegetarian becomes more apt for developing his individual spiritual consciousness. The more vegetarians there are, the more spiritualized will become the consciousness of humanity as a whole.

According to the Ancient Wisdom

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tradition, the animal kingdom will become the human kingdom during the next planetary chain, while the vegetable kingdom will become the animal kingdom. The brotherhood of man is, in the light of this knowledge, a much wider truth, which has to and can be experienced. Once this truth has become an experienced and empirical reality, the vegetarian has no doubt about the fact that he does not want to consume his own flesh and blood.

According to medical science the vegan diet is a healthy diet and even better for one's physical condition than a non-vegetarian diet. Many illnesses are connected to the overconsumption of animal products.

MAN is an evolving being. The first primordial man probably needed to survive by hunting and killing animals. As man became domesticated, he started raising cattle and poultry for his consumption along with farming and agriculture. As time passed, he invented superior methods of cultivation and developed a wide variety of grains, rice and vegetable produce.

With the passage of time, man now has a choice to give up eating animal flesh completely, as the fruits of the vegetable kingdom are more than sufficient. However, the taste and flavours of various meats attract man too much to give them up entirely.

Nature enthusiasts film real-life scenes

The most important reason, however, is the altruistic one. A person who is on a vegetarian diet can more easily purify his emotional and mental life and thus arrive at enlarging his consciousness into the realms of higher moral values and ideas; for example, brotherhood, humanity, love, harmony, charity, altruism, patience, indifference to pain and pleasure, strength to be faithful to the truth and living the One Life self-consciously, not for oneself, but for the world, with which he experiences himself to be identical.

One should eat moderately what is served, choosing with appetite, and keep in mind that what comes out of the mouth has more importance than what goes into it.

JAN JELLE KEPPLER

from the animal world, and we see many parallels between them and us — their mothering instincts, their brotherly nature, their lack of greed and most importantly, especially in domestic pets, their love. All this makes one hesitate to kill.

At one time, a brutal man would be called an animal. Today, people may say, 'He is worse than an animal'. An animal seems to be quite human-like in its limited instinctual and emotional level.

We have adequate reason for vegetarianism, purely out of compassion for our younger brethren. However, for an evolutionary scientist or a theosophist, the reason for vegetarianism is more profound. To give up something which is delicious because it comes from the pain

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of another being is a conscious, controlled decision.

Man has to be able to rein in his mind and bodily needs. This is one of the fundamentals for his growth. To become free, he needs to bind himself with some rules. The freedom which he will then achieve will be so full of joy, that no amount of tasty meat can match it. This awareness of an achievable future goal of a superior brain fabric should attract a man towards vegetarianism.

If you believe you can progress even if your palate causes 'some' pain to unimportant creatures, you may have to do some rethinking. All philosophies and religions emphasize the law of adjustment or Karma — as you sow, so shall you

reap. If you ignore the pain of the animal world, are you not also closing yourself to the true appreciation of their great inner beauty? Can you escape from the karma of causing these innocents pain? In what way is a poultry farmer different from a 'gulag' in charge?

If you ask yourself these questions, you may think of giving up meat and become a vegetarian. But another thought may bother you: 'What difference will it make if I alone give up meat? I am just a drop in the ocean — so many millions consume this.'

But remember that Jesus, Ramana and Śankarāchārya were also drops in an ocean. Do not underestimate your own influence.

VIMAL BALACHANDER

The man who ranges himself on the side of evolution realizes the wickedness of destroying life. He knows that, just as he is here in this physical body in order that he may learn the lessons of this plane, so is the animal occupying his body for the same reason, that through it he may gain experience at his lower stage. He knows that the life behind the animal is the Divine Life, that all life in the world is divine. The animals therefore are truly our brothers, even though they may be younger brothers, and we can have no sort of right to take their lives for the gratification of our perverted tastes — no right to cause them untold agony and suffering merely to satisfy our degraded and detestable lusts.

C. W. Leadbeater

Theosophical Work around the World

Adyar

Mrs Radha Burnier, the international President of the TS, inaugurated the South India Theosophical Conference, which is held every year in Adyar during the Easter weekend. About two hundred delegates attended this year's Conference, the ninetieth one, from 29 to 31 March. The theme of the Conference, '*The Secret Doctrine — A Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*', was in keeping with the 125th anniversary of the book. Mr S. Sundaram, the General Secretary of the Section, gave the Welcome Address, and several speakers of the Indian Section gave inspiring talks over the three days. Mrs Burnier gave hints in her Inaugural Talk about how to study the book. In her Closing Address, she further elaborated that the Secret Doctrine is so called because there is something secret in Life; this, she said, cannot be taught. However much one may try to understand the book through the brain, it is the heart alone that may touch upon this Secret. One must raise oneself from the preoccupations of the mind and find the Beauty, Wisdom and Truth that is hidden in everything, in the outer and inner world.

Argentina

In March, TS members in San Rafael, Argentina, celebrated forty years of broadcasting *The Art of Learning*, a twice-weekly radio programme of ten minutes

presented by the TS. The radio station is a municipal one (Radio Municipal L.V.18) and therefore free of cost. The programme was started in 1973 after a visit by the then international President, John Coats, who gave the members constructive ideas on how to make the TS known. The topics explored are generally connected with human values, practical suggestions on how to try to improve ourselves, or world events which give us pause to reflect. The day after Pope Francis I was elected in Rome, for example, the members spoke on the radio programme about the qualities he demonstrates: simplicity, austerity and a commitment to the service of all, especially the needy. A major source of texts for the radio broadcast is the 'On the Watch-Tower' editorials from *The Theosophist*. As the team blew out forty lighted candles, it thought of the many members as well as all the staff members of the radio station itself, who have contributed to the programme over the decades.

India

In March 2013 Mr M. P. Singhal, the international Vice-President, visited North India, where he gave a talk at Mayfair Lodge, Kolkata, that was attended by over thirty members. He also inaugurated the newly formed Azad Lodge which is situated about 70 km from Kolkata in a rural Muslim locality. The TOS has been

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very active in this region for several years. Mr Singhal also discussed ways to strengthen the Theosophy–Science group with Prof. P. Krishna in Varanasi, and visited Lodges at Lucknow, Kanpur and Delhi, and gave talks, one of which was entitled ‘Insights into the Teachings of TS Literature’.

On a separate visit to North India, Bro. C. A. Shinde, National Lecturer of the Indian Section, conducted a three-day Study Camp on ‘Meditation and the Spiritual Life’ at Gorakhpur. It was attended by about one hundred members of the U. P. Federation and local intellectuals from Gorakhpur University. He also gave Public Talks in Lucknow and Allahabad, and in some places in the state of Bihar.

Bro. S. Harihara Raghavan, General Manager at the international Headquarters, Adyar, was the Chief Guest at the Kerala Theosophical Federation North Zone Conference, held at Gauthama Lodge, Cannanore. He said in his inaugural address that it is important for the Theosophical Society to maintain its own identity in its special role of regenerating humanity. An exhibition of Theosophical books was arranged during the Conference.

The Indian Section organized a Conference on ‘Ethical Globalization’ at the Section Headquarters in Varanasi on 15 and 16 March. It was addressed by a number of learned speakers representing or having experience with various organizations and institutions, including the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Vidya Ashram, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Banaras Hindu University, Jadavpur

University, the Institute of Advanced Studies, Krishnamurti Foundation India and the TS. The audience was comprised of a large number of intellectuals from different spheres of life. The talks touched nearly every aspect of the subject and gave a deep insight into the complex theme of the Conference. Welcoming the gathering on 15 March, Mr S. Sundaram, the General Secretary of the Indian Section, said that ethics is a branch of Philosophy that studies the nature of right and wrong and of moral judgement. Quoting saints and philosophers, he felt that regeneration can take place only when the mind functions in awareness, and underlined the need to have a proper and harmonious blend of hand, head and heart or soul-force in order to make a complete human being. The question was raised as to what kind of humanistic frame of mind is needed to produce an ethical environment and how the TS can play a role in bringing out a more just society.

East and Central Africa

The 46th Convention of the East and Central African Section of the Theosophical Society will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from Friday, 17 May to Sunday, 19 May 2013. The theme of the Convention will be *Moral Values and Integrity in Modern Society*.

The Convention will combine with the fiftieth anniversary of the existence of the Nairobi Lodge estate. The Section requests messages of good will to mark the occasion, for publication in a special issue of their magazine, *The Theosophical Light*.

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