



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

*Founded 17 November 1875*

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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.

# Presidential Address

By Sri. M. P. Singhal, The International Vice-President  
To the 138th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society  
Adyar, 26 December 2013

Dear Brothers, Sisters, friends and fellow members,

Let us move on and pay homage to Mrs Radha Burnier, who passed away on 31 October 2013. She addressed International Conventions for 33 consecutive years, 1980-2012. She has left a rich tradition of working with dignity, quiet dedication and simplicity.

Every Convention is an occasion for standing back as witness of the path so far treaded and the direction we are heading. There is an opportunity for course correction, and also to think what the Society must do now. The Society exists to transform humanity that would live to benefit mankind.

We have also the opportunity to allow the blessings from the Great Ones to fill us, and the whole of Nature to bring teachings of the source of life and love.

**May those who are the embodiment of Love Immortal bless with their help and guidance this Society, founded to be a channel for their work. May They inspire it with their Wisdom, strengthen it with their Power, and energize it with their Activity.**

I am happy to open this 138th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society.

HPB gave the philosophical and conceptual frame work which would guide the Theosophical Society to promote

universal brotherhood. The leaders who came later, took upon themselves the responsibility of amplifying and clarifying what HPB stood for. She stressed that practical brotherhood must continue to influence the mental climate of the world, so all members will not only know themselves as brothers, but act as such.

We are members of the TS. It is a great privilege for us. Its Objects are beautiful; its purpose is noble; and its literature is inspiring. Do we feel gratitude in our hearts for these things that we are enjoying? The human psychology is to ignore the obvious. Every TS journal has notes on Theosophy, the Theosophical Society, Freedom of Thought and the Objects. Do we carefully review and remind ourselves when we see them?

The Theosophical Society is an institution. The institution and its work is far more important than any individual working in it. This is seldom realized, for people work for individuals not the institution. We use a mirror to see our physical appearance. Similarly we should reflect our thoughts daily in the mirror of our conscience to see who we really are.

## **Our Society's Uniqueness:**

The Theosophical Society has many unique features. It emphasizes the comparative study of religion, philosophy

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and science. Religion tells us our duty. Philosophy moulds our minds and science tells us about the outer world that we perceive with our senses.

The Theosophical Society has no specified religious text, but has innumerable books on religious thought. It has no priest as such, but many wise people to teach. It has no defined tenets like other religions, but has three beautiful Objects which take us from particular to universal. It has no specified place of worship, but builds shrines of all faiths in its International Headquarters. The only religion that the Society proclaims is the quest for Truth, with its motto: 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth'. It respects all religious faiths, different cultures, values, view points and other diversities, without discrimination.

The Society has rich and inspiring literature whether in small booklets or large volumes. Some texts like *The Secret Doctrine* are so profound and complex that the beginner may be bewildered and finisher may feel frustrated. However small other books are, they are simple and instructive.

Some simple concepts from the book *Practical Occultism* of HPB are:

- Reflect upon the defects of your character.
- Spirit of Love and Truth, Justice and Wisdom, Goodness and Power should be our only true and permanent Love.
- To act and act wisely when the time for action comes; to wait and wait patiently when it is time for repose.
- Have patience, Candidate, as one who fears no failure, covets no success.

Another unique feature of the Society is its three great truths, defining the basis of life's evolution. Its universal invocation is a pointer to the forces of hidden life, hidden light and hidden love uniting all in oneness. In spite of so many unique features built in the frame of TS, why are we unable to impact people. Why people shy away from us I fail to understand. But there must be a reason, perhaps several, which we need to find out.

### Declining Membership

The membership peaked at 45,000 in 1928. It dropped to 31,000 in 1933. It rose slightly to 32,500 in 1980 and since then there has been a continuous drop in membership. It is about 25,000 in 2013. Should we allow this downward trend to continue? Some members feel that numbers are not important. It is the quality that we should worry about. While quality is certainly important, dropping trend cannot be ignored in a scenario where world population is rapidly growing. From 2 billion in 1930 it grew to 7.5 billion in 2012.

We also need a critical mass of minimum members for the Society's stability like seafaring vessels need a minimum ballast weight. Without a critical mass, there can be no critical momentum. The declining trend in membership may not be taken lightly. Perhaps, we must nurture and enthuse our members with energy and example of our life.

### The Paradoxical World

This is beautifully captured in the words of American humorist, George Carlin:

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We have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways but narrower viewpoints. We spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgement; more experts, yet more problems; more medicine, but less wellness. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, drive too fast, stay up too late, get up too tired, watch TV too much, love and pray too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned to make a living, but not a life. We've added years of life, not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a neighbour. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudices. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. These are the times of fast foods, and slow digestion; big men and small character; steep profits and shallow relationships; two incomes, but more divorce; fancier houses, but broken homes; more entertainments, but less happiness.

How are we going to harmonize these paradoxes? Perhaps we have to blend, synthesize or integrate Religion, Philosophy and Science.

### **The World of Over Population, Poverty, Pollution and Lopsided Development**

The population is expected to rise to 8.1 billion in mid-2025 and 9.75 billion

in mid-2050. There is poverty which is a terrible social scourge. 46% of world income is owned by 20% of the wealthiest. Poverty is not natural. It is man made by the rich usurping wealth without sharing with poor people, sometimes paying less than they deserve. It is unethical. The two defining challenges of this century are overcoming poverty and managing climate change. It appears feasible to transform the poorest countries with proper management of natural resources. The world is suffering from intolerance, doubt, conflict and insecurity. Intolerance breeds violence. Can we have more mutual understanding, appreciation and adjustment?

Most members of the Theosophical Society, irrespective of their country, language or beliefs, reflect a rich Theosophical culture, of friendliness, mutual consideration, courtesy, patience, tolerance, acceptance and helpfulness. Therefore, nothing disappoints and disillusion outsiders more when some members behave arrogantly, unhelpfully or unkindly. We may remember that beautiful thoughts carry blessings, kind words lend strength and loving action reflects compassion.

We live in times where our scientifically trained graduates have no difficulty in recalling Newton's three laws of motion, but have no clue about the four Noble Truths of the Buddha. This has resulted in a lopsided development of humanity. Humanity is not merely the name of a species. It defines human values and sensitivity, his dignity and feelings, choosing ultimate good over sensual

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pleasures. It is necessary to ponder as to what human values we should seek to preserve in this technological world and how that could be achieved?

### **What are We Expected to Do?**

In *The Key to Theosophy*, HPB listed five points to help the Society's work; that are to study and comprehend the Theosophical doctrines, so they may teach others, especially the young people; to take every opportunity to talk to others and explain to them what Theosophy is and what it is not; to remove misconceptions and spread an interest in the subject; to assist in circulating our literature, by buying books when they have the means, by lending and giving them and by inducing their friends to do so; to defend this Society from the unjust aspersions cast upon it, by every legitimate device in their power. Finally and most important of all, by the example of our lives.

What is said is succinctly simple. It emphasizes comprehensive study of Theosophical truths, teaching those truths to the youth specially, living Theosophically and spreading Theosophical doctrines by our lives. The Theosophical Society is the vehicle of Theosophy. If the Society is strong, it will take Theosophy far and wide and spread it quickly.

### **From Good to Greatness**

In today's world mediocrity is unacceptable. Even good is not considered good enough. We have to embrace greatness which requires self-motivated and self-disciplined workers, capable of continuous innovations. Besides a comprehensive knowledge of Theosophy,

they have to be sensitive and effective communicators.

Those leaders who aim for greatness are dreamers first. Pursuing their dreams, they develop vision of the future. Vision becomes a concrete plan of action. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and Nelson Mandela can perhaps be put in the category of dreamers, who ultimately became achievers. Martin Luther King Jr, had many dreams. His vision of freeing African-Americans inspired Rosa Parks who refused to vacate her seat meant for white people and that was the beginning of a crusade against discrimination. The momentum built slowly but finally brought victory.

Imagine that the Theosophical Society is a massive fly wheel. Our job is to induce motion by slowly pushing this fly wheel till it reaches a critical momentum after which it kicks in our favour, requiring very little effort. Members need to work with definiteness of purpose and deliberateness of action to reach such a momentum. Our long cherished vision of the TS as a corner stone, the foundation of future religions of humanity can perhaps be fulfilled if we remain focussed. Where there is a will there is a way. We want heroes who are self-motivated and can undertake any job for the benefit of mankind. They are the ones, who make people around them feel good by their cheerful and helpful temperament.

### **Proposal: What We Should Be Doing in the Next Three Years**

i) Infrastructure is not in good shape. We should prepare a Hand Book of works

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that will include systems of inspection, maintenance, quality control and system of reporting at different levels. All works requiring attention will be tackled under a three-year 'Works Programme' committing yearly financial resources through the instrument of the budget.

ii) Induction of youth in the TS is important in a world, where median age is twenty-eight years, i.e., about four billion people are young and below twenty-eight years. They have energy and innovative ideas. Experienced members should help in channelling their energies in productive ways. Youth complain that senior members do not practice what they teach; they do not have gratitude to those who gave us beautiful literature. Why other organizations are able to attract youth for their work, it is something for us to investigate and apply.

iii) Propagation of Theosophy is presently the biggest challenge of the Theosophical Society because only a few have comprehension of Theosophy and they do not possess communication skills. The Theosophical Order of Service in the present situation is a wonderful tool that can overcome the existing deficiency and make brotherhood real.

iv) Research and Technology: As one Master of Wisdom said, 'Modern Science is our best ally'. Let us nurture this idea to explore and improve our work. C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant employed clairvoyance as the method of examination, but suggested testing by other physical methods to reconfirm clairvoyant findings. We should maintain a register of technically qualified

members and use their knowledge and skills. We may provide a computer in Maintenance, Garden, Sanitation and Security departments.

v) To harness solar energy and reduce the carbon footprint to control adverse effects of climate change and thereby help intergenerational equity for future generations.

vi) Manpower review as regards numbers, competence, fair wages followed by development and reform.

### Conclusion

If we stand united, acting impartially, keeping the interest of the TS uppermost in view, living and spreading the Theosophical doctrines, specially to the youth we can fulfill our great mission of transforming the humanity and thereby the whole world. In an inspiring message which Madame Blavatsky once gave, she said, 'There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, there is reward past all telling, the power to bless and serve humanity. For those who fall, there are other lives in which success may come.'

We should pay greater attention to developing the TS as an institution for disseminating Theosophy. By developing core values of Will, Wisdom and Love, the cause of Theosophy can be advanced rapidly. Love inspires the will; the will directs the wisdom which enables us to help. As we see here, Love is the inspirational trigger and so more important of the three.

(to be continued)

# The Significance of the Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

BHUPENDRA VORA

THE early history of the Theosophical Society reveals that the Objects went through a considerable amount of thinking and a number of changes before their evolution to the form in which we find them at present. The inner founders of The Theosophical Society, who were the Teachers of Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, were very specific about the direction of the work of the Society. A definite guideline from The Mahatmas was for the formation of a Society that would foster 'Universal Brotherhood'. The need for such a 'Brotherhood' features in several of 'The Mahatma Letters' and is the core principle on which the other objects depend.

They described the principle of brotherhood as the only true basis for a universal morality and stressed the need for the amelioration of human suffering through it. In the very significant communication from the Great Adept, The Mahachohan, (Letter No. 1 Letters from The Masters of Wisdom – First Series) the plight of humanity is described in great depth:

Degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, religious bigotry and unrestrained indulgence in sensual propensities were given as some of the causes of suffering that could only be cured by the principle of Universal Brotherhood. The Mahatmas intended to influence world thought through The Theosophical Society, to bring about, in a larger and deeper sense, a Universal Brotherhood that the traditional religions had failed to accomplish.

In a letter to Mr A. P. Sinnett the Mahatma KH calls on the elect of mankind to help in the work of enlightening superstitious man. He states:

For countless generations hath the adept builded a fane of imperishable rocks, a giants Tower of Infinite Thought, wherein the Titan dwelt, and will yet, if need be, dwell alone, emerging from it but at the end of every cycle, to invite the elect of mankind to cooperate with him and help in turn enlighten superstitious man. And we will go on in that periodical work of

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**Mr Bhupendra R. Vora** is a former General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in East and Central Africa, now living in England.

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ours; we will not allow ourselves to be baffled in our philanthropic attempts until that day when the foundations of a new continent of thought are so firmly built that no amount of opposition and ignorant malice . . . will be found to prevail.' (Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett – Letter No. 9 Third Edition).

This is a very significant statement from the Mahatma KH that indicates that the Mahatmas wished to bring the light of wisdom and understanding about the purpose of life to a world that was caught up in superstitious beliefs, materialism and selfishness amongst other things, that held humanity in bondage.

They wished to set up a 'New Continent of Thought' based on an understanding of the Oneness of life and wisdom about the purpose of life.

The Theosophical Society was therefore set up with the object of the formation of a Universal Brotherhood and the spreading of the eternal wisdom called *Brahma Vidyā* or Theosophy for the enlightenment of humanity, free from superstitions and dogmatic beliefs. The Objects reflect this aim. To understand the formulation of the 'Three Objects', we need to go back to the early days of the birth of The Theosophical Society. It was at a meeting of the Society in New York on 30th October 1875 that the following statement was made by members:

The title of the Society explains the objects and desires of its founders: they 'seek to obtain knowledge of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Power, and of the higher

spirits *by the aid of physical processes*'. In other words they hope, by going deeper than modern science has hitherto done, into the esoteric philosophies of ancient times they may be enabled to obtain for themselves and other investigators, proof of the existence of an 'Unseen Universe,' the nature of its inhabitants if such there be, and the laws which govern them and their relations with mankind. Whatever may be the private opinions of its members, the Society has no dogmas to enforce, no creed to disseminate. It is formed neither as a Spiritualistic schism, nor to serve as the foe or friend of any sectarian or philosophic body. Its only axiom is the omnipotence of truth, its only creed a profession of unqualified devotion to its discovery and propaganda. In considering the qualifications of applicants for membership, it knows neither race, sex, colour, country nor creed. . . .' ( J. Ransom, Short History of the TS page 81).

The significant words in this statement were 'the omnipotence of truth' and 'unqualified devotion to its discovery and propaganda'. Significantly the Society subsequently adopted as its motto the Sanskrit sutra '*Satyānāsti paro dharma*' or 'There is no religion higher than Truth'. The Society also firmly established the ideal of 'Freedom of Thought' by passing a resolution at a meeting of the General Council that is printed in every issue of 'The Theosophist'. The evolution of the Objects went on over a period of time. The broad guidelines for the objects was stated as follows:

1. Universal Brotherhood;

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2. No distinction to be made by the member between races, creeds, or social positions, but every member had to be judged and dealt by on his personal merits;

3. To study the philosophies of the East — those of India chiefly, presenting them gradually to the public in various works that would interpret exoteric religions in the light of esoteric teachings;

4. To oppose materialism and theological dogmatism in every possible way, by demonstrating the existence of occult forces unknown to science, in nature, and the presence of psychic and spiritual powers in man;

The intention of the Founders was very clearly expressed in these original ideas that subsequently went through several changes before finally crystallizing in the format that we are all familiar with. The General Council of the Society approved the Objects as under in 1896:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

2. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.

3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

In this format the Objects have been familiar to members during many decades and have become sanctified. The general view has held them to be all embracing in their aims. The first object concerning the principle of brotherhood is an outer expression of a much deeper truth about the oneness of life that occult science posits. The 'Three Fundamental Propositions' in the Proem to the Secret Doctrine stated

by Madame Blavatsky, give a concise description of the One Reality and the processes of evolution that lead the soul on its journey to perfection. The 'Third Fundamental Proposition' in particular, elaborates on this evolutionary process:

'The fundamental identity of all souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every soul, a spark of the former, through the cycle of Incarnation or Necessity, in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic Law, during the whole term.'

When there is an understanding of the nature of reality as expressed in these principles, all differences fall away. The occult doctrine enunciated in the 'Third Fundamental Proposition' states that the vast and disparate species of life, in the various kingdoms, are all a manifestation of the One Universal Consciousness, and that they are all at different levels of evolution.

However the illusion of separateness pervades human thinking and creates differences based on race, religion, caste etc. The Mahatmas considered it of primary importance to enlighten human beings that the diversity that is seen is an expression of the One Universal Consciousness evolving in the world of names and forms.

The significance of the first Object, which the Mahatmas considered to be of paramount importance, is that it mentions all those aspects that divide human beings. Human beings create divisions in the name of race, religion, caste, creed etc. As the great Adept the Mahachohan states

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in his very important communication at the end of the 19th century to Mr Sinnett; mankind has not changed much in the last two thousand years.

Why do we as a species create division is a question that we need to understand. The processes of evolution drive consciousness through the various kingdoms of life. Nature has provided an abundance of varieties in the mineral, the vegetable and animal kingdoms through which consciousness passes before emerging in the human kingdom. It is here that the mind faculty becomes available to man and differentiation starts. He cannot perceive that behind all the diversity there is one single universal consciousness. Secondly self-centredness makes him create divisions based on race, religion and so on so forth.

Bro. N Sri Ram states in his book *The Nature of Our Seeking* on the subject of Unity and Brotherhood:

‘The universe consists of innumerable things, so disparate in their nature, of life, matter and consciousness in various grades and forms, of objects and entities utterly different from one another. What can be that substance or energy which, possessing a nature of unity, gives rise to this diversity?’

We may accept the truth of this unity as a postulate which explains many things, nevertheless it is for us an abstraction more metaphysical than real, with no immediate bearing on our lives. It becomes real however, when it is translated into unity of all life in whatever form, whether plant, animal or man.

Madame Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine* about the unity of all things in their ultimate essence. The first object aspires for that unity to be recognized in the variety of life that is manifested in the human kingdom. But at a deeper level it also means the unity of all existence in whatever kingdom of life that may be. If the differences in terms of race, creed, sex etc. are seen in the context of the occult teachings as expounded in the ‘Third Fundamental Proposition’ of *The Secret Doctrine*, it will be seen that these differences are for the growth of the soul.

In the journey of evolution the individual consciousness is incarnated in the different root races to develop some qualities in each. All the varieties of expressions in nature are for the growth of consciousness. To recognize this is the way of wisdom.

Human beings create divisions and separateness based on race, religion, sex, caste and innumerable other things! Ignorance of the true nature of things and human selfishness may be considered as the main causes for the strife in the world at the individual and societal levels. Self-centredness reflects itself in relationships at all levels of life. Therefore self-interest perseveres in dealings with neighbours and work colleagues and elsewhere. We create islands of separateness forgetting that in the well being of others is our own well being. The principle of Universal Brotherhood enunciated in the first object brings us back to an understanding of the oneness of life and the relationship of the individual units of consciousness with

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each other. Further an understanding of the laws of nature makes it evident that these individual units of consciousness in whatever forms they may be are at their own individual levels of experience and progress. Therefore to view all life, whether in the form of a plant, or a tree or an animal, with compassion and love is to understand the oneness of life.

To understand Brotherhood is to change one's perspective in relationships with others. In our perceived ill-treatment, slights or injustices at the hands of others whether real or imagined, to exercise tolerance and compassion, is the way of love. In the very profound teaching of The Bible in Mathew 6:14 the Lord said :

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

If we understand the teachings of the occult wisdom that is Theosophy, it becomes evident that the individual souls are at differing levels of evolution and therefore will manifest characteristics that are different. Universal Brotherhood implies that there should be no prejudices or barriers of any kind whatsoever in our interactions with people of any background. The first Object clearly defines this Universal Brotherhood that has to be lived and not merely accepted as an ideal.

Men, however, divide and create separateness not only of race, religion, belief and so on but many other things too numerous to mention. But true

spirituality is that which recognizes the unity of all existence amongst all the complexity of manifest life. In her book *Human Regeneration* (page no. 20) Radha Burnier states:

. . . there are these two things in nature: inequality and diversity. Each being is at its own level on the evolutionary ladder and everything is different from everything else. Yet, underlying it is the one Being, the one Essence. It is a paradox: one essence, one life, one consciousness in the midst of an incredible diversity that reveals a supreme creative energy.

We are all at different levels of evolution and therefore no two people are alike in their circumstances and opportunities of life. The Law of Karma decides our present circumstances based on our previous Karma and the need for experience that will assist in our growth. The wise understand this and treat the disadvantaged and downtrodden with love and compassion. Differences of race, religion, social standing and many other things must be seen in the light of the laws of nature and the evolutionary processes. Behind all this manifold complexity of life is an underlying Universal Consciousness that is the source of all.

The second Object deals with the disciplines of religion, science and philosophy. Many of the problems in the world at the present moment are due to misconceptions and ignorance about the real teachings of religions. The Mahatmas discuss at length the state of traditional religions in many of the letters and give

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them as the cause of strife and suffering in the world. In letter number 10 (Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett) the Mahatma KH describes the state of religions as follows:

I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity. Look at India and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetichism. It is priestly imposture that rendered these Gods so terrible to man; it is religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and Gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretence of saving them. Is not man ever ready to commit any kind of evil if told that his God or Gods demand the crime- voluntary victim of an illusionary God, the abject slave of his crafty ministers? . . .

Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods.

The human condition has not improved since this message of the Mahatma

more than a century ago. Religions with divine pretensions to doctrines of love and compassion as their core teachings are found wanting in tolerance for sects within their own fold, leave alone other religions. Claiming the same historical origin, and sharing the same symbols, religious sects within religions fight bloody wars and call them holy wars. So much animosity is generated between them that the hostility and intolerance are passed on from generation to generation. The same condition prevails at the interreligious level.

The second Object for the study of 'Comparative Religion' encourages an open-minded study to appreciate the teachings of the various faiths and understand the similarity of the core principles of love, compassion and charity. The quest for truth is not only in the enquiry through the teachings of religions but also through philosophy and science that are also seeking answers to the questions of life. It is the lack of understanding and blind beliefs in dogmatic teachings of the faith systems that are the cause of much of the strife in the world.

The great Adept the Mahachohan in his letter states that The Theosophical Society is expected to be the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve this aim it must first enlighten men that the various religions and belief systems arise from the same source; and though at the exoteric level they may show many differences, they are very similar in their core beliefs. The role of the Theosophist is to understand this and work towards the harmony of all.

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The third Object is 'To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.' Various interpretations have been made about this object that to many has remained mysterious. Once again referring to Radha Burnier's book *Human Regeneration*, she states in reference to this object:

This Object implies study not only of Nature in its outer manifestation but of the relationship of all things, for all law is a statement of relationships.

There are many members who have interpreted this Object to mean the development of psychic and clairvoyant powers as well as other powers latent in man. The purpose of the inner founders of the Society was not however to set up a school of occultism where attention was given to development of such powers. This is evident in Their correspondence with Mr Sinnett. In his letter to Mr Sinnett the Mahatma M writes:

Also try to break through that great *maya* against which occult students, the world over, have always been warned by their teachers — the hankering after phenomena. . . . If you cannot be happy without phenomena you will never learn our philosophy.

The purpose of the spiritual life is to realize union with the One Universal Life that is not perceived at the outer level due to the illusions of the world. Such abilities as clairvoyance and other psychic powers may flower in an individual on the way to spiritual progress but should not be the object of our efforts. In the *Voice of The*

*Silence* there is a warning for the aspirants on the path. In the very first sutra the aspirant is warned about the dangers of cultivating the lower *iddhi* or psychic faculties because these are hindrances on the path and lead him astray.

The powers latent in man may be understood as the powers of nature, for man is the microcosmic representation of the macrocosm, that is the Universe. Madame Blavatsky has stated that within man are the hierarchies of heaven. The real purpose of this object is for man to realize his divine potential and work in harmony with nature. The great teacher Sri Sankaracharya, states in the *Viveka Chudamani* the significance of the human birth in the realization of Truth, whatever term we may use for it. The ancient statement 'Man know thyself' is perhaps a true indicator of the direction in which man's efforts must be made. He is divine and can be a co-creator with Nature if he realizes his true nature and potential.

The 'unexplained laws of nature', may perhaps be also described as 'undiscovered or un-understood laws of nature'. The law of harmony is the most significant because it reveals the interconnectedness of all that exists from the minutest forms of life to the mightiest star systems. There is a relationship between each unit of life in this Universe. The whole manifestation works in perfect harmony. *The Light of Asia* describes poetically the workings of this law:

Before beginning and without an end,  
As space eternal and as surety sure,  
Is fixed a power divine which moves to good,  
Only its laws endure.

## The Significance of the Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

This is its touch upon the blossomed rose,  
The fashion of its hand shaped lotus-leaves;  
In dark soil and the silence of the seeds  
The robe of Spring it weaves;

That is its painting on the glorious clouds,  
And these its emeralds on the peacock's train;  
It hath its stations in the stars; its slaves  
In lightening, wind, and rain.

The third Object is very significant in that it provides the platform for study of the divine potentialities of man and the relation-

ship between Man, God and the Universe.

Madame Blavatsky once made the observation that only the second Object received due consideration, with the first and the third Objects hardly receiving any attention from members. This was a significant observation and needs our careful consideration. The Objects in their totality refer to the One Life Principle and its evolutionary journey in the manifested world of names and forms. ✧

**The two principal aims of the Society are to establish a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without any distinctions whatsoever and to encourage the search for truth, as indicated in the motto of the Society : 'There is no Religion higher than Truth'. One responds to humanity's desperate need to liberate itself from the appallingly endless misery produced by conflict, mistrust and self-centredness. The other is essential for humanity's growth into moral and spiritual maturity, for realizing a great amplitude and clarity of perception, and penetration into Nature's mysterious depths. The two are interrelated because they are both intrinsic to human evolution.**

Radha Burnier

# Ways to Study *The Secret Doctrine*

CHITTARANJAN SATAPATHY

*THE Secret Doctrine* is the name of the book written by HPB — considered to be her magnum opus. It also refers to the truths she ‘made public for the first time’ through this book. In the preface to the book, HPB says, ‘It is needless to explain that this book is not *The Secret Doctrine* in its entirety, but a select number of fragments of its fundamental tenets . . .’ She further says, ‘. . . what is contained in this work is to be found scattered throughout thousands of volumes embodying the scriptures of the great Asiatic and early European religions, hidden under glyph and symbol, and hitherto left unnoticed . . . What is now attempted is to gather the oldest tenets together and to make of them one harmonious and unbroken whole.’

## **Why study *The Secret Doctrine***

There are compelling reasons for students of theosophy to read the book, which, in any case deserves to be read in its own right by anyone who is interested to know about the cosmos and his place in it. The work as it is has been dedicated ‘to all true theosophists, in every country, and of every race, for they called it forth, and for them it was recorded.’ How

the book came to be written has been documented in detail by Boris De Zirkoff under ‘Historical Introduction’ — Vol. I of 1979 TPH Edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, as also by Michael Gomes in ‘The making of Secret Doctrine’ — *The Theosophist*, May 1988. It is evident that HPB had help from both the Masters, the inner founders of the Theosophical Society, in writing the book. In a letter received by Col. H. S. Olcott on August 22, 1988 during his trip from Bombay to London, one of the Masters had said, ‘Every mistake or erroneous notion, . . . was corrected by me or under my instruction.’ From the ‘Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and *The Secret Doctrine*’ by Countess Constance Wachtmeister et al, we learn that HPB was given a choice by the Master to die and be free from the extreme suffering she was undergoing, or to live and complete the book; and that she accepted the sacrifice in the interest of the students of theosophy and the Theosophical Society.

Col. H. S. Olcott reviewed *The Secret Doctrine* three months after its publication — *The Theosophist*, January 1889. He gave two examples to demonstrate the

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## Ways to Study *The Secret Doctrine*

author's intellectual honesty and accuracy. Soon after, the *Isis Unveiled* was sold out within about 10-15 days of its publication, the publisher J. W. Bouton requested HPB to write another volume unveiling Isis a little more. HPB declined the offer of \$5000 (in today's price over \$1,26,000) at a time she did not have money to buy her passage to India. She refused on the ground that it was not permitted to reveal more of the esoteric philosophy at that time. The second example relates to her quoting Tennyson's poem 'Oh Sad No More! O Sweet No More! Oh Strange No More! . . . .' in the beginning of a piece she wrote. Two experts familiar with every line Tennyson had written vehemently protested that Tennyson had never written these lines. However, on a thorough search Dr D. Carter-Blake found the verse written by Tennyson in 'The Gem' — a magazine published in 1831, *verbatim et literatim* — word for word and letter for letter, as given by HPB. For some reason, the poet had not included this poem in any volume of his work.

HPB's intellectual honesty and accuracy as an author have great significance for a person studying *The Secret Doctrine*. She wrote that atom is divisible: 'It is on the doctrine of the illusive nature of matter, and the infinite divisibility of the atom, that the whole science of Occultism is built' (I:520). From the time of Democritus till the time *The Secret Doctrine* was written, it was the firm belief of the philosophers and scientists alike that atom was indivisible. What HPB wrote has been proved subsequently with the discovery

of electrons by J. J. Thomson in 1897, E. Rutherford's experiments in 1911 showing constituent particles of atom, Niels Bohr's 1913 model of atom and further discoveries of many other particles and constituents of particles — Jerry Hejka-Ekins, 'The Secret Doctrine in the Light of 20th Century Thought', Paper read at the 'Secret Doctrine Centenary Conference' held in Culver City, California on August 6-7, 1988.

HPB also states in *The Secret Doctrine* that Moon pre-existed Earth. Till date we have no satisfactory theory of Moon's origin in Astronomy. What we do know is that the Earth has a large iron core where as moon does not have any iron. The density of earth is 5.5gms/cc whereas moon's density is 3.3gms/cc, which rules out any possibility of moon's origin from earth. HPB deals with evolution in the *The Secret Doctrine* but she differs from Darwin. According to her, man's evolution took place independent of apes, and apes evolved on the sidelines. Further scientific research in the future may show what is written in the *The Secret Doctrine* to be accurate as happened in the case of divisibility of atoms.

### **How *The Secret Doctrine* is organized**

The book is in two volumes — the first volume is titled Cosmogogenesis, it deals with origin of the Universe — and the second volume is titled Anthropogenesis, it deals with the evolution of man. As C. Jinarājadāsa points out — by this division HPB gives a clue: 'Search for the ultimate Reality which is the Cosmos, and search

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for man who contains within himself that Reality'. Incidentally, when he was only sixteen, he wrote an article in several parts titled 'An Outline of *The Secret Doctrine*' in *The Theosophist*, December 1891 — February 1892. His is a clear example that one can begin studying *The Secret Doctrine* even at a young age.

Both the volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* have three parts each, the first part in Volume I provides the texts of the first Book of seven Stanzas of Dzian and commentaries on each verse of these seven Stanzas including commentaries on some of the omitted verses (Stanza VI: verses between 4 and 5). The first part in Volume II provides the texts of the second Book of twelve Stanzas of Dzian and commentaries on each verse of these twelve Stanzas. Part II in each volume deals with symbolism with reference to various traditions and religions. Part III in each volume contrasts the scientific theories and discoveries with *The Secret Doctrine*.

The book begins with the Proem (a prelude), Volume II begins with Preliminary Notes and both volumes end with conclusions. Earlier, *The Secret Doctrine* was published in six volumes, now it is available in two big volumes (with the Index and Bibliography in a third volume). These volumes look formidable; the texts are in small prints of about 1500 pages. At a first glance, the book may seem almost incomprehensible and baffling to many students, though Ernest Wood says, 'I am hard pressed to name any other writer who can make statements upon metaphysical truths with greater clarity

and simplicity than she (HPB) does in these pages' — *The Theosophist*, October and November 1931. He also observes that HPB never tires her readers with any prolixity — tediously lengthy stuff.

### Ways to study *The Secret Doctrine*

While answering the question how to study *The Secret Doctrine*, it is almost standard practice to refer to Commander Robert Bowen's notes which he had taken in a class which HPB herself had conducted. These notes were first published in the January-March 1932 issue of *Theosophy in Ireland*, 40 years after they were written. Some of the important points made in these notes are:

1. Reading *The Secret Doctrine* page by page as one reads any other book will only end in confusion,
2. The first thing to do is to get some grasp of the 'Three Fundamental Propositions', given in the Proem,
3. Next study the Recapitulation — the 6 numbered items in the Summing Up — Vol. I, Part I,
4. Then study the Preliminary Notes (Vol. II) and the Conclusion (Vol. II), and
5. No matter what one may study in *The Secret Doctrine*, the mind should hold fast to the following basic ideas:
  - a. The fundamental unity of all existence,
  - b. There is no dead matter.
  - c. Man is the Microcosm.
  - d. As it is above, so it is below; there is but One Life and One Law. These have been put together in a small booklet titled '*Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy*' by Ianthe H. Hoskins and published by

## Ways to Study *The Secret Doctrine*

the TPH.

Geoffrey A. Barboroka has a different view on how to study *The Secret Doctrine* — ‘Methods of Approaches to the Study of *The Secret Doctrine*’, *The American Theosophist*, December 1956. He suggests three methods of studying *The Secret Doctrine*:

1. All the passages in the book relating to each key teaching of the Ancient Wisdom can be studied in depth over several days,

2. The Stanzas of Dzryan may be studied examining each verse in detail with reference to the commentary,

3. The third method would be reading page by page, or rather line by line of the text with appropriate pauses. He strongly recommends that one should study Vol. II first before taking up Vol. I as according to him Vol. II is readily understandable. He also recommends that after studying Vol. II one should start at pages 151-299 of Vol. I, after which one can go to the beginning of Vol. I.

Is there any other way of studying *The Secret Doctrine* apart from the ways indicated by Commander Robert Bowen and Geoffrey A. Barboroka? It may be a good idea for a student of theosophy to initially get a quick grasp of the whole book from a simplified summary written by Elizabeth W. Preston. Her book is titled *The Story of Creation* which is in two parts, the second part being the Story of Man. The introduction explains the four purposes for which *The Secret Doctrine* was written and published, and traces the origin of *The Secret Doctrine* to the

Books of Dzryan. *The Story of Creation* has seven short chapters — one chapter for each of the seven Stanzas of the first Book of Dzryan. The second part dealing with the Story of Man has twelve short chapters, each chapter dealing with one Stanza from the second Book of Dzryan. Incidentally, Elizabeth W. Preston has co-authored an abridged version of the *The Secret Doctrine* with Christmas Humphreys.

Students of theosophy who are poetically minded will love a book of poetry titled ‘*O Lanoo! — The Secret Doctrine Unveiled*’ by Harvey Tordoff. Harvey left a successful career in international finance to live a life of relative seclusion with his wife on a lake promontory in the north of England. His wife presented him a set of *The Secret Doctrine* which he studied deeply and with great understanding. One finds in this book, the essence of the Stanzas of Dzryan and HPB’s commentary in modern poetry.

Books by Elizabeth W. Preston and Harvey Tordoff provide a beginner a wider view. As Edward L. Gardner says in his book titled ‘*Wider View*’, ‘some understanding of the majestic sweep of the planetary cycles, and the wider view gained there from, steadies the nerve, gives poise, and imparts an abounding assurance in the midst of any and every present day happening.’ However, getting a wider view from a summary of *The Secret Doctrine* is one thing and coming to grips with the esoteric teachings contained in the *The Secret Doctrine* is another thing.

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The Stanzas of Dzyan constitute the core of teachings contained in the *The Secret Doctrine*. As pointed out by Sri Krishna Prem and Madhava Ashish in the introduction to their book *Man, the Measure of All Things: In the Stanzas of Dzyan*, ‘These Stanzas were first made known to the modern world as the *Stanzas of Dzyan* by H. P. Blavatsky in her book, *The Secret Doctrine*.’ It is not known who may have been the remarkable author of these Stanzas, but the teachings contained in them are important. Further, since the Stanzas have been written using occult symbols, the same can be read in different ways. HPB herself says that the Stanzas can be read using seven keys and she has read them using three or four keys. Some of these keys are variously described as metaphysical, astronomical, physiological, psychological, psycho-metaphysical, mystic, intuitive etc.

Many writers, both non-members and members of the Theosophical Society, such as Sri Krishna Prem and Madhava Ashish, B. P. Wadia, Ernest Wood, Joy Mills to name a few, have observed that the teachings contained in the *Stanzas of Dzyan* and *The Secret Doctrine* are esoteric, sacred and mystical. These cannot be comprehended by reading *The Secret Doctrine* like any other book or trying to understand it merely from a metaphysical standpoint. The text appears complex to one attempting an intellectual comprehension of it. The complexity of *The Secret Doctrine* is surely not on account of HPB’s unfamiliarity with the English language, despite her modest

proclamations that it was not her mother tongue. Anyone who has read her stories or her book, *The Key to Theosophy* would know that she was perfectly capable of writing lucid, intelligible English. The style she has adopted in writing *The Secret Doctrine* is perhaps deliberate and with a purpose. B. P. Wadia in ‘*Some Observations on the Study of The Secret Doctrine of H. P. Blavatsky*’ states –

Ordinary books can be read and understood by the lower mind. Abstruse metaphysical, mathematical and philosophical books can be understood by the Higher Mind. But *The Secret Doctrine* can really be understood by the faculty of intuition which is superior to the Higher Mind. . . . The faculty of intuition has to be developed, and HPB had that in mind in writing *The Secret Doctrine*.

Geoffrey A. Barborka suggests that *The Secret Doctrine* has been presented from a Platonic rather than the usual Aristotelian point of view. In the Aristotelian system, the known factors are presented from which a picture of the whole is attempted. In the Platonic system, this is reversed and the whole picture is presented to the student who has to understand the same using his ability to correlate facts and see how they fit into the picture.

There has been a suggestion recently to write a version of *The Secret Doctrine* for Dummies. In a response, Leila Becquer says that would be counter-productive as *The Secret Doctrine* is not for intellectual purposes but for spiritual training. She

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further says, the way in which HPB wrote is an old method, about which I. Shah wrote in reference to the Sufi method of writing. Ibn Arabi also wrote about it with reference to his core doctrine (wahdah ul wujud), that his most important doctrine is not in one place but along his whole work, it is called scattered writing, portions of one theme in many places build in the mind of the reader the meaning from different points of view.

A student of *The Secret Doctrine* must not be as concerned with an intellectual comprehension of the text as to gain an intuitive understanding. The unknowable cannot be known by intellectual efforts on the mental plane. *The Secret Doctrine* is given to us by HPB to lift our consciousness to the Buddhist plane as J. Krishnamurti's teachings are. Normally, we comprehend things applying logic and rationality using Aristotelian Law of Identity, Law of the Excluded Middle and the Law of Contradiction. To understand Reality this system of logic is grossly inadequate as it offers a limited point of view. Under Buddhist system of logic known as *Chatushkoti* there are four different ways of looking at the Reality. Non-Aristotelian/Buddhist way of looking gets one closer to Reality. Study of texts like *The Secret Doctrine* and Krishnamurti's teachings require non-Aristotelian intuitive approach and visualization rather than mere intellectual comprehension and verbalization. In the Stanzas of Dzyan, we come across expressions like:

The One Reality which is both Absolute Being and Non-Being.

. . . the universe . . . was immersed in supreme bliss, to be out breathed by that which is and yet is not. — Stanza I.I.6

. . . the visible that was, and the invisible that is, rested in eternal non-being — the one being. — Stanza I.I.7

No, there was neither silence, nor sound; . . . Stanza I.I.11

Such texts require an altogether different way of study than the normal intellectual pursuit, perhaps mystical and intuitive ways of studying are more appropriate. Joy Mills in *An Approach to the Study of The Secret Doctrine* — TSA, suggests that mind must be stilled, practice of meditation is helpful in raising consciousness from mental to intuitional level, the student should literally fall in love with the work, and self-development should accompany study. She also states that the study of *The Secret Doctrine* is of little permanent value unless it is applied to individual living and one's own knowledge is brought to the aid of others. As B. P. Wadia puts it, 'The book is without doubt written for the spiritual growth of the student, but this growth is possible only when the teachings are utilized for the spiritual help of others.' In a recent article titled 'The Secret Doctrine as Spiritual Practice' — *Theosophy in Australia*, March 2013, Pablo Sender shows how the three fundamental propositions can be used in spiritual practice.

*The Secret Doctrine* is not a book we can read cover to cover and say it is finished. This is a book we should be willing to live with and dip into it as and when we feel so inclined. Its study requires

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an intuitive and perceptive approach rather than an intellectual approach involving memory and thought. Studying *The Secret Doctrine* involves seeing the truths contained in the book and being led in the direction of the final Truth it points to. Torre Whorf, in her article in *the American Theosophist* — September 1950 titled ‘The Inspiration of The Secret Doctrine’ remarked:

At first glance the book may seem almost incomprehensible, so cosmic is it in its approach. The words may baffle and confuse many a reader, but if they persist

in their efforts, while using their intuition and seeking the meaning behind the words, if they go beyond those words to the reality which inspired them, then they find that this book may open new doors into a clear and impersonal world of dazzling light which inspires them with its glory and radiance. It is this inner beauty which inspires me and which I hope will inspire you.

Study of *The Secret Doctrine* certainly requires an intuitive mind and going beyond the words to seek what the words are pointing to.



The Universe is called, with everything in it, MÂYÂ, because all is temporary therein, from the ephemeral life of a firefly to that of the Sun. Compared to the eternal immutability of the ONE, and the changelessness of that Principle, the Universe, with its evanescent ever-changing forms, 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.

SD, vol. 1, p. 274

# Conversations with Mrs Radha Burnier

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

FROM 1983 until shortly before her passing day I had the great privilege of holding conversations with Radha Burnier, the President of the Theosophical Society. Most of these conversations took place at Adyar, the International Headquarters of the Society, between 1992 and 1996 when I served as international Secretary of the TS. Others took place between 2001 until the present time.

Soon after Radha Burnier was elected President of the TS, in June 1980, I started translating her articles in *The Theosophist*, beginning with her Inaugural Address which was published in the August 1980 issue of the magazine. This work continued for almost five years and each article, including her 'On the Watch-Tower' notes were published in the Brazilian Section magazine *O Teosofista*. Later on, a compilation of her articles was published under the title *Sociedade Teosófica Hoje (The Theosophical Society Today)*. As a young Theosophist I met Eunice and Felix Layton in Rio de Janeiro in July 1981 and told Felix of my work of translating the President's articles. He said: 'That is the

best way to come to know a person's mind.'

In April 1983, the President visited my home town of Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil. During the lunch in the house of her hostess I asked her the following question: 'In *The Key to Theosophy* HPB mentions a new torchbearer who would come in the twentieth century? What is your view about such a statement?' She replied: 'In my opinion the new torchbearer is Krishnaji. I know that some members do not agree with it, but that is my opinion.' During this visit she gave a public lecture for more than 400 people at an educational institution in the city besides addressing TS members.

In August 1987 she again visited Porto Alegre and delivered a public lecture at the Auditorium of the State Legislative Assembly which was packed to capacity. I mentioned to her that I had recently read in a theosophical magazine that she had been offered the position of President Emeritus of the International Centre at Naarden, The Netherlands. Her reply was quite firm: 'I have informed them that I will not lend my name to a nominal

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## The Theosophist

function. If they want the Centre to have a real connection to Adyar they should agree that the President of the TS should also be the President of the Centre.' In 1988, at a meeting at Naarden, the Presidency of the Centre was formally offered to Mrs Radha Burnier as President of the TS, thus consolidating the link between the Centre and Adyar.

In October 1989, I attended the School of the Wisdom at Adyar, with Rohit Mehta as Director. I had some brief meetings with the President at her office and she invited me to be one of the speakers at a Convention symposium on N. Sri Ram, as December 1989 marked the centenary of his birth. The symposium was chaired by Mr Achyut Patwardhan.

In July 1990 I attended the 'Human Regeneration' seminars at Naarden. They attracted people from different countries and generated great interest. While there she mentioned that there was need for more international speakers in the TS and said that perhaps I could help in this work. When I mentioned that I was still struggling with my spoken English she said that I could be understood while speaking in English and that that was sufficient for the time being. She said she would arrange for me to give some talks in Europe next year on my way to Adyar.

In November 1991 I visited England, Spain, Portugal, where I gave talks, and the Naarden Centre in Holland, where I participated in a dialogue. When I arrived at Adyar in December 1991 for the HPB Centenary Convention, the President said she would like to talk to me after the

Convention. On 6 January 1992 I went to her house and we sat on the verandah overlooking the sea. She said: 'I think that people of your age should come to Adyar and stay for two years or so. Here they could learn about the significance of Adyar to the work of the TS, the work Annie Besant did for this Centre and also learn about the deeper work of Society. I would like you to come and work as the Secretary of the Society for two years. After that you can work anywhere.' I said: 'Don't you think I am too young for this position?' She said: 'You are young but not too young.'

I arrived at Adyar on 26 March 1992 and went to see the President the next day in her office. She said: 'I am about to send out the notice of your appointment [as international Secretary] to all departments. But before I do that there is something I need to tell you. You are going to serve as Secretary of the Society while you are still young. Some people may start to flatter you, saying that you give good talks, etc. Remember this: no matter what other people say you are what you are. If we are honest with ourselves we will see that there are many impurities within that need to be dealt with.' Her words had an impact on me and I still remember the earnestness in her eyes when she spoke them to me. To put it simply, this was one of the most important pieces of advice I have received in this life.

Between March 1992 and October 1996, when I left Adyar, I used to meet her regularly in her office. She made it clear to me that I should consult with her

## Conversations with Mrs Burnier Radha

on matters of importance. I therefore went to her office several times each week to show her some correspondence and obtain her advice on certain difficult matters before I could address them. But one of the most valuable aspects of my regular visits to the President's Office was not only her advice on administrative matters but also the conversations I had with her on a number of subjects, ranging from Adyar, Annie Besant, N. Sri Ram, to the essential work of the TS and to Krishnaji and her contact with him. Below I try to convey some of the conversations I had with the President during one of the most significant periods in my life.

John Coats, the sixth President of the TS, died on 26 December 1979. As determined by the Rules of the TS an international election took place in which Rukmini Devi Arundale and Radha Burnier were the only candidates. Mrs Burnier was declared elected in June 1980 and assumed office on 17 July 1980. When the results were declared Mrs Burnier was in Switzerland and on being informed about them she decided to go to Saanen to see Krishnaji. Sunanda Patwardhan who, along with others, was with Krishnaji at that time said that he was jubilant at the news. He said to Mrs Burnier, 'Radhaji, now you are the President and I am the Vice-President', to the smiles of those present. He had said that if Radhaji was elected President of the TS he would visit Adyar again, after an interval of forty-seven years! In October 1980 he was welcomed by the President, the Vice-President and many workers of the TS at

the main gate of the compound. From there he walked, at a vigorous pace, through the compound up to Parsi Quarters, the President's residence.

Later on Krishnaji expressed the opinion to Radhaji that the ES should be closed down. She mentioned to him: 'Why should the ES be closed down? It is not telling its members about their occult status, probation, Initiation and so on, repeating what happened in the 1920s and after. The ES is solely imparting teaching to its members on the nature and qualifications for the spiritual Path.' Radhaji mentioned that after hearing her views Krishnaji dropped the subject.

While walking along with her and with others, Krishnaji said to her on seeing the Garden of Remembrance: 'Something is not right.' He then asked her what kind of ceremonies were being held at Adyar and she told him that only the usual ones were being performed like Masonic rituals, the Ritual of the Mystic Star, ES meetings, etc. He said: 'It is none of these.' He then asked her: 'Has anything been changed here?' Radhaji then told him that during John Coats' administration many changes had been made including the two pillars which were shifted from their original location near the six-pointed star to the entrance. 'That's it!', he said, 'there were magnetized jewels under them. They should not have been moved.' After an absence of forty-seven years from Adyar he was aware of a change that had taken place without his knowledge.

After she offered him some orange juice and they talked for a while in her

house, Krishnaji left in the car with Radhaji accompanying him. When the car was about to reach the main gate he asked her: 'What are you going to do now?' Radhaji said: 'I will walk back', to which Krishnaji said: 'No, we will drive you back.' When the car started off from the main gate area Krishnaji asked her: 'Radhaji, do you believe in the Masters?' Radhaji replied: 'Yes.' Krishnaji said, with emphasis: 'What do you mean by saying 'yes'? Do you know that Annie Besant's life was entirely different because of it?' There was silence for some time after which Krishnaji again asked: 'So Radhaji, do you believe in the Masters?' Radhaji replied: 'Yes, Krishnaji, I do believe in the Masters.' 'Good', he said.

One morning, after transacting administrative business, the President mentioned to me: 'Annie Besant once told my father that there is a hand behind the TS, protecting it. This hand is still here and in the future, if the TS deserves it, this hand will still be there.' The certainty in her eyes made me feel that she was talking about something that she knew, and not merely quoting someone else's opinion.

On another occasion she mentioned that when she and Krishnaji were walking on the Adyar beach she noticed two boys from a *kuppam* (a village) nearby approaching them. She thought to herself: 'I will not allow these boys to touch Krishnaji as they are probably dirty.' When the boys reached them Krishnaji embraced both of them with affection. The President told me that in his gesture Krishnaji was silently teaching her to drop pre-conceived ideas.

She also mentioned that there was a kind of a myth that Krishnaji did not like obese people, possibly because of their magnetism. A lunch had been arranged at Parsi Quarters where she stayed for a few guests, amongst who was a weight-challenged lady. The organizers made sure that the lady in question would sit as far away from Krishnaji as possible. The table had been set, the guests had arrived and all were waiting for Krishnaji. When he did he greeted the guests and proceeded to sit just by the side of the lady in question, giving her his utmost attention during the whole time the dinner lasted. Radhaji mentioned to me that Krishnaji must have been aware of what was going on although nothing had been mentioned to him. She also felt that by sitting near the said lady he was teaching all concerned about not having prejudiced ideas of any kind.

Once at Adyar we were having lunch at Mr Ranjit Tolani's house. Several TS members were present. Eventually the conversation moved to an incident involving Krishnaji. Radhaji told us then that she wished she had asked Krishnaji many more questions as she felt he knew so much. But there was one question in particular that she wanted to ask him. She said: 'Sir, in your talks and in your books you have sometimes said that the Masters are not important and that they may not even exist. However, we have documents and letters signed by you when you were younger attesting to the effect that you saw them. What do you have to say about this?' She clarified that she was talking

## Conversations with Mrs Burnier Radha

about the two Masters involved in the formation of the TS, M. and KH She said Krishnaji was silent for some time and the only thing he said was: 'They were two of many people.'

Years later, when a group of Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation India were in Calcutta, they had left except for Mr Achyut Patwardhan. He told Radhaji: 'I am going ahead to see that all the arrangements for Krishnaji's talk today are in place. Please bring him to the venue at the appointed time.' When the time had come Radhaji went upstairs and knocked on Krishnaji's room. There was no answer. She then decided to wait for some more minutes and then to knock again. When she did, there was still no answer, which caused her to knock harder. The door then opened and when she looked at Krishnaji she realized that he was not in this world. His eyes were full of light. He then asked her to hold his hand and he kept holding her hand in the car and all the way to the venue. His talk was an outstanding one which brought

inspiration to all who attended it.

Once at her house at Adyar, 'Parsi Quarters', she mentioned to me her understanding of who Krishnaji was. 'There was Krishnamurti the man', she said, 'far advanced on the Path and very sensitive. Then there was K, whose consciousness was open to that other consciousness, the Maitreya consciousness if you will. One could clearly see when that other consciousness would take over, during his talks, for example, but also at some other moments in his life. It was a great privilege for the Society to have introduced him to the world.'

After I left Adyar, in September 2011, I kept in touch with Radhaji by telephone. Though she grew frailer as time passed, her commitment to what the TS stands for was always clear, evident and present. Her unique legacy of wisdom and strong devotion to the Theosophical Society's aims and purpose will remain alive in the minds and hearts of thousands of members who cherished her selfless dedication to the Masters' work. ✧

**Our inability to listen not only to what a person says, but to what he or she is, to hear what a tree communicates — for the tree also communicates — is a great sadness of which we are not aware. When we do not listen, there is no relationship. But for a mind which perceives and is receptive, there is a subtle form of communication that is not dependent on words or gestures. One may sit quietly under a beautiful tree, or on the seashore, not speaking a word to a companion, but there can be communication. We receive a message about his very being and therefore we are in mutual relationship. Listening, communication, relationship, all hinge together and form one inner state without which life loses its richness.**

Radha Burnier

## *Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom*

IT is plain that no distinct object whatever that pleases the will can be God; and, for that reason, if the will is to be united with him, it must empty itself, cast away every disorderly affection of the desire, every satisfaction it may distinctly have, high and low, temporal and spiritual, so that, purified and cleansed from all unruly satisfactions, joys and desires, it may be wholly occupied, with all its affections, in loving God. For if the will can in any way comprehend God and be united with him, it cannot be through any capacity of the desire, but only by love; and as all the delight, sweetness and joy, of which the will is sensible, is not love, it follows that none of these pleasing impressions can be the adequate means of uniting the will to God. These adequate means consist in an act of the will. And because an act of the will is quite distinct from feeling, it is by an act that the will is united with God and rests in him; that act is love. This union is never wrought by feeling or exertion of the desire; for these remain in the soul as aims and ends. It is only as motives of love that feelings can be of service, if the will is bent on going onwards, and for nothing else . . .

He, then, is very unwise who, when sweetness and spiritual delight fail him, thinks for that reason that God has abandoned him . . . More unwise still is he who goes about seeking for sweetness in God, rejoices in it, and dwells upon it; for in doing so he is not seeking after God with the will grounded in the emptiness of faith and charity, but only in spiritual sweetness and delight, which is a created thing, following herein in his own will and fond pleasure . . . it is impossible for the will to attain to the sweetness and bliss of divine union otherwise than in detachment.

St John of the Cross

# Address on Foundation Day

JUSTICE V. RAMASUBRAMANIAN

IT is but a strange coincidence that many people connected with the Theosophical Society were either lawyers or persons who had something to do with law or at least have had encounters with the law. The fact that the founder President Henry Steel Olcott himself was a lawyer, is something that all of you are already aware of. But the fact that there were many other law men connected with this society is not too well known. When the first set of office bearers of the Society was elected in November 1875, it had an English Barrister and a Doctor of Laws, John Storer Cobb, as its Recording Secretary and a young Attorney by name William Quan Judge as the Counsel to the Society.

After the Theosophical twins, namely, Blavatsky and Olcott left the American soil on 17 December 1878 and landed up first at Bombay and then moved over to Madras, a lawyer practising in Madurai, S. Subramania Iyer, became a friend of Olcott. He later became the Founder President of the Madura Lodge of the Society. He continued to be so until 1885. After he shifted his practice to Madras, he was made a member of the inner

committee of seven. Subramania Iyer later became a Judge of the Madras High Court in 1895 and served as such for a period of twelve years before he relinquished office in November 1907 due to ill health. As a matter of fact, his health was not so poor as to disable him from discharging his official duties, but his standard of judicial conduct was so high that he considered it wrong to continue in office unless he was fully fit. He met Annie Besant in 1893 and took part in her Home Rule League. He became the Co-Founder of the Young Men's Indian Association. He was also the Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society during the period 1905-06. He was instrumental in incorporating the Society in 1905 and he became the Vice-President in 1907, when Dr Annie Besant was the President. Later, he willingly gave away the post of Vice-President to accommodate Mr Sinnett.

Despite having served as a Judge of the High Court for twelve years, Subramania Iyer did not hesitate to appear as a witness before the same Court in the case filed by Narayanaiah for the custody of Krishnamurti. When Annie Besant was

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**Justice V. Ramasubramanian** is Judge of Madras High Court in Chennai, South India. Talk delivered on Foundation Day at Adyar, 17 November 2013.

## The Theosophist

arrested in June 1917 by Lord Pentland, the then Governor of Madras, Sir Subramania Iyer wrote a letter to Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America. He said: 'Officials of an alien nation, speaking a foreign tongue, force their will upon us; they grant themselves exorbitant salaries and large allowances; they refuse us education; they sap us of our wealth; they impose crushing taxes without our consent, they cast thousands of our people into prisons for uttering patriotic sentiments — prisons so filthy that often the inmates die from loathsome diseases.' He also renounced his knighthood and returned the insignia to the Government.

Annie Besant, who became the second President of the Society, herself had many trysts with law courts in her life. Though not a lawyer by profession, she fought many a battle in court rooms. Her first clash with the law was over the distribution of Charles Knowlton's pamphlet on birth control, known as *The Fruits of Philosophy*. It challenged Victorian obscenity laws. She and Bradlaugh collaborated on an orchestrated defiance of those laws. Both of them were arrested and they defended themselves. The verdict was that the book was indeed calculated to deprave public morals, but jury entirely exonerated the defendants from any corrupt motive in publishing it. Besant commented that this amounted to saying, 'Not guilty but don't do again'. The pamphlet eventually sold over 133,000 copies. Besant later published her own pamphlet on birth control, *The Law of Population: Its Consequences*

*and Its Bearing upon Human Conduct and Morals*. This, according to some historians, makes her the first woman ever to advocate contraception publicly.

But these happenings took their toll in Annie Besant's marital life. Though she had an agreement which entitled her to the custody of the children, her husband obtained a court order and took the children away. When she wanted to argue her case without the assistance of a counsel, the English judge ridiculed her. She lamented that the position of a mistress of a person was much better than that of a legally wedded wife in so far as child custody cases are concerned.

The legal battle of Annie Besant for custody did not stop with her biological children, but continued even in respect of the adopted. Apart from the custody dispute relating to J. Krishnamurti which she fought in the Madras High Court, there was yet another interesting case that she argued by herself. In July 1914, Annie Besant purchased a printing press from which a newspaper by name *Madras Standard* was being published. She changed the name of the paper into *New India* and started publishing the same from August 1914. As required by the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, Annie Besant filed a declaration in December 1914 before the Chief Presidency Magistrate. He accepted the same without demanding any security. But, after more than a year, the Chief Presidency Magistrate suo motu passed another order dated 22 May 1916 demanding Annie Besant to deposit

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security for a sum of Rs. 2,000. The order was complied with.

Subsequently, a series of articles came to be published in *New India* in June 1916. Some of the articles criticised the bureaucracy, some related to the unlawful reservation of compartments in certain trains for Europeans and Eurasians, one article was a reproduction of what was published in *The Herald*, London, under the caption 'The Price of Liberty', another was by Bipin Chandra Pal about the assassination of the Superintendent of Police Basanth Kumar Chatterjee of Calcutta. One article criticized the demand made on Bal Gangadhar Tilak for a security bond of Rs. 40,000 on charges of sedition, when he was about to go abroad to prosecute his suit against Sir Valentine Chirole.

Taking exception to the articles, Governor-in-Council of Bombay issued an order on 29 June 1916, under the Defence of India Rules, 1915, prohibiting Annie Besant from entering, residing or remaining in the Province of Bombay. The order of the Governor-in-Council was published by Annie Besant in *New India* on 10 July 1916, under the caption 'Ave Ceasar' followed by another set of articles in July and August 1916.

Therefore, the Governor-in-Council issued a declaration, forfeiting the security of Rs. 2,000 deposited by Annie Besant in respect of the *New India* Printing Works, Madras and also ordering the forfeiture of all the copies of the newspaper *New India* wherever they were found.

Annie Besant moved two motions, one

against the order of the Chief Presidency Magistrate dated 22 May 1916 demanding the security and another challenging the order for forfeiture of the security deposit and forfeiture of the copies of the newspaper. In the former, C. P. Ramasamy Iyer appeared on behalf of Annie Besant. In the latter, she appeared in person and made a passionate plea before a Special Bench of the Madras High Court, for the freedom of the Press. Her closing remarks are worth quoting:

The whole liberty of the Indian Press depends upon the decision of this case. If the decision should go against me, that would be the death of journalism in India. The remedy then will only be an agitation in Parliament and repealing of the Press Act. . . . I do appeal to your Lordships to construe the Act which is tyrannical in its essence, if applied in the strictest sense. . . and construe it in a way which will rejoice the heart of every loyal and patriotic newspaper without which no nation can be peaceful and without which it can never become truly great.

But the Special Bench of three judges dismissed the petitions and the Privy Council upheld the decision.

Thus it appears that the destiny of this Society is inexplicably intertwined with the legal fraternity or at least with law courts and that explains, perhaps, the reason for my being here on the occasion of The Foundation Day.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a very crucial period in the history of mankind. First, this period was packed

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with innumerable events which set the course of history for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Second, the seeds of materialistic pursuits overtaking spiritual pursuits were sown during this period, predominantly due to industrialization. Several spiritual masters appeared on the horizon during this period. While interest in abstract spiritual doctrines was on the decline, interest in occult sciences and mysticism started growing. It was during this period that Madame Blavatsky and Henry Olcott came together.

Madame H. P. Blavatsky pursued pure and simple occultism for exploring the true nature of the universe and for the establishment of a brotherhood of man.

The Theosophical twins used their interest and knowledge of occult sciences for creating a better world order. It must be remembered that after the process of industrialization gained momentum and materialism and spirituality combating with each other, the civil war broke out in the United States. Corruption in public life was at its peak in America, which haunted everal righteous men.

Henry Steel Olcott, born in 1832, entered New York University at fifteen but discontinued his university education at sixteen and took to farming. After about four to five years he took up Agricultural Chemistry and Scientific Farming. Thereafter, he became the Assistant Editor of the Magazine *The Working Farmer*. Then he started his own School of Agricultural Science. But within a few years the School was closed. Therefore, he took up the post of Associate Agricultural Editor in *New*

*York Tribune*. Simultaneously, he worked as the American Correspondent of the Mark Lane Express. After two years he was appointed as a Signals Officer in the Army and was entrusted with the task of carrying out special investigation into the operations of one Solomon Kohnstamm, a big Army Contractor, suspected of fraud. He found corruption to be in a much wider scale than anticipated. He was given the rank of Colonel. Interestingly, the corrupt practices adopted by the Army in America during the second half of the nineteenth century were of a very high order, including the sailing of vessels from New York with arms destined for the enemy, the corrupt complicity of high Officers of both the Services and the Government in trying to make personal profits out of the war, the issuing of passports in Washington to enemy agents to get through the lines. If you would like to know the magnitude of corrupt practices, here is what Colonel Olcott says in one of his reports: 'The Government has been in the habit of paying ruinous prices for the charter of vessels, some of which have been perfectly unseaworthy. The precious lives of others and men, and public property of the value of millions of dollars, have been entrusted to rotten steamboat hulks, and greedy speculators and middlemen have been paid, for their use, prices of the most extortionate nature.'

On one of hundreds of cases investigated, he reports that 'by a corrupt conspiracy between a government purchasing agent, an inspector, a Cincinnati contractor, an Indianapolis horse dealer,

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and a Republican politician, the United States had been systematically robbed of one million dollars in the purchase of horses and mules, at the Cincinnati corral, during the preceding year.’

The investigative skills of Colonel Olcott were of such a high order that he was sent to Washington in April 1865 to investigate into the murder of Abraham Lincoln on 14 April 1865. In 1865, Olcott resigned his Commission, after rescuing vast amounts of public money from speculators and swindlers.

From being an Investigator, he turned over to the profession of Law. He was taken to the Bar in New York in 1868, where he developed a thriving practice. But by 1870, he developed an interest in Occult Sciences. His pursuit brought him into contact with Blavatsky. In May 1875, he got connected to the mysterious Brotherhood. This is how the Theosophical Society was born.

In his inaugural address delivered on 17 November 1875 at Mott Memorial Hall, New York, Olcott said:

If I understand the spirit of the Society, it consecrates itself to the intrepid and conscientious study of truth, and binds itself, individually as collectively, to suffer nothing to stand in its way. . . . Come well, come ill, my heart, my soul, my mind and my strength are pledged to this cause, and I shall stand fast while I have a breath of life in me, though all others shall retire and leave me to stand alone.

On the role of the members, he said:

We are simply investigators, of earnest

purpose and unbiased mind, who study all things, prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. We seek, enquire, reject nothing without cause, accept nothing without proof; we are students, not teachers. In some respects, we resemble the Hermetists of the Middle Ages. But they had dogmas, and we, under our by-laws, have not.

Thus, the founding principles of this Society, as propounded by Olcott on 17 November 1875 are rooted in the quest for ultimate truth. This is why the acceptance of Theosophy was far easier for Indians than for Europeans or Americans. In Canto 10 of *Bhagavatam*, the demigods pray to Lord Krishna, when He was still in Devaki’s womb:

satya-vratam satya-param tri satyam  
satyasya yonim nihitam ca satye  
satyasya satyam ṛta-satya-netram  
satyātmakam tvam saranam prapannah

In a few books, the above Śloka is translated into English, as follows:

O Lord, You never deviate from Your vow, which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone. Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation — creation, maintenance and annihilation — You are the Supreme Truth. Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favour, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites. You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore you are known as Antaryāmi, the inner force. You are equal

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to everyone, and Your instructions apply for everyone, for all the time. You are the beginning of all truth. Therefore, offering our obeisance, we surrender unto You. Kindly give us protection.

Therefore, steeped in ultimate truths they were, the native Indians could easily accept Theosophy.

If Olcott made 'conscientious study of truth' as the root from which the plant of Theosophy is to sprout, Annie Besant made 'service to humanity' as its stem. Because of being part of the Fabian Society, Besant was always yearning for a Brotherhood in which, the service of man should take the place erstwhile given to the service of God. But Besant's idea of service to humanity was of a different kind. Breaking the orthodox barriers to service to humanity, Annie Besant declared that not only on the physical plane, the lowest, is service to be sought. On the mental plane, humanity can be served far more efficaciously than on the physical plane.

Explaining the source of energy of great thinkers and orators she says:

Have you ever been struck by the source of the speaker's power, the source of strength with which they move a crowd? It does not lie in themselves, not in their power, but in the power they are to evoke from the men and the women they address, from the human hearts they awaken. It is the energy of the audience and not the speaker in the tide of the speech. Orators are but the tongues that put into language the thoughts in the hearts of the people, who are not able to articu-

late them. The thoughts are already there, but when some tongues put them into speech, when other inarticulate senses take the force of the spoken word, then people think it is oratory. It is their own hearts that move them and it is their own voices inarticulate in the people which wake the power that rings from land to land.

Theosophy is derived from two Greek words, (i) *theos* meaning God and (ii) *sophia* meaning wisdom. According to Theosophists, it is Divine Wisdom. All major religions of the world have some mystical aspect in them. All religions come from a common source of Divine Wisdom. Theosophy recognizes this unity and hence it embraces all religions. While the primary meaning of Theosophy, according to Annie Besant, is the mystical experience common to all religions the secondary meaning of the term is 'a body of a doctrine obtained by separating the beliefs common to all religions from the peculiarities, specialities, rites, ceremonies and customs, which mark one religion from another.'

The connectivity between love, virtue and duty, which forms the underlying current of Theosophy, is brought out well by Annie Besant as follows:

(i) Love unites creating an expansion of life that results in happiness;

(ii) Outside the family when men enter into relations with the general public, the attitude taken spontaneously in the family by love must be reproduced outside deliberately by virtue;

(iii) Since we live in a society, this virtue manifests itself as a duty, to give

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each related person, his due;

(iv) Truth and love are two aspects of God and hence should be the foundation of morality.

(v) Our supreme duty is to serve. Only by service is the fullness of life made possible. The whole of the universe is yoked to the service of mankind. Every individual should be pledged to the service of humanity. That should be the object of life, the goal of evolution.

In her *The Key to Theosophy*, Blavatsky said:

Theosophy is the quintessence of duty. Duty is that which is due to humanity, to our fellow-men, neighbours, family and to those who are poorer or more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt, which if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and morally bankrupt in our next incarnation. I say, action, enforced action instead of mere intention and talk. A man may be what he likes, the most worldly, selfish and hard-hearted, even a deep-dyed rascal, and it will not prevent him from calling himself a Christian or others from so regarding him but no Theosophist has the right to this name, unless he is thoroughly imbued with the correctness of Carlyle's truism: 'The end of man is an action and not a thought, though it were the noblest and unless he sets and models his daily life upon this truth. The profession of a truth is not yet the enactment of it; and the more beautiful and grand it sounds, the more loudly virtue or duty is talked about instead of being acted upon, the more forcibly it will

remind one of the Dead Sea fruit. *Cant* is the most loathsome of all vices.

### **Karma Yoga – Na Karmane Na Prajaye**

Today the slogan is Live a Life That Matters; do not live in such a manner that matter itself is your life. Ready or not, someday it will all come to an end. There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours, or days. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else. Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance. It will not matter what you owned or what you owed. Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away. It will not matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end. It will not matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender and skin colour will be irrelevant. So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got, but what you gave. What will matter is not your success, but your significance. What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example. What will matter is not your competence, but your character. What will matter is not how many people you

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knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you are gone. What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you. What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters does not happen by accident. It does not matter of circumstance but of choice. Choose to live a life that matters. We make a living by what we earn but, we make a life by what we give. ✧

**If the work the few are doing represents the fulfilment of humanity's needs, then the World-Spirit, or the Time-Spirit, aids them. I hold that Brotherhood has a great creative role to accomplish in the building of the better civilization for which we long.**

**We must renounce our individualism and discover a joy in working with others for a common purpose; it is the giving of ourselves that is far more important than any other giving.**

**Our work is to proclaim brotherhood, not as an ideal, as some beautiful dream born in the imaginations of men, but as a reality, as a law of Nature.**

C. Jinarājadāsa

# Books of Interest

M. N. ROY: RADICAL HUMANIST, comp. by Innaiah Narisetti, Prometheus, 2004, pp. 209.

When humanism initially received pervasive public attention in the United States with the publication of *The Humanist Manifesto* during 1933, unknown among numerous Westerners was another humanist movement emerging in India and initiated with philosophers and social activists such as M. N. Roy. This astute thinker presented humanism as a scientific, integral, and radically new world view. Like Americans who embraced humanism, Roy emphasized ethics, eschewed supernatural sanctions, and encouraged a scientifically-oriented perspective. He emphasized universal education as a method for making persons scientifically literate and teaching people critical thinking. Roy was a rationalist who combated superstition by promoting scientific inquiry and public education.

In the early fifties, European humanists commenced discovering this philosopher and his writings. Recognizing that this contemporary Eastern philosopher remains unknown among innumerable

Westerners, Narisetti has compiled an appropriate anthology containing a carefully selected core that represents Roy's finest thinking. These statements present Roy not simply as a sophisticated thinker but simultaneously as a responsible social activist. Like Gandhi and Aurobindo, Roy spent time behind jail bars. Roy was confined for six years in an Indian prison during the 1930s when he challenged British domination in his homeland. Roy was not simply a man of thought; he was a man of action. Innaiah Narisetti is a national executive serving the Indian Radical Humanist Association, the Chairman guiding the Committee to Study Child Abuse of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and a skilled editor well equipped for a chore that he has completed effectively. For humanists, philosophers, political scientists and religious liberals, this biography will illustrate that humanism is a varied but universal philosophy expressed with increasing persuasion through an international movement that is not a monolith but a spectrum.

DANIEL ROSS CHANDLER

**Good painting is nothing else but a copy of the  
perfections of God and a reminder of His painting.**

Michelangelo

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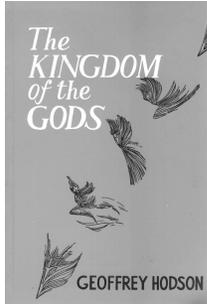
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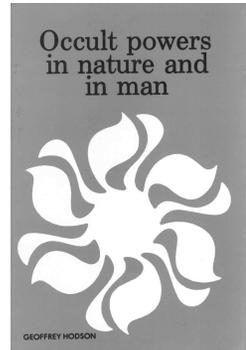
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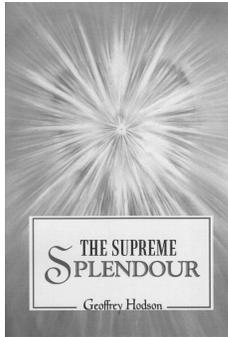
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