

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.



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Cover: Warli tribal painting is an ancient Indian art form found north of Mumbai, Maharashtra. It honors Nature and can be traced as far back as 3,000 BC. Since then, it has crossed many borders

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

Coming to Wisdom and the Process of Aging

TIM BOYD

LET us consider something that we all have *some* interest in — the process of aging, inherent in Nature. Everything has an apparent beginning when it appears in this world, a process through which it goes, and then it seemingly disappears from this world. It is one of the great mysteries that faces humanity in our thinking about our place in this universe. It is also one of the subjects to which the great minds throughout history have given their attention. It is central to an understanding of the deeper subject of wisdom.

We are all engaged in this process. There are many popular sayings comparing youth with age, but it seems that one of the distinguishing features between the person who is young and one who is deemed older, is the factor of experience. Activity is the hallmark of youth, but experience comes with age. This seems to be a distinguishing factor.

There is a humorous expression that “good judgment comes from experience, but experience comes from bad judgment”. One of the facts of life is that the nature of youth is, being uninformed about the ways of the world. That level of experience is what is generally regarded as the separating factor between the youth-

ful mind, and that which has matured. If we examine more closely, we realize that the experiences we accumulate over the course of a lifetime tend to be of certain types. There are sensations that affect our bodies, which are repeated over and over again during the course of a lifetime. We “gain experience” in the world of sensations. We also have all sorts of emotional encounters over the course of a lifetime and our emotional nature becomes experienced in the ways of that world of feelings. Then there is the constant stream and cycling of thoughts through our minds.

Our interaction with this world of sensation, emotion, and thought builds up the body of our experience, which we then point to as “knowledge”. In normal terms the person who is said to be “knowledgeable” is experienced in the ways of these three worlds of the personality. This level of experience has great value. In *At the Feet of the Master* there are four qualifications, the first of which is discrimination. The body of experience and knowledge which comes with age is the basis for our recognition of that which is good, better, and best. The discriminatory capacities of the mind draw from this body of knowledge.

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When we talk about wisdom — and “Theosophy” is the Ageless Wisdom — is that the same as knowledge of any kind? This is a question that we should come back to again and again, to ask ourselves: What is real knowledge, and what is wisdom? The traditions that have attempted to enlighten us on this subject describe wisdom in different ways. A valid teacher who is experienced in the realm of wisdom will always offer the caveat that the best that can be done is for some words to be given. The attempt has been made over time to use language and symbol to dress up that which is beyond sensation, beyond emotion, beyond thought, and necessarily beyond words, so that we can perceive something of the outline of this profound, yet invisible wisdom.

There are many words that have been used to describe wisdom. In contemporary English language we might call wisdom “the perception of reality” — a reality which extends beyond our five senses and encompasses the soul nature. In our traditional Theosophical literature we think in terms of *buddhi*, and the vehicle capable of experiencing *buddhi* we speak of as *buddhi-manas* — *the illumined mind*, or wisdom-mind.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, and in Buddhist practice, there is the concept of perfections, or *pāramitā*-s. In Buddhist teachings there are six or ten *pāramitā*-s. In *The Voice of the Silence* H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) enumerated seven. The final one that is listed is the perfection of wisdom, *prajñā*. In the attempts to communicate

what *prajñā* is, it is referred to in different ways. In Tibetan Buddhism there is a long mantra, or sutra, that is recommended to be recited and meditated upon, called the *Prajñā-pāramitā Sutra*, or the sutra on the wisdom perfection. That sutra is a description given by Avalokiteśvara, who had the experience of the wisdom-mind, trying to communicate it to Śāriputra — another disciple of the Buddha.

Avalokiteśvara attempts a description of wisdom in this mantra, which is both fascinating and powerful in its potential for realization. The way in which wisdom is described is completely in terms of negation, that is, only described as what it is *not*. The view of the *Prajñā-pāramitā Sutra* is that wisdom cannot be defined or named, it can only be indicated by stripping away that which it is not. In the Sutra there is a masterful stripping away of everything that would hide a true perception of wisdom from us.

In speaking to Śāriputra, Avalokiteśvara says: “This is the original character of everything. It is not born, it is not annihilated, it is not tainted, it is not pure. It does not increase, it does not decrease. . . . In wisdom there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no body, no mind, no ignorance, also no ending of ignorance.” If this does not strain our mind, what does? Everything that our normal perception can grasp is not wisdom. This is one approach to try to communicate the nature, the value, and to bring about the experience of wisdom. This is the *via negativa*, the path that leads to wisdom through negation.

There are other ways of describing

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wisdom. Socrates was regarded as the wisest man alive in his time. Although he was exceedingly knowledgeable, and highly sought after for his knowledge, he was recognized as wise because he would tell whoever would ask that “I know one thing, that I know nothing”. His perception that wisdom is composed of nothing — no-thing — made him a wise man.

There is a book in the Bible called “The Book of Wisdom” or “The Wisdom of Solomon”. In that short book King Solomon describes his view of wisdom and how he came to it. It is an often overlooked esoteric description. It is a very different description from the *via negativa* approach of the *Prajñā-pāramitā Sutra*. It is given in positive, or assertive, terms and personifies wisdom as feminine, as “she” or “her”. One of the reasons Solomon was regarded as the wisest of men was that when he became king of his people he was told by God to make any wish, and it would be granted. A normal king would have wished to extend his kingdom, or to have riches beyond any man who had lived. Instead, his wish was: “Grant me wisdom and understanding.” He recognized that all other virtues followed from these two.

In this book Solomon describes wisdom in beautiful and poetic ways. He says we should seek her like people seek after silver and gold, and search for her as a hidden treasure. He says that wisdom is “more moving than motion”, and “she passes through all things because of her purity”. He added that wisdom, being

One, undivided, can do all things, and “resting in herself she makes all things new”. This is poetry, but also beauty, truth, and power. In Oneness, she is everywhere present. As he expressed it: “She mightily goes from one end of the universe to the other, and sweetly orders all things.” This is wisdom from the perspective of Solomon, a presentation of the *via positiva*. Neither the *via negativa* nor the *via positiva* is correct. Each is partial, but both of them are attempts to point us in the direction of what is described as a hidden treasure within each one of us. If we had to travel to distant lands to find these particular treasures, the teachings would be pointless.

There are countless sayings that repeat some aspect of the idea that “with age, comes wisdom”. It is a very popular expression that we might have even said ourselves: “Youth for activity, age for wisdom.” But is that saying true? Does the process of adding another year add some increment of wisdom? I doubt it! One of the things we notice is that when the wise describe this wisdom, it is as something which is hidden; it is veiled. It is not discovered. We do not find it, and we certainly do not create it. It is ever present, but unseen, although its activity and potential are constantly available.

What is the veiling process that hides wisdom from our perception and our experience? In our present human stage of development, the greatest veiling agent to our perception of Truth or Wisdom is desire, and our deep involvement in the desiring process. HPB and others

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described the major focus of the human mind at our stage as the mind of desire, *kāma-manas*. We are in a continual process of repeating desires.

The capacity for our senses to pursue the many desires of the senses — taste, sight, touch, smell, and hearing — diminishes with time, with age. In a sense, the capacity to give expression to the desiring mind diminishes just by virtue of living in this world long enough. Of course, there is nothing virtuous in that process; it is just a fact. One may appear to be virtuous simply because with age our capacity to express our desires diminishes. But this is appearance only, not reality.

Part I of *Light on the Path* gives three different classes of instructions. If these three are pursued, it leads to experiencing the wisdom-mind. In the words of this booklet, we will then be able to look for and see the blooming of the flower of the soul, which takes place when the storm has become silent. But attention to these three classes of instructions comes first, beginning with killing out certain ranges of desire — ambition, desire for sensation, for growth, for life, and so on. The next set of instructions are about cultivating desire — for things that are intangible, inexpressible in normal ways. Then come the instructions about seeking out the way. But “kill out” is the first category.

In the process of aging, the death of some of the things that *Light on the Path* advises us to kill out occurs in the natural course of things. They die out naturally from the death of one’s capacity to en-

gage. So ambition, desire for sensation, and so on, die out with old age. But, again, to “die out” is not the same as to “kill out”. One involves the effect of the focused will, the other is simply due to the passage of time. The will that is focused over the course of many lifetimes has the capacity to kill out, to kill the root of the various kinds of desires that bloom life after life. In the case of any plant that dies in the autumn, its roots become strengthened during the winter, and it comes back with renewed fervor in the spring. “Kill out” is an admonition to one who would be a disciple.

We have the three Theosophical classics: *At the Feet of the Master*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and *Light on the Path*. The last one is spoken of as the advanced course in the sense that it is not written for those who are trying to find their way to the Path, nor for those who are trying to cultivate certain qualities along the Path. Plainly written at the beginning, it is intended for all disciples who find themselves firmly rooted, committed in this way, then it will be a book that can speak to them. In the absence of that commitment it might be interesting, informative, but not useful.

Damodar Mavalankar, in some of his writings during the course of his brief time here with us, put the nature of the spiritual path in very succinct terms. He said that a complete description of spiritual progress is this: “Check your desires, learn to control your mind. This is the foundation of *all* spiritual progress.” In the Mahatma Letters much

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profound knowledge and many indications toward wisdom are given. They are so numerous that it is easy to overlook many of them. One of those indications that can actually be a practice for us to the extent that we can remember it and try to apply it, is: “It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world.” This advice was being given in

a letter to A. O. Hume, advising him not to allow the mind to become disturbed. That is part of the work, and it occurs through checking the emotions, learning to control the mind.

Another quote to close with, and to ponder over, relates to the unruffled mind — the capacity for it to be impressed from the invisible, and be expressed in the visible: “It is in the dead of night that Krishna is born.” ✧

**There lives a Master in the hearts of men
[who] Maketh their deeds by subtle pulling-strings,
Dance to what tune HE will. With all thy soul
Trust Him, and take Him for thy succour. . . !**

Bhagavadgita
Chapter 18, verses 61–62

Cosmocentrism in the Theosophical World View

DEEPA PADHI

AS evident today, humanity is passing through a crisis of an unprecedented nature. Despite the glorious advancement in science and technology, which brought us more prosperity and comfort in the physical domain, we are utterly impoverished within. The crisis has its origin not in the outer nature but in the very psyche of humankind, and it is of its own making. It is because of our erroneous vision about ourselves and the world around us. This psychic crisis today is an expression of a spiritual void that has overtaken humanity and resulted in a frantic bid to serve human interests at the cost of non-humans and Nature. A change in the perception of our world view is urgently needed to save us from self-extinction arising out of our own arrogance and ignorance. What is important is our mindset and psychic hardware (our basic traits within). We need to bring about a transformation in our psychic core, shedding the rust and dross accumulated over it for so many lives.

At this critical point of time, Theosophy provides a world view which is

cosmocentric — based on the Ethics of the Cosmos, the Whole, a deep understanding of which is of utmost importance and relevance today. It consists of three fundamental propositions:

1. The universe and all that exists within it are one interrelated and interdependent whole.

2. Every existential being — from atom to galaxy — is rooted in the same life-creating Reality. This Reality is all-pervasive, but it can never be summed up in its parts, since it transcends all its expressions. It reveals itself in the purposeful, ordered and meaningful processes of Nature as well as in the deepest recesses of the mind and spirit.

3. Recognition of the unique value of every living being expresses itself in reverence for life, compassion for all, sympathy with the need of individuals to find truth for themselves, and respect for every religious tradition. The ways in which these ideals become realities in individual life are both the privileged choice and the responsible act of every human being.

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Theosophy teaches that there is an eternal order that is both immanent and transcendent, which humans can neither make nor break. Man is only a part of the cosmic order which runs by its own dynamics. The cosmocentric vision of the Theosophical world view finds its most eloquent expression in the Universal Prayer composed by the great Theosophist Dr Annie Besant:

O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;
O Hidden Light, shining in every creature;
O Hidden Love, embracing all in oneness;
May each who feels himself as one
with Thee,
Know he is therefore one with every other.

Life connotes the universal continuum. It has as varied expressions as there are forms and grades of existence.

The life which constitutes the essence of all biotic species is also vibrant in every particle of the universe. Theosophy rejects the idea of sharp division between living and non-living, animate or inanimate. H. P. Blavatsky observes:

Occultism does not accept anything inorganic in the Kosmos. The expression employed by science, “inorganic substance”, means simply that the latent life slumbering in the molecules of so-called “inert matter” is incognizable. ALL IS LIFE, and every atom of even mineral dust is a LIFE, though beyond our comprehension and perception . . . (*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 248)

In whichever part of the world we live, we share the same nature. From the

spiritual standpoint, man is expected to rise above separateness to realize the unity underlying the diversity. The seers spell out the necessity of extending fellowship to all other beings such as four-legged, six-legged, winged, rooted, flowing and so on, even to the so-called inanimates, because every created thing and being partake in the same essence.

The cosmocentric ethics is grounded on the ultimate reality which is of the nature of pure consciousness that is all pervasive. It is the pan-consciousness immanent in every particular. All creation, from subatomic particles to galaxies, from bacteria to human beings, are expressions of one, infinite cosmic consciousness. Human beings who consider themselves limited and separated from each other and distinct from Nature are actually parts of a greater whole and integrally related with the rest of creation.

This vision also finds its substantiation in Vedanta metaphysics, which upholds that it is One consciousness manifesting through the myriads of entities within the universe, living or non-living. *Sarvam khalvidam brahma* — everything in the universe is Brahman (the absolute pure consciousness) — says *Chandogya Upanishad*. In the three canonical texts of Hinduism (Upanishads, Bhagavadgītā, and Brahma Sutras) cosmocentric unity is strongly held as the basic truth. *Aham brahmāsmi*, I am the Whole (absolute consciousness), is the goal of human evolution and the birthright of every human being on the earth. The opening verse of *Isāvāsya Upanishad*

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suggests a new vision embracing the whole universe, the cosmos: *iśāvāsyamidam sarvam yat kiñcha jagatyām jagat*, meaning the one supreme consciousness envelops all things (animate and so-called inanimate) of this phenomenal universe.

The same idea is expressed by Lama Anagarika Govinda, a Buddhist and ardent theosophist:

The Buddha does not believe in an independent or separately existing external world, into whose dynamic forces he could insert himself. The external world and his inner world are for him only two sides of the same fabric, in which the threads of all events, of all forms of consciousness and of their objects, are woven into an inseparable net of endless, mutually conditioned relations.

(Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism, p. 93)

The idea of the oneness of the universe pervading all is not a mystical fantasy but a scientific fact, as it finds its support in quantum physics. The fundamental unity underlying the manifest world is called by David Bohm “the implicate order”. According to Bohm:

In the external world of space and time, things and events may indeed appear to be separate or discrete, but beneath the surface, in the implicate order or frequency realm, all things and events are spacelessly, timelessly, intrinsically one and undivided.

(David Bohm, Wholeness and the Implicate Order, p. 208)

Bohm presented a cosmology of the

universe as a dynamic web of interrelated events where no properties of any part of the web are fundamental. All the properties of a part follow from the properties of the other parts, so everything must be defined in terms of everything else.

The Theosophical world view also believes that in the state of Nature (cosmos) the parts (animate and inanimate) stand interrelated, interdependent, and integrated to the whole at the same time. The relationships among the animate and the so-called inanimate are characterized by coexistence and interdependence. Even predatory relationships which appear to be aggressive, are actually beneficial for both species. We breed and breathe, live and die in synchrony. Every creature that exists, does indeed have utility value in the ever-flowing stream of creation. Nothing is useless or unimportant in Nature.

Even those creatures which we, on account of our limited understanding, consider as harmful, have a purpose in the cosmic plan. Instead of destroying them and their habitat, we must try to create a congenial environment for their preservation with proper safeguards so that they do not do any harm to the human species.

The Milky Way is vast from one end to the other; an ant is a very small creature; but the role of both of them in maintaining the balance of the universe is equal. If even one ant meets a premature death, it will disturb the balance of the entire Cosmos. Therefore, nothing is unimportant, not even an ant. (New Vision-New World).

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Biologist Edward O. Wilson very aptly called the invertebrates “the little things that run the world”. The truth behind this is that we need these little creatures, as they constitute our life support system. Without them the human society cannot survive. We are all interdependent.

The sum total of all creations is the cosmic order. This includes the sun as well as a blade of grass or a tiny insect — all belong to one cosmic family and as each has intrinsic value it deserves reverence, compassion and sympathy.

The first principle of cosmic connectedness places the aim of human life as the realization of the divine ground of all being. Instead of viewing matter as the base of existence, the new cosmocentric value system accepts the cosmic consciousness as the transcendent ground of all reality because instead of domination, it inspires love and compassion; instead of separateness, it guides us to the realization of the Oneness. Like the Saint Sai Baba of Shirdi (India), who saw a horse being whipped and felt the lashes falling on his own back, who wept out of compassion when a stone slab fell down and broke into pieces, our deep harmony with all, animate and inanimate, will spring from our unity with the very source of all beings. In fact, for those who have realized the Whole, the One, everything seems so good that they treat everything with love and reverence. They are incapable of harming others, exploiting the weak, or ravaging a forest, as they

feel all creatures as part of themselves.

This state of Buddhic consciousness has been aptly expressed in *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. III:

When the disciple reaches this stage his consciousness has become part of the life of the world. If he thinks of himself as “I” it is as part of that “I” in which all other “I”s also exist. Now there is for him nothing which is outside or separate from himself; he identifies himself with the one great life in whatever stage it may be, whenever it is in need of help. He entirely loses the sense, which is so common in the world, of some people being outside; he is in all and with all.

This cosmocentric view which the Theosophical world view provides will definitely have profound consequences on our consciousness and behaviour. The realization that we are integral parts of the whole universe or cosmos, may change our attitude towards our environment and ecosystem. Who will destroy the ecosystem, the flora, and fauna, if he realizes that he is a part of it?

The only hope for the future lies in a change, a fundamental transformation in our thoughts, perceptions, values and, most importantly, actions. As C.W. Leadbeater reveals, “We are to grow as the flower grows. Why? Because the flower grows unselfishly, absolutely altruistically . . . Its entire growth is not for itself, but for other plants yet to come.” ✧

Transience, Immortality, and Inspiration

WAYNE GATFIELD

A great deal of Buddhist philosophy centres on the transient nature of life in its many forms. Indeed this teaching permeates Eastern culture, especially in China and Japan. The cherry blossom is regarded as an example of something that is both beautiful and yet fleeting. A term used in Japan is *mono no aware* which signifies the beauty and sadness in this transience. Awareness of the transience of all things heightens appreciation of their beauty, and evokes a gentle sadness at their passing. We ourselves are just a blink in the eye of eternity as regards our personal self. Life in itself is permanent, whereas its countless forms are like bubbles in a stream. Even this planet is so, in the context of universal life.

Most people tend not to dwell on this brief life we have, they shut it out with so many distractions and imagine that they are to live forever in their present body. Awakening to the fact of their mortality is too painful for the average man or woman to come to terms with. Indeed if this awakening is not backed up by an increasing awareness of our

inherent immortality then it may lead to depression and a constant fear of the future and what is inevitable. This realization can be extremely disquieting to most of us.

Through our studies of Theosophy and other genuine spiritual teachings we are enabled to become cognizant of the true meaning of life and also to develop our intuitions so that we have a direct perception of our immortal nature. Many great teachers have come to us, motivated by compassion, to make us aware that we are in reality spiritual beings and that “death will not touch us at all”. The rest we have to do for ourselves, no one else can do it for us. The idea that some saviour can wipe out our sins or take our karma away is unlikely to be true. It is much more wonderful to realize that Christ is not a man but our own higher Self and that there is no limit to the expansion of our consciousness. We have a mind to embrace the universe and once we understand the true nature of “self-reliance” there is no need to lean on any external teacher. The fact that there are

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those who watch over us as we would someone less fortunate or a child in our care is comforting but they would never interfere in our decisions, we have to make our own mistakes and learn to overcome suffering ourselves. However they will be there to inspire us at times and plant ideas in our minds that we are free to choose or reject as we see fit. At a certain stage of our progress we may be taken in hand by one of these teachers, but even then we will not become their puppets and will still be allowed total freedom. We can choose how much of their advice we take on board and this will mark the degree of our progress. In many cases when a guru is mentioned in spiritual literature it refers to the greatest guru, our higher Self. It is often mistaken for a human teacher, the bond is to be made between ourselves and our higher Self with the human guru as intermediary and a representative of the Divinity that we all share.

Everything lesser than the higher Self is fallible, we should place our reliance on our Divine Nature and that alone. It is our inspiration and Light. Krishna, speaking as the higher Self, says in the *Bhagavadgītā*: “I am the Lord, the Witness, the Resting Place, the Asylum and the Friend.” It is the guiding star that we follow until the Christ spirit is born in us. As H. P. Blavatsky writes in her article “The Esoteric Character of the Gospels”:

Christ — the true esoteric SAVIOUR — is no man, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being. He who strives to

resurrect the Spirit *crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions*, and buried deep in the “sepulchre” of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back *the stone of matter* from the door of his own *inner sanctuary*, he *has the risen Christ in him*.

The life of one reacts on the life of all and if we purify and harmonize our natures we affect all those around us. We can also not “sin” and suffer the effects of sin alone. Sin is a difficult concept, as it has different meanings in different cultures around the world. The one unpardonable sin is to deny the Spirit in us, to fail to recognise the potential of our true Self and the fact that we are not transient beings at all but Divine Beings. The task at hand is to overcome the selfishness in our nature and realize the oneness of all things so that we can begin to think and act compassionately for the good of all.

Any “virtue” that we acquire arises from the dissolving of this “great dire heresy of separateness that weans us from the rest”. Man-made, moral rules have little impact on someone fixed on the spiritual path, because only those things that help them to overcome this feeling of separateness matters to them in the final analysis. Therefore they wish to dispense with anything that shackles the mind to earthly attachments.

Many modern systems of “spiritual” thought attempt to justify the acceptance and acquirement of material possessions and also indulgence in a hedonistic lifestyle, often inventing clever ways of

Transience, Immortality, and Inspiration

making it all seem part of the process. They forget that such things are substitutes for the satisfaction felt when one awakens to one's true nature. When this happens all desire for the things of the world gradually fades, so that although we are in the world we are not of it. We still continue to live our life but we now have no inclination to accumulate any possessions. We accept whatever comes our way, but we have ceased actively searching. This is because we have found within us that peace and contentment that we vainly sought outside. Outer things are transient; what we have within us is eternal and immortal.

Inspiration usually comes to us sporadically in the early stages. If genuine, it is the whisperings of our higher Self in us giving us a glimpse of what lies behind the veils our lower minds create. If we are a poet, artist, musician or writer we may be able to interpret these insights into words or sounds or pictures; pale reflections of the original but still able to give others a hint of something more precious than the mediocre, everyday life. We are all aware of the effects of truly beautiful music, poetry or art. They

lift us to another realm and infuse us with an appreciation of beauty and love. The source of this inspiration is beyond any kind of designation but we must be thankful to those who try to translate this into something that gives us the wings to fly into our own heaven and comprehend something that words, sounds and images cannot. They are the interpreters and for this we must be forever grateful. HPB writes:

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

(Collected Writings, vol. II, p. 102)

There comes a time when interpreters are no longer needed and we become aware, through true inspiration, of our Immortality. Then life and death become as dreams. There is only the ETERNAL NOW. All feelings of transience have disappeared like the mist before the morning sun and the realization of our deathless spiritual nature is firmly established. ✧

**To know, is to know that you know nothing.
That is the meaning of true knowledge.**

Socrates

The Glorious Future of Man

BHUPENDRA R. VORA

MADAME H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) has written much in her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, about the evolution of man, in the volume on “Anthropogenesis”. The occult doctrine as enunciated in *The Secret Doctrine* elaborates the process of evolution of the Earth chain. It leads to the end of the cycle on planet Earth at the completion of its evolutionary journey. She traces the progress of human consciousness through the earlier root races up to the present fifth root race, and projects it into the coming root races. The Earth is the fourth globe (planet) of the fourth round of the fourth chain. In the Earth Chain the life wave has already been round the chain of globes three times.

With regard to this subject HPB states in the third Fundamental Proposition in the Proem, that there is a fundamental identity of all souls with the Universal Oversoul; and that there is an obligatory pilgrimage for every soul through the Cycle of Incarnation in accordance with the Laws of Nature. According to this principle human beings are embarked on the evolutionary journey through time and

space. The occult doctrine proposes that consciousness evolves through various kingdoms of life before emerging in the human kingdom, where the individualized soul evolves under the workings of the laws of Reincarnation and Karma.

This philosophy postulates that the human evolution progresses through vast periods of time, with the soul taking many incarnations through seven root races and many sub-races, in order to fully unfold its divine potential in the manifested world. The descent of spirit into matter has reached its grossest level during the present fourth root race. With the advent of the fifth root race, the ascent towards greater spirituality will commence and spirit will begin to dominate matter over a vast period of time.

The development of the emotional body was the work set out for the fourth root race, and the fifth root race has for its task the development of the mind principle. In the coming root races the further stages of progress will be those of the *buddhic* and *atmic* principles of man. This progress takes place over millions of years. The spark of consciousness that

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embarked on the journey of necessity, returns to its source at the end of its journey after having attained to manifested perfection as a fully enlightened being. This is the glory that awaits human beings at the end of the cycle of “necessity”.

In *The Masters and the Path*, C. W. Leadbeater writes about the various stages of development or initiations through which the aspirant on the spiritual path goes through before emerging as a fully evolved Master of the Wisdom, or Mahatma. The esoteric traditions of the many faiths also refer to these initiations and the fetters of delusion, greed, anger, and so on, that need to be overcome at each step of the way whilst progressing on the path of enlightenment. In ancient times there were many mystery schools in Egypt, Greece, and other parts of the world that prepared aspirants for the higher divine life. In Greece, for instance, the mystery school of Pythagoras was well known for its esoteric teachings. In India the tradition was for the neophytes to go to the hermitages of the enlightened sages to seek wisdom.

Even though the present stage of the average member of the human race is far from the point of full development of the mind principle, there have been many men who have attained this and far higher levels in comparison to their fellow human beings on the evolutionary journey. These Light Bearers of human evolution can be identified throughout the ages. In *The Mahatma Letters* the Mahatma KH refers to such beings and the levels of their evolutionary development. He states:

“Plato and Confucius were fifth-round men and our Lord a sixth-round man . . . and not even Gautama Buddha’s son was anything but a fourth-round man.” (Letter No. 66, *The Mahatma Letters*, chron. ed.). This means that these beings were very far ahead in evolution in comparison to the rest of humanity.

The Mahatma refers to the astounding heights to which a great being like the Lord Buddha has reached. This places him millions of years ahead of the rest of humankind. Other great souls like Socrates, Plato, and Confucius impressed their mark on history through their contributions to world thought and were also far ahead in the evolutionary process. Throughout the annals of history there have been many such men and women who have stood out above their fellow human beings for their exceptional achievements in various fields of human endeavour. Their contributions in the fields of science, philosophy, arts, and spiritual disciplines have left indelible marks on human development through the centuries.

In the field of art, great sculptors and painters like Michelangelo seemed to be divinely inspired when creating masterpieces of sculpture like the “Pieta” or “David”. His inspired paintings of the Apostles, amongst the many other works of art in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, reveal an extraordinary mind. Was it inspiration from without or the divinity within that inspired him to create this heavenly art! It is said that he was primarily a sculptor who was pressured into

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undertaking the paintings that continue to awe all those who set their eyes on these life-like creations. What is it within the human consciousness that leads to such stupendous heights of perfection! In the ancient world the arts and sciences were regarded as divine gifts of the gods.

Similarly, in the field of music the compositions of the great composer Beethoven reveal a genius far above that of many other composers. Did he bring his genius from a former life where it had been flowering over many lives! When we see the works of great masters like Michelangelo, Beethoven, and many others in the various arts, they evidently reflect an intelligence that is far above that of the average human being. During the Mughal Emperor Akbar's reign in India there was a great music master named Tansen. Such was his mastery that he could create moods of joy and sorrow through the singing of rāgas. It is said that he could light candles and make it rain with the recitation of those rāgas. Such was the divinity of his compositions when played, that angelic beings in the higher planes, like the *gandharvas*, responded to them.

In the field of science an Isaac Newton or an Albert Einstein perceived in Nature the workings of some law or the other that others were not able to see. It is said that Isaac Newton saw an apple falling to the ground and started reflecting. "Why should the apple always descend perpendicular to the ground," thought he, "why should it not go sideways or upwards?" Thus came into formulation his

theory of gravity. In *The Mahatma Letters* the Mahatma KH, quoting the Vedantic philosophy, states: "*ātmānam ātmanā paśya*", meaning: "To know *itself* even as a shining light, requires no light to make itself perceived." Within human beings is the power lying dormant that needs to be awakened so it may rise to its full potential. It does not need any light external to itself. The advice is rightly given: "Be a lamp unto yourself."

The examples of these extraordinary humans suggest that within man is the potential to rise to great heights of achievement in the fields of material and spiritual sciences. Nature intends for the human consciousness to evolve through many incarnations to higher and higher levels of unfoldment to its full divine potential. In the poetic compositions of great poets like W. B. Yeats, William Blake, and Rabindranath Tagore you may see the divinity within rising towards its full glory. It is said that the writings of Shakespeare were inspired by a Master of the Wisdom. All these men rose to their positions through sustained efforts during many incarnations.

In *Gods in Exile* (pp. 13–14) J. J. van der Leeuw writes:

Man is essentially divine; as a son of God he partakes of the nature of his Father and shares his Godhead. Man's . . . true home is therefore the world of the Divine; there we live and move and have our being "from eternity to eternity". In his own world the Ego of man has his own activities and lives a life of joy and splendour beyond all earthly conception. There is, however,

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one lesson or experience which he cannot learn in his own world, but for which he has to put forth his consciousness into the worlds of outer manifestation where there is manifoldness and the antithesis of “I” and “not-I”. It is there alone that, through the medi-um of bodies composed of the matter of these outer worlds, the Ego can gain self-consciousness, that is to say, consciousness of himself as a separate individual.

The priest, in the story of the ancient Egyptian faith in Mabel Collins’ *The Idyll of the White Lotus* (bk 2, ch. 8), declares to the neophyte:

Hear me, my brother, there are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech:

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

Swami T. Subba Row, writing his com-

mentary on the story at the end of this book, states that all aspirants on the occult path have to go through trials and difficulties of life in order to conquer the lower aspects of their nature and let the divine within them flower to its fullest light and glory. The lower aspects of their nature that need to be conquered are enumerated as desire (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), ignorance (*moha*), arrogance (*mada*) and jealousy (*mātsarya*).

When consciousness enters into the human body, it is placed under the charge of the five senses and the six emotions enumerated above. The human soul has its own intuition to guide it, but its lower nature will not allow it to listen to its voice of reason. In the *Bhagavadgītā* Lord Krishna refers to this struggle between the lower and higher aspects of human nature in a dialogue with his disciple Arjuna:

Let man uplift the self (ego) by the SELF; let the self not be self-degraded (cast down). Indeed, the SELF is the friend of the self; and also the SELF is the self’s enemy.

For him whose self (ego) has been conquered by the SELF (soul), the SELF is the friend of the self; but verily, the SELF behaves as an enemy, toward the self that is not subdued.

(ch. 6, verses 5–6)

The physical ego, the active consciousness in man, should uplift its body-identified self into unity with the soul, its true nature; it should not allow itself to remain mired in the lowly delusive strata

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of the senses and material entanglement.

In *Masters and the Path* C. W. Leadbeater elaborates on the ascent back to Godhead through various spiritual steps described as initiations, when the neophyte casts off the fetters that bind him to the world of matter. Buddhist scriptures describe these fetters as:

1. Delusion of one's individuality or self (*sakkāyaditthi*)
2. Doubt as to God's plan (Evolution) and the Laws of Nature (*vichikicchā*)
3. Reliance upon rites and ceremonies (*silabbataparāmāsa*)
4. Sensuality (*kāmarāga*)
5. Anger or hatred (*patigha*)
6. Desire for life in the world of forms (*ruparāga*)
7. Desire for life in the world of no forms (*aruparāga*)
8. Pride (*māna*)
9. Irritability (*uddhaccha*)
10. Ignorance (*avijja*)

The preparation for the higher life must commence with the development of character, purification of life, and devotion to service, that is so strongly emphasized in *At the Feet of the Master*. It is not self-glorification or the desire for personal progress that should be the motivating factor. When this realization comes the soul puts aside selfish interests and works for universal good, drawing the attention of the great beings who are the elder brothers of humankind. The first step of preparation is that of a *sotāpanna*, meaning one who has entered the stream. The importance of Initiation is not in the

exaltation of the human being, but in that of his becoming one with a great Order.

The first fetter that is to be dealt with is delusion (*sakkāyaditthi*), of the "I am I" consciousness that is connected with the personality. It is the delusion about the true nature of man. The strong identification with the personality (body, mind, intellect principle) prevents the aspirant from the realization of the unity of life. At a higher stage of development the identification with the individuality is to be abandoned to lead to greater unity with the Divine Life. It is a process of successively dropping the veils that hide man's true divine nature and to the realization that he is one with *brahman*.

The next fetter to be broken is that of *vichikicchā*, which has been defined as doubt about the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation and of the efficacy of the method of attaining the highest good by the path of enlightenment. This does not mean a blind acceptance of the principles that have been enunciated, but a reasoned consideration of the Laws of Evolution. One of the qualities that an aspirant is expected to cultivate as defined in *At the Feet of the Master* is faith or *śraddhā*; this is different from blind faith in rituals and superstitions, which is in itself a fetter. At this stage the aspirant arrives at absolute certainty, based upon either first-hand knowledge or upon reason, that the occult teaching upon these points is true. He realizes God's plan for the evolution of the immortal life through perishing forms and is convinced that it is wonderful and beneficent in every part.

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The third fetter is known as *silabbata-parāmāsa* or superstition. All erroneous beliefs and dependence upon outward rites and ceremonies for purification of the self are considered a fetter. Religious traditions do offer aids in the form of prayers, pilgrimages, fasts and other observances that help but do no more than that. We must find deliverance within ourselves through personal efforts at self-purification and the gaining of wisdom. When aspirants have overcome the limitations of these three fetters they are in a position to receive the second initiation or reach that state of progress. By that time they have no illusion about their real Self and know the outer vestures of the physical, astral, and mental bodies for what they are; instruments for acquiring experiences of the material world. They have no doubts about the plan of evolution and the operation of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation and are certain that within themselves deliverance must be sought. In Buddhist terminology the person has become a *sakadāgāmi*, one who incarnates just once more.

The fourth fetter is that of sensuality (*kāmarāga*) or attachment to the enjoyment of the senses. Aspirants must free themselves from the possibility of being enslaved by external things. In the *Katha Upanishad* the wise sage describes the state of the undisciplined mind, that lets the senses run hither and thither, like wild horses. But they obey the rein like trained horses when a person has discrimination and the mind is one-pointed.

The fifth fetter is anger or hatred

(*patigha*). The aspirant must attain to that state where anger or hatred has no possibility of arising in the mind. When an inner state of balance is realized, the aspirant is influenced neither by attractions (*rāga*) or repulsions (*dvesha*). When these two fetters are cast off, the disciple becomes an Arhat and is then on the path to great glory in terms of spiritual progress. The initiate rises into a condition of ecstasy in which it is possible to have glimpses of the higher planes. In the descriptions attempted by some of the Christian saints and Hindu yogis this state of divine ecstasy is mentioned. St Teresa speaks of such experiences, as does St John and St Francis of Assisi.

The higher initiations require the casting away of the remaining five fetters: desire for life in the worlds of form and no forms, pride, irritability, and ignorance. It is noteworthy that ignorance (*avijja*) in some form remains to be overcome by initiates even at their advanced stage of progress. It indicates that the learning process continues albeit at an advanced level.

In its descent into matter the soul takes on sheaths of consciousness in successively denser planes until it dons the physical vesture where lies the field of action. The influence of materiality is strong and the soul falls under the influence of delusion (*māyā*) about the real nature of things. In the interaction between spirit and matter the soul evolves to perfection by gaining experience in the manifested world and casts off the fetters that bind it to the cycle of death and birth.

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The veils of *māyā*, the illusions of the physical world, no longer have a hold over it. The ascent back to the Godhead unfolds its consciousness at higher and higher levels of existence. The person rises from being an aspirant to being an enlightened Mahatma.

In *The Masters and the Path*, C. W. Leadbeater writes about the stages of initiation and the possibilities that open before the initiate in the service of the One Universal Life. The picture that unfolds before the initiate is that of a grand universal scheme of evolution where endless vistas open before him. Theosophical teachings mention the seven rays along which humans progress in accordance with their natural inclinations. The progress of the initiate takes place along one of the rays and eventually may lead him to be a Master of the Wisdom heading one of the Rays.

The Masters of the Wisdom were once ordinary human beings like us, but rose to stupendous heights of spiritual progress through their determined efforts over many lives. For many of these glorious

beings we have accounts of their previous lives and the struggles that they went through to attain to the state of wisdom. In particular, Buddhist scriptures write about the many former lives of the Lord Buddha, where he consistently served others in a spirit of compassion and love, to the extent that compassion, love and selflessness became ingrained in his nature. He attained to the state of a Buddha in his last life in India and became the Great Teacher of humanity.

However the glory does not end there. The steps on the path of initiates lead higher and higher to the heart of the solar system and beyond. The consciousness of an advanced being rises to envelop that of a planet, a solar system, and on and on. The spark of the Divine having left the bosom of the Father, or Universal Spirit, returns after its obligatory journey with the realization that it is *brahman*. The declaration *aham brahmāsmi* or “I am *brahman*” is one that comes with the realization of its divine state and not through a mere intellectual understanding of its nature. ✧

A spoon cannot taste of the food it carries. Likewise, a foolish man cannot understand the wise man's wisdom, even if he associates with a Sage.

Dalai Lama

Letter to Carl H. Hartmann

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR

Carl H. Hartmann, Esq., FTS
Range Nursery, Toowoomba,
Queensland, Australia

Adyar, Madras,
8 January, 1883

My Dear Sir and Brother,

I duly received your favours dated 4th and 9th September, 1882. I trust you will kindly excuse me for not writing to you, but I was so busy that I have now created time, so to say, to answer you. As you must have learnt from the December *Theosophist* and the January no., we arrived here from Bombay on the 19th ultimo; much of our time was therefore taken up in preparing for the removal and then settling ourselves in our new home. We are not yet quite settled but we have begun business already. As regards books, etc., you wanted, I enclose an official letter of accounts.

I requested the Indian correspondent of Mr P——, to allow him to show to you his letters, and he tells me that he objected only to Mr P. showing them to strangers. He only desired that Mr P. should first have his doubts cleared and then show all the correspondence to brothers like you — who are earnest and

devoted seekers of truth. Many are the men, my friend, who take exoteric rites and formularies to be truths, and they suppose that whatever is written in any religious book is to be understood and practised literally.

And to be able to perceive the hidden truth there is but one way, *viz.*, by physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual development and purification, so as to strengthen the intuitive faculties as will enable them to penetrate at once to the substance. You speak about abstinence, but remember the article “The Elixir of Life” in the March and April Nos. of *The Theosophist* (Vol. III) well and study it carefully. *It is no use to fast so long as you feel the necessity of eating.* The whole groundwork of spiritual progress then comes to this: *check your desires and learn to control your mind.* And if you will think over it a little you will find the rationale of the philosophy. The desires and the passions are, so to say, chains (*real magnetic chains*) which bind down the mind to these earthly, carnal enjoyments, and appetites. And he who wishes to rise superior to the Māyā which pervades this world must do so by breaking those

Damodar K. Mavalankar (1857–?) was an Indian Theosophist and a chela of Mahatma Koot Hoomi. Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, December 1908.

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adamantine chains which hold him a prisoner in this transient world. When these chains are once snapped, the cloud will be gradually swept away from off your inner sight, and your vision will be clear to perceive the truth. This is the grand secret of accomplishing the end; but although said in these few words, it embodies a grand philosophy which unfolds gradually to him who rightly follows the path. No Guru will ever come to you; pretenders you may find many, but a real Master we must approach and force our own way to. If by our irresistible and strong willpower, our indomitable courage, and our moral purity, we are determined, and set about to work in the right direction hinted at above, we cannot but *force* our way to a Guru, who *cannot* refuse taking us as pupils. Remember that the purer and more spiritual the man, the more sensitive is his heart to all pure attractions. If we therefore by our *iron Will* force our way, we touch the chord which cannot help taking us to the proper channel. For a clearer comprehension of what I mean, I cannot do better than refer you to the article, "How a chelā found his Guru", in *The Theosophist* for December 1882, and my footnotes thereon. You are now too far advanced in age to be able to become a *practical occultist*. According to our Indian Rules, a chelā is accepted for practical occultism either at the second or third cycle of his age at the latest. This is no whim or caprice on the part of the venerated Masters; all their rules and laws are based upon a thorough com-

prehension of the hitherto unknown laws of Nature, and a better knowledge of the humanity which surrounds them. Modern science even has found out that after each seven years the body of a man is entirely changed. You will thus perceive that for the body to be changed so completely within seven years, the process must be going on gradually all the time, and the new body that is thus formed is entirely of the man's own making, for this process of the emission and the attraction of atoms is going on all the time. If therefore, knowing this secret, the man controls his desires and passions all the time, so that he will emit from himself those atoms that are not suited for his progress, at the same time giving them a good tendency so that they may not prove a nuisance to others, and if he attracts only those atoms which are suited to his progress, then the body he will have formed will be entirely his own creation, and he can use it in any way he likes. For the completion of this process seven years are necessary. You will thus see why the probationary period is fixed for seven years. It is no arbitrary rule, but the necessary condition exacted by Nature itself. This is the reason also why the neophyte has always to guard self against self; *i.e.*, he must watch all the time his desires and passions, so as to prevent them from attracting atoms unsuited to spiritual progress. When, therefore, the third cycle of a man's age is past, his vitality is, in the first place, expended in directions opposed to spiritual progress; in the second place, his mind has been

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wont to run into channels which are inconsistent with psychical development and from which it is extremely difficult to turn it into correct grooves. Hence chelās are admitted and brought up from their young age. You yourself know the proverb that you can bend a young plant but not an old tree. Perhaps you will say that if chelās have to force their way to the Masters, how can children (for under twenty-one they cannot be properly called men) be expected to do what advanced persons find so difficult? Here, then, my friend, remember that no one becomes an adept in one life. Before a person can have the privilege of being admitted as a chelā even, he has to pass through a succession of lives, and *prepare* himself *theoretically* for the task. I do not know but that according to western notions this may sound very strange; but, nevertheless, it is a fact. The man has to study theoretically first, and develop within himself this germ of adeptship, before he can ever hope to approach the Secret Sanctuary in any capacity. Here then is the chance for you to *live the life*, and prepare yourself for a future rebirth under more favourable and advantageous conditions and circumstances. Keep always in mind that a man spins his own web in which he entangles himself, and if these meshes press hard upon him they are all of his own making. The law of Karma — that Immutable Force of Nature — which governs the universe, is strict and just, as Justice cannot but be strict and severe, and if we allow ourselves to be swayed by undesirable influences, we have to

blame none but ourselves. Utilize this life of yours, then, for securing a happy future. By the means pointed out to you already, prepare yourself to perceive the truths which are not given to all to comprehend, and gain as much mastery as you can over the theoretical side, assisted by psychical development. This you cannot achieve better than by *realizing* the grandeur and the intellectual eminence of the leading idea of our society, *viz.*, Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. The various theosophical publications must by this time have given you a glimpse of the fact that this idea is the first step on the ladder leading to the attainment of that most difficult of all accomplishments — Nirvāna. If you will thoroughly comprehend the germs of philosophy contained in that one idea, you cannot but try your best to promote and propagate it as far and wide as possible. Remember that humanity is but a part of Nature, and to attain Nirvāna one must identify himself with Nature and *through* humanity to thus merge into universal totality; this you will see can be done only by a thorough comprehension and proper study of the sublime idea of Brotherhood. There lies the path then — identify yourself with Nature through humanity, by means of the development of an unselfish philanthropic feeling and fitting acts and thus mend you own future.

With best wishes and
kind fraternal regards,
Ever yours sincerely,
Damodar K. Mavalankar

Annie Besant's Public Service in India

N. C. RAMANUJACHARY

DR Annie Besant (1847–1933) made her home in India from 1893, when she first landed, and went on to stay for four decades although she was visiting other countries on lecture tours and administrative work occasionally. She lived in Varanasi till 1907, and moved to Chennai (Adyar) when she succeeded Col H. S. Olcott as president of the Theosophical Society. For her long services in various fields of Indian renaissance, she is considered one of the builders of modern India.

The following specific points of Annie Besant's work in the public arena need attention:

1. Her being prompted by Madame H. P. Blavatsky to work for India.
2. Her own experience during 1893–1907 in Varanasi and tours in India.
3. Her audience with Sanat Kumara and Agastya, the Indian rishis, and her direct plunge into the social and public areas.
4. Her Wake Up India Lecture series, in 1913, several social reform efforts, and joining the Indian National Congress.

5. *The Commonwealth and New India* periodicals, and pamphlets on Home Rule.

6. Her presidentship of the Indian National Congress in 1917 and tours on political work.

7. Her Home-Rule Movement (Hind Swaraj) in 1916.

8. Her Commonwealth Bill (1915) — tours to British Parliament.

9. The Entrance of M. K. Gandhi on the scene.

10. Her withdrawal from active public work and death in 1933; a great deal of unfinished agendas.

Annie Besant basically differed with the programs of non-cooperation and satyagraha of M. K. Gandhi; and also the student participation in politics. Most of the social unrests in post-independent India are aggrievedly relegated to the negligence to this caution.

As already mentioned, Annie Besant came to India in 1893 and made it her second home. Her concern for the Indian situation was remarkable even before her arrival here, as can be seen in her essay "A Bird's-Eye View of India's Past as

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the Foundation for India's Future" (1915).

The kind of India she had in mind can be visualized from the following extract:

The India I love and revere and fain see living among the nations, is not an India westernized, rent with struggles of political parties, heated with the fire of political passions, with a people ignorant and degraded, while those who might have raised them are fighting for the loaves and fishes of political triumph. The India to which I belong in faith and heart is a civilization in which spiritual knowledge was accorded highest title of honour and in which the people revered and sought after spiritual truths. To help in turning it into another Great Britain or another Germany is an ambition that does not allure me. Therefore the India that I would give my life to help in building is an India learned in the ancient philosophy, pulsing with an ancient religion, an India to which all other lands should look for spiritual life—where the life of all should be materially simple but intellectually noble and spiritually sublime.

She took up active political work in 1913 and organized a band of TS workers the same year. The pledge the members took was:

I promise to promote union among the workers in the fields of spiritual, educational, social, and political progress, under the headship and direction of the Indian National Congress.

When the Congress hesitated to do the work, she started the weekly paper *The*

Commonweal to popularize her ideas of national reform in India and in England. She waited until 1916 for the formation of the Home Rule Movement giving a fair chance to the Indian National Congress. The then Government of India wanted to stop her work for the "political independence of the country" and interned her for three months in 1916. Her ideal was a "Commonwealth of Free Nations", and India to play a prominent role therein. She formed a National Convention with elected members of the legislature and earnest seekers of independence to make the Commonwealth Bill. This convention can easily be likened to the Constituent Assembly (for drafting the new Constitution of India), which India established after obtaining political independence in 1947. Besant brought together the differing sections led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Krishna Gokhale and paved the way for one national movement. She endeavoured to bring together the spirit of unity among the Hindus and Muslims. She was a strict disciplinarian and worked within the constitution. She did not approve of the non-cooperation and civil disobedience policies of Gandhi; and seriously warned the people of the perils such actions would bring about in the future. But she did not meet with the concurrence of the general public. Many political analysts and leaders have agreed with her and lament what happened, for the "evils" of civil disobedience are the causes for the unrest we have today, where more personal issues are termed national

Annie Besant's Public Service in India

issues and objectives are achieved by ransom. She stood firmly for national patriotism within the frame of international culture. However she was badly misunderstood by the general public and slowly her "convincing policies" made her lose her political influence. Bipin Chandra Pal was clear enough when he said: "In those exciting days, we did not stop to calmly consider the real psychology of her policy. We did not even impartially examine the facts of the case. Her attitude and action in this matter was strictly correct and constitutional."

Her *New India* (daily newspaper) writings and editorials need to be studied very carefully, as the issues they deal with are still alive and prevailing today.

Her addresses titled *Wake Up India* (a plea for Social Reform), delivered in 1913 and dedicated to "the motherland", deal with the following topics and a re-reading would bring new light into focus, even now: foreign travel; child-marriage and its results; our duty to the depressed classes; Indian industries as related to self-government; mass education and the education of Indian girls; the colour bar in England, the colonies and India; and the passing of the caste system.

The literature she produced on political issues and topics run to as many as one hundred (as listed out in *The Theosophist*, October 1947) and these are besides those on philosophy, religion, culture, social reforms, and so on. Her prominent books on political history are: *How India Wrought for Freedom* (1915) and *Lectures on Political Science* (1919).

Her presidential address to the Indian National Congress delivered in December 1917 at Calcutta, after detailing many factors of history and current affairs, concludes with the following aspiration:

After a history of millennia, stretching far back, out of the ken of mortal eyes; having lived with, but not died with, the mighty civilizations of the past; having seen them rise and flourish and decay, until only their sepulchres remained, buried deep in the earth's crusts; having wrought, and triumphed, and suffered, and having survived all changes unbroken; India, who has been verily the crucified among nations, now stands on this her resurrection morning, the Immortal, the Glorious, the Ever-young; and India shall soon be seen, proud and self-reliant, strong and free, the radiant Splendour of Asia, as the Light and the Benediction of the World.

In her lecture on "Indian Awakening" Besant says:

In the past, I have sometimes traced to you, the steps of India's descent; how from the time of her great spirituality, when the life of the spirit was seen as the sun in the heavens, how from that time downwards, with the decay of spirituality went also the decay of desirable things. There came the lessening of the spiritual life, then the decay of the original side of intellectual thought, of creative intelligence, and only when those had gone far down into the twilight, came the slow decay of material prosperity.

She is consistently bent upon the opinion

Annie Besant's Public Service in India

that India's awakening cannot be complete until the nation is rejuvenated with the spiritual/intuitional glory she earlier had. Awakening necessarily includes all facets of spirit down to social sphere of activity. She continues:

Trust to life, to the living spirit. We were not there to guide the life, when it made the glorious past. Life can be trusted, for it is divinely guided, and all we have to do is to cooperate with it. That is the idea you must have above all things — be full of hope and full of courage.

Her thoughts on “non-cooperation” are clear and she was against such a movement because (1) it is revolutionary, (2) it stirs up hatred between government and people, setting up the people against the government, and (3) it strikes at the foundation of society which is based on cooperation and can only exist through continued cooperation.

Annie Besant was against the idea of students being thrown into political conflicts. She says:

They may ruin their whole lives in a surge of excitement and in their manhood bitterly reproach those who took advantage of their inexperience — there can be no wise politics without thought beforehand. People who shout first and think afterwards make a mob, they do not make a political party; and that is the thing that the boy does. Train your boys to think first and then to form opinions, not to call out first and then wonder what they have been shouting for — that is bad moral training.

She is, as already stated, considered to be a builder of modern India. She made a lot of pioneering effort in the fields of social service/reform and political re-organization. The following events she initiated speak for themselves:

1900: Delivered her first lecture on social reform.

1908: Established the Theosophical Order of Service, Sons of India, and Daughters of India Movements.

1912: Founded the Order of Theosophical Sannyasis.

1913: Formed a small group of youngsters which eventually developed to be named the Order of Brothers of Service in 1917.

1914: Started the weekly journal of national reform *The Commonweal*. The same year she started *New India* (daily newspaper) which continued publication for fifteen years. Started the YMIA and donated the Gokhale Hall in George Town, Chennai, formerly Madras, to be a centre of free speech.

1917: Formed the Women's Indian Association in Adyar which developed to national stature as All-India Women's Conference (at Poona in 1927 and at Lahore in 1931).

1920: Stood firm against the non-cooperation plan of Gandhi. Here she was supported by five members only and hooted out by thousands. This event made her courageous enough to say: We are nearer the threshold of independence, now that people are bold enough to outwit a foreigner. (Not exact words).

1921: Started the Political Club in

Annie Besant's Public Service in India

Madras, which paved the way for the effort to draft a constitution for India. She ultimately took the Commonwealth of India Bill to London for presentation before the Parliament.

1928: On invitation, she wrote a statement for the World Peace Union.

Annie Besant did attempt in full and

well an Indian renaissance; and, as I often iterate, there is a need to present an authentic and well-documented record of her work. This alone will bring up the rightness of her views and their currency in the unruly atmosphere in which the country is now deeply submerged. ✧

Compassion

Usually, our concept of compassion or love refers to the feeling of closeness we have with our friends and loved ones. Sometimes compassion also carries a sense of pity. This is wrong; any love or compassion which entails looking down on the other is not genuine compassion. To be genuine, compassion must be based on respect for the other, and on the realization that others have the right to be happy and overcome suffering, just as much as you. On this basis, since you can see that others are suffering, you develop a genuine sense of concern for them.

H.H. The XIVth Dalai Lama

Karma and Rebirth

K. JAISHREE

KARMA means action, work, or deeds; it also refers to the principle of causality, where the intent and actions of an individual influence his or her future. Good intent and good deeds contribute to future happiness, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to future suffering. Karma is closely associated with the idea of rebirth in some schools of Asian religions. Different religions have dealt with karma from different perspectives. Let us consider what the five major religions have to say about karma.

Although the word “karma” is not used in **Christianity**, the Bible says: “As you sow, so shall you reap”. This means that one will face the consequences of one’s own actions — which is karma.

Islam has its ethic of reciprocity, or the Golden Rule, that essentially states either of the following:

- We should treat others as we would like others to treat us. (The positive form of the Golden Rule.)
- We should *not* treat others in ways that we would not like to be treated. (The negative form of the Golden Rule, or the Silver Rule.)

This concept describes a “reciprocal”, or “two-way”, relationship between one’s self and others that involves both sides equally and mutually. This is also a form of karma.

In **Hinduism**, according to the Vedas, if we sow goodness, we reap goodness; if we sow evil, we reap evil. Karma refers to the totality of our actions and their concomitant reactions in this and previous lives, all of which determine our future. The conquest of karma lies in intelligent action and dispassionate reaction. Not all karmas rebound immediately. Some accumulate and return unexpectedly in this or other lifetimes. We are said to produce karma in four ways, through (1) thoughts, (2) words, (3) actions that we perform ourselves, and (4) actions others perform under our instructions.

Everything that we have ever thought, spoken, done, or caused to happen is karma, as is also what we think, speak, or do this very moment. Hindu scriptures divide karma into three kinds:

(1) Accumulated karma (*sanchita* karma). It would be impossible to experience and endure all karmas in one lifetime. From this stock of accumu-

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Karma and Rebirth

lated karma, a handful is taken out to serve one lifetime, and this handful of actions, which have begun to bear fruit, and which will be exhausted only on their fruit being enjoyed and not otherwise, is known as (2) *prārabdha* (commenced) karma, which is the portion of accumulated karma that has “ripened” and appears as particular problems in the present life.

(3) *Kriyamāna* karma (karma in the making) is everything that we produce in the current life. *Kriyamāna* karma flows into *sanchita* karma and shapes our future. Only in human life can we change our destiny. After death we lose *kriyāśakti* (ability to act) and are thus unable to generate *kriyamāna* karma, until we are reborn in another human body.

Actions performed consciously are weighed more heavily than those done unconsciously. On this basis some believe that only human beings who can distinguish right from wrong can do *kriyamāna* karma. Therefore animals and young children are considered incapable of creating new karma.

Tulsidas, a Hindu saint, said: “Our destiny was shaped long before the body came into being.” As long as the stock of *sanchita karma* lasts, a part of it continues to be taken out as *prarabdha karma* for being enjoyed in one lifetime, leading to the cycle of birth and death. A *jivā* (soul) cannot attain moksha (liberation) from the cycle of birth and death, until the accumulated *sanchita karma* is completely exhausted.

Karma is a Buddhist term that lit-

erally means “action” or “doing”. In the **Buddhist** view, karmic results are not considered to be a “judgement” imposed by a God or other all-powerful being; rather, these results are considered to be the outcome of a natural process. Contemporary Buddhist teacher Khandro Rinpoche explains:

Buddhism is a non-theistic philosophy. We do not believe in a creator but in the causes and conditions that create certain circumstances that then come to fruition. This is called karma. It has nothing to do with judgement. . . . In fact, one karmic cause can have many fruitions, all of which can cause thousands more creations. Just as a handful of seed can ripen into a full field of grain, a small amount of karma can generate limitless effects.

(*This Precious Life*, Shambhala, p. 95)

In the Buddhist view, the relationship between a single action and its results is dependent upon a nearly infinite number of subsidiary causes and conditions; thus, the ability to precisely predict the results for any single action is considered to be beyond the comprehension of ordinary beings. According to the Buddhist tradition, it was only at the time of his enlightenment that the Buddha gained a complete understanding of the workings of karma. Thus, it is taught that only one who has reached the state of the Buddha (referred to as *omniscience*) would be able to precisely predict the outcome of specific actions. Indeed, the Buddha indicated that worrying over the precise results of specific actions is a

Karma and Rebirth

counterproductive exercise that will only increase one's suffering or anxiety. He identified this type of worrying as one of the four imponderables.

Nevertheless, the Buddha emphasized the importance of understanding the *nature* of karma on a general level. He taught that wholesome actions (free from attachment, aversion, and ignorance) lead to happiness and eventually to liberation; and unwholesome actions (based on attachment, aversion, and ignorance) lead to suffering. Developing a genuine, experiential understanding of karma on this level is considered to be an essential aspect of the Buddhist path.

In **Jainism**, karma is the basic principle within an overarching psychocosmology. Human moral actions form the basis of the transmigration of the soul (*jivā*). The soul is constrained to a cycle of rebirth, trapped within the temporal world (*samsāra*), until it finally achieves liberation (*moksha*). Liberation is achieved by following a path of purification.

Jains cite inequalities and suffering as evidence for the existence of karma. The Jain theory explains the karmic process by specifying the various causes of karmic influx (*āsrava*) and bondage (*bandha*), placing equal emphasis on deeds themselves, and the intentions behind those deeds. It attaches great responsibility to individual actions, and eliminates any reliance on some supposed existence of divine grace or retribution. The Jain doctrine also holds that it is possible for us to both modify our karma, and obtain release from it,

through austerities and purity of conduct.

The Law of Order, Opportunity, and Spiritual Dynamics

Order pervades the manifested universe because everything exists according to the laws of Nature, which operate in the material realm as well as in the subtler fields of thought and feeling. Karma is the law of spiritual dynamics related to every act in daily life. It implies the entire cycle of a cause and its effects. Ralph Waldo Emerson called it the "law of compensation". Every thought, desire, or action affects in some measure the equilibrium of the universe. Once its harmony has been disturbed, it seeks to return to balance, seeking to restore equilibrium, which is what we call karma.

According to H. P. Blavatsky, karma is "the *ultimate law* of the universe, the source, origin, and fount of all other laws which exist throughout Nature. It is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes of being." It "*adjusts wisely, intelligently, and equitably* each effect to its cause". All laws of science and morality are expressions of this tendency to restore harmony, which we call karma.

We Choose Our Destiny

We ourselves create our own future by our choices each minute. By ignorant action, we find ourselves involved in selfish deeds, feelings, and thoughts. But death does not settle old scores. We carry over effects from one life to

Karma and Rebirth

the next and must expect to meet the consequences of our past.

Each of us is born with an inherited character in an environment and family that seem either to help or block our progress. In reality, all circumstances are opportunities for us, for they are the natural results of our past living and are stepping stones for our future growth. Our destiny is not imposed upon us. We make it as we daily weave the threads of our future.

Karma is the law that dynamically adjusts effects to causes. It is the law of harmony or equilibrium that balances all things. But it is also the law of opportunity, which allows us to change our present behaviour for a better future. We have made ourselves what we are. And we can remake ourselves.

Physical Action in Daily Life

If our actions bring happiness to others, we will sooner or later find ourselves in a fortunate environment, with an increased opportunity for spreading happiness and goodwill. If, on the other hand, we cause pain to others by our actions or our failure to act, we will find ourselves eventually in unhappy surroundings until we learn, by experience, a greater wisdom in living. The law of karma itself is impersonal, neither good nor bad.

Emotional Action

The force generated on the emotional level is that of desire or feeling. To pursue desire aids in our development by

binding us to the objects of desire. We may judge the wisdom of our desires by experiencing their results. Through the fruits of unwise desires, we learn to focus on higher ones and finally to be free from all desire. Through the happiness enjoyed from wise desires, we become illumined and eventually learn to be happy in all circumstances.

Desire also makes opportunities. Once this principle is realized, we will understand that to have opportunities of any particular kind in the future, we need only cultivate desire along that line and put that desire into action now.

Mental Action

The third force is that of thought. The force generated by thinking increases our ability to think clearly. Devoting some time every day to thinking deliberately and in a controlled way will increase the power of our mind as an instrument. Thoughts are things, quite literally. They are modifications of the mental energy that is all around us.

Many thoughts are strongly associated with emotion and therefore bring the thinker into contact with other persons, in relationships that are either pleasant or unpleasant. What we greatly love comes upon us. Similarly, what we greatly fear also comes upon us. We make both of these happen.

Knowing that we become what we think, we can deliberately set ourselves to think of qualities we desire to develop. Bit by bit, the moulding power of thought creates these qualities. The process is

Karma and Rebirth

as natural and reliable as developing muscles by exercising.

The Necessity of Reincarnation

Obviously harmony and equilibrium are not always achieved in one lifetime. That is why we are reborn — not just to experience life again, but to become harmonious beings. The cycles of reincarnation provide the necessary extension in time for the law of karma to operate.

Motives and deeds are both important, and each has its own consequences. Deeds react upon the environment, but motives reacts on character. When faced with an unpleasant karmic result, we must seek to meet it constructively and to modify it, remembering that it is really an opportunity to build new qualities of character. Courage and serenity in meeting misfortune, and a persistent effort to eradicate all feeling of ill will and resentment towards those who seem to be responsible for our unhappiness, will do much to improve both our present and our future.

Possible Opportunities and Changes

Sometimes we have an opportunity that we think is impossible for us to take. But it would not be there unless karmic law had brought it to us as a result of our past desire and effort. Such opportunities should be seized bravely.

Often the result of karma is not seen immediately. It is like a seed that lies dormant, seemingly dead. But eventually it sprouts, matures, and the harvest is reaped. In the fertile soil of our physical, emotional, and mental natures, we plant

the seeds of our future, and we carry with us the rich harvest of many past sowings. If the harvest seems to be poor and unfruitful, it can be improved by planting better seeds. We are never without the opportunity to plant again, to sow the seeds of love, kindness, and generosity, that we may reap the harvest of wisdom, understanding, and peace. The beauty and majesty of the law of karma are summed up in these words by Mabel Collins:

We are each our own absolute lawgiver,
the dispenser of glory or gloom to ourselves;
the decreer of our life, our reward,
our punishment.

(The Idyll of the White Lotus)

Desire to sow no seed for your own
harvesting; desire only to sow that seed
the fruit of which shall feed the world.

(Light on the Path)

As human beings we are in a position to do something about our destiny by doing the right thing at the right time. Through positive actions, pure thoughts, prayer, mantras and meditation, we can resolve the influence of karma in the present life and turn our destiny for the better. We also have the opportunity to speed up our spiritual progress through right motive, thoughts, speech and actions. Our only obstacles are our lack of knowledge and clarity.

Unkindness yields spoiled fruits, *pāpa* (sin), and good deeds bring forth sweet fruits, *punya* (virtue). As one acts, so does one become: one becomes virtuous by virtuous action, and evil by evil action. ✧

Theosophical Work around the World

Ireland

The 12th All-Ireland Convention took place at Clayton Hotel, Dublin on 27 May 2017. The event was well supported with members hailing from the north and south of Ireland, from both Belfast and Phoenix Lodges.

They were pleased to have as their guest speaker, Gerard Brennan, President of the Indo-Pacific Federation and a long-term member of the Australian Section, who is also affiliated with the TS in Ireland. He delivered a most inspiring talk, augmented by a symbolic Power-Point presentation on “The Journey of the Wild Swans”, which resonated deeply with the Irish psyche. The sense of oneness and lovely energy in the room during this occasion was palpable.

Before the speaker’s talk, there was a short business meeting which began by lighting the candle and some Adyar incense, followed by a few moments’ silence. The Invocation by Annie Besant, “May Those who are the embodiment of Love Immortal” was also recited, invoking the blessings of the Holy Ones before beginning the proceedings.

There followed the reading of all the heart-warming and much appreciated greetings, including from the International President, Tim Boyd, the President of the Australian Section, Linda Oliveira, the Chairperson of the European Federation, Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu,

former guest speaker on a number of occasions, Bhupendra Vora, Bernice Croft, and many dear heads of Theosophical units across the globe. This created a very special atmosphere and served to remind the group of their special bond and magnetic link with Theosophical brothers and sisters worldwide.

Fellow officers were thanked for their continuous support and sterling work in both Belfast and Dublin Lodges.

The following officers of the Regional Association were elected and some re-elected: Organizing Secretary, Marie Harkness (Belfast Lodge), Assistant Organizing Secretary, Catherine Lenehan (Phoenix Lodge, Dublin) and Treasurer, Paul Johnston (Belfast Lodge).

Following refreshments and a chat, the Organizing Secretary formally introduced Mr Brennan, who then proceeded with his presentation. Following a brief question-and-answer session, he was very warmly thanked for having shared his unique wisdom with the group and was presented with an Irish memento. Before leaving, group photographs of those present were taken. All had felt a special blessing and upliftment on the entire day’s activities.

The day after the Convention, Mr Brennan was accompanied to the ancient megalithic remains at Newgrange in County Louth. It was an amazing day with a picnic and visits to Dowth and to

Theosophical Work around the World

the ancient Hill of Tara, where all the Irish kings were crowned. The wonderful uplifting Convention and the happy day after, steeped in Irish history, were certainly etched in their memories.

142nd International Convention

The next International Convention will take place from 31 December 2017 to 5 January 2018, and will be on the theme “From Teachings to Insight: The Altruistic Heart”. It will be webcast for the fourth time, since Tim Boyd became international President.

The Registration Form, including the rates, will be published in the August issue and on our website. We are looking forward to a harmonious and profound experience together. The General Council meeting will take place on 30 December and will continue on 6 January.

11th World Congress

As announced in the March issue, below we have additional information about the next World Congress of the TS Adyar to be held in Singapore from the morning of 4 August until 9 August 2018, at the Ramada and Days Hotels complex. (Arrival on 3 August is included in the hotel package.)

Directly after the World Congress, the 4th TOS International Conference will take place at the same venue from the afternoon of August 9 until August 11.

Between the Ramada and Days Hotels is located Zhongshan Park. All who stay

in these hotels have free entrance to a museum behind the park, called the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, also known as Wan Qing Yuan, formerly the Sun Yat Sen Villa, a two-storey colonial style building. Sun Yat Sen (1866–1925), was the founding father of the Republic of China, who visited Singapore nine times between 1900 and 1911. The museum is a fitting tribute to the intriguing life and times of this Chinese leader, honouring his revolutionary efforts and activities in South-East Asia.

The Registration Form that follows on page 41 includes hotel accommodation and other rates so that you may start planning to attend this special event.

News from the theosophical world

During the first half of 2017 the TS issued several Charters for new Lodges: The Presidential Agency of Bangladesh has two new Lodges in Dhaka: “Pro-Active” and “Kazi Nazrul Islam”; the Belgian Section in Antwerp has a new Lodge, “Open Paradigma”; and the Indonesian Section has two new Lodges in Jakarta: “Blavatsky” and “Saraswati”.

The Regional Association of the Theosophical Society in Norway has a new Organizing Secretary, Mr Andreas Isberg, succeeding Mr Saleh Noshie; and the Theosophical Agency in Switzerland has a newly appointed Presidential Representative, Mr Andrea Biasca-Caroni, following Mrs Eliane Gaillard’s twelve years of valuable service. ✧

Theosophical Work around the World



Members attending the 12th All-Ireland Convention, including Marie Harkness (*front row, 2nd from right*), Organizing Secretary of the TS in Ireland, and guest speaker Gerard Brennan (*on her right*), President of the Indo-Pacific Federation and long-term member of the Australian Section



The 11th World Congress organizing team in Singapore (*from l. to r.*): Chong Sanne, Presidential Representative of the TS in East and South-East Asia; Lily Chong, Hon. Secretary, Singapore Lodge (SL); Marja Artamaa, International Secretary; Serena Lee, Hon. Librarian (SL); Nancy Yeo, Hon. Treasurer (SL); K. C. Tang, Vice-President (SL); and Joseph Lam, Hon. Accountant (SL)

Theosophical Work around the World



Ramada and Days Hotels complex in the Novena district of Singapore,
venue of the 11th World Congress of the TS Adyar



Zhongshan Park, located between the Ramada and Days Hotels in Singapore,
with the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall Museum in the background

**11th World Congress & 4th TOS International Conference
Registration Form**

Name (as in passport): _____

Address: _____

_____ Section/Lodge: _____

Nationality: _____ Sex: Male/Female

Passport No: _____ Passport Date of Expiry: _____

Email address: _____ Mobile Tel: _____

Check all the applicable boxes below:

World Congress Accommodation (6 nights from 3 to 9 Aug 2018)	Days Hotel (★★★)	Ramada Hotel (★★★★)
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Twin-Sharing	SGD\$1,165	SGD\$1,306
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Single Occupancy	SGD\$1,589	SGD\$1,801
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Includes congress fee, three meals from 4th to 8th, and breakfast on 9th

Twin-Sharing, Preferred Roommate: _____

TOS Conference Accommodation (2 nights from 9 to 11 Aug 2018)	Days Hotel (★★★)	Ramada Hotel (★★★★)
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Twin-Sharing	SGD\$365	SGD\$412
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Single Occupancy	SGD\$506	SGD\$577
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Includes conference fee, three meals from 9th to 10th, and breakfast on 11th

Twin-Sharing, Preferred Roommate: _____

Extended Stay before or after event (indicate dates): _____

*Payment in **Singapore Currency (SGD)** by bank wire transfer only (no credit card). Bank wire transfer to be made to the following account. All applicable bank charges must be prepaid by the remitter. To save on minimum bank charges, consolidate payments by Section/Lodge.*

Bank Name: **Citibank Singapore Limited**

Bank Address: Capital Square Branch, 23 Church Street #01-01, Singapore 0494814

Account name: **Singapore Lodge Theosophical Society**

Account No.: **0-303060-006** SWIFT: **CITISGSGGCB**

*Payment must be made before **04.04.2018**. In case of cancellation before the deadline, payment will be refunded, except for SGD\$100. After **04.04.2018** there will be no refund of any amount. Attendance will be confirmed when Registration Form has been received with note about the payment made. **Registration will be on a first come, first served basis as the venue has limited capacity.** For information or for mailing the Registration form, please **contact:***

<2018wc@singaporelodge.org>

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