

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.



THE THEOSOPHIST

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CONTENTS

The Third Object <i>Tim Boyd</i>	5
The Higher Self: Best Teacher, Best Guide, Only Savior <i>Col. H. S. Olcott</i>	12
Three Truths and One Dharma – II <i>Fernando A. de Torrijos</i>	15
A Call to Unity <i>Patrizia Moschin Calvi</i>	20
Take Heart, for the Race of Man Is Divine <i>Wayne Gatfield</i>	25
What Leads to Insight <i>C. A. Shinde</i>	29
Tamil: The Glory of India – II <i>Lokesh Chandra</i>	33
Theosophical Work around the World	41
International Directory	42

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Cover: A white lotus flower (*Nelumbo nucifera*); it signifies purity and devotion. The TS observes 8 May as the White Lotus Day to commemorate the passing of H. P. Blavatsky, its co-founder, in 1891.

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The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this journal.

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.

The Third Object

TIM BOYD

SINCE the time of the founding of the Theosophical Society (TS), there have been great changes in the world around us. For anyone in their twenties or younger, in so many ways the world they inhabit is different than the world in which their parents grew up. For instance, in my basement I have three or four hundred record albums, vinyl discs, which for a hundred years were the way people experienced music at home. My daughter, or anyone her age, has never had the experience of using a record player, or hearing music from this now-outdated technology.

Even the sounds that are a part of today's music are different. Much of contemporary music uses electronically produced sounds, sounds that have never been produced in the natural world. Their minds are being tuned and influenced by forces that were never before available in the world. Our interactions with the variety of computer screens and devices which populate our lives, and the rapidity of travel and communication have also changed our perception of time and space. As we have seen in such events as the "Arab Spring", events occurring in what were previously thought of as remote places have immediate repercus-

sions around the world. An uprising in Libya causes oil prices to rise in Chicago, Delhi, and Tokyo. Someone sneezes on a plane in Singapore and an epidemic arrives in Toronto. These new conditions create great problems in the world, but also provide enormous opportunities.

Sophocles, a wise Greek philosopher, made the profound comment: "Nothing great comes into the world without a curse." Carl Jung said the same thing differently: "Where there is light there is shadow."

In the outer world there have been enormous and rapid changes, yet when we consider our inner world, the challenges we face are exactly the same today as they have been for millennia — the sense of separateness, the conviction that somehow we are distinct and separate from one another and the natural world. In 2008 for the first time in human history, the world became predominantly urban. In previous times, cities such as Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Cairo, Beijing, Mexico City, and others with populations exceeding twenty million people would have been unthinkable, but this is the trend that is spreading through the world. With so many people crowded so close together, it would seem to be the ideal condition

The Third Object

for community life and brotherhood. However, what we find is the exact opposite; in the midst of millions of fellow souls there is a growing sense of isolation; people feel profoundly alone. Loneliness is epidemic. These are the inner conditions. When we think about changing to suit the times, we must always remember that outwardly the times are always changing, so our focus must always be on that which is eternal.

The third object of the TS is to investigate the unexplained laws in Nature and the powers latent in the human being. Throughout its history this has been interpreted in different ways. Often it has been thought that this relates to psychic powers, which it does, but it reaches much deeper than that.

It is worth noting that the founding of the TS was directly connected to psychic phenomena, not merely the early connection with the spiritualist movement, but the actual occasion for its founding.

When H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) came to America she had been given instructions that it would be the place and the time for the beginning of this new movement. She wrote that in coming to America she felt like a Muslim going to Mecca — not because of anything about America's democracy, or history, but because America was the hotspot for spiritualism.

Today it is hard for us to imagine the scope and context of the phenomena surrounding the spiritualist movement in the late eighteen hundreds. Beginning around 1850, there was an upsurge in people claiming to communicate with

the dead. It was not just communication, but there were dramatic phenomena that would occur around the mediums who were connecting with the "spirits". During seances, people and objects would appear from nowhere, sounds and voices with no visible source occurred, objects would levitate and be materialized.

The phenomena were so dramatic and widespread that they became news attracting reporters from every major newspaper in the USA. Every day there were stories about spirits and materializations. This was the cause for HPB's excitement because she understood spiritualism, what it was, and what it was not. Within the spiritualist movement itself the basis for the phenomena was not understood, and lacking a proper grasp, fantasy was being substituted for facts about the inner life.

Her sense was that if conventionally inexplicable phenomena had captured the public imagination then this movement, where verifiable, could be used to turn popular attention towards the Ageless Wisdom, where alone genuine explanations could be found.

HPB went to the Eddy Farm in Vermont, and there she met Col. Olcott, who was attending the seances as a journalist. Olcott was a very high-level investigator. During the American Civil War he became a colonel because of his investigations of corruption in high places within the military's chain of supply. In spite of constant threats to his life, he persisted in identifying the criminals and making sure that they were convicted and sent to prison.

The Third Object

For a mind of his type, when the spiritualist phenomena started to appear, while he felt it could be real, he also felt that it needed to be thoroughly investigated. For the mediums, he was a pest; he set up an array of equipment to make sure there was no fraud and to detect what was actually happening. He positioned other observers to try to detect fraud. When he and HPB met, a friendship and partnership formed that lasted the rest of their lives.

The actual occasion for the formation of the TS came about after they returned to New York City from the Eddy Farm. Many people would come to where Blavatsky and Olcott lived, mainly to meet with Blavatsky and listen to her endless stories about strange lands and occurrences. She had the habit of not merely talking about profound occult subjects, but also of routinely producing phenomena to demonstrate her point. Anyone who spent time around her would necessarily witness levitations, precipitation of objects, clairvoyant messages, and numerous other “supernatural” phenomena.

One of the more common phenomena was the production of sounds from tables, walls, floors, and so on. On one occasion a man was visiting, who doubted what he was seeing and hearing, believing that it was some sort of trick; in order to make her point, she caused the rapping noises to happen in his eyeglasses.

Before long a group of people interested in these subjects gathered around her. One of them was a gentleman who had a great deal of knowledge about

magical practices in ancient Egypt. At one point he was asked to give a talk on the subject. After that talk the people who attended wanted to know more about it. He agreed to give another lecture in which he would actually materialize the spirits invoked in Egyptian magic, and would teach how to control the spirits. At some point in this conversation somebody suggested that a society should be formed to investigate these sorts of things.

This was the point at which the idea for the TS first surfaced and took form. So, in a sense, the founding of this organization is strongly rooted in its Third Object. The idea expressed in this Object is one that has become very strong in the world today and is being advanced by many other organizations — the idea that sleeping within all of us, there are various sorts of powers of which we are unaware. In part because it is easier to grasp, our immediate focus tends to go to psychic powers.

Often within the TS the question arises: “Why is it that we don’t do more to cultivate telepathy and other psychic powers?” The question normally is asked with an assumption that the presence of psychic abilities is a sign of advancement, or spiritual elevation. It is worth noting that cats and dogs have telepathy and a level of psychic vision where they are constantly seeing things that we do not. Unless one feels that a cat is more advanced than a human, perhaps psychic abilities are not an indication of development.

The renowned author and speaker, Geoffrey Hodson, wrote many books.

The Third Object

A great deal of what he wrote related to his own clairvoyant observations. He was not born clairvoyant as some people are. His clairvoyance awakened later in life. He tells the story of the moment he first became aware of it. He was at home one evening and his little dog was in the other room barking at something. Hodson got up to see what the dog was barking at. He came into the room and checked. He looked where the dog was looking and at first he saw nothing, but then he saw the outline and later the full form of one of those little beings, like fairies. Although his clairvoyant abilities grew with time, this was the first time that he saw something of this nature in a waking state.

Often we are much more psychically sensitive than we give ourselves credit for. Everybody has the experience of walking through a neighborhood and feeling something fearful, sad, or even uplifting. In northern California there is a forest that is home to the largest and oldest trees on the planet. There is an experience that always happens when one finds oneself coming into the presence of these old trees. Regardless of whether a person is psychically sensitive or not, whether a person has a spiritual background or not, the same thing happens to everyone. On approaching the trees, people begin to speak softly, to breathe more deeply. A sense of sacredness and quiet comes over adults and children alike. There is something, unseen by most, but felt by all, which inhabits that environment.

One of the things that Hodson and others talked about, is the continual pres-

ence of the Deva Kingdom — a hierarchical kingdom of intelligent life that appears in the literatures of spiritual traditions as angels — beings which are said to be a parallel evolution that is close to humanity, but separate.

A distinguishing feature of the human evolution is often identified as free will. In the case of humanity, it expresses as the freedom to act in cooperation with the flow of divine law or to act in opposition to it. When we speak about the Deva Kingdom or the angelic beings, this choice is not there. In those kingdoms, all of the various different orders from highest to lowest, participate in cooperation with the divine order of things. Geoffrey Hodson did a great deal of work describing the work of the angelic kingdom, and the ways in which we can cooperate with it. The potential for cooperation is particularly powerful in the field of healing.

One of the truths of the spiritual life is that any person who sincerely commits himself to a path of spiritual unfoldment ultimately becomes a healer. Whether or not psychic abilities become apparent, the latent power of healing magnifies within us. With or without a specific healing ritual, the presence of a person who has some experience of a deepening unity restores a sense of wholeness in all who come within their atmosphere. In the presence of someone who is peaceful or inspired, even if he says nothing, we find ourselves uplifted. The mere presence of such a person heals the people and conditions around him.

The Third Object

In the Mahatma Letters an insight is given on this Third Object. In the first letter from KH to A. O. Hume the Mahatma describes a process that we are engaged in every moment: "Man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions, a current which reacts upon any sensitive or, and nervous organization which comes in contact with it in proportion to its dynamic intensity . . . the Adept evolves these shapes consciously, other men throw them off unconsciously."

In that same letter we find a further description of the inner side of our normal, if unconscious, behavior: "every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and becomes an active entity by associating itself . . . with an elemental; that is to say with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence, a creature of the mind's begetting, for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one as a maleficent demon." By virtue of the quality of the thoughts and feelings that inhabit our mind, we are continually affecting others and our environment. Wherever we go we carry this population with us.

We tend to believe that the universe operates under different laws in different realms. In our attempt to understand the deeper teachings great stress is often

given to what is called the Hermetic Axiom which says: "As it is above, so it is below. As it is within, so it is without." In the natural world we know that if we place a bowl of honey outdoors, the fragrance and sweetness of that material will attract certain insects and birds. If we place rotting garbage outside, it will attract creatures of a different sort. We know this, but somehow we do not apply this fundamental understanding to the inner world. Thoughts that are violent, angry, depressed, are the food, the sustenance for other life forms. Whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, from moment to moment we are attracting and nourishing these different life forms.

When I was a little kid, during the summer we used to go to California and visit my grandparents. One evening a cute little stray dog came into my grandmother's backyard. We liked the little dog and were playing with it. My grandmother told us: "Don't give him anything to eat, because he won't go away." But he was so cute that we did not listen. We got a little piece of meat, gave it to him, and went to bed. All night long that little dog was outside howling for more food. In the same way, all the things that we feed come back again knocking on the door, asking of us to continue the process that we have begun. There is no empty space, no place where there are no intelligent life forms, seen or unseen.

One of the ideas behind cultivating a meditative practice is that as we think about and experience peace, those beings

The Third Object

that feed on these thoughts and emotions are attracted to us. As we cultivate the experience of compassion in action, those beings gather around us, and in the presence of these sorts of vibrations other things of a lower and disturbing nature cannot take root.

There is a phenomenon associated with one of the powerful patterns in Nature. Hurricanes, when photographed from a satellite, are seen to have an organized pattern of activity that spreads over hundreds of kilometers. One of the things that occurs is that around the edges of these massive storms, numerous smaller storm systems develop — tornados which are also quite powerful. We could say that these lesser “powers” become active in the presence of the “greater” power.

In a poem by Robert Browning the statement is made that our reach should exceed our grasp, or what is a heaven for. Our spiritual lives are the process of reaching for a grand vision of Unity which must always lie beyond our grasp. However, the process of moving closer and closer to the greater, necessarily includes the lesser. The forest both includes and exceeds the tree.

There is this quotation from the Bible: “In Him (the Divine) we live, move, and have our being.” Every aspect of our experience is the expression of divinity; the only thing blocking us from a conscious experience is our unawareness. With every breath, every thought, we are witnessing and experiencing the omnipresent, divine consciousness, but un-

aware of it. The highest powers that are latent within us are the powers of peace, compassion, patience, kindness, harmony, generosity, and so forth.

In the mythologies of spiritual traditions throughout history there are profound stories that speak to these things. There is a beautiful story in the Bible in which Jesus had been speaking to the multitude, and at the end of the day he and his disciples boarded a boat to the other shore. As the boat was sailing across the water Jesus went to sleep. When the boat was in the middle of the water a powerful storm came up and the disciples became afraid that the boat would be turned over and that everybody would die. At that moment, when they were at their most fearful they cried out, and the Christ who was asleep awakened and spoke the words: “Peace! Be still!” and the waters calmed, and the storm died down.

Like all true teaching stories it is a description of the life that we live; it is not a Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu description. Each one of us finds ourselves on a journey across the waters of thought and emotion, and each of us has many qualities, represented by the disciples’ differing qualities of mind. They are all good, but in the absence of the informing presence of the Christ, they become disconnected and fearful. The highest principle that dwells within each of us is this Christ principle, the *Ātman*. While it sleeps we are vulnerable to all of the waves of the world, but if we can awaken it within us, for the difficulties in life and for people around

The Third Object

us, the command is the same: “Peace! Be still!”

When we investigate the unexplained laws in Nature and the powers sleeping within us, we find ourselves presented with a choice. We must continually choose what it is that we will give our attention to, how we will “people our current in space”. Sustained attention to psychic senses will cause those to awaken on some level.

Attention to the Master, the Christ, the ever-present Ātman awakens the deepest powers latent within us. No matter how we choose, we generate results and we also generate karma. As a practical matter we are advised to “seek first the kingdom of heaven” and all the rest will be revealed within our consciousness. We should continue to reach for the highest, for that which is ultimately beyond our grasp. ✧

You will be taking a very low view of Occult Science if you were to suppose that the mere acquirement of psychic powers is the highest and the only desirable result of Occult training. The mere acquisition of wonder-working powers can never secure immortality for the student of Occult Science unless he has learnt the means of shifting gradually his sense of individuality from his corruptible material body to the incorruptible and eternal *Non-Being* represented by his seventh principle. Please consider this as the real aim of Occult Science.

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett
T. Subba Row

The Higher Self: Best Teacher, Best Guide, Only Savior

COL. H. S. OLCOTT

IN my Annual Address [at the International Convention, Adyar, December 1891], after an outlook over the state of the whole movement, I put on record my views as to the non-sectarian basis of our Society and the evil of intolerance; and as, within the past twelve-month (1900) even, I have had to defend that basis against a prevalent misconception in several countries, which was preventing excellent persons from joining us, I feel it a duty to quote my remarks on the occasion in question. I said:

My belief is that if less intolerance towards Christianity had been shown hitherto by the Founders of the Society and their colleagues, we should have suffered and made to suffer less, and would today have had a thousand Christian well-wishers where we have one. We may truly say we have had cruel provocation, but that does not really excuse us for lacking the courage to return good for evil, and so proving untrue to our ideal of brotherhood. So imperfect have we all been in our consistency of behavior, that, years ago, the Masters

told us that being a Fellow of the Theosophical Society was not at all equivalent to being a real Theosophist, that is, a knower and doer of godlike things. To return: it is, of course, no more important to humanity as a whole that Theosophy should be recognized and practised within the Christian than within the Hindu, the Buddhist, or any other Church: on the other hand, it is equally important; and our Society will not have fully proven its capacity for usefulness until it has kindly and patiently helped earnest and willing followers of each and every religion to find the key, the one [and] only master-key, by which their own Scriptures can be understood and appreciated. I deplore our intolerance, counting myself a chief offender; and I do especially protest against and denounce a tendency which is growing among us to lay the foundations of a new idolatry. As the co-Founder of the Society, as one who has had constant opportunities for knowing the chosen policy and wishes of our Masters, as one who has, under them and with their assent, borne our flag through

Col. H. S. Olcott was the Founder-President of the Theosophical Society from 1875–1907. An extract from chapter 24 of his *Old Diary Leaves*, Fourth Series.

The Higher Self: Best Teacher, Best Guide, Only Savior

sixteen years of battle, I protest against the first giving way to the temptation to elevate either them, their agents, or any other living or dead personage to the divine status, or their teachings to that of infallible doctrine. Not one word was ever spoken, transmitted, or written to me by the Masters that warranted such a course, nay, that did not inculcate the very opposite. I have been taught to lean upon myself alone, to look to my Higher Self as my best teacher, best guide, best example, and only savior. I was taught that no one could or ever would attain to the perfect knowledge save upon those lines; and so long as you keep me in my office, I shall proclaim this as the basis, the only basis and the palladium of the Society. I am led to make the above remarks by what I have seen going on of late.

With regard to HPB's sudden death, and the bringing of her ashes to Adyar, I said:

The blackest sorrow of the year, or rather of all our years, was the sudden death of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, at London, on the 8th of May last. The awfulness of the shock was increased by its suddenness. She had been an invalid for years, it is true, but we had seen her more than once snatched back from the very brink of the grave, and at the time of her demise she had laid plans for continued work in the near future. Some building was being done by her order at the London Headquarters; she had pending engagements unsettled, among them a most important one with myself. Her niece saw her on the previous day, and made an appointment with her. In short, I do not

believe she meant to die, or knew she would die when she did. Generally, of course, she knew that she was liable to depart after certain work had been finished, but circumstances make me think she was surprised by a physical crisis, and died before she expected she would. If she had lived, she would have undoubtedly left her protest against her friends making a saint of her or a bible out of her magnificent though not infallible writings. I helped to compile her *Isis Unveiled*, while Mr Keightley and several others did the same by *The Secret Doctrine*. Surely we know how far from infallible are our portions of the books, to say nothing about hers. She did not discover nor invent Theosophy, nor was she the first or the ablest agent, scribe, or messenger of the Hidden Teachers of the Snowy Mountains. The various Scriptures of the ancient nations contain every idea now put forth, and in some cases possess far greater beauties and merits than any of her or our books. We need not fall into idolatry to signify our lasting reverence and love for her, the contemporary teacher, nor offend the literary world by pretending that she wrote with the pen of inspiration. Nobody living was a more staunch and loyal friend of hers than I, nobody will cherish her memory more lovingly. I was true to her to the end of her life, and now I shall continue to be true to her memory. But I never worshipped her, never blinded my eyes to her faults, never dreamt that she was as perfect a channel for the transmission of occult teaching as some others in history had been, or as the Masters would have been glad to have found. As her tried friend, then; as

The Higher Self: Best Teacher, Best Guide, Only Savior

one who worked most intimately with her, and is most anxious that she may be taken by posterity at her true high value; as her co-worker; as one long ago an accepted, though humble, agent of the Masters; and finally, as the official head of the Society and guardian of the personal rights of its Fellows — I place on record my protest against all attempts to create an HPB School, sect, or cult, or to take her utterances as in the least degree above criticism. The importance of the subject must be my excuse for thus dwelling upon it at some length. I single out no individuals, mean to hurt nobody's feelings. I am not sure of being alive very many years longer, and what duty demands I must say while I can.

And now, brethren and friends, I come to a matter of the deepest, saddest interest. H. P. Blavatsky's body was cremated by her order, often reiterated and at long intervals. Before leaving India for Europe for the last time, she executed what proved to have been her last Will and Testament, and the original document is on file here as provided by law. Its date is the 31st of January, 1885. The witnesses were P. Sreenivasa Row, E. H. Morgan, T. Subba Row, and C. Ramiah. It contains a clause to the effect that she wishes her ashes to be buried within the compound of the Headquarters at Adyar; and another requesting

that annually, on the anniversary of her death, some of her friends should assemble here and read a chapter of *The Light of Asia* and one of *Bhagavadgītā*. In compliance with her sacred wish, therefore, I have brought her ashes from London; across the Atlantic, across the American continent, across the Pacific, from Japan to Ceylon, and thence hither, that they may find the last resting place she longed for, the holiest tomb that a servant of the Indian sages could have. Together we came, she and I, from New York to India, over seas and lands, in the beginning of 1879, to relight the torch at the temple-door of *gnyānam*: together have we come now — I living, she a memory and a handful of dust — again in 1891. Parted are we in body, yet united in heart and soul for our common cause, and knowing that we shall one day, in a future birth, again be comrades, co-disciples and colleagues. My private duty towards her is fulfilled: I now turn over to the Society the honorable custody of her ashes, and as President shall see that her last wishes are fulfilled so far as feasible.

I then removed a silken covering, and exposed a closed, handsomely engraved Benares vase, in which were the ashes of Madame Blavatsky. All present rose to their feet and stood in solemn silence until the mortuary urn was re-covered. ✧

Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.

The Voice of the Silence
H. P. Blavatsky

Three Truths and One Dharma — II

FERNANDO A. DE TORRIJOS

The Experience of the Silent Mind

Our mind usually works through memories and ideas. We make partial use of our mind; we do not work it to full capacity, integrally. We just do not know that there is another way the mind can function, free from memory, comparison and choice. This incomplete use of the mind creates a sense of inner deficiency, emptiness, which seeks to be filled with interest vested in property, in other human beings and the enrichment and expansion of the self, all of which become a rallying point for all our efforts to fill the inner void. All the while we are completely unconscious of the fact that our mental life is but the result of our habits, and there is nothing in the nature of the mind itself to compel us to use it as we do. Greed and ambition, conflict and strife are so much with us that we do not even question their right to exist and do not at all realize that they are due to inadvertence and lack of insight.

Our habit of escaping from conflict has created an inability to see things as they are. Fixed patterns of escape have entirely mechanized our lives and re-

sulted in the decay of all the intrinsic human qualities, the qualities of the heart, such as respect for truth, admiration of beauty, feelings of friendship and love, freedom from self-concern. Facing facts without condemnation or justification forms an important element of J. Krishnamurti's (K.) approach to the problem of our own transformation. However, as long as we use our minds for self-protection and self-aggression, as long as we look at the world through ideas and prejudices, and create a permanent rallying point for separative, defensive and aggressive activities, which we believe to be ourselves, we shall persist in our habit of escaping from the actual present and therefore missing the very ecstasy of living.

To live a life free from self and its fulfilments is Krishnamurti's solution of the world problem; that is his true revolution. To him there are factual memories and psychological memories and he objects only to the latter, so also, he draws a distinction between factual time and psychological time, and only the latter is the measure of our frustration.

Mr Fernando A. de Torrijos is a long-term member and lecturer of the TS in America. Talk given at the European Congress, Barcelona, Spain in August 2017.

Psychological time is created when we long for a past or future fulfilment. In reality, we live always in the now, consciousness is always in the present. Past and future, like dimensions in space, are mental constructs, valid and valuable for creating order in the world of sensory perceptions, but entirely misleading when superimposed on our life with its stream of events which happen only in the present and are true only when not corrupted by memories or expectations. K. wants us to live in the present from moment to moment, seeing facts as they are.

Stretched between the past and the future, the self, like a spider, builds its net of acquisitions and habits. The role of time in the building up of self is crucial, because the self cannot exist without the idea of its having been in the past and going to be in the future. The permanency of the self is inextricably tied up with the continuity of time from the past to the present into the future. The self is like an axis of crystallization round which thoughts, feelings and desires settle. The conditioning of thought by the idea of its belonging to a permanent self is at the same time a conditioning of the present by the past and the future. Timelessness is coextensive with selflessness, and both are manifested in living in the present from moment to moment, unconcerned with past memories and future hopes and fears.

The Silent Mind

So long as we use our mind wrongly, any change in our environment will lead

us nowhere; for, the mind will, within a short time, recreate the same or similar environment. By our present use of the mind, we have so distorted it that it has become dull and insensitive to its own potentialities. True revolution consists in clearing the mind from all alien elements and making full and correct use of it. The revolution is not in the environment, but in the creator of the environment.

Mystics and yogis all over the world have said, each in his own way, that man's fundamental problem is his own mind. But their difference with K. becomes apparent, when we examine how they deal with the mind. According to K. the mind is to be free from all confusion due to prejudice, all rigidity due to attachment to beliefs and ready-made patterns, all submission to authority, all dependence on success and failure, all greed and possessiveness, and all ambition and self-fulfilment. Our mind, he says, cannot be thus free, unless it be completely silent, quiet, neither with the motionlessness of suppression, nor with the tranquillity of death, but with the calm of integral self-awareness. The mind cannot be made silent; it becomes silent when we see how we make it restless by misuse.

To K. ignorance is not ignorance of God, of metaphysical entities, of higher planes; it is ignorance of one's mind, of its make-up, its ways and motives. The quieting of the mind through the orthodox methods of determination and effort in the pursuit of an objective merely allows the mud to settle for a time; but the danger of disturbance and becoming cloudy

again remains and the mind's price for its freedom from disturbance is "eternal vigilance", which means ceaseless tension. Surely a mind ever in tension may appear quiet on the surface, but it is the calm of a prison, ever ready to break out in an uproar. We cannot forcibly bring peace and calm to the mind; the mind has to reach that state.

The first step in the direction of clarity and silence of the mind is what K. calls self-knowledge, which comes when the mind watches its own working with interest, and yet with impersonal detachment. We must distinguish self-knowledge from introspection. Introspection merely deals with small sections of the surface, while self-knowledge lays bare the very constitution of the mind, its warp and woof, peels it off layer by layer, down to the self, its innermost kernel. Introspection merely examines some elements of the conscious activity of the mind, while self-knowledge is of the whole mind, conscious as well as unconscious.

Self-knowledge rightly pursued illuminates every crevice of our mind, so that nothing remains hidden; yet it does not attempt to interfere with the constitution or working of the mental states, but merely brings them into light. It should not be supposed that the observing mind is something above the mind, some additional external fixture; it is the same mind acting differently. The mind under observation and the observing mind are one and the same mind; their difference is only in function, not in essence. These two aspects of the mind stand to each

other in a peculiar relation: when the mind becomes restlessly active the observing mind seems to disappear; its function of observing has completely faded out. When, on the other hand, we succeed in strengthening the observing function, the process is reversed and the distractions and restlessness lose some of their vigour. Krishnamurti's approach to the problem of the restless and painful mind takes advantage of this relation and, through strengthening the mind's capacity for self-observation, brings about the spontaneous quieting and silencing of the observed mind and its distractions.

Self-knowledge is therefore passive only in the sense that it does not immediately and actively interfere with faulty mental states. But it is far from being ineffective. On the contrary, we may find at the end that it possesses far more power than we dreamt of. K. gives us the first glimpse of this power by calling it "alertness", which immediately converts the observing mind into an investigating mind, a spotlight into a search light. Self-knowledge therefore is active in the sense that it is alert or closely watchful. It not only watches the distracted activities with its own light but can probe into the fringe of consciousness; the borderland which the unconscious must cross, before it enters the conscious, so that nothing in that region may be missed. It is passive in the sense that it does not interfere, but active in the sense of being alert and watchful. It is, therefore passively alert or actively quiet. Not only can such an alert mind observe itself, but it can ferret

out and penetrate the most obscure and hidden of its activities. Introspection can watch only the simpler movements of the conscious mind; the alert mind we are describing is also in touch with the unconscious mind and brings more and more into light, the fringe of consciousness, the dim regions where the conscious merges into the unconscious and the unconscious projects itself into the conscious. This it can do because it is free both from active valuation and indifferent unconcern. The average conscious mind is so little aware of itself that this fringe of consciousness escapes its attention and little opportunity is given to the unconscious to establish a larger surface of contact with the conscious. Both suffer in consequence: the conscious remains shallow and petty, commonplace and uncreative, and the unconscious in conflict and strife, disintegrated, heterogeneous, full of complex and painful entanglements.

The alert mind is the first step toward bringing the conscious and the unconscious together. It begins by making the conscious part of our mind sensitive or the unconscious at the fringe of consciousness; it also encourages the unconscious to project itself more and more into the conscious. When the interaction in between the two aspects of our mind is well established, both will be the gainers: the conscious mind will gain in width and depth of insight, and the unconscious in opportunities for constructive and creative self-expression.

K. does not make us depend on any external agency, some higher mind or

higher Self that is utterly unknown to us. When alertness reaches a point of such intensity that, effortlessly and spontaneously, it discards all memories and aversions, all fears and hopes and is solely and supremely concerned with the entire content of the present moment, outer and inner, subjective and objective, without separating the two, without a sense of duality between the “me” and the “not-me”, both being only two aspects of a single integral experience, such a point of supreme alertness K. calls “awareness” or “mindfulness”.

An article written by Sri Ram and published in *The Theosophist* in December 1972, gives some clarity about the importance of cultivating mindfulness.

Right Mindfulness is a key virtue that opens the door to things unperceived before and therefore ignored. If you say to someone: Have a sense of proportion, he might not even know what it means. Like tolerance, good taste, grace in action, it is a virtue of maturity. It will come naturally as one wakes up inwardly. Paying full attention to whatever it might be, a piece of work, to objects around, to beauty in those objects, to one’s behaviour, speech, the tone in which one speaks, to one’s thoughts, feelings and reactions, is really a process of waking up.

To see an object as it is, there must be no subjective additions by the mind. It must not interpose its thought. There must be no reaction or mental comment, interfering with the receptivity of the mind. It must be in a negative (receptive) condition but awake, not asleep or dreaming.

Three Truths and One Dharma — II

Such a condition is like a mirror in which all things are reflected faithfully. First one must see a thing as it is, whether a situation or the condition of one's mind, or any other object of perception; then only there can be a clear comprehension of its nature.

The Buddhist monk or aspirant makes a regular practice of such seeing. They call it bare attention, that is just attention or observation, without colouring or interpretation, without the action of memory in any way. Basing themselves on texts from the Pali canon, they practise bare attention about all one's activities at the physical and other levels step by step. They begin with breathing, that is, observe the inbreathing, the outbreathing, its quickness, length of time, all about it, not regulating it; as is done in the practice called *prāṇāyāma*. Then they go on to the postures of the body, all aspects of the bodily behaviour: how one sits, eats, walks, and so forth. As one does so, one

ceases to identify oneself with the body. *At the Feet of the Master* says: "The body and the man are two." One may accept this as part of a philosophical statement or general theory; but that does not mean we realize the fact. The cultivation of mindfulness (with the help of the breath and the physical body), is the ideal practice designed to achieve that separation in one's mind, to start with. It is then directed toward sensations pertaining to all senses and then to feelings, one's mental states and the contents of those states. One should be careful, while doing this, not to get self-involved or self-centered unconsciously. To the extent one is, one should wake up to that condition. It should also become an object of observation, with a view to freeing oneself from it. Absolute freedom in every sense, in every aspect of one's being, is the aim and purpose of all of this.

(To be continued)

Once again I must stress the importance of living a benevolent life — with or without meditation — always keeping the intention pure, and speech, action, and livelihood clean. Anybody who achieves this standard of living is a noble man, whether he meditates or not. Always, at the base of all lies our intention.

Buddhist Meditation
Samdhong Rinpoche

A Call to Unity

PATRIZIA MOSCHIN CALVI

I salute the decision to make “A Call to Unity” as the topic of this Convention, and I wish to thank International President Tim Boyd and his staff for that. Investigating this topic will give opportunities for personal and collective growth.

The first question we should ask is: are there any divisions in the Theosophical Society (TS)? The answer is yes, for sure, just as there are divisions in the theosophical movement as a whole. But while that does not prevent the TS from doing its “external” work, Theosophy teaches us that this is not enough. Keeping up a common facade might be beneficial in the short term, but will lead to breakdown in the medium to long run.

To say that the TS or the theosophical movement is divided is an oxymoron. The oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines words expressing contradictory concepts. “Hot ice” or “eloquent silence” are examples of oxymorons, and so is the concept of brotherhood when used in combination with the word division.

Hence the great challenge ahead of us, to which we are called by our President, is to find again unity of purpose and of

feelings, unity of vision and shared passion. Those who speak of Theosophy — that is unity of life and brotherhood — and then clash with their fellow members are not authoritative, they are not credible. And this matter concerns not only all of us but also all people of goodwill.

There is a major difference between being authoritative and being authoritarian. Authoritarian persons force their authority and thoughts on others, thus restricting other people’s individual freedom. Authoritative persons instead exert a moral authority derived from their own actual merits and capabilities. Authoritativeness is earned through hard fieldwork; it is not about filling one’s mouth with beautiful phrases. People are willing to follow those leaders who can lead by example, leaders who can provide inspiration, who have a clear vision which they know how to convey to their teammates. Authoritative leaders will not get tangled up in accusations, slander, power games; instead they will unleash and enhance the talents of people, sharing with them the objectives to be achieved. A true leader knows how to create team spirit.

Ms Patrizia Moschin Calvi is an active worker and the Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Italy. Talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, on 3 January 2017.

A Call to Unity

Can we really claim to be authoritative when we talk about brotherhood? Can we really bear witness to this high ideal, first of all within our association? Or are power and money guiding us as bad counsellors?

Certainly the TS as an institution can do very well without all those who fight it every day, and I am referring here to fellow theosophists! But as a *corpus* — a body, a sacred union of brothers like ours who seek to contribute to raising humanity, no, we cannot afford to do that. From the esoteric point of view, that is an inconsistency that can really cost us very dear.

The law of laws is unity in everything, which means harmony, cooperation and helping each other. Everything in the universe lives for everything and for theosophists like us, it logically follows that we should lead lives that benefit humankind and taking an altruistic approach will bring sweet fruits. Once we have realized and achieved this, there will be a combination of peace, wisdom, light and impersonal love within us that cannot be described in words.

Thanks to the technicians, the Convention is live broadcast this year too, and it is wonderful as we can be together and connected, even with those friends who could not attend in person.

But what does this really mean? It is the tangible, visible, material realization of what happens on the subtle levels: we are all united. Beware, however: on a physical level we have to perform an act of will and then connect via the inter-

net, thus we must make the effort to reach out to this event; to connect with our brothers emotionally, mentally and spiritually we need to act likewise, as it takes an act of will on our part, a simple but necessary initial small sacrifice.

The theosophical literature points to the need to bring groups of people to incarnate together, so that in addition to growing mutual karmic relationships they can also learn to work together towards a common greater goal. This holds true also for fellow members who are gathered here, or connected via the Internet, of course. The value of work done together goes far beyond accomplishing a project: working together creates subtle yet powerful synergies, whose loving vitality will feed the divine spark of *buddhi*, the ardent energy of the spiritual individual. And when the buddhic vehicle has developed and intuition has reached our physical brain, it will give us wisdom and perfect knowledge.

In a letter of 1881 the Mahachohan wrote: “[It is] the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true theosophist.” It is a very simple yet very profound definition of brotherhood and also a paradigm for shaping our life. The Master’s words only contain positive encouragement to work for the benefit of all beings, without controversy and personalism.

The divisions inside the TS mirror the divisions inside us since, as a Latin say-

A Call to Unity

ing teaches us *omnia munda mundis*, “to the pure, everything is pure”.

The Society has always tried to support and encourage inter-religious dialogue between different groups within the various religions. This aspect was highlighted also by the Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche in his speech at the 2007 European Theosophical Congress in Helsinki, when he said that the Theosophical Society could and should play a role in fostering inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue, in the common quest for Truth and brotherhood.

A similar dialogue is desirable also between the different currents that make up the contemporary theosophical movement. Indeed credit must be given to Mr Tim Boyd for encouraging such a process, in particular by supporting the International Theosophy Conferences, which allow different components of the modern theosophical movement to participate in the dialogue.

It would be good if this process of dialogue, encounter, and common in-depth discussion could be extended to Anthroposophy and to associations related to Alice Bailey and Nicholas Roerich, since they are all branches of the same tree, the Theosophical Society. No matter if, at present, some of these movements fail to respond to the call. If our will and dreams are strong and steady, we will achieve our aim of unity.

All this is deeply related to the concept of Unity of Life, our pole star, which calls both for common spaces of investigation at the crossroads between religion, science and philosophy — which are in

fact beginning to materialize — and for spaces of dialogue between nations, not merely inspired by economic and political self-interest.

Dear fellow members, within our organization we have developed the extraordinary ability to find some common ground between religions, philosophies and sciences, but we should try to find a similar common ground also among ourselves, on a personal level.

Brotherhood is our challenge — brotherhood is our mission. It means finding unity within ourselves and unity, so to say, “outside”, unity regardless of any difference of opinion; it means overcoming differences.

To paraphrase *Light on the Path* by Mabel Collins, there is no question that inside us there is a “spirit of brotherhood”: the light of the world and the only light that can illuminate the Path. However, if we are unable to perceive it within ourselves, there is no point looking for it elsewhere, or accusing others of lacking it.

In 1888 H. P. Blavatsky stated that the Masters cannot do much if there is no cohesion of thoughts and feelings between the members of the TS. Are we still able to feel that we are all one? At this precise moment in time this is the challenge for the TS. Are we aware of it? Can we still feel we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same father, members of the same family, capable of working together?

In the Sermon on the Mount in Luke’s Gospel it is said:

A Call to Unity

If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? . . . But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

We all represent the TS, but what is our state of mind? With what sort of impetus do we renew our pledge of love for Life and the Masters every day? And what is our approach to our fellow brothers and sisters?

We are not a movement just like any other: we are expected to offer impartial brotherhood. We are the *knights of universal brotherhood*, and no one can disrupt this wonderful totality, this union of intent which is as deep and ancient as the Eternal Wisdom.

“After all, what matters in life is unity, harmony between human beings, which can be created only if there is harmony in each of us. And that harmony is not possible if there is division either inside or outside of us.” said J. Krishnamurti in his dialogue with the Jesuit priest E. Schallert.

Man is basically good and does evil out of ignorance, said Socrates, but as theosophists, we cannot feign ignorance of the laws of life. We have had the privilege of encountering Eternal Wisdom and the responsibilities that come with this are immense: the glorious cause of

the Masters, who have given this growth opportunity to the world awaits us.

It is not by hindering initiatives or by vilifying members of the TS that we inspire our brothers and sisters. Inspiring others through a conduct worthy of our divine nature is one of our most important duties as theosophists. Living our life by adhering to the teachings we received through deed and action is the highest form of authoritativeness. Dialoguing in a spirit of cooperation to build something together is evidence of our understanding of the divine laws. If we fail to do that we run the risk of missing the train of history. Time is running: we must reverse the route immediately; we have to do it here and now before it is too late.

So fellow members, I appeal to our undivided soul, to our deepest longing for a meaningful life, to the higher call which urged us to join this movement: let us give up all personalism and consider things only from the point of view of the common good of the whole. Life is great, much greater than all of us, but if we connect together our tiny bright dots, our glowing little flames, they will become a great shining light of love, which will have the power to illuminate and warm the hearts of people worldwide.

We need to learn again to understand, at all times, to unite and not to divide, to accept every being and every thing as they are, to discern between things that increase our awareness and those that keep us unaware — because the whole is more than the sum of its parts and together we are irresistible.

A Call to Unity

There is no other way to go than to act together. Only in this way will we live up to the extraordinary harmony of life and be true *peregrinus in itinere* (pilgrims on the path), authentic knights of the Order of Universal Brotherhood without distinctions.

We are approaching regeneration, a new birth, which will determine the new course of the TS: the butterfly will leave the cocoon and its beauty and glory will

have no equal, because it will reflect the beauty of our souls.

Let me close with a statement by Prof. Bernardino del Boca, a greatly respected Italian theosophist, a quotation which I find extraordinarily suited to this great call to unity, in the name of brotherhood. Del Boca wrote:

“Have you seen your brother? You have seen your god. Bow down and worship.” ✧

Fear not . . . our knowledge will not pass away from the sight of man. It is the “gift of the Gods” and the most precious relic of all. The keepers of the sacred Light did not safely cross so many ages but to find themselves wrecked on the rocks of modern scepticism. Our pilots are too experienced sailors to allow us fear any such disaster. We will always find volunteers to replace the tired sentries, and the world, bad as it is in its present state of transitory period, can yet furnish us with a few men now and then.

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett
Koot Hoomi Lal Singh

Take Heart, for the Race of Man Is Divine

WAYNE GATFIELD

THE main problem that runs through the whole of modern society is the misunderstanding of the true nature of “Man”. Materialistic science has reduced humanity to a kind of automaton. It is much the same as when H. P. Blavatsky first published her magnum opus *The Secret Doctrine* to disabuse us of this delusion and to show us how neatly we fit into the Divine Plan that is unfolding. Mankind has a great destiny and if we can become aware of our potential then the time of transformation will be nigh and the Golden Age will be here at last.

The words in the title of this article are taken from “The Golden Verses of Pythagoras” and in the next line to the one quoted he says: “Sacred Nature reveals to them the most hidden mysteries.”

This is echoed in *The Voice of the Silence*, where it is written:

Help Nature and work on with her; and
Nature will regard thee as one of her creators
and make obeisance.

And she will open wide before thee the
portals of her secret chambers, lay bare

before thy gaze the treasures hidden in
the very depths of her pure virgin bosom.
Unsullied by the hand of matter she
shows her treasures only to the eye of
Spirit — the eye which never closes, the
eye for which there is no veil in all
her kingdoms.

Then will she show thee the means and
way, the first gate and the second, the third,
up to the very seventh. And then, the
goal — beyond which lie, bathed in the
sunlight of the Spirit, glories untold, un-
seen by any save the eye of Soul.

These treasures are only for those
who have become aware of their Spiritual
Self and have learned therefore to love
Nature. Society at the moment conspires
to destroy Nature for its own profit and
to thereby cultivate “the great dire heresy
of separateness that weans [us] from the
rest”. Man as a result becomes more
brutal and divorced from Nature and
selfishness rules his thoughts. As human
beings sharing the same planet, we cannot
seem to get along with each other.

The poet Robert Burns wrote:

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Take Heart, for the Race of Man Is Divine

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn, —
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

Most of society is consumed by trivialities that the lower mind transforms into necessities and makes appear of great importance. People die for causes that are the product of the limited intellectual understanding of a few or the mass delusion of the many. There is so little respect for life that people kill for the sake of money or position or to gain territory, all things of little importance in the wider picture. There is no thought of the impact of what they are doing, nor of the beauty and dignity of the human condition. Love is replaced by lust and lust is companion to anger and jealousy and other lower emotions that are ultimately destructive.

It is essential in this day and age that we learn to see the Divine in others and therefore to love them as our brothers and sisters. We must cultivate ahimsa, harmlessness, and be compassionate even to the insect. The Theosophical Masters tell us:

How many of you have helped humanity to carry its smallest burden, that you should all regard yourselves as Theosophists. Oh, men of the West, who would play at being the Saviours of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting

threatens them, would you be partakers of Divine Wisdom or true Theosophists? Then do as the gods when incarnated do. Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly.

The world in general has an obsession with war and with conflicts. A kind of insanity impels governments to spend billions of pounds on weapons of mass destruction whilst millions of people are struggling to survive. In the Bible (Isaiah 2:4) it is said:

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.

If we look at “He” as not being a personal God but humanity in general then we can begin to see that the only way to find peace is to give up the perverse desire to harm others for relatively unimportant reasons. There is only one “weapon” we should use to overcome others and that is “Love” in its truest sense. There is a song entitled “Only Love can save us” and this should be taken on board by society in general, because no matter how learned or unlearned a person, it is something that can be understood and applied in everyday life by everyone.

There is an incredible difference between the mentality that is reluctant to kill an insect and the one that indiscriminately slaughters thousands of fellow human beings with little or no emotion

Take Heart, for the Race of Man Is Divine

or regret. Those who are capable of the latter and call themselves “religious” are in reality also killing religion and their primitive view of a god made in the image of man is the cause of untold suffering in the world. This “god” who possesses all the worst qualities of a human being and is inferior to even an ordinary devout Buddhist hardly merits worship and divine honours.

Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of the non-violent “martial” art, Aikido, wrote: “When someone comes to you with anger, greet them with a smile. This is the highest kind of martial art.”

It is high time we practised this kind of martial art. Warrior castes and races are historically classed as “brave” but there is nothing brave about the systematic murder of fellow human beings. Karma comes down heavy on the perpetrators of such “brave” acts. Famous victories are glorified in books and on film and TV, but now we should begin to turn our attention away from such brutality. It may be necessary at times to take up arms to protect one’s country, but this should never be glorified, as many innocent people die in the process. H. P. Blavatsky says in her first letter to the American conventions:

The tendency of modern civilization is a reaction towards animalism, towards a development of those qualities which conduce to the success in life of man as an animal in the struggle for animal existence. Theosophy seeks to develop the human nature in man in addition to the animal, and at the sacrifice of the superfluous animality

which modern life and materialistic teachings have developed to a degree which is abnormal for the human being at this stage of his progress.

Mankind in general manifests the more “bestial” aspects of animal nature as many animals are gentle and harmless. The words of the Holy Ones have generally fallen on “stony ground” and have not taken root in the consciousness of humanity as a whole.

Despite all this, Pythagoras exhorts us to “take heart” because all this negativity is on the surface and the result of this misunderstanding of the real Self that can animate and awaken each one of us individually and collectively to who and what we are in reality, and our world view alters completely as we begin to see that the race of man is truly Divine.

We will become aware of the absolute preciousness of every individual life, whether plant, animal or human and respect will grow in us for all of them. We will become consciously incapable of harming any of them needlessly and will do all that we can to minimize destruction done for merely selfish reasons. Our thoughts, even regarding building housing and so on, will take into account Nature, and we will do our best to show compassion to any life that may suffer as a result of it, thinking how such buildings might help to enhance Nature, rather than spoil it.

Our fellow human beings will not be judged by surface appearances. Everyone has their own journey and we do not

Take Heart, for the Race of Man Is Divine

know what another is going through that may make them angry, withdrawn, or bitter. We must always remember that deep inside them is brooding the True Spiritual Being and that we must seek to be aware of it, and perchance bring it to the surface with kind words, loving thoughts and gentle treatment; not being concerned with short-term results. Seeds have been planted that may sprout in this or future lives. All we can do is to try to act in harmony with the evolutionary processes outlined in *The Secret Doctrine*. We must elevate these from mere intellectual concepts to the realm of enlightened practice and understand that the reason these teachings were given out to us was so that we would become aware of the true dignity of human nature and its place in this evolutionary scheme, and to also realize our relationship and responsibility towards all the other kingdoms of Nature.

Always we should try our best to help, to encourage others to realize their potential. Most people in the world just want to be happy and to express themselves and be understood and loved. To these ends they place their reliance upon

transitory things that in the end often bring them pain and suffering. We must have compassion all the time, never criticize, but help them to realize that they are divine beings, denizens of Eternity. This is not achieved by giving out platitudes or complicated teachings, but by the strength of the Love we give them, which has developed from our deepening understanding of the real purpose of life that has grown from our studies of Theosophy and related genuine spiritual teachings. Then it is up to them how they react to that, we should be indifferent to results.

Most sane people are aware of the horrors unleashed on the planet through war and terrorism and so forth, but even thoughts of anger, revenge and retaliation have a profoundly negative effect on the collective consciousness of humanity as a whole. Only by planting the above mentioned seeds of compassion, love, and understanding can we regain the true dignity of being human, and move forward together and progress towards higher states of consciousness, in which an enlightened understanding, an appreciation of Life is paramount. ✧

Loyalty and devotion lead to bravery. Bravery leads to the spirit of self-sacrifice. The spirit of self-sacrifice creates trust in the power of love.

Morihei Ueshiba

What Leads to Insight

C. A. SHINDE

THERE are profound insights in spiritual teachings, and in one's book of life as well. One needs to perceive it and be a lamp unto oneself. In Mahayana Buddhism, the term "insight" refers to understanding the true nature of reality and is often symbolized by a sword. The sword of insight can cut through the tangle of thoughts and negative emotions that often ensnare us. We read inspirational texts on the activities and other religious practices. But the question such as what leads to insight needs to be explored, because we cannot bank on just theories or blueprints for insight.

It is essential for a seeker on the path to cultivate insight — and true insight is developed as a byproduct of meditation. HPB said insight arises from practising and keeping "a clean life, an open mind and a pure heart". The most important insight to be cultivated is a perception of the true nature of reality. *The word Reality is probably the best term to name the beyond.* So the word can then be for seekers of truth a word of discovery, not a word of definition. In science we have words of definition; but here we have a

word to give direction to the mind to go beyond that and take one outside the sphere of any comparison whatsoever. The Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha begins with Right Insight or Right Belief or Right View, which means right perception without which the treading of the spiritual path would have no proper basis. Only a few people who are serious seekers of truth, are capable of insight through their study and ethical living, and therefore they listen before they speak, think before they act, and try to go into the depth of discernment that is coupled with understanding. Such right effort, to be aware or attentive or alert opens up a new insight in human life. As I understand, the theosophical teaching being both expansive and deep, one can have insight into the threefold evolution of man, reincarnation, karma, human constitution, consciousness, and so on. This perhaps makes him see good in others and feel the oneness of life and resolve not to think or feel evil of any being.

The insight we are inquiring into is related to intuition but not the same. Intuition is the ability to understand some-

Prof. C. A. Shinde is a National Lecturer of the Indian Section of the TS, and Librarian of the Adyar Library. Talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, on 3 January 2018.

What Leads to Insight

thing immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning, whereas insight is based on a fully conscious examination and analysis of phenomena in order to see the true nature of things. Insight is the wisdom that knows the nature of the objects and their meaning. One comes to insight when the mind is very still, when the thought is absent, when the mind is not burdened with its own noise. It comes with extraordinary rapidity or as a flash of understanding. The process flows from insight to inspiration to intuition. "Intuition is the highest point of intelligence and to me, keeping alive that intelligence is inspiration", said J. Krishnamurti.

The role of inspiration and insight is to infuse, incubate and inculcate values in the individual. For instance, Annie Besant's insight into spiritualism sprung from the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*: all questions that had often come to her mind and remained unanswered were answered by her new insight into spirituality. It is then that she joined the TS and became an ardent pupil of Madame Blavatsky. It is these, her altruistic frame of mind and heart, the attitude of non-aggression, and the open mind holding no prejudice, that brought her to such spiritual insight. Her right motivation to practise the altruistic aspiration for liberation from delusion both for herself and all other living beings brought her to this spiritual insight. We all experience her intuitive insight in the Universal Invocation, "O Hidden Life", which is an inspiration to all of us. Other examples that we know of such as Archimedes'

discovery of the Archimedes' principle, James Watson's discovery of the DNA helical structure, and so on are flashes of insight.

If we begin to see all this, we would do something about it and that is the beauty of human life. Insight into eco-philosophy is also essential for human ethical and aesthetic development. Such insight can keep us in touch with the real world and change the destiny of the new civilization towards an ecological age. For example, present-day ecoscientists have had insight into reef revival and developed projects that have potential for smaller feeder reefs that supply coral to other areas and thus support the broader marine ecosystem. It is a new way of looking at the problem and the only hope for the future in terms of large-scale reef revival. It could help future generations to speak with the voice of eco-wisdom. Insight into eco-philosophy would be of enormous help to change the pattern of one's behaviour towards Nature, to develop alternative, holistic ways of living and to bring the world to a state of ecological renaissance. "As the earth is the support of all moving and non-moving things so is moral conduct the support of all merits", said the Buddha.

Insight comes strangely. One may get insight anywhere. For instance, a patient in a hospital may realize that nothing is greater than health. A prisoner may get the insight that freedom is the most important thing. At the cemetery the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death may flash upon the mind. As

What Leads to Insight

human beings, each one of us is capable of receiving perceptions into many areas of life. By thinking deeply about the state of a child in the mother's womb where it neither sees the mother nor cries for her attention, one may arrive at the insight that like the child, humanity is in the womb of infinite truth. So we are all moving in Him and have our beings in Him.

If man does not get insights and is not ready to transform his anger into tolerance, fear into adventure, hatred into forgiveness, jealousy into inspiration, then in the true sense is his life in vain — that would be his spiritual death. So it is important to realize the sad truth that we all have come with nothing and we will go with nothing; so let us remain humble and thankful.

We all read about the life of Gautama Buddha who renounced his kingdom and family and set out into the forest in search of insight. He got insight into the nature of human life and also the solutions to human miseries. In fact when he saw a sick man shaking with fever, an old man hobbling along with a cane, and a dead body — a corpse — his mind was greatly troubled. Therefore he set out into the forest in search of truth.

Theosophical teachings lead human beings to insight and inspiration to work for human progression and perfection. Human regeneration happens to one who is predominantly sattvic, operating from selflessness, love and kindness and then he gets close to the pure consciousness or superconsciousness. Then his first and foremost duty is to humanize himself and

be free from all kinds of distinctions that prevail in humanity today. It is important to have insight into the brotherhood of religions, as the teaching says that the source of all religions is the Wisdom-Religion. It is only with such insight and wisdom that one may begin to appreciate Christians for their missionary activity, Jains and Zoroastrians for their ahimsa, Buddhists for their peace and compassion, Hindus for their patience, and so on, and then one begins to see the good in all.

This reminds me of a small story: there was a noble tailor, who had become a great sage. The king came to pay his respects and presented the sage with a pair of golden scissors encrusted with diamonds. But the sage refused to accept it. "What can I give you that can be of use to you?" asked the king. The reply of the tailor is something to be contemplated and, I think, relevant to know the altruistic heart. The tailor said: "Give me a needle rather than scissors." The reason is symbolic, but an insightful and inspiring one. He said the scissors cut and divide but the needle sews the pieces together. Our minds are like scissors, but our hearts need to be like the needle that loves and brings all faiths together to realize the brotherhood of religions and to understand the essence of religion.

Insight is knowing what it means to care

In this world of hurt, fear, pleasure, ambition, success, failure, and so on, how the present generation understands this hidden faculty of insight or creative energy, and attempts to develop it, is our concern.

What Leads to Insight

Through negation of thought there is a total rest for the mind, it implies going beyond one's likes and dislikes. When judgmental thoughts are suspended and when we relax freely (like an old woman watching children play) there is the possibility of insight and one may continue the journey of awakening with joy and perseverance. It is this relaxation from everyday anxieties and worries that makes one lose attachment to hopes and fears, and one's mind and heart opens to insight. The beauty of insight is to know what it means to care. How do we help the young to understand and deal with this faculty of insight which is already there in them, how do we help them to care for themselves and the surroundings?

There is the instance of a little girl, who was cycling and suddenly she got off and picked up a piece of plastic that was lying on the road. She then threw it in a nearby dustbin, remounted her cycle and went on. Look at the insight of that little girl. In fact, nobody told her to do what she did. She had an inbuilt feeling for keeping the road clean. Cleanliness is next to godliness (virtue), she might have heard, but at that moment it was a natural, spontaneous desire to keep the countryside beautiful. People who talk about action do not usually act because

they do not see what actually is, and as they do not see, they do not act immediately. Unfortunately, this instinct of insight will probably be destroyed in that little girl as she grows up in this modern world of pleasures, ambitions, successes, and failures.

To sum up, the task undertaken by our Elder Brethren or the Holy Ones is to help humanity proceed from the world of unreality to the world of truth. So they have instructed us or pointed out that he who is on the path exists not for himself but for others. Everything in the world is dependent upon other things in many ways. But beyond the body and the functions of the mind there is the characteristic of independence. In Sanskrit *para* is beyond. Serious study of theosophical teachings may lead to basic insightful questions like "Who am I?" "Where am I going?" and "What do I do with my life?" Being with such questions, one's life will not be the same, rather it becomes an insightful, spiritual journey. In this sense insight is a spiritual awakening by means of the gift of deep understanding and realization. It is a powerful gift — rather the best answer available at a particular time — that points us in the direction of the Hidden Life, Light, and Love that embrace all in oneness, with the altruistic heart. ✧

The knowledge of the self is obtained only by those who have a real intention to understand. Since such intention does not commonly exist, very few human beings have achieved self-knowledge.

The Way of Self-Knowledge
Radha Burnier

Tamil: The Glory of India — II

LOKESH CHANDRA

THE first Tibetan monastery of Samye was established by Padmasambhava and he ordained the first seven Tibetan monks. He is considered the Second Buddha in the Nyingma tradition as having laid the firm foundations of Buddhism in Tibet. Western scholarship has associated him with Udyāna or Swāt in north-west India (now Pakistan). His paradise is *zans-mdog dpal-ri* where *zans-mdog*, “copper-coloured”, is Tāmraparṇī meaning Sri Lanka and *dpal-ri* is Śrīparvata which had a monastery with a Bodhi-tree pavilion. Inscriptions of Sri Lanka and of the Ikshvāku dynasty (ca 227–309) of South India make it clear that Padmasambhava was from South India. Tāranātha’s history of Buddhism (in Tibetan) gives only the genealogy of the kings of Kanchi. It deserves study. The syllabification dot *tsheg* in Tibetan is unique in the family of Indic scripts: *rin*. The Tibetan *tsheg* seems to be derived from Tamil which has a dot on top of the consonant for devocalisation. The devocalisation dot on top in the Thai script is also from Tamil. The ceremonies of the Thai monarchy are performed by brāhmanas

whose forefathers came from Tamilnadu. Their ritual texts are in Tamil and Sanskrit on palmleaves.

Bodhidharma bequeathed a widespread Ch’an or Zen practice of meditation to the East Asian countries of China, Korea and Japan. A Ch’an (Pali *jhāna*) monastery can be seen everywhere in China. The main scripture of Ch’an is the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra*. Lankāvatāra has been identified as Kanchi by Hui-li in his life of the famous Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang. It took three days from Kanchi to Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan navigation technology was highly developed for the times, was safe, and most people went to Indonesia in Sri Lankan ships. Fa-hsien is the first of the three Chinese pilgrims who went to India and have left a record of their journey. He embarked from Kanchi to Sri Lanka, thence to Srivijaya, and from there to his homeland China. Kanchi was one of the most prosperous seaports on the eastern coast of India. Bodhidharma was the youngest son of the king of Kanchi as inscribed by Lan-ch’i Tao-lung on the hanging scroll in the Kogakuji Monastery in Japan (reproduced on page 39). He prescribed three

Prof. Lokesh Chandra is the former President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi. Last part of talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, on 1 January 2018.

sutras: (i) *Lankāvatāra* for philosophy, (ii) *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra* for daily recitation, and (iii) *Nīlakaṇṭhaka* hymn for contemplation. The *Lankāvatāra* is the only Buddhist scripture which insists on vegetarian food, and the *Nīlakaṇṭhaka* is actually a hymn to Harihara, but ascribed to Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. Vegetarianism and Harihara clearly stem from the ambience of Kanchi. The tradition of Bodhidharma popularised three yogic terms in the Chinese language: *t'oloni* or *dhāraṇī* to represent *dhāraṇā*, *ch'an* or *dhyāna*, *san-mai* or *samādhi*. The hymn to Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara is sung in Sanskrit three times a day in Ch'an monasteries in China, Korea and Japan.

1. Salutation to Avalokiteśvara who recites the hymn to Nīlakaṇṭha

namo ratna-trayāya |
nama āryāvalokiteśvarāya
bodhisattvāya mahāsattvāya
mahākāruṇikāya |

2. Merits of the hymn (*phala-śruti*)

aum sarva-bhayeshu trāṇāya
tasmai namaskṛtvā imam |
āryāvalokiteśvara-
stavanam nīlakaṇṭhānām |
hṛdayam vartayishyāmi
sarvārtha-sādhanam śubham |
ajeyam sarva-sattvānām
bhava-mārga-viśodhakam ||

3. Hymn

tadyathā |
aum apaloka lokātikrānta ehi hare
mahābodhisattva sarvamsarva |
smara-smara mama hṛdayam |

kuru-kuru karma |
dhurudhuru vijayate mahāvijayate |
dhara-dhara dharanīśvara |
chala-chala mama vimalamūrtte re |
ehyehi kṛshna-sarpopavīta |
visha-visham pranāśaya |
hulu-hulu malla |
hulu-hulu hare |
sara-sara siri-siri suru-suru |
bodhiya-bodhiya
bodhaya-bodhaya
maitriya nīlakaṇṭha |
darśanena prahlādaya
manah svāhā |
siddhāya svāhā |
mahāsiddhāya svāhā |
siddha-yogeśvarāya svāhā |
nīlakaṇṭhāya svāhā |
varāha-mukhāya svāhā |
narasimha-mukhāya svāhā |
śankha-hastāya svāhā |
chakra-hastāya svāhā |
padma-hastāya svāhā |
nīlakaṇṭha-vigrahāya svāhā |
mahābali-śankarāya svāhā |

4. Final salutation

namo ratna-trayāya |
nama āryāvalokiteśvarāya svāhā |
aum sidhyantu mantra-padāni svāhā ||

The International Olympics held at Shanghai in 2008 began with the recitation of the above Sanskrit hymn with Mandarin pronunciation. A thousand young beauties of the same height sang the hymn to thundering martial music. They were silent deeps of substance of the glories of the golden age of the T'ang, initiated by Emperor Kao-tsu (ruled 618–

626) whose palace was sanctified by the first painting of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara done by the Indian monk Bodhideva. What a synchrony of a Sanskrit hymn sung by a thousand beauties on Chinese soil at international Olympics whose origins go back to Mount Olympus in ancient Greece. Chinese voices, martial tunes and the silence of Bodhidharma: what a tribute to Tamil glory. The TS should set up a temple to Bodhidharma near the Mahākacchapeśvara Temple which has been constructed on the site where Mahākāśyapa the first Indian patriarch in the transmission lineage of Bodhidharma meditated. Mahākacchapeśvara is a variant of Mahākāśyapa.

Kanchi was a renowned centre of Tantric philosophy, art and ritual. Prājña of Kapiśā (worked in China 785–810 AD) came from Afghanistan to Kanchi to learn Tamil to study the *guhyaṭīka* of Tantric esotericism. Besides he studied Chinese at Kanchi before embarking for China. He translated several sutras into Chinese, but his outstanding work is the rendering of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* into Chinese completed on 16 March 798. It preserves the letter of the King of Kanchi who had presented his own copy of the text to the Chinese emperor in 795. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is the final sutra of the *Avatamsaka* corpus. The Avatamsaka sect has several monasteries in the three East Asian countries and Prājña is adored for his excellent translation.

Prājña taught Sanskrit to Kobo Daishi in China. Kobo Daishi is the founder of the Shingon sect or Mantrayāna in Japan

which is deeply influenced by Hinduism. Kobo Daishi created the Japanese alphabet which runs: *a i u e o, ka ki ku ke ko*, and so on. As Kobo Daishi was to return to Japan, Prājña said: “With the vow to transmit the torch of Dharma, I came to China. I wish to sail to Japan, but circumstances do not allow me to fulfil my intention. Take with you the new *Avatamsaka-sūtra* and the *Shaṭ-pāramitā-sūtra*, both of which I have translated, and these Sanskrit manuscripts.” Japan has some thousand Shingon monasteries where daily worship has Sanskrit mantras, *homa* is performed every month, and they have shrines for Hindu deities like Sarasvatī and Nandikeśvara Gaṇapati. The Japanese alphabet follows the Tamil system of the first and fifth letter of the phonetic class: *ta na, pa ma*. The Government of Tamilnadu should celebrate the unparalleled contribution of Bodhidharma by setting up a Ch’an/Zen monastery in Kanchi as a national memorial. It will become a major centre of pilgrimage. The Chinese call him T’a-mo or Dhamma, but the Japanese have the Tamil form Daruma.

Floating in a sea of verdant woods are the imposing golden roofs of the Todaiji monastery. It enshrines the 48 feet high colossus of Rocana Buddha, raised by Emperor Shomu to symbolise the power of the State. It was consecrated on 9 April 752 in a sumptuous ceremony presided over by Bodhisena, with Sanskrit music and dance by Buddhasthira from Champa. Champa was immersed in Tamil culture. Buddhasthira introduced eight dances from Champa which included the Dance

of Pedu from the Rigvedic legend of Aśvins who gave a white horse called Ahihan, “serpent-killer”, to King Pedu to trample the poisonous serpents. Serpents mean enemies. Three dances out of eight are still performed as part of the Imperial ceremonial. Buddhasthira taught Sanskrit to the Japanese at the Daianji monastery in Japan. In 1970 I went to see the room where he used to teach. The kingdom of Champa would have survived if they had become a protectorate of the French in early 19th century like Cambodia. When the French lost Indo-China Champa became a part of Vietnam and their identity is in danger. Indians have to help them. Most of them are Muslims, but there are about forty thousand Hindus who still perform their Śaiva pūjā. They have many legends of Yang-In, “venerable Indra”. Indra has been shortened to “In”, like in India the name “Sachin” is short for Śachindra. India has to establish active relations with the Hindu Chams. The glorious history of Champa was created by French professors in their study rooms in Paris. We owe a *rshi-ṛṇa* (obligation to sages/gurus) to Champa for their renaissance.

The Sung emperors of China used to get palmleaf manuscripts for the protection of their state. Their security was constantly threatened by the barbaric Liao, Hsia, and Chin dynasties of the north. The palmleaf MSS were divine protection of the empire. The annals of the Sung dynasty mention how expeditions were sent to India from time to time to bring manuscripts. In 966 the emperor donated

lavishly to 157 monks to search sutras. The Sung emperors waited for Indian scholars, and imperial decrees said: “Let us wait; when some learned Indian monks come, the work of translation will be resumed.” China considered Champa a renowned centre of Sanskrit learning and a cache of palmleaf *granthas* (from the root *grath*, “to tie up”; the Chinese termed them “bundled books” as they were tied up). A Chinese military mission was sent against King Śambhuvarman of Champa. The Chinese took back 1350 Sanskrit works, the largest stockpile of manuscripts that was ever taken to China. Even the great Hsuan-tsang took only 650 Sanskrit sutras to China. The Southern Sung dynasty had close commercial relations with South India and it was but natural that they acquire *granthas* from Kanchi and other places. We have to study the annals of the Sung dynasty, to find out the imperial missions to India for collection of MSS as well as the texts in the Chinese Tripitaka translated during the Sung dynasty, to visualise the role of Tamil scholarship in the acculturation of south-east and east Asian countries.

The royal rituals of Thailand are conducted by brāhmanas who went from Tamilnadu centuries ago. The ritual manuscripts are in Tamil and Sanskrit. The first independent kingdom of Thailand was founded in 1237. King Ram Khamheng (1276-1317) recruited brāhmanas from Cambodia. In 1782 the king invited the brāhmanas from Ligor to conduct court ceremonies. The ancient images of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Pārvatī are

in Chola style and date from the tenth century. The Śaiva High Priest presides over all Hindu ceremonies at the Royal Court to this day. The festival of Śivarātri was revived by King Rama IV who ruled from 1851 to 1868.

Sitting in the beautiful mountain city of Lausanne at the residence of Prof. C. Regamey I met the great Chinese writer Madame Han Suyin. The whole city shone with lights as if it was perpetual Diwali. She said: “The Indians think that they never invaded any country. Why do they not own up to the facts.” I said: “The myth of political ahimsā is a modern idea of Mahatma Gandhi.” She went on to narrate: “One night two thousand years ago, it is said, a god visited a youth in India and said to the young man, named Kaunḍinya: ‘Find a bow, board your boat, sail toward the rising sun.’ Kaunḍinya went to the temple next morning and there found on the floor, a bow with a quiver full of arrows. He embarked and the god-driven wind blew him across the elephant-backed sea to a shore where Willow-leaf, the beautiful queen and leader of the Khmer amazons, reigned. The queen launched her war canoe to repel Kaunḍinya, but the youth shot it through with his arrows, and she submitted to him. They were married, and thus was born the dynasty of the first Khmer kingdom.” This account is from Chinese dynastic annals. Sage Kaunḍinya married the Nāgī princess Somā and founded the Funan state. Funan is the Chinese transcription of *vnam*, “mountain”. It means “rulers of the mountain”.

Kaunḍinya dressed the leaf-clad Somā in cotton and silk garments, and she shone in her new ravishing glamour. Kaunḍinya introduced the Pallava script for writing the Khmer language, Sanskrit learning, rice cultivation and the petty tribal chieftainships were replaced by a vast state with an ever-active communication system in a written language, and led to developments of all sorts. Gathering of food and hunting became agriculture. Thus Tamil sages and warriors created grand cultures and civilisations, literatures and monuments all along the coastline of south-east Asia. The languages Thai, Cambodian, Laotian, Cham (in Vietnam) are full of Sanskrit words, pronounced in a compressed and clipped manner, like *krut* for *garuḍa* in Cambodian. The inscriptions in Cambodia are in Sanskrit and Cambodian upto the 15th century and their Pallava script follows the developments of south India. The last two thousand years of south-east Asia have been enriched by the Pallava hegemony beginning with dressing the leaf-wearing tribals, giving a script to the local language for communication between tribes, replacing food gathering with agriculture for plenty to eat, introduction of philosophical ideas, new norms of worship leading to higher value systems, replacing ephemeral leaf huts and timber dwellings by architectural monuments of bricks and stone, establishing temples where the poor and rich met in homage to the Divine in a shared way of adoration, and the definition of the relationship of the King and the people. The King had

Tamil: The Glory of India — II

to be concerned with the well-being and happiness of the people. As Kālidāsa says: *prakṛti-rañjanād anvartha-rājaśabdo* — the very word *rājan*, “king”, subsumes the happiness (*rañjana*) of the people (*prakṛti*). The criterion of a real ruler is the happiness of those over whom he rules. Aśoka speaks of *hita-sukha* in the inscriptions as his state policy. *Hita* means the well-being of people, and *sukha* is the duty of the king to find out if the measures taken for well-being have made people happy. His Majesty the former King of Bhutan termed this concept as Gross National Happiness as parallel to and as equally important as Gross National Production (GNP).

To conclude, the Tamil word for peacock in the Old Testament is testimony to the role of Tamil merchants in sup-

plying gold, sandalwood and peacocks for the construction of Jerusalem as early as three thousand years ago. They introduced vegetarian diet on the holy day of Friday in the Jewish tradition. Since the Tamils were mining gold as far as Africa, they perhaps gave rise to the concept of Suvarṇabhūmi. All our acharyas come from south India. The wonder and pride, the marvel and enriching experience of those sensitive to beauty, the vivid skill and imagination of the architects of Asia as far as Mongolia, have their roots in the minds and adventures of the Tamils. The Tamil mind has been the grace of spring, the fullness of the moon, the thirst for thought, the splendour of enormity, the human will to live beyond, and the loveliness of the morn as they sat to contemplate the sunrise alive in the *gāyatrī* hymn.

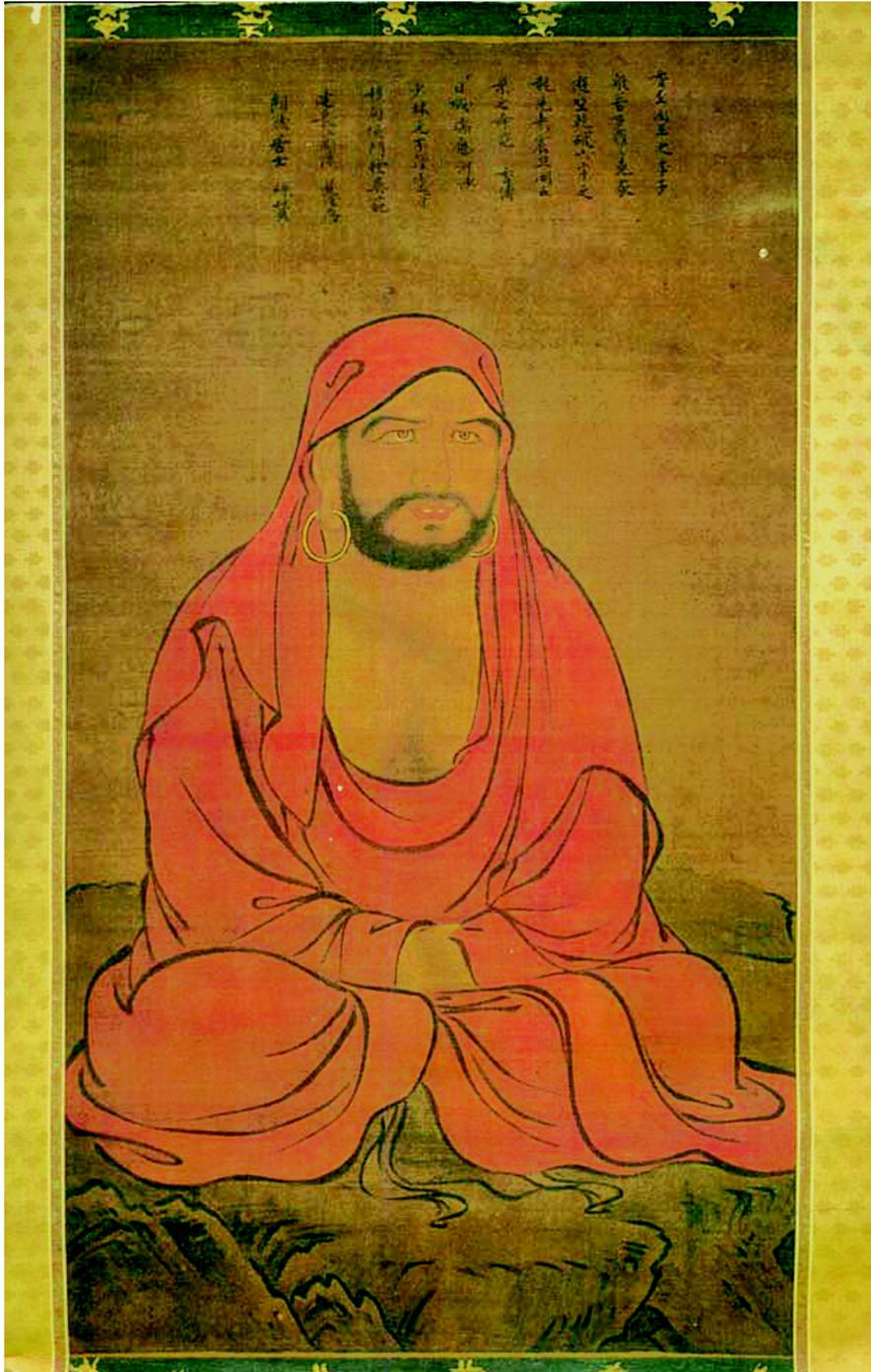
There is no caste system.

It is a sin to divide people on caste basis.

The ones who are really of a superior class are the ones

Excelling in being just, wise, educated and loving.

Chinnaswami Subramania Bharati (Bharathiyar)



Bodhidharma, the youngest son of the king of Hsiang-chi/Kanchi, the Pallava capital, and follower of Prajñātāra's eminent line. (National Treasure of Japan ca 1271 CE, colophon by Lan-ch'i Tao-lung)

Theosophical Work around the World



Left to right: Mr S. K. Srinivasan; Ms H. Sripriya; Mr V. Gopalan; Dr M. Srinivasan, President, TOS Adyar; Mr K. Sivaprasad, Secretary, TOS India; Ms Nancy Secrest, International Secretary, TOS; and Dr R. Revathy at the TOS India South Zone Conference at Adyar



Ms Marja Artamaa, International Secretary, TS, releasing the book: *Co-working with the Masters for the Spiritual Welfare of Humanity* by Dr A. Kannan, at the 95th South Indian Conference of the TS

Theosophical Work around the World

Adyar

The **South Zone Conference** of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) in India was held at Adyar on 24–25 March, with the theme “Service through Will, Wisdom, and Love”. It was inaugurated by Ms Nancy Secrest, International Secretary of the TOS and International Treasurer of the Theosophical Society (TS). Ms Marja Artamaa, International Secretary of the TS, was the chief guest. Both of them as well as Mr K. Sivaprasad, National Secretary of the TOS, India, addressed the gathering, followed by a few short talks by delegates. The after-lunch session was devoted to presentations of TOS activities by the various regional groups. The next day a few non-governmental organizations (NGOs) talked about their work in helping underprivileged people.

A remarkable work continues to be done by collecting used clothes in good condition, cleaned, ironed, and displayed with price tags, similar to a shop. Free coupons are distributed to needy school students. They then go with their families and choose clothes the family needs in exchange for the coupons. Another NGO works with youth who do well in studies but do not have the means to go to college. The group has agreements with some colleges who offer some free seats in exchange for services provided by the NGO members in terms of training their graduating students. Thus the colleges are benefited as well as the needy students.

The remarkable thing about the work of these groups is that there is no feeling of “charity” and all those involved in the process are benefited; it is a regenerating process of human dignity for both sides. Since there is no monetary flow, it is just a network of friends, and corruption is unlikely.

The conference concluded with a valedictory address by Mr S. Harihara Raghavan followed by a vote of thanks by Dr R. Revathy, convenor of the meet, and Secretary, TOS Adyar.

“Illumination Must Come from Within” was the theme of the ninety-fifth **South India Theosophical Conference** held at Adyar from 30 March to 1 April 2018. After the theme presentation, Ms Marja Artamaa, the International Secretary, released a book, *Co-working with the Masters for the Spiritual Welfare of Humanity*, by Dr A. Kannan. A series of talks were given during the rest of the day and the next two days on topics related to the theme. Mini-workshops were conducted after each talk to discuss the matter in detail. Mr K. Jaikumar, convenor of the conference and General Manager, offered the vote of thanks to conclude the event.

Recent News

In Finland Mr Janne Vuononvirta, succeeded Mrs Mirva Jaatinen as General Secretary. Mr Victor Aguayo has taken the place of Mr Cesar Ortega as Organizing Secretary in Chile. ✧

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