



THE THEOSOPHIST

VOL. 133 NO. 7 APRIL 2012

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NOTE: Articles for publication in *The Theosophist* should be sent to the Editorial Office.

Cover Picture: The Pond in Besant Gardens – V. Krishnan

Official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky, 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this magazine.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

How Should We Live?

One must think deeply about this question. Observe carefully how the mind acts, see how the currents move, watch how they condition our actions in daily life, how they affect our perception of the world around us. How do we look at others? What is our relationship with them? How do we react to what happens to us? Do we evaluate everything according to our desires, seeking only objects that contribute to our pleasure or vehemently reject those that appear to be obstacles? Are we making judgements, holding prejudices, attributing values? Without thoughtful reflection on how we are conducting our lives, without observing honestly and objectively how our minds work, without understanding the relation of our interior life to the outside world, there will not even be the first glimmer of enlightenment.

So our preparation must begin there — with *vichāra*, which means profound thinking; seeing all the implications. It is not enough to concede that we may perhaps harbour one or two desires, and then to dismiss the whole thing lightly. If there is a certain attitude within the mind, we must examine all its implications. Do these affect what I see; do

they affect my relationships?

And the more we observe and the more we think carefully, the more the mind becomes capable of seeing. And to see that we have been living in this kind of darkness marks the dawning of light.

So there must be no sense of achievement or acquisition, or the attachment which comes through the pursuits we have mentioned, but a total inner renunciation. This is not a question of giving away your possessions, because you can physically give up everything and the same process will go on in the mind. Nor does it take place through an act of the will; it only comes about through observing and understanding all is happening in the way we have been discussing.

We are all familiar with the lists of inner states to be cultivated or avoided. Yoga speaks of Yama and Niyama, or non-injury and the absence of self-indulgence.

Then the teaching speaks of *aparigraha* or ‘not grasping’. Without this we cannot proceed to meditation because as long as there is any sense of ‘grasping’, there is disturbance. We have to go further and see what this grasping of the mind really is. There is, let us say, something beautiful that we experience and it makes

us happy. It is natural to feel happy in the presence of beauty. But to see and enjoy in that way does not end the matter. The mind says, 'That was MY experience. That enjoyment was MY enjoyment.' So it stores up the memory of it. Now it can say, 'This is MY memory', and every now and again it recalls it. There is then very little which can be called mere experience because the mind grasps it and labels it. It adds the word 'my' to everything.

The word 'renunciation' is not a popular one because it stands in opposition to what is the accepted norm in modern civilization. For renunciation means to hold on to nothing, neither to a person nor to things nor to ideas. When this stage is reached, the mind is tranquil and calm. Without tranquillity of the mind there can be no real penetration into the depth of life.

Yoga has been defined as the ending of the modifications of the mind. The modifications of the mind include all the things that we have been speaking about and more. And when these modifications or fluctuations of the mind come to an end, there is silence.

This is what everybody has said who speaks about meditation seriously. *At the Feet of the Master* speaks about *viveka*, discrimination and *vairāgya*, non-attachment. Yoga speaks about the same thing. Without understanding this question of 'thirst' and 'attachment' through clear observation (*viveka*), there cannot be that calmness of the mind which is meant by the words *śama*, *dama* and so on. Without a basis of self-observation and a minimum

of order it is not possible to begin meditation seriously or to go deeper into the nature of things, to perceive not only external forms — their qualities and characteristics with which we are familiar — but also to be able to realize the deep significance and purpose of existence. When the mind is empty, it can receive truth and derive the greatest benefit from it.

What is Meditation?

So it may be very important in connection with meditation to learn to be completely open — to have the attitude of learning (not feeling 'I know') — whether it is with other people or with words and ideas. How can we come to be aware not of relative reality but of the truth itself? The answer is given in one of the Upanishad-s: Observe, listen, ponder, meditate.

So we come to 'pondering'. Pondering — questioning — is a necessary part of the awakening process. Everywhere in life there is suffering; what is the meaning of this? Why do creatures prey on each other? What is the meaning of human life? The answer to these questions cannot come from a book. A book is like a map; it is not the country itself. The answers given by somebody else are not real answers.

And then there is the question of friendly relations. We often feel resistance towards particular people and this can arise from a number of inner attitudes. From infancy one may have been taught certain forms of resistance. White children may be taught resistance against children with

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a black skin and black children may be brought up to have prejudices against whites. We as Theosophists may not have these particular prejudices, but we may have our own resistances. If karma has placed us in modest circumstances there may be a resistance against those in better positions. So there may be resistance of a racial, social, economic or other nature. There is an attitude of shutting out one set of people or of withdrawing oneself from contact with a certain group. And then we acquire other forms of resistance from our environment and from the media.

Instead of all this can there not be an attitude of friendliness? Can we live without a protective wall surrounding us? Where there are barriers there cannot be trust or friendship. Nor must we forget the quality of generosity — not just a willingness to share material things but a generosity of spirit that has no sense of what is mine and not mine.

There are other qualities that have been spoken about as necessary parts of this way of life. For example, the Eightfold Path of Buddhism recommends right means of livelihood. We all know that there are occupations that are incompatible with the awakening in which we are interested, that not only injure other living creatures but harden the mind and make it callous and insensitive. Butchers and soldiers whose job it is to take life come in the end to take it all as a matter of course. Prison officers in certain countries routinely inflict violence upon the prisoners in their charge. If these people

even felt to a slight degree the horror of their actions they could not go on with their work. And then there are people who inflict injury on animals. Such activities are totally incompatible with the attempt to lead a spiritual life.

But even if none of us goes as far as this we may still participate in actions which hurt others in an indirect way. That is why it has always been taught that there is no difference between what you do and what you cause to be done. A woman who wears a fur coat may not have herself slaughtered an animal but she nevertheless caused the injury and death. So one has to examine carefully what is involved in one's way of living. Does it, to take another example, involve falsehood? There are people who take it that it is quite all right to do crooked things or to regularly indulge in deception and lies because these are accepted business practice and therefore allowable.

The Right Way of Life

I remember an occasion when some young men met Krishnamurti and, after the discussion, they said: 'If we really follow this, we cannot survive.' And he replied: 'Don't survive.' It is not possible to reconcile success (if that is what it is) brought at such cost to others with spiritual virtues. If the means of livelihood serves merely to make more money or achieve a better social position it may lead one in completely the wrong way, in which case, one should find the courage to give it up and do something else.

There is a way of life which helps and

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another way of life which definitely does not. If our way of life makes us insensitive, if it creates disharmony, if it narrows our sympathies it will never bring us to the point of awakening, to which we aspire.

If we are serious we cannot reconcile incompatible things. We must think this over carefully and adopt that way of life which brings about greater harmony, a greater sense of non-separateness, wider sympathies and a calmness which leads to clarity of perception. Our way of life cannot be kept in a separate compartment for it has everything to do with meditation.

When the mind is able to give all its energy without distraction, it can probe into the true nature of things. This 'probing' is not a kind of skipping from one idea to another or a process of logic and reasoning in the ordinary sense of the

term. That kind of mental exercise can be carried on by anybody who has a good mind but it cannot be called meditation except in a very loose sense. Someone with a good intellect can make a logical construction around any subject and, given enough time, even produce a reasonable book! Intellectual agility is not needed in meditation; penetration in depth is essential.

All this can, in the end, be achieved only when the mind is ready for it. It must be a mind not distracted by outside forces, unclouded by manifestations of the personal self, for it is only when the mind has become clear and tranquil, when it can focus its energies (with or without the aid of the means we have spoken about) that it can learn further to be a receptacle of the truth. ✧

... that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

William Wordsworth
Tintern Abbey, II.40–9

The Evolving Universal Consciousness

BHUPENDRA R. VORA

A BASIC tenet of esoteric philosophy is that of the oneness of all life. Madame Blavatsky states that ‘the Atom, the Man, the God, are each separately, as well as collectively, Absolute Being in their last analysis, that is their Real Individuality’. The innumerable forms of life, both animate and inanimate are aspects of this consciousness and therefore the concept of Brotherhood is not merely an ideal but a fact of nature. In one of the ancient scriptures, it is stated that the One Universal Life chose to become the many and thus this manifold world came into being for the purpose of evolution. Under the influence of *māyā*, the individual units of consciousness see themselves as separate from others, but this is an illusion. There is an underlying field of consciousness that pervades and links everything in the Universe. The individual units of consciousness proceed on their evolutionary journey in accordance with natural laws.

According to the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*, the manifested universe is the field of activity for the One Universal Life. It projects itself into this

world, having taken up its abode in the innumerable species of life that evolve through the process of evolution. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, this One Life has been symbolically shown as the Aśvattha tree with its roots above and the branches below signifying that the myriad forms of life in the outer world have their roots in the one tree of life in the inner planes. In the process of evolution, and under the influence of *māyā*, the illusion of separateness is created. Lord Kṛṣṇa, signifying the Universal Consciousness, states that he is the five elements, the mountains, the stars, trees and all other forms of manifestation, both animate and inanimate.

Whilst brotherhood is a fact of nature, we witness in the world both the divisive and dissipative forces as well as those working towards harmony and unity. In this conflicting situation is the Universal Consciousness evolving to higher levels of manifestation at the outer level of existence!

Much has been written about the mystery of creation. In his book, *Man, God and the Universe*, Dr Taimni writes:

Mr Bhupendra R. Vora was General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in East and Central Africa, and now lives in England. Talk given at the international Convention, Adyar, 2011.

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According to the highest conceptions of Hindu philosophy the manifested universe is nothing but a product of Divine Ideation and the individual worlds of souls are the result of the impact of this Divine Ideation on individual minds. The illusion which is implied in taking our individual world as something independent of the Divine World is called *Māyā*.

It is this illusion of separate individual worlds, under which beings exist, treating others as different from themselves and with competing interests. Whilst this may be true at the outer level of existence, there is an underlying reality that connects all life. Under the influence of *māyā*, this manifold world with its innumerable species of life, presents a multiplicity that is difficult for the mind to fathom. The human consciousness perceives the innumerable forms of life and differences of behaviour that create conceptions of separateness.

This illusion of separateness causes conflicts of interest amongst people at the individual levels, and also at the large societal and national levels. Human beings think about differences in terms of racial groupings of people, outer behaviour, languages, religions and numerous other things, not as expressions of the one life but as things that create division and cause conflict.

In speaking about the human condition with its conflicts based on ideologies, national and individual interests, races, religions, etc., the Mahatma KH writes (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter No. 8):

Poor, poor humanity! It reminds me of the old fable of the war between the Body and its members; here too, each limb of this huge 'Orphan' — fatherless and motherless — selfishly cares but for itself. The body uncared for suffers eternally, whether the limbs are at war or at rest. Its suffering and agony never cease. . . . And who can blame it — as your materialistic philosophers do — if, in this everlasting isolation and neglect it has evolved gods unto whom 'it ever cries for help but is not heard!'

The truth of this statement can be seen in grave issues concerning the environment, like carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere, or the resolution of the financial crisis that has gripped the world at the present moment. The sense of separateness and self-interest has dominated the minds of men and nations. There are, however, voices of sanity that question the direction in which humanity is moving or question the values of society! It is heartening to note that there has been a gradually rising world opinion on many of the issues that concern human progress and the materialistic values that have dominated it. The voice of conscience is heard more loudly than ever before around the world, on many of the issues that face the future of this planet and the evolution of life. The facilities of the electronic media and Internet have made it possible to create world opinions on issues of universal interest. A recent case in point is the expression of anger against and disapproval of the greed of Corporations, Banks

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and their Directors. The sit-down protests organized by groups of people have occupied important centres of activity in many parts of the world. Electronic petitions to the UN and other world bodies touch on moral issues like the rights of a people to self-determination or the future of many species of life. Is a new world consciousness arising, that will change the old order of things?

It has been stated that the spiritual elevation of any Great Being is accompanied by the upliftment of the entire human consciousness. Similarly with the elevation of human thought and action on altruistic lines, the consciousness of the entire race of men is affected. Is a new consciousness based on ethics and morality beginning to take shape?

Nations built on the ideology of capitalism and affluent living, are in crisis due to people living beyond their means at the individual and national levels. These critical times call for reflection on the true values of life and the way to peace and prosperity for all. In his writings published in the book, *The Voice of Truth*, M. K. Gandhi states his views on economics in the following words:

True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of

all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life.

It is the greedy pursuit of wealth and its worship that are the cause of so much anger and the resultant protests all over the world. There have been several examples of Corporation chiefs declaring huge bonuses for themselves even whilst their companies were making losses or were on the verge of bankruptcy. Can this type of greed be justified when a large proportion of the human race live below the poverty line? The ancient Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, regarded things like clothing, stylish homes, etc., as distractions, unhelpful in developing the mind and character.

Recent events in India show that a large number of people are no longer willing to accept the evil of corruption and the extreme greed of politicians and others who dispense with all standards of morality and decency to accumulate their ill-gotten wealth. The fact that such large numbers of people are involved in voicing their discontent with the present order of things suggests an inner movement of consciousness. The recent uprisings in the Middle East termed as the 'Arab Spring', indicate that the old order is changing. It is an indication that it is no longer possible to sustain systems where the rights of the majority are not acknowledged or where a small group of people in power live in great opulence through corruption and misuse of power.

Describing the state of man in the early stages of evolution, J. J. Van der Leeuw writes in his book, *Gods in Exile*:

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As long as man, in his pilgrimage through matter, identifies himself entirely with his bodies and follows entirely their dictates, in utter oblivion of his own true, divine nature, he does not suffer, but is contented in an animal way. It is only when the soul in her earthly prison begins to recall the divine home from which she lives exiled, when through love, beauty or truth, consciousness of her own true nature awakens, that suffering begins. We are like Prometheus, chained to the rock of matter, but it is not until we become conscious of what we truly are, that we are at all aware of being prisoners, of being exiles.

Man is dual in nature and the struggle between the material and the spiritual is a constant one. The influence of the illusions of the world, like power, wealth and position, are so strong that humans fail to follow the path of righteousness until some lessons of life are learnt. In the great epic, *Mahābhārata*, is the character of Duryodhana who makes the statement that he knows what righteousness is and yet cannot follow it; he knows what unrighteousness is and yet cannot give it up. In many ways this is the human condition. Many people know the rights and wrongs of their actions in daily life as well as what is ethical and moral and yet do not heed their conscience in the furthering of their self-centred objectives. In describing the human condition, the Great Adept known as the Mahachohan, states in his letter:

To be *true*, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition

morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilized* races less than any other, have ever possessed the *truth*. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles — right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism — are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago.

The Mahachohan states that the Universal Brotherhood of humanity is the only secure foundation for a true morality. Has the world changed since the Mahachohan's observations concerning the human condition more than a century ago? Recent world events indicate that a greater awareness about the problems affecting the human condition has arisen amongst some people. A large world lobby is canvassed through the Internet communication to voice its opinion in respect of many moral and ethical issues affecting the human race as well as those concerning the environment. This new world consciousness questions the established order of many of the things in the world. This augurs well for the future. The power of Internet lobbying and the voice of a large number of people has been seen in many instances recently. One example of this is the plan to build an overhead bridge over the Adyar Beach that was shelved after protests from a large number of people through petitions.

The third fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* states 'the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Oversoul . . . and the obligatory pilgrimage

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for every soul . . . through the Cycle of Incarnation in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law'. To understand this fundamental proposition is to understand that all humanity and the other kingdoms of life are all manifestations of the One Divine Source and that they are all on the evolutionary journey. Therefore, to view all life with love and compassion is true spirituality. Brotherhood, therefore, means seeing no differences on the basis of race or people's beliefs or the many other distinctions that we create through our narrow-mindedness.

The Great Adept referred to the many dualities that exist in the world — right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism. When the divine source of all is understood, the dualities fall away and only goodness and love prevail. It is on

the well-being of all that our own well-being depends. Self-centredness and greed eventually lead to misery and cannot provide lasting happiness.

The world seems to be going through major changes in many directions at the present moment. The role of the Theosophist is to ensure that the principle of Universal Brotherhood does not become an idle phrase but remains a regenerating reality. It is necessary to have a wise and respectful tolerance of the differences in opinion and belief amongst people. The Mahatma KH defines this Brotherhood as follows: 'In our Brotherhood all personalities sink into one idea — abstract right and absolute practical justice for all.'

The practice of Brotherhood means a negation of the self in the way of service and love. ✧

Let us have concord with our own people,
and concord with people who are strangers to us . . .

May we unite in our minds, unite in our purposes,
and not fight against the divine spirit within us.

Atharva Veda, VII.52.1–1

The Mahatmas and the TS

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

SOMETIMES the following questions are asked: 'Now that there are so many spiritual and esoteric organizations in the world, don't you think that the TS has completed its work? Now that the Society has helped to disseminate Theosophy for well over a century, is it not time for it to retire?' Some questioners even point out that there are much more 'modern' and 'fresher' spiritual messages today, by a number of teachers, which supersede the message of the TS. It becomes evident that, for them, the TS has become 'old hat'.

There are others who say that since there is no recent evidence of communications with the Masters within it, they may have 'discarded' the Society. This reminds me of an answer given by our current International President to a Brazilian journalist, during a press conference which took place before the World Congress of the TS, held in Brasilia, in July 1993. Mentioning *Old Diary Leaves* by Col. Olcott, he said that there was documented evidence of contacts between the Founders and the Mahatmas. His question, which he addressed to Mrs Burnier, was: 'What is the nature of

the communication of present-day TS leaders and the Masters? And what is the nature of *your* communication with them?' A few moments of silence followed, after which the President said: 'Let us suppose there is a couple for whom their relationship is considered as sacred. Would they talk about it in public? The relationship with a Master is much more sacred than that and therefore one does not talk about it.' The silence that ensued marked the end of the press conference.

The Mahatmas offered some degree of guidance to the Founders, and to some other individuals, in the difficult beginnings of the Society. However, they made it very clear that they never intended to run it. And when one examines some of their letters, the nature of the guidance given in the 1880s remains as vitally valid today as when it was first given. Today, more than 130 years since the first communications were received, it is still worthwhile considering some of their statements about the nature of the TS and its work. For although the world has changed outwardly since that time, the essential features of the human mind have not. Although contemporary

Mr Pedro Oliveira is now a member of the Australian Section of the TS, but has worked at Adyar and elsewhere.

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people are sailing a sea of information and instantaneous communication, the overwhelming majority seems to lack a genuine spiritual compass.

(Excerpts from letters quoted below are taken from *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* and *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*):

Rather perish the TS with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, a hall of occultism. That we the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the TS to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

It should not come as a surprise to its members that the Society, as inspired by the Mahatma's altruistic spirit, cannot base its work on attitudes that are the glorification of the personal self. One of the sources of vitality of the TS has been the encouragement of differences in viewpoint while carrying out a harmonious and cooperative collective work. For this reason, those who solely seek self-promotion within it are bound, sooner or later, to meet with disappointment, as well as those who eventually seem to insist that it should offer psychic training practices and development. The Society offers opportunities for one to study psychic phenomena and understand their

mechanism, both from Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatmas, and many other authors in the Society. The distinction between psychism and spirituality has been made amply clear. Without the light of spiritual insight, psychic development tends to lead the practitioner astray.

To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilized* races less than any other, have ever possessed the *truth*.

The essence of religion is a state of complete and irreversible harmony with the Ground of Being, the Timeless Reality; and philosophy, at its best, is a clear and steady movement towards wisdom, a spiritually-transformed perception of the world. If such conditions exist they can meet every problem and offer real solutions. Alas, religion has become a platform for exclusion, fear-mongering, violence and murder; in other words, a source of evil in the world. And philosophy, as in the words of Will Durant, when he referred to the speculative thinker, seems to be the domain of those who know more and more of less and less. The well-known Indian scholar, T.R.V. Murti, once remarked that he had never met a philosopher who was interested in Truth!

The TS includes both religion and philosophy, as well as science, in its field of study and exploration. But such study is meant to be at the service of the first

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and most important of its Objects, namely, Universal Brotherhood without distinction. In doing so the Society seeks to integrate the best of the ancient traditions of India, Persia, Tibet, China, and so on, with the lofty philosophical schools in the Western world. The second Object can be seen as a space for dialogue between traditions with a view to realizing the essential oneness of humankind.

The pendulum has swung from the extreme of blind faith towards the extreme materialistic scepticism, and nothing can stop it save Theosophy. Is not this a thing worth working for, to save those nations from the doom their ignorance is preparing for them?

A crude representation of scientific materialism of the nineteenth century was given by Pierre Cabanis, French physiologist (1802): 'The brain secretes thought like the liver secretes bile.' The materialist world view has in it an inbuilt mechanist assumption that only matter exists. However, the very concept of matter has undergone change in the last two hundred years and some scientists have questioned the orthodox materialistic stance. Today, materialism exists in a much more sophisticated way as it has a very powerful ally: advertisement. One of its mantras is 'you can have more'. Following this principle, thousands of new gadgets enter the market on a regular basis, for modern materialism also works with another important factor: obsolescence. We are being continuously encouraged through television, magazines

and websites to get a new car, a new mobile phone, a new house, and sometimes also a new body!

As a result of this frenzy for the 'new', natural resources are being destroyed at an appalling pace. No wonder that the Mahatma used the word 'extreme' in his reference to materialism. The Society also exists to try and stop it, not by preventing people from using gadgets, but by presenting to them the larger view of life which a Theosophical understanding gives.

You *have* the making of your own future, in your own hands . . . and every day you may be weaving its woof. If I were to *demand* that you should do one thing or the other, instead of simply advising, I would be responsible for every effect that might flow from the step and you acquire but a secondary merit.

The above is an extract of a reply from Master KH to C. W. Leadbeater when the latter had offered to become his chela (disciple). One of the fundamental principles along which the Masters seem to work is given in it: 'you *have* the making of your own future in your own hands'. So unlike 'modern' gurus and teachers who tend to create a sense of dependence in their students or followers, the Master very clearly pointed out to CWL the core principle of self-responsibility. And the teachings of Theosophy, in what concerns human evolution, highlight the same principle: it is only when I cease to depend on external circumstances that I can truly grow. Self-observation and self-awareness

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become practical expressions of this important principle.

Selfishness and the want of self-sacrifice are the greatest impediments on the path of adeptship.

The sense of 'I'-ness is developed along the vast expanse of the evolutionary process. It initially can be seen as an instinct of protection against an aggressive external environment. As the mind principle develops and gets stronger, self-interest settles in and starts to govern most of our activities. However, self-interest, in its essence, is a process of isolation and conflict, either covert or overt. It remains, to this day, one of the major causes in the collapse of relationships and the lack of mental clarity and wholeness. However, when the spiritual path is approached, self-interest becomes a danger and a serious impediment. The following is an excerpt from a letter from HPB to C. W. Leadbeater, written from Ostend in 1886, about a chela, Bawajee, who had gone with her to Europe to help in the work, but who later on turned against her and the Society:

Moreover, he has slandered persistently Subba Row, Damodar, Olcott and everyone at Adyar. He made many Europeans lose confidence in them. Subba Row, he says, never said a truth in his life to a European; he bamboozles them always and is a liar; Damodar is a great liar also; he alone (Bawajee) knows the Masters, and what They are. In short, he makes of our Mahatmas inaccessible, impersonal Beings, so far away that no one can reach Them!!!

At the same time he contradicts himself: to one he says he was 10 y. [years] with Mahatma KH; to another 3 years, again he went several times to Tibet and saw the Master only from afar when he entered and came out of the temple. He lies most awfully. The truth is that he (B.) has never been to Tibet and has never seen his Master 100 miles off. NOW, I have the assurance of it from my Master Himself. He was a chela on probation. When he came to Bombay to the Headquarters, your Master ordered me to tell all He accepted Krishnaswami, and had sent him to live with us and work for the TS.

The spiritual path is not for the faint-hearted, nor for those who refuse to look at the unsuspected motives that drive their actions. As Bro. Sri Ram aptly pointed out, the treading of the Path implies turning oneself inside out, so that one can observe and see for oneself what one's hidden motives and attitudes really are. If such fundamental honesty is not there one may, in all likelihood, become another wreck on the Path.

. . . the chief object of the TS is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men; and the real value of this term 'selfish', which may jar upon your ear, has a peculiar significance with us which it cannot have with you; therefore, and to begin with, you must not accept it otherwise than in the former sense. Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness

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if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of desire for self-benefit or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself.

The Mahatmas, the Founders and their successors, pointed out that the Society, as a living entity, has Universal Brotherhood as its essential and perennial keynote. The TS was never meant to be an academic body, although a great deal of scholarly work has been produced within it. It was also not intended to be a 'hall of occultism' wherein occult or spiritual practices are taught systematically. It was neither conceived also as a philanthropic organization along worldly lines, in which the self-interest of a few determines who gets benefited by its funds. The Mahatma's view of philanthropy is quite different for, as he points out, whenever there is desire for self-benefit or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously, the altruistic effort becomes tainted. Only a truly altruistic body can be in a condition to receive their influence and energizing help, for they — each one of them — live only to benefit humanity. Therefore, any member who is earnest to help the TS must check the existence of selfish motives in themselves. This, however, is easier said than done.

Will you, or rather they, never see the true meaning and explanation of that great wreck and desolation which has come to our land and threatens all lands — yours first of all? It is *selfishness* and *exclusiveness* that killed ours, and it [is]

selfishness and *exclusiveness* that will kill yours — which has in addition some other defects which I will not name. The world has clouded the light of true knowledge, and *selfishness* will not allow its resurrection, for it excludes and will not recognize the whole fellowship of all those who were born under the same immutable natural law.

Carl Gustav Jung suggested that there is a 'shadow' side in the human psyche, which is nourished by lack of attention, observation and reflection. It consists of the accumulation of that which has been repressed for a long time, including feelings, desires and personal ambition. In the contemporary world, this aspect of the mind has become quite visible, for example, in the actions of those who promote war and violence in the name of religion. The unconscious desire for the supremacy of one's religion — or ideology — has turned the world into a much more dangerous place. Another aspect of the same problem is the craving for novelty, which betrays a deep-seated fear to face oneself as one is. Leisure can then become a routine of repeated escape from oneself. The end-result of such attitudes is selfishness and exclusiveness. The selfish mind creates for itself a customized world of illusory pursuits, which cuts itself off from the benign glory enshrined in every form of life.

The term 'Universal Brotherhood' is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us, as I try to explain in my letter to Mr Hume, which

The Mahatmas and the TS

you had better ask the loan of. It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*.

Contrary to what many believe, the Society does not have an ideology of its own, was not formed to convince people of the reality of the teachings it made available to the world, neither to promise people a facile way of personal development. The very cornerstone of the TS is Universal Brotherhood without distinction, an essential affirmation of the profound oneness of human consciousness and destiny and thus the perennial basis for a timeless ethics which can completely change human relationships, as well as our relationship with Mother Earth. The one and only concern of the Mahatmas, expressed again and again in their correspondence, is with humanity, its suffering, its travails and its uplifting.

And now it is your province to decide which will you have: the highest philosophy or simple exhibitions of occult powers. Of course this is by far not the last word between us and — you will have time to think it over. The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity', a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds.

Both A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume, the recipients of letters from the

Mahatmas, were convinced that the way to attract the attention of people in general to the work of the TS was through continuous demonstrations of occult phenomena. Madame Blavatsky did oblige in this direction up to a point, but she was later told by her Teacher to cease from displays of such phenomena. The above well-known quotation contains reference to those in the Brotherhood of Adepts who belonged to a higher rank, and from them came the direct advice that the TS should be a Brotherhood of Humanity. It is equally interesting to note that the Mahatma seems to equate the Brotherhood of Humanity with the highest philosophy, a possible indication that the first Object of the Society embodies in it the core esoteric principle of unity as a fundamental law of existence.

So, in spite of proclamations to the contrary, the Theosophical Society continues to have a meaningful work before it. Its essential message has not aged, nor has the Society become 'old hat'. It may have problems like every institution which consists of human beings has. But any serious member who carefully examines the Objects, the purpose and the inner life of the Society, cannot fail to see how important, relevant and urgent its work is for the world. Do the Masters still have an interest in it? Some may wish to speculate about this. However, one of them left a sobering message for those who aspire to understand their work: 'How few are they who can know anything about us.' ✧

Brotherhood is a Reflection in Action of Right Perception

P. SHOBHA

ALL scriptures, and the prophets of all the religions, have taught that man is made in the image of God and that the purpose of life is Self-Realization to regain our 'paradise lost', for we have been like the prodigal son.

Jesus said: 'God is Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.' Theosophically speaking, the words 'God' and 'Spirit' are not the same, though in common expression the one is used to refer to the other.

'Spirit' refers to the unmanifested Absolute that is Eternal Truth, Eternal Love and Eternal Bliss, beyond any of the dimensions of time and space.

'God' refers to the Creator. Spirit plays the role of God the Creator, who is omnipresent and whose inherent nature is harmony. In this Cosmic Drama, God is actually the Spirit, who has the role of the Father of Creation, and we are children of God; hence the fact of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of human beings.

Therefore, it follows that Brotherhood is not something that is created by

any enrolment or membership; it already IS. Godhood is not something to be attained, as human beings have the potential in them.

However, to see the human being as Spirit only and not subject to the limitations of the world of duality would be amounting to hypocrisy; because he does feel anger, love, joy, sorrow, heat, cold.

Each one of us lives in two worlds: Some may live in a world of music and poetry; others may live in a world of sense pleasures. Some may live in a world of peace and harmony while others may live in a world of confusion and misery. It does not matter in what circumstance we live; we all live in two worlds: the outer world and the inner world.

In the outer world, we are involved in actions and interactions, whereas, the quality of our inner world is reflected in our being happy or unhappy, peaceful or miserable. Equanimity and harmony of our inner world arise only through meditation. Since harmony is the inherent nature of creation, there is a natural harmony between these two worlds. It is only

Ms P. Shobha is a member of the Indian Section of the TS. Talk given at the Indian Section Convention, Adyar, December 2011.

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when we transgress the laws of Nature that there is discord and suffering. Everything in creation is interconnected and when we are happy we spread that happiness to those around us.

Knowing through intuition is perception, and perception is bound to be right because it has occurred in deep awareness which is a deep meditative mood. Actually, there is nothing that is right and nothing that is wrong. What is considered right at one given point of time is considered wrong at another point of time. All that is required is to be totally aware in every situation; every act then becomes a spontaneous action done in response to the situation in the moment; and whatever is done in awareness is right. In this state of awareness you are centred. You become close to yourself. Love is the nature of our being, and with Love blossoms Compassion. The Buddha tells us that whenever we need to respond, just become mindful, become aware. Just become a silent spectator of yourself, before you want to act; allow the act to happen and whatever you do will be right.

Even if you feel anger or jealousy, just watch that feeling with total awareness. Maybe you hate someone who has hurt your feelings very badly and you really want to hit back. But never retaliate or react. The supreme remedy in such a situation for oneself and for those around would be to remain silent and watch the emotion. You will be surprised to find that anger slowly disappears, and in its place is the feeling of love and forgiveness and the qualities of loving kindness. You

can use this awareness remedy even to overcome physical pain or even to overcome difficult situations by focusing your awareness on the area of pain or the problem situation. The secret is that in the presence of your Awareness, anything that is not in harmony with the Divine Self in you disappears, or is rather transformed to the opposite condition of being in harmony with your Inner Being.

The highest service to human beings, however, is helping people to be themselves. Allow them the opportunity of evolving themselves, without interfering in their personal matters. It is best not to attempt to advise or to change people or impose your ideas or ideals, however good your intention may be; because any such action would be a form of coercion and a trespass of their personal liberty of free will which is an insult to the human being. Whenever the occasion demands, be ready to offer a helping hand even if the person has been unkind to you. With the love of the Divine, spread your consciousness to include everyone within, accepting them as they are.

Harmony exists where there is love and awareness of the divinity in persons, because more than respect, it is reverence for the human being that matters. The beauty of our ancient way of greeting one another with 'Namaste' means 'I bow to the divinity in you'.

We are here to learn to be able to cope with every situation that life has to offer. Do your best and forget the rest. Do not expect anything in return. Expectations often are met with

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disappointments and frustration.

It must be remembered that being good to others does not mean that you should compromise on your ideals. Here is the test of the courage of conviction, which all those on the Path have faced and for which many have been tortured for upholding the truth. Jesus Christ was crucified because he spoke that which was the truth to him. Most touching of all is his great compassion for the brotherhood of ignorant human beings when he pleaded: 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' Be firm but do not hurt anyone's feelings. Even when you have given love and you are not accepted or appreciated, or your help is not wanted, or even if your presence is not wanted, just keep away in silence, knowing that anyone who does not respond to your goodness is not worthy of it; let there be no feeling of possessiveness towards anyone or anything; because, what is yours will be with you; what is not yours will not remain with you.

Whether at home, or in the office or otherwise, it is not necessary that you should be treated well with gratitude just because you have been righteous. Whatever you give, you shall receive. If you are experiencing difficulties, blame no one and take the responsibility for your condition. The only right act is to face the situation with cheer knowing that 'even this shall pass away'.

You might have faced a situation where you have been helpful to some people, and when you no longer are able to offer further help, they turn against you

and hurt you with harsh criticism. Do not lose heart. For this is the way of the world. Bless all those who are suffering and those who need compassion; bless all those who have hurt you in different ways; because it is your enemies more than your friends who have helped you in life to improve and get tempered. Be ready to forgive those who have hurt you, because when you forgive you are actually releasing the burden of pain.

Whatever quality you want to spread around, whatever you want to offer to someone, you must first of all have enough of it yourself. Service need not be only in terms of material help. It can also be by offering your mere presence beside the bedside of the sick and lonely and the dying people — this would give them immense solace and comfort — or even extending your thoughts of kindness and blessings to someone who is suffering.

Even if the whole world finds fault with you, and you have one person who loves you unconditionally and accepts you as you are, you are indeed blessed. There is everything to be learned from Nature. The gift of life and all the joys of life we have are free of cost. And how often we have taken it all for granted! Let us be thankful and offer our gratitude everyday. When you are contented and grateful, you are truly being prayerful to the creator who has given the gift to you, without your asking for it.

Knowing anything in its totality is perception. Life is not complete without death. The circle has to be completed. Having perceived life in all its hues and

Brotherhood is a Reflection in Action of Right Perception

flavours and lived it to the full, one last sacrifice of love remains, which is to be of help to those who are frightened of death. This is the last service to human beings — setting an example of going through death with total acceptance, to welcome death. Nobody wants to think of his own death or to talk about it. It is the most dreaded fear. However, I am convinced that those who accept death as a welcome natural end have lived a quality of life that is incomparable.

During the last days of my parents, I have been by their side. Both of them left their mortal frames consciously and cheerfully. The peculiar deep silence and emptiness that I experienced during the last few days and moments of my father's life is inexplicable. It was not that I was not sad. Despite my grief, every time that I was near him it was as if I were lifted to some other level of existence of great peace and overwhelming love. It was something more than any other spiritual experience I have ever had. I just wanted to dissolve and disappear with my father's soul. There seemed to be a great dignity in death of which I had never known. To me this is a kind of benediction that keeps me moving forward.

It does not matter if you have not been

able to do much service to human beings; a life well lived is in itself an example which is a form of service; if you have lived life fully in total awareness of every moment of your life, then you have made your life a beautiful offering At the Feet of the Master, worthy of emulation. Nothing else remains to be fulfilled. There is total surrender. And when the time comes, you will be able to accept the ultimate test and make the ultimate sacrifice also with awareness. When there is awareness there is unconditional Love; and when there is unconditional Love, there is no fear because of the faith that 'the Light that has led me so far, will still lead me on'.

The disciple of Jesus Christ, Saint John, said: 'As many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' December is the season of Christmas and while the whole world celebrates Christmas, let us become receptive to the vibrations of the spirit of goodwill, love and peace, and receive the Christ into our hearts.

Let this also be our Resolution for the New Year, so that Brotherhood is not confined to lectures alone as an Ideal; but, let every action of ours become a conscious expression of brotherhood. ✧

Greater is he who acts from love than he who acts from fear.

Talmud, Sota 31a

Dante — Ptolemaic Cosmology — The Labyrinth

(Symbolic Meanings for the Journey of the Soul)

EDI D. BILIMORIA

Our Thesis

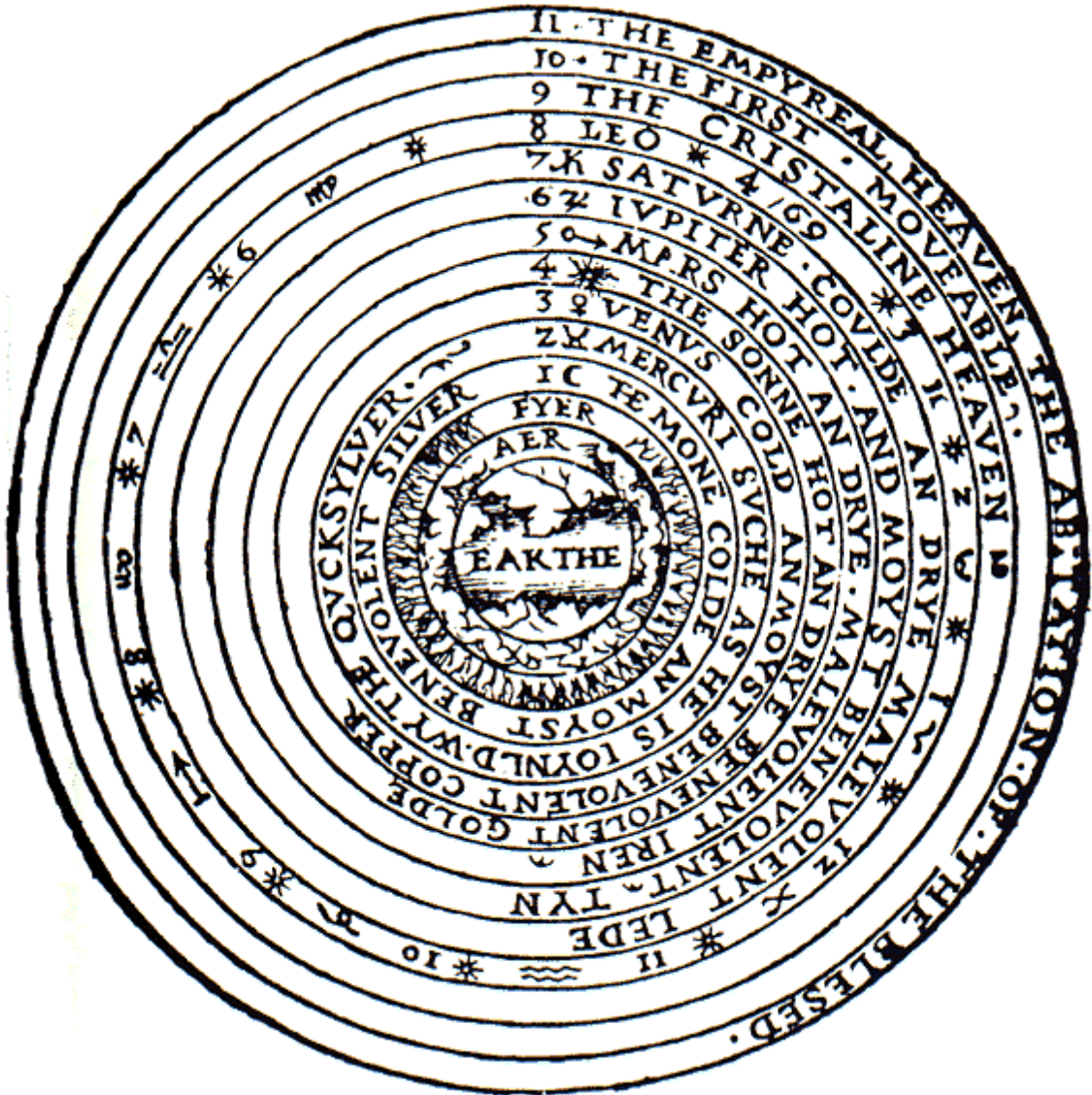
‘All is context-dependent’ should be the statement replacing that simplistic remark one hears all too frequently: ‘all is relative’. This context dependency certainly applies to our view of the cosmos. For example, if we wish to indulge in extra-galactic travel, then life is made easier if we treat our sun as neither stationary nor the centre of the universe, but rotating around the centre of our galaxy. For solar system dynamics and space travel a heliocentric frame is the most useful. But in order to understand our coming into, and exit from terrestrial incarnation, the geocentric, Ptolemaic, *psycho*-physical system is by far the most felicitous. This system formed the bedrock of ancient Greek¹ and Medieval Cosmology where the coming into being of a universe and the birth of a human were not regarded as rigidly disconnected events, but as component aspects of one, organic and unitary process on the basis of ‘As Above, So Below’ — the microcosm mirroring the macrocosm. For this reason, the Ptolemaic universe was gloriously encoded in the ancient world

symbolism of the labyrinth and used as the poetical structure in works like Dante’s *Divina Commedia*.

The Ptolemaic System

In barest outline then, Ptolemy’s work was grounded upon Aristotle’s idea of an ordered universe divided into the sublunary or earthly region which was corruptible, and the heavenly region which was perfect and immutable. Centremost was the stationary Earth and then the Ptolemaic order of the planets from Earth outwards was Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, each moving in its respective sphere, then the Fixed Stars, and finally the *Primum Mobile*. However, *notice that the only difference between this ordering of planets from the heliocentric system is that the Earth and Sun have flipped places, the Earth now rotating in its orbit and the Sun essentially stationary*. It is suggested that the Ptolemaic system is valid even nowadays provided that its symbolic meaning is distinguished from a literal physical interpretation where, of course, it does not work in a mechanistic scientific sense.

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The Ptolemaic universe from Andrew Borde's *The First Book of the Introduction of Knowledge*, 1542.

The *Divina Commedia*, The Ptolemaic View and the Labyrinth

The *Divina Commedia* reflects this symbolic meaning behind Ptolemaic cosmology in exotic detail with its circles, or spheres not only reaching out into the heavens, but funnelling down into the very centre of Earth which is essentially the bottom of Hell. This last statement provides us with a *clue* to how the Ancients regarded Earth. (The old English word for a ball of string was ‘clue’ — a reminder of the crucial clue that princess Ariadne placed in the hands of the handsome prince Theseus before he entered the Labyrinth. We shall also ‘enter’ it shortly, indeed construct one to wit.) The Ancient view of placing Earth at the centre of the universe was not the egoistical attitude that we now presume it to be, but rather the notion that what is densest must fall to the centre and what is rarefied but rise upwards. Hence to be at the centre of things (Earth) was not the best, but the worst place to inhabit. Therefore Earth was Hell, the dregs, where everything sank down, the most undesirable part of the universe to be in. Not surprisingly then, Dante commences his epic journey from ‘Hell on Earth’ — a perfect correlation between the Ptolemaic notion and the *Divina Commedia*. But where does the Labyrinth enter into all this? As alluded to above, the Ptolemaic order is encoded in the labyrinth — both symbolic and historical. We shall explain this.

Two Kinds of Labyrinth

There are two principal types of

labyrinth. In a multi-cursal labyrinth — the traditional *maze* — paths branch out into other paths that branch out further and it is likely that a traveller may never reach the centre. By contrast, a uni-cursal labyrinth, or *meander* has only one path which, however much it may twist and turn, it ultimately leads, inexorably and with no dead ends to the centre. The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral is a meander whilst the one at Knossos in Crete is definitely a maze — or is it? Let the tale unfold.

The Cretan Labyrinth at Knossos — Its Double Meaning

The Cretan legend and symbolic meaning behind the slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus is well known and was outlined earlier (*The Theosophist*, vol.131.11, August 2010, p.19). Here we only emphasize that mythology demands that the labyrinth at Knossos had to be a maze. There was no doubt that unless you entered it with a clue you would soon get lost in its bifurcating passages and get devoured.

However the historical labyrinth at Knossos can be seen on early Cretan coins and pottery. The design is seen to be not a maze but actually a *meander* with seven circuits — a-mazing! Why this contradiction between the mythological maze and the historical meander? Why *seven* circuits?

When we enter into terrestrial life we are indeed in a labyrinthine maze of all kinds of experiences. We do not know which of many paths to take and we have to learn to control our personal Minotaur of sense-driven lust getting the better of our higher nature. When we succeed in

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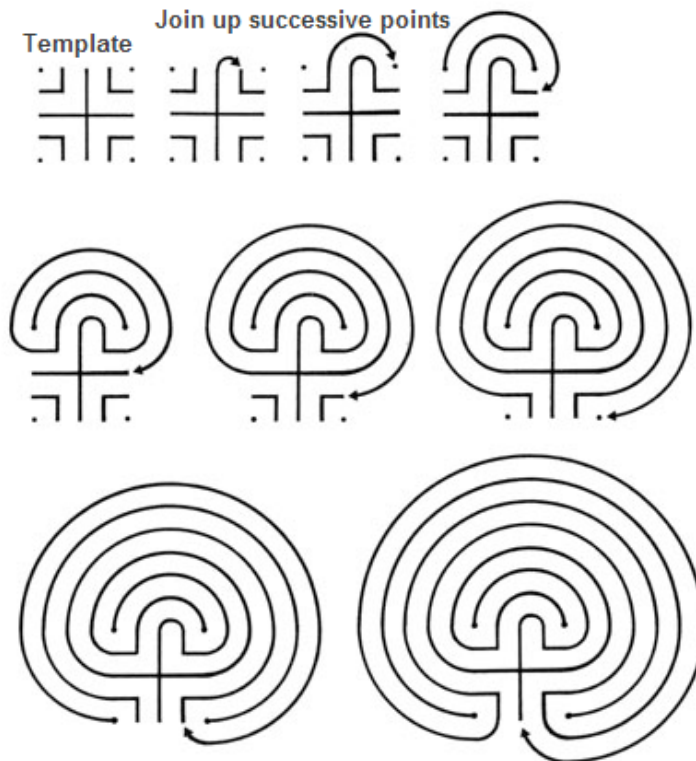
controlling (or slaying to use the traditional term) our lower nature by finding the clue and using the sword of the mind, then our path ahead becomes clarified — our personal maze has been transformed into a meander. The labyrinth is thus the symbolic pattern of our coming into birth, and our coming out of birth as we shall see by constructing and walking inside the one in Crete.

Building the Cretan Labyrinth

The figures given below show how the historical labyrinth, i.e., meander at

Knossos may be constructed. Starting with the template of the cross with four extra right angles in each of the cross angles and a dot in the middle of each second angle, start by joining the top end of the vertical cross bar to its immediate neighbour and work around the diagram clockwise as shown in the figure. We obtain *seven* circuits which we may label, working from the outermost to the innermost, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon and Earth (see overleaf) — none other than a depiction of Ptolemaic cosmology.

Constructing the Historical Labyrinth at Knossos, Crete



The Ptolemaic universe from Andrew Borde's *The First Book of the Introduction of Knowledge*, 1542.

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Walking Into the Cretan Labyrinth = Entering Incarnation

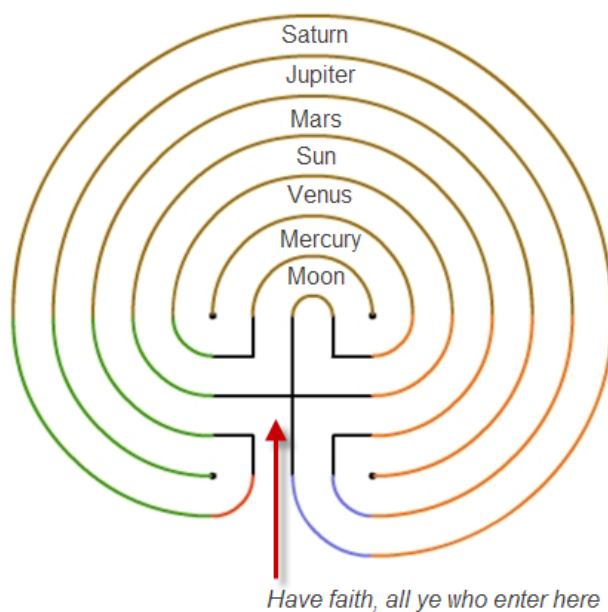
Let us leave the Fixed Stars and walk into the historical Cretan labyrinth hoping to be born on Earth (we shall assume that we are old souls and know our path in the life to come.) The first circuit we encounter is not Saturn, but Mars, for it is passion and desire for life, symbolized by Mars that draws us into incarnation. On our way we pass through the circuit of the Moon which symbolizes the model-body² around which the physical body is moulded. The last circuit we encounter before 'falling' on Earth is Venus.³ As we journey into incarnation each planet gives off some of its influence to the incoming

soul. At death, the reverse occurs and we 'hand back' those borrowed qualities to the planets in turn as we 'ascend'. So Mars is this time the last planetary sphere we pass through as we must now give up the thirst or desire for sentient life. The planets in the Ptolemaic system, as mirrored in the labyrinth, thus indicate the order in which our life principles are activated as we come to Earth and the order in which they must be shed as we leave our labyrinth of experience — Earth.

Ptolemy — Crete — Dante

It would not be useful to attempt a literal cross-correlation of the Ptolemaic system as used by Dante with the historical

**Dante's *Divina Commedia* has:
Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.
The spiritual warrior may prefer the first alternative!**



Dante — Ptolemaic Cosmology — The Labyrinth

Cretan labyrinth. Nonetheless the central and important role ascribed to Minos and the Minotaur in the *Divina Commedia* demonstrates Dante's knowledge of the allegorical and symbolic meaning of the famous Cretan legend. Thus the Soul in *Paradiso* ascends to the level applicable to it, ranging from the first sphere of the Moon to the seventh sphere of Saturn. Although not quite the same as the order of the planetary circuits encountered at death as depicted in the Cretan meander, the principle is broadly the same; that of rising to the 'buoyancy level' of the planetary influence relating to the attribute of the Soul.

Coda

In conclusion we must with utmost sincerity pay obeisance to those great Souls who have ever shown Mankind a way out of the labyrinth of his own making — if only he will listen to their wise words; and Dante was assuredly one of those lofty Souls. Just as the 'Kingdom of Heaven Must Lie Within', so the heroic journey that Dante undertook must ultimately become our own personal journey. Perhaps then, when we have truly absorbed this epic poem and it speaks its sublime message to us from within, the amazing *Divina Commedia* may alchemically transmute into just —
COMEDIA. ✧

References and Notes

1. But with notable exceptions like Aristarchus of Samos who postulated a heliocentric system.
2. Etheric double and doppelganger are some of the many other names ascribed.
3. Venus symbolizing intuitive wisdom or insight. Thus it is said that just before birth we have an intuitive flash of our life ahead; and just before death we experience a review of the life we have lived.

The esoteric significance and symbolic meaning behind Ptolemaic cosmology and the labyrinth have been taken mainly from the following works:

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Barborka, Geoffrey, *The Divine Plan*, Quest Books, 1986.

Algeo, Prof. John, *Labyrinth of Life*, Quest Books, The Theosophical Society in America, 1996.

Tarn, Harold, *The Soul's Imperative*, The Theosophical Society in England, 1999.

**If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed; if I
say that He is without me, it is falsehood.**

Rabindranath Tagore

Brotherhood in Education

ANNIE BESANT

NOW what is a child? From the standpoint of reincarnation and karma, he is not a newborn intelligence, that has come into a body by the laws of physical heredity, offering either a clean page, as some imagine, or a page blotted by the bad heredity of the past, on which the educationalist has to write according to his own ideas. That is not the child, as seen from the higher standpoint. The child is a living spiritual intelligence, who has come into a body, fitted for the stage of evolution at which he has arrived by the progress made in the past, in which he is to pursue the path of evolution in the present. He brings with him the capacities which he has made. He brings with him the powers which he has woven into his nature, the faculties that need to be drawn out. He is an ego, sometimes older than that inhabiting the body of his teachers. He is sometimes a highly developed entity, who only needs a helping hand in order that he may be able to get ready for his work in the world.

Looking then at the child from the Theosophic standpoint we see a living and possibly highly evolved ego, in a feeble body. Our duty is to study the child, and not to coerce him; to understand him and

help him to grow and to find himself. The education of the child should be very largely one that seeks to give him opportunities of manifestation, rather than to impose on him methods of development. And until it is realized that the child is an eternal Spirit, with powers and capacities of his own, not running into a mould but to an individual growth, that the duty of the teacher is to aid the growth and not to try to change it; until that is understood, the whole educational system is going along a wrong road and is based on a false idea.

No child naturally needs coercion. When he does, it is the fault of the early training, when he was a feeble helpless creature in the hand of his elders. I admit the difficulty you may have with a boy or a girl who has been spoiled, when you try to bring them round again. But even then, you will only bring them round again by love and not by fear. One of the worst features of the present methods is the idea that the child is to be ruled by terror where he ought to be ruled by love; by punishment, where he ought to be attracted to learn. For the child desires knowledge, if you will only present it to him in the right way. Do you not know that the child

Reprinted from *The Ideals of Theosophy*, 36th Annual Convention Lectures given in Benares, 1911.

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spends more than half of his young life in questions regarding the world around him? There is no lack of desire for knowledge. In fact, his continual questions are often rather troublesome and trying to the patience of unsympathetic elders.

Utilize this longing to know, and give him knowledge in a form which he is able to assimilate. If the child evades the school and fears his lessons, blame the teacher and not the child, the teacher who does not know how to give knowledge in an attractive form, and, therefore, is not able to guide the pupil aright by awaking his intelligence and his interest. The attention of the ego must be aroused, in order that he may be induced to put himself down into his new vehicle. And he must be allured down by love and by presenting objects of interest, for blows only drive him back to his own region.

Ordinary children have the desire to understand and acquire knowledge. You only have to guide. There lies the duty of the elder. His experience of the objects of the world enables the elder to help the untrained, scarcely-used, body of the child. The difficulties are with the body rather than with the ego. Sometimes only the training of the brain is necessary to enable the ego to lay hold of his property and use it, and he eagerly seizes the opportunity. At other times he is indifferent, and remains deaf to the voices of the world. And then remember that your success in teaching is going to be very largely proportionate to the amount of the ego that you are able to draw down to work in the brain. You cannot drive him

down, you can only allure him down. And only by making your teaching attractive, will you be able to win the ego to attention, and so ensure the progress of the child.

Looking at the child with a keener vision, at the subtler bodies which he brings with him, you find that everything there is in germ. The child does not bring into the world well-grown and well-developed capacities, as a rule. He brings the germs of faculties that he is going to develop during life. Now some of those are mental faculties, others of course, emotional. Some of the emotions make for happiness, others for misery. You might call them germs of virtues and vices — which are permanent modes built into the character of the master-emotions of Love and Hate.

Those have to grow, and have begun growing from the early days of infancy. If the child be surrounded with good influences, if all who come near him are pure in thought, loving in emotion, then those influences playing on the germs of good emotions draw them out, without the child knowing anything about it, and the virtuous seed is developed under those influences, while the seeds of evil are starved out. Under those influences the seeds of vices have no opportunity of growth. Now the early education of the child is very largely, and at first entirely, not by books or words, but by the silent influences of the thoughts and the emotions of his elders, that are playing upon him continually, as the sun shines and the rain falls on the growing seed buried in the earth.

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The child is naughty. Have *you* been irritable, impatient, have *you* been anxious or worried? Then you have sent out a stream of influences that has stimulated in him the germs of anger and of evil. These are things that are not thought of by the ordinary father or mother; the child's little naughtinesses are reflexions of the more serious faults of the elders who surround him, the very elders who punish in him what they have caused. The child's bodies are a precious gift from nature, the shrine of a living Spirit, placed in your hands to help, to guide, to protect.

You have no right to allow to play upon them anything from your own lower

nature, no right to make the future life of the child more difficult and less noble, because you yield to ignoble passions and desires. You make the whole future life of that child less noble than it should be, because you are not living your highest and your best. And those elders who realize what the child is, and the tremendous responsibility of using aright the power which they wield over him, will improve themselves for the sake of their children; so that the child becomes a stimulus to parental nobility, and the father and the mother grow better and purer, as they try to guard, to help, and to guide the child. ✧

Certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes. . . . Whereas, our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already.

Plato, *Republic*, VII, 518C

Science and Spirituality in the Twenty-first Century

SAMPOORAN SINGH

The Human Failure

Human beings have been living for millions of years by coherent superpositions of subject over the object, which implies an energy exchange between different webs resulting in the distortion of both. This has led to the conditioning of the psyche, which has flowed to chaos, strife, fragmentation, duality, and so on; and to jettisoning the Reality.

The great spiritual leader, J. Krishnamurti, and the renowned physicist, David Bohm, had penetrating dialogues that shed light on fundamental issues of existence: ‘Has humanity taken a wrong turn which has brought about endless divisions, conflict and destruction?’ and ‘What needs to be done within the consciousness of man to preserve our very existence and bring out a new culture?’ J. Krishnamurti stated: ‘I have a million years of experience, and it has given me a certain capacity. And I realize at the end of it all there is no relationship between me and the truth. And that is a tremendous shock to me . . . All your examinations, all your struggles, all the things that you have

gathered through years and years, centuries, are absolutely worthless.’¹

Your reactions are shared by all humanity. Your brain is not yours, it has evolved through centuries of time. All memory is the summation of all humanity. We are the whole of humanity; we are the rest of mankind.

Words are limited, all experiences are limited. Between ‘what is’ and ‘what should be’ is time. Thought and time bring duality. Thought-time is the enemy of man. They cover a very small area. In every human being is the capacity to break through bondage, to be in the lineage of impersonal compassion. The secret is ‘observing, listening, questioning, understanding, learning and spontaneous action’ — all these words are born in non-duality. All this proves that man has utterly failed to resolve the psychological imbalances, chaos, conflict.

Krishnamurti said: ‘India has lived all these centuries on ideas. She has to move from a life based on ideas, which are non-facts, to the seeing of fact only.’² The objective science is the search for

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objective truth, it passes from *fact* to *fact*. But this living from fact to fact gives us knowledge (information), materialism and violence. The fact flows to a new model of artefact with a higher sensitivity, so the pursuit of materialism leads to the design and fabrication of artefacts for human comfort, leisure and sensitivity. Violence leads to the design of weapon systems — say, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Objective science is engaged in finding technical solutions to human challenges; which adds to human psychological imbalances. The whole of moral, spiritual, and other dimensions is normally pushed out. Objective science is leading mankind to self-annihilation.

Science with Creativity

While discussing science with creativity, Hideki Yukawa, Nobel Laureate in Physics, wrote: ‘Creativity implies discovering something that nobody has hitherto known about, or inventing something new . . . (It is) the discovery of a truth in nature unknown to man.’ Many eminent neuro-physiologists and neurosurgeons — for example, Karl Pribram, John Eccles, Roger Sperry, and Wilder Penfield — have stressed that we have to enhance our level of awareness with a view to be creative. We have to explore the field of man’s self-awareness, the field of his consciousness, his ego, his being the subject and not the object.

Only intuition can lead us to truth, and not the accumulation of non-facts. Intuition bestows creativity. Intuition is timeless perception. It is perception of the

Wholeness or Oneness of life.

Science now recognizes the truth of the immanence and the transcendent potentials of each human consciousness, and that of the divine Universal Consciousness to be the truth of the universe. If man perceives this truth, the boundaries of thought–time and the limitations of the mind–brain–body system are divorced, and one revels in a realm of Intelligence, Wisdom, Love and Compassion. The perception of *Truth* ends all pain, misery and travails, and one revels in freedom, order, harmony, non-violence and peace. This is the key to the survival and excellence of mankind along with all fauna and flora.

Spirituality

Spirituality is to understand the conditioned mind (the matter content of consciousness), and also to perceive the Unconditioned Energy; so it is the science of the wholeness of life. It aims at self-actualization of the hidden human potential. Spirituality is fundamental and objective science is a derivative. An integration of science and spirituality is the key to the survival of mankind.

Spirituality is the science of the wholeness of life. In spiritual science, the emphasis is on the act of perception, the quality of the instruments employed for perception, the quality of consciousness behind the perception. Spirituality implies an exploration of the maximum quantum energy potential of consciousness. Both Open Science and Spirituality have a non-authoritarian approach.

The Human Survival

Objective science, as it is today, does not tell us very much about the real nature of the human being. Jacques Monod, Nobel prize-winning biologist, wrote in 1972: ‘What we see opening before us today is an abyss of darkness.’³³ George Wald, Nobel prize-winner in medicine, 1967, wrote: ‘Our society has taken a wrong turn . . . By now the problem is not transcendence, but survival.’³⁴ Jonas Salk said: ‘Not only survival, but further evolution.’³⁵ P. Krishna said: ‘We are going towards self-annihilation, and not too much time is left now.’³⁶ Objective science also appears to lead us to self-annihilation.

Awareness

The state of awareness is born in the dimension of the Silence. There is choicelessness in the dimension of Awareness, which is an energy released by the non-action of the knowledge of the conditioned consciousness; there is an energy that functions without our volition. It operates without our choice. It is an energy that permeates the source of perception and response and has no relation to the willing, the volition, the choice. This is called the energy of Intelligence, and this emerges in the complexity of Cosmic Life; it is a movement in non-duality and conducted in non-duality. To be aware is choiceless. There is no choice — to be aware, and not to be aware.

Insight can only take place when there is the ending of thought–time. Insight is direct perception — without word,

without bringing any knowledge to it, without any intellectual arguments. Perception is not of time. Perception has no perceiver. Perception is *now*, the *present*. Therefore action born of perception is timeless. Awareness is timeless. There is a sense of benediction waiting, and the whole of mankind is moving towards it.

There is an immense reservoir of energy — energy in the Cosmos [pursuit of materialism for human comfort and leisure, space travel]; energy is also chaos [violence, artefacts for military machinery as WMDs] — and that is the source of Creation.

The Benediction of Timelessness

If ‘objective observation and understanding’ is carried on for a long length of time chronologically, the potential of the quantum energy of the subject of cognizance rises; there is a flow of energy from the subject to the fact, objective truth; the fact makes a quantum jump through the ‘event horizon’, and the fact is now in the inner realm which gets bombarded by the subject and is annihilated. The dimensions of the subjective realm are Science–Education–Ethics–Health.

The benediction of the timeless is waiting, the ground is ready. Can we create something — subjective research — out of this benediction? The emptiness is not lifeless. It is Passive Reality. The fact crosses the ‘event horizon’. In the symbolic–dualistic mind, everything (thought, psychological imbalances) remain within the speed of light; and in the intuitive realm, anything is faster than

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the speed of light. The speed of light is absolute; it is like a wall that no object can crash through. As we approach the wall, time slows down, mass increases and space becomes curved. It gets bombarded by the subject of cognizance and goes into abeyance. What is left behind is pure Consciousness, so there is awareness of Itself by Itself. There is the awareness of the Wholeness, the Oneness of Life.

Passive Reality is the substance of creation. The creativeness expresses itself as Active Reality. The fact or objective truth produces knowledge, materialism and violence. It is an alternative way of living, living in Emptiness.

A simple perception can result in an objective approach to all the subjective world; this objectivization of the subjective world is a tremendous world (fact, objective truth).

Hideki Yukawa wrote: '[Galileo Galilei] asked questions addressed to nature and succeeded in receiving answers directly from nature.'⁷ Herman Weyl wrote: 'I have a direct knowledge entirely different from the theoretical knowledge that represents the 'parallel' cerebral process in symbols.'⁸ An awareness of the *fact* resolves all our problems.

The Perception of Truth

Herman Weyl wrote:

Scientists would be wrong to ignore the fact that theoretical answer is not the only approach to the phenomena of life; another way, that of understanding from within

(interpretation, intuition, insight) is open to us. . . . This inner awareness of myself is the basis for the understanding of my fellow men.⁸

Ilya Prigogine agreed completely with Herman Weyl.

Voltaire wrote:

. . . everything is governed by immutable laws . . . everything is prearranged . . . everything is necessarily the effect . . . We are both equally foolish, both toys in the hands of destiny.⁹

Voltaire expressed the truth of life.

Alexander Koyre expressed the truth of life in words: 'A world in which there is place for everything, there is no place for man . . . Two worlds: this means two truths, or no truth at all.'¹⁰ This is the tragedy of the modern mind which solved the riddle of the universe, but only to replace it by another riddle: the riddle of itself.

Kothari wrote: 'The new theorems unless trivial, are of course first "discovered" and then proved. Discovery is an inspired guess, a flash of insight. It is not a step by step process, but a sort of quantum jump. A rational account of a discovery, the proof, follows and does not precede the discovery.'¹¹ He again wrote: 'Fundamental discoveries which go deep into the nature of things are the result of uncommon intuition and faith, not cold logic.'¹²

J. Krishnamurti wrote: 'Only the truth can liberate the mind from its own ideation; to see the truth, the mind must

realize the fact that as long as it is agitated, it can have no understanding.¹³ Transformation is not in the future, can never be in the future. Transformation implies: ‘Seeing the false as the false and the true as the true is transformation, because when you see something very clearly as the truth, that truth liberates.’¹³

Concluding Comment

Albert Einstein stated: ‘I do not believe we can have any freedom at all in the philosophical sense, for we act not only under external compulsions but also by inner necessity.’¹⁴ Hideki Yukawa said: ‘Man has things in him that are unknown even to himself. He still retains within him many things that he possessed before man became man. He has them whether he realizes it or not. The human emotions are closely related to these . . . Every individual has in him things that cannot be simply defined. Thus human emotions, and human happiness in turn are closely bound up with these indefinables.’¹⁵ Our daily living is nothing but a chain of reactions to the compulsions that surround us — socially, culturally, economically, politically.

Man does not have anything of his own. The brain, the memory, the inherited conditionings are shared with his predecessors. He did not weave the web of his life; he is merely a strand in it.

All great discussions have arisen from the realm of the timeless, so scientific enquiry — both objective science and subjective science — are not a cerebral activity and gathering information, but a

quest of the Timelessness, the Divinity, the Life Field. A selfless, unfaltering devotion to truth and use of knowledge for man’s upliftment — higher hierarchical expression of Consciousness — are the only vocations of a scientist.¹⁶ It appears that man is just a mechanism in the hands of the Divine, Nature.

Max Delbruck, a Nobel laureate and pioneer of molecular biology, said in 1980: ‘I think the further course of history will not be decided by further discoveries in science, but by these questions of human values.’¹⁷ Recently many eminent scientists have concluded that we cannot impart value education at the reason or intellect level.¹⁸ It is evident that the further course of history will be a quantum jump from objective science to subjective science, where subjective science deals with the wholeness or oneness of life.

Erika Erdmann and David Stover discussed: ‘We believe that our journey ahead through the turbulence of unforeseen events will succeed best if guided by the understanding that our consciousness, our species, and our biosphere form an indivisible unit. . . . The hour is late, the problems confronting us immense, and inhumane, catastrophic solutions become ever more likely the longer we delay. Our only hope lies in replacing a laissez-faire mentality with a willingness to shoulder responsibility for the future.’¹⁹ Albert Einstein wrote: ‘Nothing at all will remain but a few pitiful pages in the history books, briefly picturing to the youth of future generations the follies of its ancestors.’²⁰ ✧

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When you have trained yourself to see the pattern behind the Great Plan and its operation, then you can see the fact of the world as Will, as the Great Sacrifice, an offering of God.

C. Jinarājādāsa

Theosophical Work around the World

President's Travel

The President, Mrs Radha Burnier, visited Gujarat in the north-west of India, early in March 2012, where we have a large and enthusiastic number of members. She gave a public talk on 'Qualifications needed to live a right kind of life', where about a hundred people were present. She gave another public talk on her way back, at the city of Bangalore. It was on the same subject, but spoken spontaneously, and therefore, different. This subject is of great importance to all members at present, as we have to think hard and arrive at what is most suitable.

Adyar

A lively discussion, hosted by the Adyar Lodge, took place on 14 March in the Headquarters Hall, on the topic: 'Approaches to the dissemination of the Perennial Philosophy'. Several questions were raised by the participants, such as: Should not the TS be presenting new teachings? Should we not make the current teachings more widely known? Are other organizations that base their teachings on ours taking the credit that is due to us?

The discussion brought forth many valuable insights: Theosophy is the Perennial Philosophy; there are subtle planes other than the physical on which dissemination of the teachings has taken place and therefore, the teachings are

freely available to all; as mankind shares consciousness, it is important to have right thoughts which carry their own power; attendance at Lodge meetings influences the overall consciousness; some people may be interested in the classical teachings, inspired by HPB and the Mahatma Letters, and others may understand better through the writings of Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, C. Jinarājadāsa, N. Sri Ram, J. Krishnamurti and others. All these teachings are narrow paths leading to understanding, but when we come together at a Lodge meeting, we form a broad path, which is the aim of the Lodge.

At the physical level, we must try to be more up to date in broadcasting our teachings in modern technological ways, as well as in other ways — through pamphlets, books, CDs, DVDs, and the electronic media. Where such material is available, we could provide adequate information of its availability. We should be clear also whether a dissemination of the teachings implies publicity for the organization, the Theosophical Society.

More needs to be done; approaches to disseminating the teachings may be new; however, it remains that the teachings themselves cannot be new as the Perennial Philosophy, or Theosophy, is as old as the hills.

Discussions such as these are important and of value to all members of the TS everywhere. ✧

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