



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover Picture: Orchids at the Adyar Garden – by J. Suresh

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

A Centenary to Mark

This year, all over India and in some other places also, our members are celebrating the centenary of the publication of the text *At the Feet of the Master*. The official name given to the author was Alcyone, which is one of the stars of the sky, but of course everybody knows that it was a reference to J. Krishnamurti. It was said that when he was very young, he was taken every night to receive teachings from his Master. The book has been continually selling during this one hundred years and has meant a great deal to many readers.

E. A. Wodehouse, the brother of the famous P. G. Wodehouse, wrote as follows:

What struck us particularly was his naturalness — of any kind of side or affectation there was not a trace. He was still of a retiring nature, modest and deferential to his elders and courteous to all. To those whom he liked, moreover, he showed a kind of eager affection, which was singularly attractive. Of his ‘occult’ position he seemed to be entirely unconscious. He never alluded to it — never, for a moment, allowed the slightest hint of it to get into his speech or manner . . . Another quality was a serene

unselfishness. He seemed to be not in the least preoccupied with himself . . . We were no blind devotees, prepared to see in him nothing but perfection. We were older people, educationalists, and with some experience of youth. Had there been a trace in him of conceit or affectation, or any posing as the ‘holy child’, or a priggish self-consciousness, we would undoubtedly have given an adverse verdict.

This quality of modesty, of courtesy for all, and complete absence of pride whatsoever, the ‘serene unselfishness’ which made him see nothing important in himself remained with him for the rest of his life. He was certainly conscious of a greater power taking over when he had to give a talk and there were periods every day and night when he seemed to be in another world, but apart from this, there was no feeling of superiority in his behaviour. This feeling of unimportance remained with him like the fragrance which surrounds a beautiful flower; although he was in a position to know and become friends with very important people, he remained himself always ready to pour out his affection on anyone who responded. The Society’s driver at the time, Munuswamy, stood at a little distance when I went to see Krishnaji, but

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Krishnaji would go spontaneously up to him, take his hands in his own and pour out affection. He did this with many people who were simple and could not understand the talks he gave.

The little book *At the Feet of the Master*, though unclaimed by him, has touched the hearts of thousands of people. The language is very simple because the writer was young, and did not know English well. This was an advantage to thousands of people who came to read the book as they did not have to know difficult words and phrases in English. They could follow what he said. A few passages here and there do not sound like his, but more like those of C. W. Leadbeater. This happened because he did not know enough English, and needed help from somebody else to say what he wanted to. But it does not mean that the book was made up of what somebody else thought. Even the first paragraph conveys something of the depths at which he understood, and what was said to him.

This centenary is not like any other. It brings to those who study the book something of the great wisdom that lies behind it. It conveys to the reader the flavour of a teaching which can raise him up to the level of a devotee and adherent of truth. What more can we ask of a little booklet that anyone can read and understand.

The Nature of Teaching regarding the Path

The Mahatmas refer to their world as being different from the human world, our

world. It becomes easier for us to understand if we think of a person who has been blind from birth. He cannot see all the things that we can see, the beauty of the earth, the colours of the sky. But he still perceives sounds, smells, taste and so on, and experiences the world in a completely different way from us. There is no way of conveying to him the experiences which we go through because we have eyesight. Similarly, we can take examples from various creatures, animals, birds and so on which live in their own world. In that world there is very little reasoning, and all the experiences which have to do with reasoning in human life have no meaning for them.

The human being receives affection from them, but they cannot understand human experience. The human being, similarly, cannot understand them wholly, because they live by instinct, which is a different kind of awareness from reasoning. By analogy we can try to understand that there may be people who lead a life which is very different from ours. Their world is not the same as our world, because what is essential and vital in their world is not important to us; and what seems important to us has little relevance to the world in which they live.

In the human world, time is very important; in the modern world, much more than in the ancient world. All our organizations and institutions depend on time to function. If human beings were not conscious of time, these organizations would collapse. But that is at the outer level. This illusion of time makes us

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psychologically face the world in a certain way. The first rule in *Light on the Path* is 'Kill out ambition'. Ambition exists because we are under the control of time. Ambition is the desire for achievement; to get something done within a certain time.

Everything in nature grows, exists and dies according to the dictates of Nature. A child is born and you do not have to do anything about it growing. You plant a seed and if the conditions are right it sprouts, becomes a little seedling, then maybe a big tree, bearing flowers and fruit. All this happens by itself.

Numerous examples can be given of how expansion takes place, not only through physical growth, but the growth of faculties.

Each human being has extraordinary faculties, not only the faculty of reasoning, but the faculties which awaken the sense of beauty, make him aware of peace, and so on. Now these faculties have grown into the human consciousness by themselves. We may not accept that growth, expansion and all that is connected with them. But, because of the sense of time, we feel that within our particular lifetime, we must reach somewhere or achieve something.

Time is illusion. It passes differently if you are happy, or in distress. If you are standing in a queue, the time passes very slowly. If you have reached the top of the queue, then it does not go so slowly. So, this has something to do with our desire. If you are at the back of the queue you want very badly to be in front; and time

goes very slowly. But if you are at the top of the queue, then you are not conscious that it is going so slowly.

This was perhaps why Krishnamurti made such a statement as 'Desire is time.' Ambition is a kind of desire, intense desire. It produces all kinds of difficulties in relationships. The wars that have taken place in the world and caused misery for millions of people, are the products of ambition in the human mind. Ambition makes people to want more and more things to satisfy them. We may be ambitious to derive spiritual satisfaction, or intellectual satisfaction apart from sensory satisfaction. But it is all the same thing.

It is caused by the desire of achievement in this lifetime, or within one part of a lifetime. Now animals do not have ambition, because they have no time sense. Unlike human beings, they live freely and spontaneously and they do not feel the need for other animals to recognize that they have gone ahead more than their friends. But the ambitious human being wants the whole world to know that he has done better than others. Part of the satisfaction that ambition gives is comparing oneself with everybody else. I have run faster than everybody else and I have got the Olympic gold medal. But the animal runs fast, unconsciously, not trying to impress anybody else. Competition in this world is the source of enormous evil.

In one of the essays of Madame Blavatsky, found in the booklet *Practical Occultism*, she points out how competition in the modern world is evil. This is part of

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the world in which the illusion of time is strong. Ambition, desire, achievement, all these are expressive of the human mind being under the illusion of time. But in the Master's world, this sense of time does not oppress any of Them. The Masters know how to wait for things to grow according to the flow of Nature.

Sometimes people ask: Why do they not intervene, and put things right? Can they not remove quickly some of the bad characteristics in the human being? This is like saying, why is the small plant not a big tree? If we are not thinking in terms of time, we will just be watching the plant growing into a tree. We will realize that what we call a bad man will slowly become a good man, and we do not have to force him, model him, change him, and

do all those things that human beings want to do. So what we call patience is one of the great characteristics which prevails in the world of light, which is the Master's world.

They know what has happened, and what will happen, because everything already exists in eternity. We are imprisoned in time, psychologically, but They live in the eternal. In *Light on the Path* this contrast between that world of light and the world of illusion has been repeatedly pointed out: Four times we are told, 'Live in the Eternal.' And from that eternal point of view all the activities, particularly the psychological changes and attitudes which exist in the human being and are based on time, are false. That is why it is māyā. ✧

Of all the qualifications, Love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest, and all the rest without it would never be sufficient. Often it is translated as an intense desire for liberation from the round of births and deaths, and for union with God. But to put it in that way sounds selfish, and gives only part of the meaning. It is not so much desire as *will*, resolve, determination. To produce its result, this resolve must fill your whole nature, so as to leave no room for any other feeling. It is indeed the will to be one with God, not in order that you may escape from weariness and suffering, but in order that because of your deep love for Him you may act with Him and as He does. Because He is Love, you, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love also.

J. Krishnamurti (Alcyone)
At the Feet of the Master

The Great Flight

CARIN CITROEN

LIVING near the river, I often see flocks of birds rising up from the water and flying from one end of the stream to the other, where all of them, suddenly, as by soundless command, turn around and fly back again. How beautiful and what great order, because none of these birds on turning back fly into each other. Moreover, it is interesting to watch how one particular species of waterbird changes colour after making their U-turn, as when flying in one direction the dominant colour is white, while on the way back it is grey. This colour change depends of course on the side of the bird which is exposed to one's view, for the tops of their wings are mainly grey, while underneath, the wings as well as the bodies are mostly white. An added charm to the sight is the shimmering reflection of their graceful movement on the water. There is a well-known adage, 'birds of a feather flock together'. In the literal sense it means that only the same species of birds will gather and migrate together, and, indeed, I have never seen a mixed group.

Every year when the birds are migrating either to their summerland or their winter abode, the first indication of

the event is when a few birds of a particular species start to circle around while calling out, thus attracting the attention of more and more birds of the same type, who respond by joining the slow moving circle. The roll-call may go on for a while, until after a day or so a great group of birds takes to the air. It is wonderful how without previous discussion or arguments, or committee meetings, the circle unfolds itself into a flight pattern, which is often, if not always a V formation, with the vertex of the V at the front, and its two lines stretching backwards. The point of the V consists of two rows of birds, one flying directly behind the other. These are the strongest birds of the flock which have taken it upon themselves to cleave the air and withstand the headwinds which can be at times very powerful and sharp. When after a certain time the birds flying in the front row of the arrow get tired, they fall back, while the birds flying in the same formation directly behind them will come forward to replace their tired kith and kin, who now take to flying in the second row of the arrow. The other birds of that flock follow behind, but remain well within the wake of the formation, thus forming the

Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, November 1998. **Miss Carin Citroen**, who passed away recently, was a devoted naturalist and worked at Adyar for many years.

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tail-end. They will not come forward to share the burden of the air-cleavers, for the simple reason that they are not capable of doing so, as they are either too old, too weak or too young, and thus totally dependent on the strength and the aerodynamics caused by the flapping of those powerful wings in front of them, which create a kind of undulating effect in the air, by which the infirm are buoyed up, nay, almost carried to their destination.

Interestingly, one day, these young birds will simply take their place in the arrowhead, not because they have been so enjoined, but because they know that they can do it. Such sensitive examples revealed by Nature cannot but attract one's attention, and by pondering about their correlation with the human kingdom, there follows inevitably an in-depth enquiry about the purpose of our life, our destiny, our relationships and modes of service. Nature is full of these wonderful mysteries of which we really know so little. But through observation, and above all, interest, we can sense that great agency which actually ensouls the many forms of life, and although we cannot gaze into His face, we can gaze upon His handiwork.

Now, the extraordinary way the birds support each other on their migratory track, as well as in their flight pattern, is simply referred to as 'instinct', whereas in the human kingdom such organized action would be called responsibility. This different evaluation arises from the fact that birds being purely creatures of Nature have no *self*-consciousness but are totally integrated in the consciousness of their flock. The same thing is true among

animals who, as C. W. Leadbeater pointed out, have also a group consciousness. Man, on the other hand, is *self*-conscious, and having developed a rather self-centred outlook on life — 'I' and the 'others' — does not feel himself at all one with the rest of his species. Long, long ago, there was not all that much difference between the animal groups and tribals. Both had their own strict laws. And if there was a fight among tribals, it was a fight from man to man, using animal traits to intimidate each other, such as the use of warpaint to frighten the other party, feathers on the head to gain greater height, and above all the deafening war cry. All that is long past now, and God forbid that we should have to experience another world war, where the aggressor most probably will not be seen at all due to the use of long-distance missiles or laser beams, and where thousands or millions of innocent creatures, including humans who have nothing to do with the war, a thousand miles or more away, will 'accidentally' be killed because of a *slight* miscalculation at the firing range or malfunctioning projectiles, and so forth. How does the word 'responsibility' fit into this picture?

Man has grown extremely clever, but due to his self-centred lifestyle the great beneficial influence which such a highly developed brain could have bestowed on his less developed, poorer and weaker brothers and sisters in life is corrupted, overshadowed, polluted and almost stifled by the wholesale destructiveness of his overpowering greed, the dire consequences of which we are presently experiencing: the rivers are polluted with

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chemical waste and fish are dying; the sea is often a dumping ground for nuclear waste and is heavily overfished by dragnets, and now fish becoming scarcer science has developed a system by which deep-sea fish can be located and scooped up. The deforestation of the earth to obtain wood and oil has caused erosion of the soil in many countries, while the animals are driven from their habitat and often killed for food, and the human forest-dwellers who have for ages lived on the produce of the forest, are either killed, because these so-called 'stupid' things are in the way, or put on a piece of land where they will slowly die because they do not know how to cultivate it. Then poisons which have been used for years in pesticides have now seeped through the soil and are poisoning the village wells causing people to die slowly; air pollution by petrol emissions from cars, motorcycles and aeroplanes is threatening human health; and the so-called scientific way of animal husbandry crates animals from almost the day they are born, so that they cannot move nor lie down, in order to produce tender meat called veal — much in demand in the western countries — while others are poked and needled to give more and more milk, by which treatment their udders get so enlarged that both standing and lying down is very painful; chicken are caged up night and day with bright lights burning over them so that they may lay more and more eggs; all this and much more is going on and growing worse day by day.

This ruthless onslaught and desecration

of life in all forms is caused by — as we just mentioned — the biggest pollutant of them all, human greed. It was human thought which produced the branch of knowledge called Science, and we can clearly see for ourselves the havoc which the advancement of technology causes. 'The greatest of man's achievements seem to make his ruin more certain and more complete' were words uttered years ago by the Bishop of Ripon, who must have sensed the impending catastrophe because of the widening gap between the spiritual and the materialistic life of man. Scientists, generally speaking, emphasize the importance of material things, except in cases where the researcher happens to be also a man of spiritual depth.

Perhaps some may think that this description of our period is a bit too gloomy. A prophecy of the *Vishnu Purāna* in a nutshell may be apt:

In those days will be reigning over the earth Kings of churlish spirit . . . they will be of limited power, and will often rapidly rise and fall; their lives will be short, their desires insatiable, and they will display but little piety . . . [one can replace the word king of course by presidents, prime ministers, political parties, etc.] . . . the world will be wholly depraved . . . wealth alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood the only means of success in litigation; and women, objects merely of sensual gratification. The Brāhman thread will alone constitute the Brāhman; dishonesty will be the universal means of

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success; impudence and presumption will be substituted for learning; . . . fine clothes will be dignity, and among all castes [we can read here 'among all countries'], he who is strongest will reign over the earth.

An old issue of *Lucifer* carries this prophecy with a footnote of Mme Blavatsky: 'The Purāna-s are surely pre-Christian and this period of Kali Yuga applies most evidently to our time.'

We will never be able to come closer to life and truly experience it more intimately unless we open ourselves to it, which means that we cannot harbour greed, self-importance, likes, dislikes, prejudices and so on, because that distorts all perspectives. Therefore, those who are seriously wanting a change, and searching for a deeper meaning or reality, because they have experienced the emptiness, pretence of the worldly life and the cruelty in its patterns of behaviour, may have to make a complete break in the way they live by turning their attention from the outer to the inner life.

A new beginning in life demands courage, endurance, but above all humility, so that we will not be so silly as to pride ourselves or feel superior to others when we have been able to introduce some small beneficial changes here and there to relieve suffering, because that pride would destroy everything. Courage and humility are like two sides of the same coin, because a truly humble person is one who has distanced himself a great deal from his little self, his self-importance, and thus has come very close to life. Similarly, the man of real courage is usually not — as

generally assumed — a bold and brazen individual, but one unconscious of that virtue until it is put to the test. Then, on the spur of the moment he plunges into great danger to save others. Such a person has also distanced himself from his puny little ego. Of course, all virtues are in some way related to each other, but LOVE is the greatest.

As long as man is confined by his physical structure and senses, including the brain, he is earthbound, although it is precisely these that make him aware of his relatedness to Nature. And if that awareness deepens through man's inward search for truth or reality, he will ultimately be able to free himself from sense-bondage. Only then will he discover that great reality called LIFE, that great symphony to which *all* living things orchestrate. Finally, with the growing awareness of relatedness and man's ever widening perception of the oneness of life, man's responsibility will gradually develop, and in due course he will be transmuted and integrated into that life stream. However, to fit ourselves for that integration, how much have we to prepare, purify and mould ourselves. That naturally will take a long, long time. A nice little quatrain runs:

Before we build, we have to lay
Foundations in the stubborn clay,
And spend ourselves for many a day
On work that never shows.

Surely, that work which we call preparation will show itself but not immediately.

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This little quatrain evokes to mind a bas-relief in one of the very ancient temples in Egypt. God Khoom sits behind his potter's wheel shaping out clay vessels, an act into which he, as a true artist, pours forth something of himself. Khoom was called the fashioner of man. This striking picture represents on the one hand the Deity or Divine essence imprisoning itself in matter — the great sacrifice — and on the other hand man, the dual aspect of a creature of clay with divinity embedded in him — a frail graft indeed — but with the promise of a truly glorious future if it can withstand its innumerable trials and tribulations. And those are absolutely necessary for man's spiritual growth.

Thomas Mann concurs:

Time works for all of us, if only we will allow it to do its work of moulding and raising opposites to a higher unity, *and* if we will make it fruitful by working on ourselves. Time is a precious gift handed to us, that in it we may become wiser, better, riper, more nearly perfect. A man who has lived his fourscore years here below, knows something about time and the patience that makes time bear fruit.
TIME IS GRACE.

So, all caution us that the process of transformation will take a long time. A tumbling-barrel is one in which one puts rough gemstones and a little water. Then, with the help of a small electrical gadget one makes the barrel go round and round. The time it has to tumble depends on the roughness of the stones. When all the sharp corners have been knocked off,

when the gems get polished by the friction, the stones begin to shine. Similarly, Grace or any other spiritual quality deeply embedded in an individual, no matter how coarse the exterior, will begin to shine out in time after many hard knocks in successive lives. True Grace cannot be cultivated like manners, which are all too often superficial — like a poor veneer — and come off with the slightest scrape to show up a raw cast underneath. The growth of Grace may be helped somewhat by environment, upbringing or culture; however, it is more likely to be a maturing process of something learned in former lives brought to bloom by the bearer. In a permissive society the development of Grace is stifled at birth, as it cannot thrive in a life given over to self-indulgence — in a world of takers and snatchers! — because its very character is unconstrained goodwill, and it radiates a beautiful and harmonious influence over its surroundings. It is giving without thought for self. The Grace of Time is also giving — we are given time to accomplish, prepare and forget.

Many teachers, both ancient and modern, have spoken of this 'inner nobility that is hidden in the ground of the soul', others again said that 'Grace is the life of the soul and brings it about that man is one with God', actually 'lives and acts in Him'. We members of this Society, often refer to the spark within and have come to know through our studies that whenever even a single soul awakes to its true nature, the light is quickened in other souls and creative forces are released

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which help those in sympathy with it. The spiritually awake are like flowers which spread their delicate perfume in the air for every passer-by to inhale and enjoy. But a spiritually awake individual stimulates the atmosphere even more, actually brightens the spark within. This lighting up of that little spark within us holds great promise for further development, or the growing of our wings for the great flight. Tauler, a Christian mystic (1300–61), refers to this spark ‘that flies up to the height where is its home, so that the intellect cannot follow it, for it has no rest until it returns once more to the Ground from which it flowed out, where it was in its uncreatedness’.

Hidden within our own breast ‘smaller than the smallest atom, greater than the greatest space’, according to the *Katha Upanishad*, is the root and flower of our Being. Here is our Divine source and timeless essence which inspired us and urges us on to our rebirth into a new life, a spiritual life. But what does it mean to be born into a *new* life?

According to Annie Besant, ‘sacrifice is printed on the Universe in which we live’; therefore it is an old occult law that, as the Divine give — remember Khoom pouring himself out — so they demand that we ourselves also shall give. An aspirant cannot ‘ask’ — in its true mystic sense — until he has attained the power to help others or all life. Moreover, he who wants to relieve suffering in the world must expect to suffer himself. Recognizing that suffering will be beneficial for the work he has undertaken, he

will accept it bravely and allow the fire of suffering to consume the dross of his nature. And thus purified, he will become an even more useful tool for the great work.

In sum, a spark of the Divine, originally free and happy in its essence, lost that freedom and happiness since ‘its fall into matter’. The ‘fall into matter’ refers to the journey of the Divine essence through involution and evolution, in order to evolve finally as highly developed human beings, and even greater beings, until one day perhaps these beings having developed far beyond our physical comprehension may merge again into the ‘Divine’, adding their strength, compassion, love and wisdom to the great Universal Force. A Vedic hymn says:

O Agni, Holy Fire! Purifying Fire! You who sleep in the wood, and ascend in shining flames on the altar, you are the heart of sacrifice, the fearless wings of . . . the divine spark hidden in everything and the glorious soul of the sun!

To earn our wings for that great flight, we have to go through the shining flames upon the altar of sacrifice, as all impurities have to be removed, however painful that may be. Blake called it ‘dying in the divine image’. The physical body will always resist this sacrifice, but that is only natural. However, we learnt that ‘Time is Grace’, and according to the Gospel of Hermes, the great Egyptian Teacher:

Though it is a gift of grace and cannot be induced at will, yet those who have learned to smoothe its way can help this ecstasy

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to manifest. By intense concentration on the God within, the Immanuel, with a vivid aspiration to merge into that eternal Reality we have so inadequately called God, the pure man can break out of the body and in a soaring rapture, a 'flight of the spirit' pass straight into union with That which is the All in all.

Unlike the birds, man spreads his inner wings and flies alone, relying on his own strength, faith, endurance and direction; accompanied by none, encouraged by none and seen by none, he gives himself in total renunciation.

This is the Great Flight of the Alone to the Alone. ✧

When the soul becomes freed from everything external and is united with prayer, then prayer like a flame envelops it, as fire envelops iron and makes it all fiery. Then the soul, though still the same soul, like red hot iron, can no longer be touched by anything external. . . . Blessed is the man who, while still in this life, has been granted this appearance and who himself sees his image, perishable by nature, become fiery through grace.

St Elias Ekdikos

Self-Becoming

BEVERLEY CHAMPION

AS members of the Theosophical Society with its aim to foster Brotherhood, we are aware that any endeavour towards achieving this high ideal can only be realized through individual effort on the personal journey of *Self-Becoming*, which is the process whereby we earn our own spiritual progress.

In *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. I), H. P. Blavatsky, commenting on Stanza Six, says:

Born in the unfathomable depths of Space, out of the homogenous Element called the World-Soul, every nucleus of cosmic matter, suddenly launched into being, begins life under the most hostile circumstances. Through a series of countless ages, it has to conquer for itself, a place in the infinitudes.

Our Third Fundamental Proposition affirms the obligatory pilgrimage through the Cycle of Necessity, making our pilgrimage dependent upon self-induced and self-devised effort with no special privileges or special gifts save those won through personal effort and merit. We read in *The Mahatma Letters* that even an Adept 'becomes, he is not made'. That

title must be earned.

So what is it which we must each unfold for ourselves? To unfold something implies that we already possess it as a latent faculty but need to unlock it. Of course, we would prefer someone to tell us how actually to do it, but in reality that is not possible. Another person can only skirt around the periphery, talking about the subject, whereas the realization of individual potential is a personal endeavour.

Theosophical writings tell us that living beings are in a constant state of (metaphysical) motion and that such 'self-movingness' constitutes the very essence of life. Constant, perpetual motion is an Occult Law of progressive development.

Geoffrey Barborka suggests in *The Divine Plan* that this teaching of essential identity is the Law of Evolution, but the original meaning of the word 'evolution' has unfortunately lost its primal significance and has become much associated with the form side of beings, the vehicle aspect which the Spiritual Monad must don for purposes of manifestation in the earthly sphere. He goes on to say that the use of the word 'evolution' no longer expresses the unrolling of the potencies

Mrs Beverley Champion is a member of the Adelaide Lodge and former General Secretary of the Australian Section of the TS.

Self-Becoming

of a being's inherent selfhood. He explains that the word 'evolution' comes from the Latin word 'volvere' which means to turn or to roll out; in other words, to unfold as a blossom unfolds the potencies wrapped up within the bud. It is the Great Mystery and is the eternal, uncreated energy which impels every entity to express itself by means of Self-unfolding.

Barborka quotes *The Secret Doctrine*: that the specific keynote to understanding this Self-becoming, is contained within the Sanskrit word *svabhāva*, a compound of *sva*, meaning Self, and *bhāva* meaning being, or state of being. He gives the dictionary meaning as 'own state of being; innate disposition; inherent spontaneity; inherent nature; innate impulse'. He also suggests that all of these express the idea that it is an inherent urge of the entity to express itself in its *own* characteristic, hence its essential identity — a potency impelling the entity to pursue this Self-becoming. 'This law pertains to all kingdoms of Nature, thus the blossom of the rose displays the characteristics of a rose and not a violet. Similarly each acorn possesses the possibility of growing into an oak tree.'

We just take for granted this great mystery that tiny seeds should have such potency wrapped up within their casing, the seed obeying an inner impulse of Self-becoming. This is of course a Karmic Law. Every cause produces an effect and every effect generates yet another cause and so on and so on.

Where humans are concerned, this

process is the learning part of Self-becoming and is also the path to the eventual understanding that we are each responsible for our thoughts, speech and actions. We are the only level of manifestation in this world that has the freedom to choose our own path, to use our Self-consciousness. This is what defines us as human and needs to be considered when exploring the journey of Self-becoming.

It is at the level of Manas or Mind that we have the capacity for self-reflective thought, the ability to examine fully the dual aspect of Mind and to understand fully the functions of the outward turning, lower desire mind and the inward turning Higher Mind aspiring towards Buddhi, the seat of all love, wisdom and creativity. This is not to devalue the so-called lower mind, so necessary if we are to function in the physical world, but to dwell always at that lower level is to cut ourselves off from the real transformation of our consciousness, to separate ourselves from our true potential.

This is the splendid vision for humanity, the vision of what we *may* become, but it necessitates an understanding of what we already are! This splendid vision can only be attained by self-effort. In the wise words of Jonathan Livingston Seagull, 'We can lift ourselves, we can be free, we can learn to fly!'

All of this effort to transform our own consciousness is not, of course, for ourselves, but is altruistically for the benefit of the whole life-wave. The challenge is to understand that, through our own humanness, we can bring about the

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transformation, not only of ourself, but if enough of us try, we can also change the world.

In Letter 120 of *The Mahatma Letters* we read:

The only object to be striven for is the amelioration of the condition of man by the spread of Truth suited to the various stages of his development and that of the country he inhabits. Truth has no earmark and does not suffer from the name under which it is promulgated if the said object is attained.

In Letter 126 we are told by the Adept:

Our knowledge and science cannot be pursued altogether on the Baconian methods. We are not permitted, come what may, to offer it as a remedy against, or to cure people from suspicion. They have to earn it for themselves and he who will not find our truths in his soul and within himself, has poor chances of success in Occultism.

We know that our souls are continually urging us to live in harmony, not only with other humans, but also with our environment; but our personality, the vehicle for the soul, has other ideas and if, as we are told, the soul is responsible for the antics of its personality, then no wonder we hear the term 'a poor soul'. In today's material world there is much truth in the saying that 'Man is a seeker after the greatest degree of comfort for the least necessary expenditure of energy'. We do like our comfort and many would say, why not, but let us not forget that it is at the

level of the material vehicle where our work of self-transformation really begins. Any progress towards Self-Realization, however, depends on a much deeper spiritual motive.

We often hear it said that our souls are a music, of which our bodies are the instruments, and that the music exists without the instrument but it cannot make itself heard without a material intermediary. Annie Besant encouraged us to strive for excellence and said that we can be a Paganini violin or a cheap and cracked fiddle.

Some other encouraging words to assist us in our journey of Self-becoming are to be found in *Man, the Measure of All Things*:

He who experiences the whole is Man. Cosmogony is Man writ large upon the heavens. Its truth is in his heart. We do not speak of such potential men as we are now, though even we, alone among all beings, have in our hearts the power to grasp the cosmos in our fists, to fuse again the mass of scattered splendour into a gleaming pearl within the heart.

On our journey of Self-becoming we are continuously transforming our consciousness towards embracing the unitary oneness of all Nature. Consider the marked difference between the seasons of Winter and Summer, and then consider that it is Spring which is the transition from the one to the other. Spring is the awakening of new life — a new consciousness. Spring is Nature demonstrating a response to an inner urge to become.

Self-Becoming

HPB reminded us that there is a power behind the Theosophical Society which will give us the strength we need, which will enable us to move the world if we will but unite and work as one mind, one heart. As members, we are challenged with the idea that it is far better to have friendly division than forced unity. Perhaps the future development of humanity is not so much our 'aim' but rather 'that which is our destiny'. We understand that evolution will continue despite our human behaviour at any one stage, but real progress towards a harmonious world can only be quickened by individual effort.

We can assist by promoting a much better understanding of the Universal Laws which govern that progress towards the unfoldment of more and more consciousness. The term Universal Brotherhood is not an idle phrase. The Theosophical Society was an experiment to help foster

Brotherhood but also to help change the consciousness of humanity.

HPB in *The Collected Writings* (vol. XIII) had this to say:

One Eternal Truth and One Infinite, Changeless Spirit of Love, Truth and Wisdom in the Universe, as one Light for all in which we live and move and have our being . . . we are all Brothers. Let us then love, help and mutually defend each other against any spirit of untruth or deception, without distinction of race, creed or colour.

That was written in 1887, but still holds true as a beacon for the way we conduct ourselves today.

There may be only one spiritual path, but each person who attempts it walks with his unique, inherent motion of going forward, and each one leaves his own unique imprint. ✧

A man once asked the Prophet what was the best thing in Islam, and the latter replied, 'It is to feed the hungry and to give the greeting of peace both to those one knows and to those one does not know.'

Hadith of Bukhari

Not for himself but for others

C. A. SHINDE

WHEN we speak about steps on the path we need to look for a radical change in the human mind. It is an illusion that we can take ten steps at once, but it is vision that we can take only one important step — the next one. J. Krishnamurti stated: *The first step is the last step*. But that first step needs to be taken with a clear perception, or in HPB's words it comes with an unveiled spiritual perception; then we can comprehend his statement — because that act of perception is also the last step. The Master states that the most important qualification on the spiritual path is LOVE (*At the Feet of the Master*). In order to qualify accordingly, the aspirant has to learn to be selfless, to accept willingly the life of Service.

Then he has to learn to unite himself spiritually with all living beings, forgetting himself, and it is this unselfishness that makes a magnetic connection between soul and soul.

Then with ability gained on the path, he has to learn to uplift spiritually all others from that stage of evolution which they have reached. He exists 'not for himself but for others'.

A revolution in one's outlook is needed

and this can happen only when one learns to give up one's attitude of self-importance. Self-importance has become the dominating set of mind which needs to be dealt with, and that should be the first concern of the aspirant on the path.

If we give serious thought to this, then we may come to realize that this attitude of self-importance has reference only to memory; it is a continuing memory, of becoming something, that is the cause of self-importance. For instance, 'My father was so-and-so officer, then how can I be less than that?' Without that I am nothing. 'We are that to which we are attached' — a name, an idea, and that is the trouble with us. But what I am now is *important*. What am I now? This is an important step on the path; because *the easiest thing is to advise but the most difficult thing is to know oneself*. We must begin from where we are, without any ego or without any conflict to learn one's real nature.

This journey starts with doubt and the eager intellect to ask questions, not to others but to oneself. One may start with self-dialogue, because unfolding is a natural process and it starts with asking a number of questions like: What have

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I done all these years? What am I doing now? Has my life been useful to anyone — either to society, or to myself? Why do all these relationships in life seem so disharmonious?

We have asked such questions before but now on the path we have to ask the same questions in a different way, not just because we are discontented but to get at the facts. There is something holistic about facts, because facts are reality. So by asking questions or dialoguing with oneself the outlook is changed and the purpose is to find out the truth, reality. In this respect, Theosophical literature may help, because it makes us clear. For example when we study the book *At the Feet of Master* or *Man and His Bodies* it makes clear to us that man himself builds his own bodies. Either he makes them beautiful or ugly, strong or weak, as he passes through one life after another. The outlook is changed; then there is more seriousness, more spirituality and a more meditative approach, and the journey from the particular to the general and from the general to the spiritual starts.

Spirituality is to see goodness in all. Mind is beyond matter, enlightenment is beyond the mind, and goodness is beyond enlightenment. Enlightenment is to see divinity within everyone, and that is spirituality. J. Krishnamurti says: If you are really treading the path like a strong man you do not need external things. What we need is to find out the Divinity within each one of us. *Every one has it*. It is hidden. It only needs to be awakened. In fact, it is eager to be awakened, but

unfortunately, we do not give it a chance.

For all this, control of the mind is important. Control of the mind means starting with not losing the temper, no anger, no impatience. It is a scientific truth now that control of the mind means to slow down thoughts. If our thoughts are slowed down through the nerves it keeps the mind calm, and it is not irritated or agitated. Slowing down thought is important, and therefore Taoists gave much importance to contemplation. In Taoism it is said: If you study and discuss for fifteen minutes then you need to contemplate for thirty minutes and meditate for one hour. It is because sensation establishes what is actually given that we need to be aware of sensation. Our thinking enables us to recognize its meaning, so we need to learn to think systematically. Our feelings tell us its value so we need to give importance to what our heart feels. Our intuition points to possibilities that lie within immediate fact, to see what is, so we need to develop this intuitive mind; and for all this, profound reflection is needed. To exist for others — that means to lead a life of service.

The first step in service these days consists in learning to be a patient and sympathetic listener — at home, in the office, or on a train or bus journey. *The Voice of the Silence* asks us to attune our mind and heart to humanity's great pain. Let us first learn to attune ourselves to the pain of family members and neighbours and then to humanity at large — because to serve is to help. Could we possibly be

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of help when we think only of our rights and not responsibilities? From moment to moment we have a chance to do selfless service, like in helping the sick, the lonely, a neglected person. NGOs are doing these: 1. caring for stray dogs 2. carrying accident victims free of cost to the hospital 3. caring for old people 4. rehabilitating drug addicts, and so on. I have heard of a woman from a middle class family who visits a nearby hospital everyday with six dozen bananas and remains there for an hour, distributing them to the pregnant women from the poor sections of society. This is all done in the spirit of service.

He who is on the path really exists for others. He must remember that to live and let live is all right but on the path he must also realize the web of life that makes him go one step forward: Let live to live. Then only will the aspirant on the path be able to think of the awful slaughter and heartless cruelty — and be moved by the nightmare of superstition which is a mighty evil. Resolve to live for others and determine not to buy products tested on animals, because they are treated in such a manner that they are subjected to a lifetime in hell, to intense pain and suffering . . . and that too to safeguard man.

Then he will say ‘no’ to leather products because he sees that buffalo calves which are unwanted are skinned alive for soft calf leather. Rabbits are beheaded for their fur, crocodiles are bred, reared and killed for their skin. Seeing all this, how can he use leather products?

The aspirant on the path becomes sensitive and realizes the mighty evil, and

comes to the understanding that we all belong to one big family. It includes all that exists on earth — and we all have an equal right to be happy. It is important to realize this truth for one who is on the path. Then only can he comprehend the meaning of the statement: He who is on the path exists not for himself but for others.

An emerging global ethics acknowledges the enormous complexity of our planet, the Life of our planet and our culture. Although we know a little and predict global warming and its effects, it must also include, however, an attempt to understand how to be wise in order to have ecological balance.

A scientific paper published last year says that toads were able to detect an impending earthquake and gave warning that saved the lives of many thousand people in Italy. Toads can detect changes such as the release of gases and charged particles that *foretell* an earthquake. So if the biosphere is incredibly creative, it is also incredibly complex: we know so little of the universe. That kind of humility is wise to inculcate as a human value if we want to tread the path. The emerging global ethics needs to include the view of respect to all of life and the planet. This biosphere is a protective cover like an eggshell. All of us are being incubated by Mother Earth under the one umbrella of our biosphere — which is a scientific fact but very few know this.

Live to benefit mankind — the first step

Whatever benefit we get in leading a

Not for himself but for others

clean life is not for the good of us only but for the benefit of others, not only through knowledge but also as a service. To live to benefit mankind does not require great outward contributions to humanity. It does not require asceticism or constant self-mortification. There is no need to put oneself down or to put oneself up. Annie Besant says as this ideal begins to rule, the sense of true solidarity will arise. Much more importantly it requires restraint of personal thought and emotions. We must become aware of the fact that we have been polluting the mental atmosphere by our frequent bursts of anger, by fits of depression, anxiety, worry and undue excitement. By our negative emotions, by our hatred and greed, we individually as well as collectively are partly responsible for terrorism.

To live to benefit mankind is not so much a question of one's occupation, but rather an attitude of mankind. It starts with fulfilling our obligations such as obligations towards parents, i.e. to look after aged parents; obligation to environment, thinking seriously about harmlessness.

All this requires an unshakable willingness to sacrifice one's own personal comforts and preferences which usually violate the common good.

A hint is given in *At the Feet of the Master* that as particular human beings we are tools or pens in the hand of the Master. Our duty is to have noble thoughts. Remembering that, we need to be very careful about thoughts. Our repeated thought becomes our attitude, and

if we are really concerned about bringing a radical change in the human mind, it would be by giving up our attitude of self-importance, which is a dominating state of mind. We need to detect the defects in ourselves and try to eliminate them. There is goodness and nobleness in every soul and we must try to find these out and focus on a radical change in our outlook.

This is possible if we are aware. Division, separation, duality — all these exist, as long as the intention of living is to make use of others. One needs to question oneself whether one wants to live with others or wants to make use of them. If we want to live with others around us, then there is no dualism, but if we want to make use of them, there will be not only dualism but also separation, conflict, comparison, competition, and ultimately destruction. He who is on the path must deal with this first, because with this ability he learns to uplift all others spiritually.

In the light of intuition he teaches us to live for others, and for this ability, one must know what one is and not what one wants to be. If we are really serious and start contemplating our own intention, perhaps we might notice that most of the time it is to make use of ourselves and also to make use of the other. But we must ask seriously: are we making use of ourselves rightly or doing something else?

An aspirant who is on the path gets flashes of intuition and insight. He starts looking at Nature. As human beings, everybody has this ability. When we observe a beautiful bird flying from tree to tree, or a very small but shining sunbird

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trying to get the nectar from a flower, in that observation we see perfection. In that moment of observation, there comes in a flash, a revelation of that which is — a revelation of unity or non-duality. That is truth. It is the observation and inference of something beyond. But when we look at the world of men, there is only competition, comparison, condemnation. Surely it is in the man-made world that there are only problems, because one sees only duality and not unity. *Love is the only solution.* We speak about love which is conventional, and this is not true love. Krishnamurti says: Love is the most important qualification for a teacher. He who has forgotten his childhood and lost sympathy with children is not fit to be a teacher, because children are very eager to learn and he has no right to shun their eagerness. The awakening of intelligence

is the real purpose of education. And intelligence, highly awakened, is intuition, the true guide in life that teaches us to live a life not for ourselves but for others. So I would like to put before you the inspiring thoughts of the *Tao Te Ching*, which may help us to exist on the path for others.

Be humble and you will remain Entire.
Be bent and you will remain Straight.
Be vacant and you will remain Full.
Be worn and you will remain New.

This must be our lifestyle — with humbleness, with Love towards all. With love there comes beautiful self-control. Pure love means no personal gratification, but renunciation of all that is personal. So on the path, one exists not for oneself but for others, which is the life of service that includes three levels — Help at the physical level, Love at the emotional level and Upliftment at the spiritual level. ✧

OFFICIAL NOTICE CONVENTION 2010

In accordance with Rule 46 of the Rules and Regulations of the Theosophical Society, the Executive Committee has determined that the 135th international Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the international Headquarters, Adyar, Chennai, India, from 26 to 31 December 2010.

Mrs Kusum Satapathy
International Secretary

Taijasa Awareness Meditation

PABLO D. SENDER

THERE is an approach to meditation that encourages the development of a choiceless awareness rather than the use of any process of thought such as analysis, visualization, repetition of mantram-s, etc. This awareness meditation was held in high esteem by J. Krishnamurti as well as by different spiritual traditions. We find it, with variations, in several schools of Buddhism — like Vipassana in Theravāda, Dzogchen and Mahāmudra in Tibetan Buddhism, and Shikantaza in Zen — and in other traditions like Vedānta, Taoism, etc. This practice is frequently considered to be among the more transcendental.

Why is this meditation so highly regarded by different traditions? What happens in our consciousness when we are in a state of awareness? Using the detailed Theosophical teachings regarding the human constitution and the processes of consciousness, we will explore these questions and the theosophical approach to awareness meditation.

Our Spiritual Nature and Its Evolution

The highest Principle in human beings, *ātman*, is but a ray of the Absolute Reality.

This universal Principle is eternal, incorruptible, perfect, and complete. Being absolute and unconditioned, it cannot manifest directly in the conditioned Cosmos. It needs a more differentiated vehicle, *buddhi*, through which the Real is reflected in the worlds of illusion. *Ātma-buddhi* constitutes what in Theosophy is called the Monad, that is, the divine Spark, which immerses in matter and undergoes the process of cosmic evolution. At the beginning of this process, the divine Monad is unconscious on the lower planes. It evolves through the lower kingdoms of nature, from elementals to animals, pushed forward by physical evolution. As a result of this, the Monad gradually awakens to consciousness. The efforts of physical evolution, however, are not enough to develop self-consciousness.¹ This becomes possible only when the human kingdom is reached and the stage of intellectual evolution starts. At this point, the Monad is connected to the highest product of physical evolution — the animal man — through *manas*, which acts as a bridge between the spiritual and the material.

Manas is described as the Principle of

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the Mind, and is the source of self-consciousness. In its original nature, however, it is beyond what we conceive of as mind. Our mind is only the shadowy reflection of this spiritual Principle, when working through our brain. The same happens with the pure *manasic* self-consciousness, which, according to HPB, is self-consciousness ‘in the higher spiritual sense’.² It is not a consciousness of us being body or mind, this or that, but a pure *sense of being*, of *I-am-ness*, which is not identified with or conditioned by any particular characteristic.

By getting in touch with *manas*, the animal man is endowed with mind and self-consciousness. However, since this Principle is too spiritual to work fully through the physical brain, it can only send down a *ray* of itself. This greatly conditions the original quality and expression of *manas*. Now, the spiritual mind is limited to material perceptions, manifesting as the lower, or concrete, mind. And the pure self-consciousness, acting now in association with the body and its senses, develops the sense of ‘I am — this particular personality or body, separate from the rest’. This causes the birth of the illusory self, the lower ego.

Due to its association with *manas*, at the end of this cycle of evolution the dual Monad (*ātma-buddhi*) acquires divine self-consciousness, thus becoming triple (*ātma-buddhi-manas*). However, the divine Spark can only assimilate the spiritual essence of *manas*. It is then necessary to purify our mind and self-consciousness in order to realize our spiritual nature.

Raising the Seat of Self-Consciousness

As a result of the process just described, most of us feel we are the personality, and are unable to recognize ourselves as being the spiritual Monad. How can we become aware of our real Self? Annie Besant explains in the following:

The one certainty for each of us, needing no proof, beyond all argument, incapable of being strengthened by any act of the reason, is the sure truth: *I am*. This is the ultimate fact of consciousness, the foundation on which everything else is built. . . . If, studying man in his present stage of evolution, we seek to know the seat of this Self-consciousness, we find that in most of us its throne is the lower mind. . . . From this life of the lower mind, in which sensations still play so large a part, man rises to the life of the intellect, and the lower mind becomes his instrument, ceasing to be himself. From the life of the intellect he must rise to the life of the Spirit, and know himself as the One. The seat of Self-consciousness is moved from the lower mind to the higher by strenuous thinking, by the intellectual travail of the student, the philosopher, the man of science — if the latter turn his thoughts from objects to principles, from phenomena to laws. And as strenuous thinking can alone lift the seat of Self-consciousness from the mind to the intellect, so can deep concentration and meditation alone raise that seat from the intellect to the Spirit.³

Taijasa Awareness Meditation

The lower mind is the concrete mind; the one that is interested in material objects, and lives in and by sensations. Most people are self-conscious mainly at this level. They are not interested in *Ideas*, in an understanding of life and its purpose. They are interested in more ‘practical things’, that is, in what can bring a palpable physical or psychological result. Dr Besant says that the first stage in this process of raising the seat of our self-consciousness, is to start experiencing this less concrete dimension of life and of our being; to discover that our body and lower mind are not the only reality. This higher dimension is grasped by what she calls the ‘intellect’, that is, the abstract mind. She said that a person begins to be conscious of these subtler aspects by studying universal themes that are not directly related to personal existence, by trying to grasp abstract principles and laws of life. In other words, the person has to adopt a philosophical attitude and become a seeker of truth. Through this effort the mind gets refined and becomes able to perceive gradually the formless world of the Spirit. This is what HPB called *Jñāna Yoga* in connection with the study of *The Secret Doctrine*.⁴

Then Dr Besant describes the second stage, which is beyond even ‘strenuous thinking’. As HPB pointed out, gaining spiritual Self-knowledge and becoming conscious of our divine nature is not possible by reasoning or by any brain process.⁵ Here, non-conceptual meditation is needed. We have to resort to that source of wisdom in us which is beyond the

intellect and its processes — *buddhi*. This Principle, besides acting as the vehicle of *ātman*, is a faculty of unitive, spiritual, perception. However, Theosophical teachings state that if there is no *manasic* element united to *buddhi* this wisdom remains as only a potential on our plane. In other words: the original nature of our consciousness is full of wisdom, but we are unconscious of it. When there is a union of wisdom (*buddhi*) and pure self-consciousness (*manas*), this innate wisdom becomes available and there is a transformation in us — we become consciously divine. In HPB’s words:

Manas is Spiritual Self-Consciousness, in itself, and Divine Consciousness when united with *Buddhi*.⁶

***Taijasa* Meditation**

Let us explore now the Theosophical approach to this non-conceptual type of meditation.

Since all virtues are already present in our spiritual consciousness, we do not need to add or acquire anything. What is needed is to disentangle our pure self-consciousness from its association with the personality, thus becoming self-aware at the spiritual level. In other words, we need to transcend the sense of ‘I am this name, body, and mind’. As we said, this cannot be done through any activity of thought, because thoughts belong to the personality. The problem, however, lies not in the thinking process itself — which is the natural activity of *manas* when working through the brain — but in the identification of our consciousness with

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the illusory thinker. It is important to realize that, though there is a continuous process of thinking, there is no *thinker* as a real entity at the psychological level. There seems to be one only due to the union of this living thinking process with the pure self-consciousness.⁷ In other words, the illusory sense of 'I am the thinker' is created when a succession of thoughts arises in our minds and the *manasic* self-consciousness is reflected on them.

There are several meditative practices to become self-aware at the spiritual level, some of which were explained in a previous article ('Who am I?', *The Theosophist*, Aug. 2009). In awareness meditation we accomplish this by watching our mind and its movements. According to HPB, when the individual consciousness is turned inward, there is a conjunction of *buddhi* and *manas*.⁸ Here, there is 'self-consciousness in its purest form'.⁹ This conjunction is permanent in the enlightened one who has realized his divine consciousness, while the aspirant is able to attain it only momentarily. This temporary state of mind in the aspirant is called *taijasa*, 'radiant', since *manas* is 'illuminated by the radiance of the divine soul [*buddhi*]'.¹⁰

J. Krishnamurti explains the steps for this type of meditation as follows:

First of all, sit very quietly; do not force yourself to sit quietly, but sit or lie down quietly without force of any kind. . . . Then watch your thinking. Watch what you are thinking about. . . . And when a thought arises, do not condemn it, do not say it is

right, it is wrong, it is good, it is bad. . . . When you look, when you go into thought very, very deeply, your mind becomes extraordinarily subtle, alive. No part of the mind is asleep. The mind is completely awake.

That is merely the foundation. Then your mind is very quiet. Your whole being becomes very still. Then go through that stillness, deeper, further — that whole process is meditation.¹¹

In the *taijasic* state of our mind, we are in contact with our innate wisdom (*buddhi*). This is a clear, radiant awareness, beyond all mental grasping. We cannot produce it in a direct way, by means of the activity of thought. It is only reached by the effortless recognition of one's transcendental identity through discriminating wisdom. 'Effortless' here means that we cannot force or produce this perception. All we can do from *below* is to create the right conditions for the *buddhic* perception to appear from *above*. Let us explore these conditions.

The *buddhic* perception is beyond the personal. It can only arise when there is no distortion produced by our personal likes and dislikes. Therefore, we should remain aware of the movements of our mind with equanimity, without engaging in judgements or reactions to what we perceive. We are pure witnesses. This higher consciousness, however, is also described as being associated with a state of love and bliss. It cannot manifest if there is any sense of condemnation or severity in our witnessing. We watch

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whatever is in the field of consciousness with a sense of love and integration.

Because this spiritual perception is non-dual, we have to let go of the separation between the observer and the observed, between the thinker and the thinking. As we said, thoughts are not a problem in and of themselves. They are like the waves of the ocean, like passing clouds in the immutable sky. We do not try to stop or manipulate them, because in that very act we are assuming the position of the thinker. Without intervening, we relax all effort, inward and outward, and let the continuous process of thinking work in its own self-directed activity. Dropping the identification with the illusory thinker, we simply stay quietly aware.

This *taijasic* state is full of wisdom.

Wisdom here means that we see things as they really are, without getting entangled in personal reactions or conditionings. Being beyond the psychological process, this state is beyond time, and in its very atmosphere illusion is dissolved. As we read in *Light on the Path*:

Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal. This giant weed [the lower self] cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought.¹²

The state of *taijasa*, in and of itself, gradually purifies our self-consciousness from its personal elements. We become aware of the impersonal sense of *I-am-ness* and then our consciousness can go beyond, rising 'to the life of the Spirit'.

References and Notes

1. In Theosophical literature self-consciousness is used in the philosophical sense, whereas self-awareness is the more common term used today.
2. Blavatsky, H. P. (HPB), *The Secret Doctrine* II, Stanza 3, p. 79.
3. Besant, Annie, *The Reality of the Invisible and the Actuality of the Unseen Worlds*.
4. Bowen, R., *Madame Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*.
5. HPB, *Collected Writings (CW)* VIII, 'Self-knowledge', p. 108.
6. HPB, *CW* XII, 'The Philosophical Rationale of the Tenet', p. 630.
7. This thinking process (*kāma-manas*) which expresses itself through the lower Principles has an intelligence of its own — the elemental consciousness. Even after the transpersonal Ego leaves behind these lower Principles after death, they can still reproduce the same thinking process when attracted to a medium, and be taken as the real person.
8. HPB, *CW* XII, 'ES Instruction No. II', p. 545.
9. HPB, *CW* VIII, 'Modern Idealism, Worse than Materialism', pp. 96–7.
10. HPB, *The Key to Theosophy*, Section 9, 'On Post-Mortem and Post-Natal Consciousness', fn. 4.
11. Krishnamurti, J., *On Education*, p. 58.
12. Collins, M., op. cit., Part I, 'Rule 4'.

About Phi, a Fly and a Flea and the Neverending Story of the Human Race

FRED A. PRUYN

THE age of Kali has arrived, a gloomy age of fear and misery, caused by a loss of virtue and a great deal of selfishness. We see fear everywhere around us. We fear unknown emergencies that might place our little self in danger. There are a thousand hazards that would paralyse the human mind and change our personality in the wink of an eye into a block of concrete, if we would let them rule our life.

Literally, Kali Yuga is translated as the iron age or black age; the fourth and last of the four great *yuga-s* constituting a *mahāyuga* (a great age), the other three being the Kṛta or Satya Yuga, Tretā Yuga, and Dvāpara Yuga. Kali Yuga is the most material phase of a being's or group's evolutionary cycle, and is stated to have commenced at the moment of Kṛṣṇa's death, usually given as 3102 BC.

In essence all *yuga-s* or ages have to do with harmony, rhythm and proportions. We know harmony is in essence divine, and we feel that a harmonious musical composition can bring us great joy. In the arts we can see that the right proportions, a fine balance, can bring us in touch with the Divine.

A fly and a flea in a flue
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?
Said the fly, 'Let us flee!'
'Let us fly!' said the flea,
So they fled through a flaw in the flue.

In this gem of a limerick by Trudi Hammel Garland — who is the author of some fine books on mathematics and spirituality — we find an expression of the rhythm of Nature in a pure form, not noticed at face value, but corresponding closely by its beats to the magic number of phi, the so-called golden ratio, or golden section.

The golden section is an irrational, or transcendental, number — a transcendental number! — meaning that it never repeats and never ends, with a practical value of 1.618 or 0.618. Many artists, especially painters and architects have always embraced the ensouling power of this number. There seem to be some unexpected links with this number on spiritual growth in the Kali Yuga.

To get a decent picture of the dimensions of this gloomy age we have to go far back into the past, not just an odd 2000 years, but millions of years. Anyone of

Mr Fred A. Pruyne of Holland gave this talk in 2006 at the Theosophical Society at Pasadena, USA.

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the opinion that the spiritual evolution of mankind in Kali Yuga could take place in a few millennia, has to be prepared to receive a shock, because we will have to go back four million odd years to find the roots of all this trouble of today.

The ancient chronological charts of the Brāhman-s refer to four great evolutionary cycles or *yuga-s* that decrease with time. The total length of the four *yuga-s* in earth-years is 4,320,000 — 1,728,000 for the Satya Yuga, 1,296,000 for the Tretā Yuga, 864,000 for the Dvāpara Yuga, and last but not the least, 432,000 for Kali Yuga. We may notice that the lengths of these four *yuga-s* are related in the ratio 4:3:2:1, in other words, they are all multiples of 432,000.

An odd four million years ago, a former Kali Yuga ended and a brand new *mahāyuga* commenced. Man knew again the inner meaning of Nature, knew himself to be one with Nature, and lived in harmony with the Great Mother. It was a marvellous time, so superb that spiritual growth was just not possible. All was there, nothing was wanting, there was no suffering, hence no aspiration, no striving, and so no growth. The Theosophical Glossary on the Internet describes it thus:

It is the age of purity, reality, and truth, sometimes called the Kṛta Yuga. The Kṛta is the age in which righteousness is eternal, when duties did not languish nor people decline. No efforts were made by men, the fruit of the earth was obtained by their mere wish. There was no malice, weeping, pride, or deceit; no contention, no hatred,

cruelty, fear, affliction, jealousy, or envy. The castes alike in their function fulfilled their duties, were unceasingly devoted to one deity, and used one formula, one rule, and one rite. Though they had separate duties, they had but one Veda and practised one duty.

In the next Yuga, Tretā Yuga, virtue is diminished by a quarter and so measures three times Kali Yuga, and lasts 1,296,000 years.

In the Tretā Yuga sacrifice commenced, righteousness decreased by one-fourth; men adhered to truth, and were devoted to a righteousness dependent on ceremonies. Sacrifices prevailed with holy acts and a variety of rites. Men acted with an object in view, seeking after reward for their rites and their gifts, and were no longer disposed to austerities and to liberality from a simple feeling of duty.

In Dvāpara, virtue is lost by a half and as a result lasts even less — 864,000 years. It is said that

the Veda became fourfold. Some men studied four Veda-s, others three, others two, others one, and some none at all. Ceremonies were celebrated in a great variety of ways. From the decline of goodness only a few men adhered to truth. When men had fallen away from goodness, many diseases, desires, and calamities, caused by destiny, assailed them, by which they were severely afflicted and driven to practise austerities. Others desiring heavenly bliss offered sacrifices. Thus men declined through unrighteousness.

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The nature of the age of Kali was described by the prophetic authors of the *Vishnu Purāna*, some thousands of years ago. We find in *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky:

There will be contemporary monarchs, reigning over the earth — kings of churlish spirit, violent temper, and ever addicted to falsehood and wickedness. They will inflict death on women, children, and cows; they will seize upon the property of their subjects, and be intent upon the wives of others; they will be of unlimited power, their lives will be short, their desires insatiable. . . . People of various countries intermingling with them, will follow their example; and the barbarians being powerful (in India) in the patronage of the princes, while purer tribes are neglected, the people will perish (. . .) Wealth and piety will decrease until the world will be wholly depraved. Property alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification. . . . External types will be the only distinction of the several orders of life . . . a man if rich will be reputed pure; dishonesty (*anyāya*) will be the universal means of subsistence, weakness the cause of dependence, menace and presumption will be substituted for learning; liberality will be devotion; mutual assent, marriage; fine clothes, dignity. He who is the strongest will reign; the people, unable to bear the heavy burden, *khara bhāra* (the load of taxes) will take refuge

among the valleys. . . . Thus, in the Kali Age decay will constantly proceed, until the human race approaches its annihilation.

Not such a happy story at all. Although this is handed over to us from the dim past, it has the essence of a broadcast news bulletin of today.

Some writers and scientists who show an interest in the chronological tables of the Brāhman-s contend that these periods are too long. They usually ignore or deny the fact that these years are a conversion of so-called divine years into human years. If we consider divine years — 360 years for each human year — for human years we would have to face a great problem with our devachan, and our next incarnation, for we would be jumping right through these cycles and scarcely ever would have developed the spirituality we need in these ages. G. de Purucker stated our after-death period will take roughly a hundred times the years we have lived on this globe. In other words, our life in this world takes only one percent of our true or universal life; which stresses the significance of this life, because only in this small period of time can we shape our future. In that other ninety-nine percent of our life, we sleep in the bosom of our parent and rest in the vastness of space, and are unable to correct our destiny. This figure is, however, given as a rule of thumb, and there may be great variations and exceptions, just as there is a wide range in the need for sleep of individuals. Now we may better understand the chronological tables of the

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Brāhman-s concerning the evolutionary cycles and why they are expressed in divine years.

The evolutionary course of all life flows in a cyclic pattern, not as much as the famous Einstein thought, through the warping of space and time — which would turn any seemingly straight line inevitably into a curved one, but because of the reason that everything is ensouled, all the way down to the infinitesimal small particle. Consequently, we are surrounded and permeated by waves of life on visible and invisible planes of existence. All IS consciousness, temporary meeting points of spirit and matter, on as many different planes of existence. There is a constant exchange of life and vehicles for that life, visible and invisible. These souls or entities together form life-waves, together they feel the impulse to continue their evolutionary course in their particular stage of life. Near the coast, life under the surface of the sea goes up and down with the ebb and flow. In the same way all of life follows an invisible track, as it cycles across invisible planes, in a regular serial order. We ourselves, and our brothers in other kingdoms of life, even way below the earth, deserve the credit for the manifestation of cycles in Nature. We see the seasons, but also the perturbations in nature. All is connected with the mental and spiritual maturing of our inner life.

When we take a closer look at the groundwork of the Hindu system of chronology, we may be more assured that Nature does not work in such mysterious ways as commonly thought, but rather

in an impersonal way, perhaps, in a mathematical way, which has much to do with harmony and virtue, two aspects of the same order. Some dictionaries describe ‘virtuous’ among other things as morally excellent; in other words, the most evolved spiritual state. Is it not strange that we have an expression for a situation in which efforts to solve a given problem actually result in an aggravation of the problem, or the creation of a worse problem? We call it a *vicious circle*. How strange for a circle to be vicious!

Cyclic evolution can never be a closed circle; it should look more like a spiral under the influence of time. Then we may see that mathematics can rightly be called the language of the universe and can help us to find the knowledge to grow out of this Kali Yuga — like the fly and the flea out of the flue.

As the great philosopher Spinoza of the seventeenth century wrote:

I should attempt to treat human vice and folly geometrically. The passions of hatred, anger, envy, and so on, considered in themselves, follow from the necessity and efficacy of nature . . . I shall, therefore, treat the nature and strength of the emotion in exactly the same manner, as though I were concerned with lines, planes and solids.

Spinoza hinted on the groundwork of the cosmos with which this system of Yuga-s has much in common, as it also has much in common with virtue and the decline of virtue. This answers one other major question — why other kingdoms

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of Nature seem to be left out of this dreadful maelstrom. These *yuga-s* of suffering are based on virtue, therefore, it is evident that this whole system is based on the moral operations of Nature.

As said before, all evolution shows a cyclic path, with its ups and downs, and so shows a great deal of regularity. The special properties of the divine ratio, 1.618 or 0.618 — or the properties of that other enigmatic number, the number pi, the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter — were always and will always be the same. There is nothing human to them, they are simply everlasting. These ideas survive all, even a total annihilation of the universe, because they are not really ideas, or matter, or a system *or* principles, but the expression of the highest intelligence of the universe and are thus a blueprint for all.

With the help of these tools we can make for ourselves an inner chart of nature. We can now find out the true esoteric pathways of Nature, get into her tracks and follow in her footsteps and go with the tide. I would not be much surprised if the famous divine ratio, or phi, plays a key role in our evolving universe.

This divine ratio shows up in *so* many unthought-of places and behaviours in Nature, that it must have something to do with the proportional length of the *yuga-s* and the time of suffering. As said before, it is the same rule of divine harmony many artists have sought, to make their work come to life when they wanted to give it a soul. We see this golden proportion within many magic properties all

over in Nature — in the formation and growth of the seeds of sunflowers, the circular growth of sprigs and leaves on the stems of plants and trees, the special behaviour of birds of prey, in the total make-up of our body, in musical compositions, and so on. Even the *fly and the flea in their flue* in the limerick found a place there in proportion to phi.

So why would not the evolving life-waves of human karma follow the same divine order through the *yuga-s*? Why would the evolving *yuga-s* not show the same order as the circular growth of shells? The whole truth about the hidden operations of Nature was never divulged to the public, nor openly discussed, with good reason. Generally speaking, we would hurt ourselves badly if we got knowledge about future events that would demand a greater inner self-control than we now have. It is not without reason we have no foresight, for we would prepare ourselves exoterically, but much more importantly, we would be off guard esoterically. The message was that being prepared esoterically is paramount.

We often display a bad habit of trying to end a crisis by bluntly killing it. We call it prevention, which is usually regarded as a wise measure. But just as often, prevention can make things worse, especially when it is initiated by fear. To prevent ourselves from getting hurt we invent seatbelts, a crumple zone and — a more powerful engine. Traffic must be made safer, but also if possible, faster. When dealing with infections, we tend to slam the body with antibiotics; or in

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company, when there is a slight disagreement, too many people carry a gun.

There always were those other golden options — *patience and letting go*. Probably we love our lower selves more than those and chase those unwelcome guests out of our house! A crisis — in other words, the more visible part of a cycle — simply has to run its race, one way or the other. The flow of karma has to have its sway. When too much water collects in a storage reservoir, the sluices have to be opened; we are not able to stop the rain.

We would do well to study the way people of Asian stock used to deal with setbacks. In his correspondence with the English editor A. P. Sinnett, a wise Tibetan remarked that ‘Time often neutralizes the gravest evils by hastening a crisis’ (*Mahatma Letters*, no. 87). And in another letter he writes: ‘We are all prepared and are trying to hurry on the crisis one way or the other’ (Letter no. 30).

Where do we find a Western philosopher saying such words? Usually authorities try only to stop a cycle from continuing. The Western world generally loves fear, by always portraying pain and suffering and not the rich harvest of compassion and happiness that follows when we are ‘out of the flue’, when the consequences of former vices have worked their way out.

On a much larger scale, would each *mahāyuga*, with the subsequent order of cycles in a decreasing order, as Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali Yuga be nothing else but a crisis in itself, a process of growth, an unfolding of Karma at a higher

level? Would we be able to see all the misery in Kali Yuga as the last painful budding process of a flower, a flower that will eventually produce the perfect man who will deliver the seed for a new race in another age?

I have tried to give a sketchy idea about Kali Yuga, but did not give the clue as to how the *fly and the flea* got out of the flue. To get this clue it is essential that we know that Kali Yuga is a purely subjective condition; this is very beautifully illustrated in the *Mahābhārata*, in the story of King Nala and Princess Damayanti:

Once upon a time a rājā, a king, had declared that the time had come for his daughter Damayanti to marry, and so he invited kings and nobles to come and contend for her hand and name. Damayanti was also glorious, so adorable, so radiant, that besides her lover Nala, there were many other nobles who gave *acte de présence*, and even the gods Indra, Yama, Varuna and Agni wished to compete. So it came to pass that Damayanti had to pick her lover Nala out of a confounding line-up of disguised gods who all looked like Nala. Damayanti pleaded with the gods to have mercy and asked them to unveil a bit of themselves. In the end they showed some mercy and she was able to pick her lover out, simply because she saw him standing firm on the ground while the others were hovering a bit above the ground and showed no human attributes such as stains of sweat and so on. In short, they were too perfect.

On the way home from the wedding,

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the gods encountered Dvāpara and Kali, who were far too late to enter the competition. This made Kali very upset. Kali is shown perhaps as the first stalker in history! Kali was obsessed by jealousy and sought a way to hurt Nala. He stalked Nala for many years and at last, after twelve years had passed by, he found a flimsy blemish in Nala's way of living and through that a way to possess him.

When Nala was occupied once with his holy ritual of sacrifice, he observed all his duties, except for a single trifling one — he forgot to wash his feet. Kali found this as an opportunity to enter him. Immediately he incited Pushkara, the brother of Nala, to a game of dice and showed him how to gain all that his brother had.

It is important to note that Kali is called the god of dice in this story. In the language of symbolism it implies that man has lost the power of foresight, and no longer lives *with* karma but leans heavily on the great illusions of luck and chance. As de Purucker said: 'Good luck is an awfully poor teacher, it sends us to sleep.' But Nala was not so lucky and as a result acquired a lot of pain. There is one other hidden message of some importance to think of: the flimsy blemish of Nala. From it, we see that one unheeded or careless thought might endanger one's future. Nala created almost unconsciously an opening in his protective spiritual armour and evil could find a place to settle. As a result, Nala lost all his possessions, his entire kingdom, his beloved wife, even his last raiment in a simple game of dice. One

thing was still his though — his virtue, strength and will power. Naked to the skin, he had to flee and look for shelter with the hermits; but by his virtue and great inner knowledge he found a way in the end to subdue Kali and was able to restore his kingdom.

Unselfishness, universal love and virtue will lift our burden and give us a larger vision of life and the future, and then, after some incarnations, when we have learned again to live with karma

... When the close of the kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being which exists, of its own spiritual nature . . . shall descend on Earth . . . (Kalki Avatāra) endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. . . . He will re-establish righteousness on earth, and the minds of those who live at the end of Kali yuga shall be awakened and become as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed . . . shall be the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Kṛta age, the age of purity.

However, in due time, after many, many years, another Kali Yuga will knock on the door. So

*'Let us fly!' said the flea,
So they fled through a flaw in the flue.*

As with Kali, the flaw in the flue was caused by a human too. There may be some pain in learning how to live, to love and let go, but in the end we may see that even flaws can lead us out of misery, to another life on a higher plane. ✧

TENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Theme: 'Universal Brotherhood without Distinction: a Road to Awareness'

Rome, 10 to 15 July 2010

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Saturday, 10 July

- 10.30 am Prayers of the Religions
OPENING OF THE WORLD CONGRESS
Welcome by *General Secretary, Italian Section*
Address by Mrs Radha Burnier, *International President*
- 4.00 pm LECTURE:
'Why do we Belong to the Theosophical Society?'
Mrs Linda Oliveira, *International Vice-President*
- 6.00 pm Reception — Italian Section
- 8.45 pm Cultural Programme by Dr Edi Bilimoria
'Musical Yoga — Study is Transformation'

Sunday, 11 July

- 9.00 am LECTURE:
'What Divides Us?'
Prof. P. Krishna, *Krishnamurti Foundation India*
- 11.00 am SYMPOSIUM:
'The Theosophical Society as a Regenerating Brotherhood'
Mr Ricardo Lindemann, *Brazilian Section*
Mrs Patrizia Calvi, *Italian Section*
Mr Jan Jelle Keppler, *General Secretary, Belgian Section*
- 2.30 pm Italian Section Meeting
- 4.00 pm WORKSHOPS:
1. 'Forgiveness and Interconnectedness:
Two Key Elements in Brotherhood'
Mrs Betty Bland, *General Secretary, American Section*
2. 'Challenges in Brotherhood'
Ms Marja Artamaa, *General Secretary, Finnish Section*
3. 'Living Brotherhood'
Mrs Marie Harkness, *Organizing Secretary, Ireland*

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- 5.30 pm SHORT LECTURES:
‘The Discovery of Self’
Mr Colin Price, *English Section*
‘The TS on Probation’
Mr Pedro Oliveira, *Editorial Office, Adyar*
- 8.30 pm Musical Programme:
Italian bel canto with Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Piano

Monday, 12 July

- 9.00 am LECTURE:
‘The Scientific Basis of Universal Brotherhood’
Dr Dara Tatray, *General Secretary, Australian Section*
- 11.00 am SYMPOSIUM:
‘Brotherhood as a Road to Awareness’
Miss Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, *General Secretary, French Section*
Mrs Lissette Arroyo, *General Secretary, Mexican Section*
Mrs Ing-Britt Wiklund, *Swedish Section*
- 4.00 pm WORKSHOPS (continued from Sunday)
- 5.30 pm SHORT LECTURES:
‘In my Beginning is my End’
Miss Mary Anderson, *Former International Vice-President*
‘Self-Perception and Fraternal Action’
Mr Marcos Resende, *General Secretary, Brazilian Section*
- 8.30 pm Musical Programme:
Italian Classical Music — Rome Town Band

Tuesday, 13 July

- 9.00 am SHORT LECTURES:
‘Love and Service — Twin Stars of Brotherhood’
Mr S. Sundaram, *General Secretary, Indian Section*
‘The Meaning of *nosce te ipsum* in the Practice of Universal Brotherhood’
Prof. Graziella Ricci, *Professor of Spanish Linguistics and Literature*
- Afternoon: HALF DAY OUTING
- 8.30 pm Italian Section General Assembly Meeting
Free evening for other delegates

World Congress Programme

Wednesday, 14 July

- 9.00 am QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- 11.00 am WORKSHOPS:
1. 'Solidarity and Cooperation: Practical Expressions of Brotherhood'
Mr Antonio Martinez and Mrs Julia Ballesteros, *Colombia*
 2. 'Practical Brotherhood in Our Everyday Life'
Dusan Zagar, *Organizing Secretary, Slovenia*
 3. 'Self-Knowledge as the Foundation for Brotherhood'
Carlos Guerra, *General Secretary, Portuguese Section*
- 4.00 pm THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE:
- 'Service as a Road to Awareness'
Mrs Diana Dunningham Chapotin, *International Secretary, TOS*
Mr Timothy Boyd, *Vice-President, American Section*
Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr, *General Secretary, Philippine Section*
- 5.30 pm SHORT LECTURES:
- 'Life: A Symphony of Art and Beauty'
Mrs Manju Sundaram, *Indian Section*
- 'The Plucking of a Flower Affects a Distant Star'
Mr Bhupendra Vora, *English Section*
- 7.30 pm Slide Programme by Mr Pedro Oliveira
'Theosophical Centres around the World'

Thursday, 15 July

- 9.30 am CLOSING OF THE WORLD CONGRESS
- Prayers of the Religions
Brief Impressions of the Congress
Closing Address: Mrs Radha Burnier, *International President*



**What are we here for, save to help each other, to love each other,
to uplift each other?**

Annie Besant,
The Laws of the Higher Life

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