



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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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

## How does the ego-centre arise?

The much-used word 'my' refers to a fictitious centre to which the mind draws every experience. It is actually non-existent. In Sanskrit there is the word *ahamkāra*: *aham* means 'I', *kāra* means 'making'. So *ahamkāra* is that part of the mind which is the 'I-maker'. The 'I' is constantly created by the process of labelling. If there is an experience, and if the mind did not say consciously or unconsciously, 'It is my experience', the experience would fade away.

Because there is memory, there is the repetition of it, and because it has had certain experiences it creates further categories. It has experienced pleasure, therefore it says, 'I am the enjoyer'. It has organized certain things, so it says, 'I am the organizer'. So it habitually grasps various things and labels them, thus creating the 'I'.

Silence cannot come through another form of ambition. You cannot say, 'I want my mind to be silent. I am going to put an end to the fluctuations of my mind'; that would be one more form of achievement. Wherever there is the desire for achievement or acquisition, there is this entity called the 'I' — the psychological fiction that wants to achieve. Through a

long process we have created the notion that there is this entity which must reach somewhere, and we go on supporting that idea. It is difficult to imagine a life in which that 'I' is not getting somewhere or acquiring something.

So one cannot become silent by saying, 'I want to be silent'; for the simple reason that the 'I' is not capable of silence. It is the sole source of all the noise, the disturbance, the problems. We think that problems come from outside, but although there may be difficulties outside, the problem lies within. The difficulty may be that the body has some illness. If it is ill, you treat it. But the difficulty can be made into a problem. 'I am ill. I have led a good life, so why should I suffer? When I am ill other people do not give me the kind of help I need.' One can make innumerable problems out of that sickness. But we should see it not as a problem but as a fact — a difficult fact, perhaps, but one that can be dealt with — that is all.

It is the self which creates the problems. And the self can never bring about silence because it is all the time creating disturbance. The disturbance *is* the self! Jealousy is part of the self; so is attachment to ideas; so is intolerance. The self is built of all these things. From that

point of view, such a phrase as 'self-realization' is misleading because, if there is realization of Truth, there cannot be self in it. So where there is achievement or acquisition there is the self — whether one is aware of it or not. In which case the mind is not empty; it is filled with the self.

### **Illumination Comes from Within**

One of the Mahatmas reminds us that illumination must come from within. The means to illumination is not meditation alone; he speaks of chastity in thought, word and deed. There must be purity, government of the animal passions, and unselfishness of intention. Without these meditation is not serious; it becomes what Krishnamurti called an activity of isolation.

When we speak of the mind, does that include the conscious and the unconscious? What is the difference between the two?

The mind is, of course, the conscious as well as the unconscious or subconscious. There are various things in the mind which do not make themselves felt at a particular moment. That does not mean that they do not belong to it. In the subconscious mind there may be greed, for example, but it may lie dormant, because the opportunity to show itself is not present at that time. When it does show itself, it becomes part of the conscious mind. In the same way, within the mind there are many tendencies that we carry on from incarnation to incarnation and they come into the conscious mind according to circumstances and

opportunity. It is the same with memory. There are many memories of which a person is not conscious. Sometimes they can be recalled fairly easily and sometimes only on special occasions.

Certain fundamental questions will always have to be examined with care. The one that has concerned us principally at this time is: 'What is the nature of the self?' We have seen that this requires great penetration and can be arrived at only through sustained use of energy.

We have arrived at certain conclusions. The self appears to be myself, the 'I'. This 'I' is made up of impressions created largely by the body for we have a certain image of ourselves which is partly connected with the physical person. We have come to see that this physical person has little to do with the real self. The confusion between this and the Self is the cause of many problems and these are further complicated with identification with emotions and thoughts.

None of this can be understood in depth by a process of simple ratiocination, but only by what has been called 'clear sight'. But because the illusion of the self as self-existent, as having a separate individual identity has been accepted as reality for many years — indeed for many incarnations — it has taken on the appearance of reality. We are conditioned by everything around us to take its existence for granted. As children we were taught to promote its interests, to think of all things in relation to it. All this cannot fail to exert an influence. So it is easy to fall into the belief in the existence of the

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self and one has to look very carefully — and inwardly — to discover the truth; to find out, if after all, it is just an imposition, a fiction created by thought.

It would be easy simply to say, 'Yes, the self is not real', or 'The sense of separation is an illusion'. But that would be just uttering words. If one really saw that fact, it would change one's life.

Meditation is work which is to be done in order to see. It is not just a cerebral activity; it is a probing deep to discover truth with regard to the nature of that self which has been leading us such a dance for untold incarnations.

### Self-existence

The idea of self-existence (existence-in-itself) is associated with the existence of everything else we know. Because we see everything separated physically, we believe that everything exists in itself and by itself. And when we think in terms of connection, it is superficial. Thus relationship can be formed and broken because relationship, according to our ideas, is itself something that lies only on the surface of life, the making or the breaking of which depends solely on our will. But we question the assumption that this is how things are in reality — that they are indeed separate objects unconnected with one another. We ask ourselves whether, in fact, existence, the self of all things, is of an entirely different nature.

From an intellectual point of view, many answers may be given, many authorities quoted. But all this has nothing to do with penetration into the Truth with

which we are chiefly concerned. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The futility of purely mental and intellectual exercises can be seen by their fruits — or the absence of the fruits — because having pursued them to the limit one finds oneself in exactly the same situation, plagued by the same disturbances, the same problems in relationship, the same lack of understanding. We discover that the intellect has no answers.

But then we discover that there is a different kind of knowledge which comes through deeper penetration and we find that it bears fruit. A profound change can now take place because we are looking at the problem from a different viewpoint.

To turn the energy of the mind into the quest for the Self or to examine the nature of existence means also to explore their meaning and purpose. Unless there is clarity about the question of self-existence — the independent unrelated existence of each thing — we shall not be able to understand this.

If the mind does not see the nature of the Self, if it is unable to grasp relationship which exists in depth at a subtle level, it will not be able to see life in all its meaning and beauty.

We may see relationship between separate things, between objects that remain separate but still exist in some sort of relationship. There may also be a perception in which the relationship is not simply a coming together of separate things. Unity is vastly more than this. But it can be only discovered by a mind which is capable of digging deeper.

### Trees — A Necessity

A useful article relating to trees has been recently published in the *Guardian Weekly*. It is written of trees, which are having a bad time in the present day, that they are continuously under threat. To a large extent, trees are home to the world of biodiversity, but they are being mercilessly destroyed. Half the number of trees in forests has been cut down and every year there is a smaller forested area than earlier. This reduces the amount of good air that we human beings breathe. Apart from this there is the beauty of the trees.

A great tree like the Banyan can be a wonderful aid for many purposes. But smaller kinds can also be invaluable. We cannot survive without them, but it needs insight to know this fact. Many trees live a long time and others produce offshoots, so that when there is one tree there can be many others. The very atmosphere that we breathe becomes different when there are trees because they absorb the carbon content and some other pollutants. The older they are, the better control of pollutants. Besides this, where there are trees the temperature is lower.

Unfortunately, more than the number of trees cut down and whole forests having disappeared, is the serious condition of the weather. The United Nations, which aids bodies that help to reduce emissions, has the following to say: tree planting can offset a great deal of the emission in the first half of this century. Therefore, there is urgent need to save trees even in cities. The Indian economist,

P. Sukhdev, is also a study-leader of biodiversity and the economics of ecosystems. He works as Co-Director of Deutsche Bank in Mumbai. He calculated the economic value of nature and its deterioration after a three-year survey led by hundred experts. According to him, if we halved the deforestation by another thirty years, it would reduce the cost of global warming because the erosion of forests, coastal areas, etc., leads to huge losses each year. 'A tree is invaluable and what we get from trees is priceless.'

There are a number of people who enjoy coming to Adyar for a walk because of its beauty, quiet, and the preservation of a natural environment. Not only are the trees protected, but many varieties of plants and other minor forms of life in other kingdoms are also looked after in this compound. Every city needs several areas where greenery is respected and loved. The importance of preserving the atmosphere created by denizens of the different kingdoms cannot be praised too much.

The pollution of water sources is important in considering this subject because if pure water is not available, many plants and trees cannot survive. They need very little, and water is one of the few things they need. Trees are 'model citizens, decorative, quiet, economical, calm and courageous'. Without water enough greenery cannot be preserved. Letting trees grow involves making sure that water is available for them — and also for shrubs and smaller plants of every kind.

# Many Lives in One

MARY ANDERSON

**M**ANY legends and fairy tales and even modern stories for children have hidden meanings. Examples are *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

There are tales of characters who go through many experiences and thereby learn many lessons and may even be transformed in the course of their life. These stories cannot be taken at face value only, as happening in the course of one lifetime. Whether the genial authors were aware of it or not, the stories they wrote seem to portray developments in the principle character or characters that could not have taken place in one lifetime only but rather in the course of several lives on earth. We might say that the story of one lifetime, representing many lifetimes, also reflects the story of any one of us and even the saga of humanity itself in the course of evolution through many lives: the descent of spirit into matter and its ascent into freedom from the bonds of matter, bringing home a rich harvest of experience and at the same time refining matter itself, as only spirit — the indwelling life — can.

One example of many lifetimes in one is the legend of Faust, as recounted by Goethe, about which Brother Jinarājādāsa

wrote. As Brother Rājā says, the first part of the play goes from Heaven to Hell and the second part, which is much longer, returns from Hell to Heaven.

Faust cannot discover the satisfaction he seeks through academic study, through selfish love, through art and beauty or through the exercise of political power, but finally he finds it in unselfish action, in which, certainly, what he has experienced and learned from selfish love, from beauty and from the exercise of power plays a part.

What Faust seeks and what he promises to sell his soul to the devil for is one moment of perfect fulfilment, perfect happiness. He tells the devil: ‘If only I can say to the present moment “Stay with me! You are so beautiful!”’, then you may put me in chains, then will I willingly perish.’ Such a moment he finds at the end of the play in unselfish action for the good of others. According to his pact with the devil, the latter can now claim his soul. But Faust has become perfectly selfless, and the devil can have no part in him.

Another tale which could be the story of many lifetimes in one is the legend of Perceval, one of the Knights of the Round

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Table at the court of King Arthur. Perceval's very name is descriptive of his career. It may be derived from the Old French 'par ce val', meaning 'through this valley'. Is this valley the symbol of earthly life or earthly lives — the valley of the shadow of death? For, in a sense, what we call life is death and what we call death is life.

Perceval's life as told in the legend can be divided into three parts: his childhood with his mother — all innocence — his life as a Knight of the Round Table, learning worldly wisdom, and his search for something beyond, his quest for the Holy Grail, and, after failure, his final success in passing the test allotted him and becoming the Grail King or the Keeper of the Holy Grail. He had to fall from his original state of purity, innocence and ignorance to a condition of strength but of selfishness, and then rise to unselfishness, to loving concern for others. He was known as the Pure Fool, because he always kept something of his childhood innocence and ignorance.

He was the son of a great King. When his father was killed, his mother, who was sick of fighting and killing and of knighthood in general, retired to a lonely forest, completely isolated from human company, except for a few servants. She wanted to bring up her son, who was still a baby, in ignorance of the outside world and above all, in ignorance of everything pertaining to knighthood. But Perceval had warrior blood in his veins. He made himself a spear out of wood and could aim it with perfect accuracy.

One day, some knights of King Arthur were riding through the forest and Perceval, who had never before seen any strangers, let alone knights in shining armour, took them for angels and knelt before them, to their great surprise. But, when they had explained that they were not divine apparitions, he conversed with them and they told him about King Arthur and his court. Perceval immediately made up his mind to go there and become a knight.

His mother was horrified when he told her. This was what she had feared most of all. According to one tradition, she dressed him in ridiculous clothes, like a court jester, and gave him a little old horse to ride on, so that people would laugh at him and he would return to her. They did laugh at him, but he was so innocent that he took their laughter for friendliness and felt happy, thinking 'How kind people are!' So innocent are we perhaps when we first try to be worldly wise, with many illusions as to what to do and what to think. His mother also gave him advice to do foolish things: 'Take jewels from a lady if you have the opportunity. Take a kiss from her. When you see food, help yourself.' Such advice soon landed him in trouble.

When he arrived at King Arthur's court, he was ridiculed by some of the Knights, but, according to one legend, he retrieved a goblet which an insolent knight, a stranger to the court, had stolen from King Arthur. He killed that knight with his home-made spear, presumably at a vulnerable point in his armour, and he



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took the dead knight's weapons, armour and horse. When he returned the goblet to King Arthur and the King was told of his valour by some knights who had meant to go to his aid, he was knighted by the King.

But he still had much to learn: how a knight should behave at court, etc., and another knight instructed him in courtly behaviour suitable for polite society. We might say that he received exoteric instructions: to be moderate in all things, daring but not reckless, neither miserly nor a spendthrift, not to ask questions. But his instructor omitted to teach him the importance of love. So Perceval was no longer a fool, but the wisdom he learned was only worldly wisdom. His heart remained blind and foolish. Having been told not to ask questions, he failed a first trial.

He was destined to be one of the Grail Knights, the Holy Grail being an emblem of the Divine. In this sense, we are all Grail Knights, we are all destined to find the Holy Grail, the spiritual nature within ourselves and all human beings, all life.

Early in his career as a knight, Perceval came across the Castle of the Grail, where the present Grail King was suffering intense pain from an old wound. It was Perceval's dharma to free the King from his suffering, simply by asking the vital question: 'What ails you, Sire? What is wrong?' and thus by showing compassion. But, probably since his instructor had told him it was uncourtly to ask questions, he remained silent when he should have spoken. He was taking

things literally, following eye-knowledge and not soul-wisdom. For this an old squire scolded him as he left the castle:

Miserable fool! You have failed to do what would have saved you and us! With a single question you could have freed Amfortas from his suffering and gained for yourself the highest bliss on earth. But you did not ask that question. Now ride where you will. Misfortune will follow you, and may the sun never shine on you.

Perceval rode on, his mind spinning. He did not understand, so he rebelled, thinking, 'The King has many knights. I was only a guest who came by chance. Why should I have the duty of freeing him from his suffering? May others do it, since he is their lord.' How often do we leave things to others? One author comments: 'You are wrong, Perceval, and you do not know it, for your heart is still blind.'

Perhaps we all have unique opportunities which we miss, trials in which we fail, and we have to wait for many years, perhaps for many lives, until such an opportunity comes again. Perceval did have another opportunity, but only after many trials and tribulations. We might say, perhaps after many lifetimes with their karmic lessons. But he finally passed the test and became the Grail King.

Another story which might be seen to illustrate evolution through many lifetimes is that of Pinocchio, a modern fairy tale which was also filmed.

Pinocchio was a very mischievous little boy, full of good intentions, with a fundamentally loving nature, but easily

## The Theosophist

influenced. He was one of those people who always follow the last piece of advice they have received until they receive other advice. For example, Pinocchio agreed to go to school in order to learn to read and his kind foster-father sold his one warm jacket to buy him a spelling book. Pinocchio went happily off to school, but on the way there he came across a puppet theatre and he wanted at all costs to see the show. So in order to buy a ticket he sold his spelling book.

Later, he was given some gold coins for his poor foster-father, but he met two confidence tricksters who told him of a magic field where, if he planted his coins there, a great tree would soon grow, bearing as its fruit dozens of gold coins. He followed this advice and of course, he was robbed of his coins. He went to the police to report the theft and he was imprisoned for having allowed himself to be robbed! A topsy-turvy world! But do not ignorance and stupidity sometimes land us in trouble? — as does desire for wealth with no effort on our part. We must work in some form for whatever we get.

Later, when Pinocchio did go to school, he was, like Perceval, just about to attain his goal — in his case, to become a real human little boy — when he forfeited his chance, letting himself be influenced by a classmate who told him about a wonderful country where children did not need to go to school or to learn anything but could play all day. Pinocchio believed him and went with him to that country. They enjoyed themselves immensely, playing, eating sweets and so on

all day long. But suddenly they began to grow long hairy ears. They were transformed into donkeys. This does not mean that they reverted to a pre-human state, but the donkey is a symbol, through no fault of its own, of stupidity. They refused to learn, so they became stupid. If one does not use one's capacities, they atrophy. Poor Pinocchio had a heavy karma to bear. As a donkey he was sold to a circus and taught many tricks with great cruelty.

Because he was stupid, in the sense of being too gullible, too easily influenced, and because he had not the will power to carry out his good intentions, he had to suffer the consequences. This is perhaps meant as a lesson for children, but is it not also a lesson for us? We may not believe what Pinocchio in his innocence believed, but do we not also sometimes run after enjoyment, wealth and comfort?

Finally, having exhausted this unpleasant karma and other unpleasant karma, Pinocchio again became a puppet and finally a proper little human boy.

What Pinocchio lacked was intelligence and above all, will power. But he did have a loving heart, and that was his saving grace. Although it was not enough, it helped him to attain the wisdom and will power he lacked.

All this has lessons not only for children but also for us. Will, Wisdom and Love are all necessary.

We have gone into some stories of one lifetime which really includes the experiences of many lives. It is sometimes said that up to a certain age, perhaps thirty, we may have to repeat lessons learned in

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previous lives. Let us not make a dogma of that. But in our youth we may do many stupid things when we should know better, 'sowing our wild oats', indulging in youthful excesses. Then the time comes for us to be serious and take up our dharma in life. This may happen suddenly, like a sudden conversion. St Augustine and St Francis of Assisi are examples of this. They led gay lives as young men, probably spending money, drinking, womanizing, etc. But suddenly they experienced a turning point and thereafter devoted themselves to a saintly life. Another example is Milarepa, the Tibetan saint, who engaged in black magic in order to avenge his mother who had been wronged. He completely changed when he recognized that he had done great wrong, but he had to suffer for it, driven almost to suicide.

Whether we consider one single human life or many lives in one life or many lives in succession, the same pattern emerges, according to the Hermetic Principle: 'As is the Inner, so is the Outer;

as is the Great, so is the Small; as it is above, so it is below; there is but ONE LIFE AND LAW; and he that worketh it is ONE.'

That pattern leads Spirit into matter and in matter Spirit forgets itself. It is smothered. But, following the experience of matter, even of materialism, Spirit begins to free itself and return to its own abode enriched by experience. This pattern may be repeated in one earthly life. The baby has forgotten its past, but still trails clouds of glory from its heavenly home. Growing up, the child gains physical strength and adapts to life on earth and may learn selfishness. The man or woman may become materialistic, but, taught by karma, will slowly realize his or her true dharma, as did Faust, as did Perceval, as did Pinocchio.

They all began in a certain innocence, in unconscious perfection and graduated to worldliness, to conscious imperfection and finally at the end of the story, at the end of their life or their lives, conscious perfection. This is our destiny also, as we can see it depicted in those stories. ✧

**Karma — all that total of a soul  
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,  
The 'self' it wove with woof and of viewless time  
Crossed on the warp invisible of acts.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Such is the law which moves to righteousness;  
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;  
The heart of it is love, the end of it  
Is peace and consummation sweet. Obey.**

Edwin Arnold  
*The Light of Asia*

# Universal Brotherhood and Global Sustainability

K.V. K. NEHRU

## **Preamble**

Revolutions in Communication Systems, Information Technology and Transportation Engineering have brought the human communities nearer in an unprecedented manner. Among other things, this has also dramatically increased our power to endanger the environment and all forms of Life, *including our own*.

The Ancient Wisdom points out that concomitant with the evolution of the forms of organisms — which alone is studied by the scientists — there is an evolution of Life and Consciousness, which expresses itself through these evolving forms. The more advanced the form is, the more the potentialities of consciousness that can manifest through it. In fact, it is the impetus from the evolving Life that drives the evolution of the forms of the organisms.

It teaches that the purpose of Creation, insofar as the human mind can comprehend it, is the Evolution of Consciousness — from a 'state' of unconscious perfection, through conscious imperfection, to the state of conscious perfection.

The new generation has to be apprised of the organic Unity of all Life, that cooperation — not competition — should be their way of life.

## **Goals and the Goal-maker**

The major challenges facing humankind today are not due to a lack of education. They are created by highly educated and professional minds — lawyers, business administrators, scientists, economists, military commanders, diplomats, and so on. We are producing lopsided human beings, who are very clever, very capable in their intellect but almost primitive in other aspects of life — top scientists and engineers who can send human beings to the moon but who may be brutal with their spouses; human beings who have a vast understanding of the way the universe operates but little understanding of themselves or their lives.

It is not difficult to trace the origin of all human misery to the phenomenon of 'I' in the human individual. This is where mischief begins. Wars, violence and exploitation have their ultimate origin

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## Universal Brotherhood and Global Sustainability

there. So the problem of world reconstruction is the problem of the regeneration of the individual.

In the new context of safe globalization, old goals, either at the individual or corporate level, become inapplicable — they need to be redefined if survival is to be expected. This requires an understanding of the spiritual nature of Man, since he is the goal-maker: to know why he does not stop with the ‘need’ but turns it into ‘greed’.

### Geological Calendar

Scientific investigations indicate that the Earth got solidified about 4500 MY (million years) ago. In the beginning there was no oxygen either in the oceans or in the atmosphere, but only nitrogen, CO<sub>2</sub>, etc. There had been no life on Earth until about 2600 MY before the present. This era is therefore called *Azoic*.

At this time blue-green algae appeared and started to convert H<sub>2</sub>O to oxygen, with the help of sunlight, using the photosynthesis process. They brought the atmospheric oxygen level to the present value of 21% needed for the subsequent life forms. What is not commonly realized is the fact that these original unicellular organisms, which produced oxygen, themselves thrived most efficiently at an oxygen level nearly half that. Were ‘survival of the fittest’ the only governing principle of the evolution of biological life they would never have produced the 21% level. It seems they were creating an environment better suited for the later life. At many points in the evolution of life it

appears as though a Great Plan was being followed, and it has been throughout, a phenomenon of *co-evolution*, rather than competitive evolution, on the planetary scale.

Then came the *Archeozoic* and the *Proterozoic* eras lasting for a total of 1450 MY. Then followed the *Paleozoic* era (350 MY) of invertebrates and amphibians. The great reptiles came and went in the next *Mesozoic* era (140 MY). Mammals appear in the next *Cenozoic* era (60 MY). *Homo Sapiens* appear in the last few million years.

### Hierarchy of Levels

In all this long history of biological evolution we can see a gradual building up of structural complexity, and a concomitant functional proliferation. Successive levels of organization of matter form a hierarchy, in which any given level contains all lower levels as components and is itself a component of all higher levels. Succeeding levels are structurally more complex than lower ones, inasmuch as a given level combines the complexities of all lower levels and has an additional complexity of its own. At any level of organization, not only is there certain autonomy but also a necessity to transcend that in order to meet the requirements of a Greater Whole of which it is a part.

Something entirely new happens at a supervening level of organization, and this event is not explainable in terms of the lower level. A tissue, for example, is more than the sum of its cells. There is thus a leap between levels — gaps or transcend-

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ences in the evolutionary process. There is no purely logical explanation of this situation; with present understanding the relation between the levels could not be predicted. Nobel Laureate, Ilya Prigogine, called this the process of *self-organization*.

There is another implication of the way life is organized. While higher levels *coordinate* lower levels, *all levels affect each other*. This is not a control hierarchy in the manner of a top-down business organization. The interactions and information flows are multi-linear and flow up as well as down.

### Evolution of Consciousness

In the organizational processes of the living systems, a dynamic balance is maintained between self-assertion or autonomy and submission to the requirements of the next higher whole in the hierarchy. In the case of human individuals, the next higher level of organizational hierarchy, variously called the 'Heavenly Man', 'Humankind', or simply the 'Global Consciousness', has not yet formed to a degree where its overall supervening control may be felt by the individual consciousnesses comprising it. However, that this Global Consciousness already exists and that more and more individuals are becoming sensitive and adaptive to this next stage of consciousness development have been amply demonstrated by the extensive investigations carried out at the Princeton University Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) programme over the recent decades.

Consciousness is relatively dormant in the Mineral Kingdom. It acquires the power to respond with feelings in the Plant Kingdom. It adds a new dimension of consciousness in the case of the Animal Kingdom, namely, that of thinking. Only in the Human Kingdom does it begin to flower into the dimensions of creative activity and into intuition. Direct experiencing of the unity of all Life, Order (*rta*) in Nature and pure Love, characterizes this new dimension of consciousness when developed. We shall refer to this as the consciousness of the 'Ethical Man'.

### The Ethical Man

At the present moment, evolution has brought us to the verge of this next stage of development in the human consciousness. Only a few individuals are showing signs of this development. These are the precursors. The majority of humanity is still in the stage of emerging from the control of the Animal Mind (passions and drives predominant) and developing the state of Concrete Mind, and thence to developing the state of Abstract Mind. Instinctive emotional response still plays a dominant role in deciding a man's course of action, as against the 'right' action.

Even though this transition to the next stage is not yet complete, an ever-increasing number of people are showing an awareness of coherence, beauty and goodness, evidencing the dawning of the new consciousness. Not only this: this next stage of the evolution is *awaiting our conscious participation*. An understanding of the constitutive Principles of the

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‘Human Self’ (Individual) is therefore in order, since it serves to give us a perspective view of the Great Plan and our immediate role in it, and the direction in which we have to work.

The Monad (*Turiyātmā*), existing on the Anupādaka Plane, puts forth a reflection of itself and acquires vehicles on the lower Planes for the sake of gaining experience. The Permanent Atoms and Principles get attached to the Monad with the help of the seven Creative Hierarchies.

The four lower Principles constitute the perishable Personality, which is renewed every incarnation. The real Individual, the Self (*Jivātmā*) continuing in the Causal Body, lasts throughout the Human stage.

The Human Self has a programme and a goal for Itself, which is to reach back to the Divinity of its origin in the fully awakened state of consciousness of the Ethical Man. One accomplishes this by gaining experience in the world of time and space through the ‘Personality’. The Personality itself comprises of four Principles or vehicles of consciousness working in still ‘lower’ levels of existence, the lowest of which is the physical world we perceive. These four Principles are respectively the psycho-emotional bodies through which thoughts and emotions are experienced; the Etheric Double, which is the vehicle of the five types of *prāna* (vitality) and nerve energies; and the gross physical body through which sensations are experienced. For long periods of evolution the Personality fancies its own goals in life. These may not be in consonance with the goals of the Human Self (namely,

the Ethical Man), which are spiritual. But continued experience and the gaining of knowledge make us realize our true spiritual goal. From then onwards the Personality cooperates and harmonizes with the Self, making the world a beautiful and good place to live for all.

### Ecological Footprint

In the middle of the nineteenth century the world’s population reached one billion, and its use of resources increased dramatically. Both the population and resource use continued to grow throughout the twentieth century. In the past fifty years, humanity has used more natural resources than in all of the preceding millennia together.

The ‘ecological footprint’ gives a quantitative estimate of the human overload of nature: it defines the share of the planet’s biological productivity used by an individual, a city, a nation, or all of humankind. If the footprint of a settlement is larger than its area, that settlement is not independently sustainable. A city is intrinsically unsustainable because very few of the natural resources used by its inhabitants come from within its boundaries. In 1996, the Earth’s biosphere had 12.6 billion hectares of biologically productive space, making up about one-fourth of the planetary surface. Equitably shared, in a population of 5.7 billion, this yielded an ‘earth-share’ of 2.18 hectares per person. Today the earth-share has shrunk: there are more people — 6.3 billion — while the biosphere’s biological productivity has remained at best constant.

Thus today's Earth-share is merely 2.1 hectares for each person on the planet. Yet the average footprint is 2.8 hectares and it is growing rapidly.

### **Impending Global Crisis**

We are approaching the outer edge of the planet's capacity to sustain human life. The disciplines of General Systems Theory and Systems Ecology point out that living at the edge is dangerous, because ecosystems do not collapse in piecemeal fashion. Modern societies have been operating on the mistaken assumption that in nature cause and effect are proportional, that an additional ounce of pollution produces an additional ounce of damage. This, however, is not so. Ecosystems may be polluted for many years without any change at all, and then suddenly flip into an entirely different condition. Gradual changes accumulate vulnerability, until a single shock to the system, such as a flood or a drought, knocks the system into a different state, less adapted to sustain human life and economic activity. The observations of scientists, for example in the case of the tsunamis, indicate that the world now is heading for such a crisis. They also point out that a vision of a peaceful and sustainable society and adopting simple lifestyles will go a long way towards providing a positive eco-feedback that can avert this mishap.

### **'I' and 'Not-I' in Dynamic Balance**

Systems are integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of

smaller parts. Individual 'things' (plants, people, schools, watersheds) are themselves systems, and are not sustainable separate from the larger systems in which they exist. The Centre for Ecoliteracy recognizes that learning to think systematically is critical to an education for sustainability.

In the organizational hierarchy, the myriad entities comprising nature are living entities that are *both interdependent and autonomous to a degree*. They are both wholes and parts of larger wholes. In its self-assertive autonomous role, each entity is intent upon its self-consummation, whereas in its role as a subsidiary part, each entity is capable of transcending itself in the interest of the greater whole. There is apparently a dynamic balance to be maintained between autonomy and submission to the needs of the next higher whole in the hierarchy.

All human beings are integrated parts of one Individual Being which is the entire human species. In other words, we all belong to one individual being just as different parts of an organism belong to that organism. The realization of this belonging together can have profound consequences for our consciousness and behaviour, promoting cooperation, harmony and peacefulness.

A global society need not suppress differences between individuals, cultures, and societies. However, notwithstanding pronounced social and cultural diversity, a peaceful and sustainable global society must have a high degree of unity. The nations and cultures of the world need to



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be united by common values and aspirations, centred on creating a social and ecological environment in which all people can live with dignity and well-being.

Simpler lifestyles must be the rule because people have a deeper sense of responsibility for their communities and their environment.

A renaissance of spirituality is needed as well. With less stress and anxiety in daily life people can explore the higher

and deeper dimensions of their life.

In the final count, the decisive alternative to a world of misery, conflict and violence is a sustainable and equitable world that inspires peace in people's hearts — the precondition of enduring peace in the world. In creating a vision of such a world, the holistic science of systems and evolution has a major role. And those of us who are developing such a science have a major responsibility.

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**As the ignorant act from attachment  
to action, O Bharata, so should the  
wise act without attachment, desiring  
the welfare of the world.**

*Bhagavadgītā*, III.25

# Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Italy

PATRIZIA MOSCHIN CALVI

ACCORDING to the biography of Helena Petrovna von Hahn written for the Russian public by Helena Fyodorovna Pissarev, the version of the wedding celebrated at the age of seventeen with Nikifor Blavatsky (then a forty-year-old) is very different from the 'official' version given by A. P. Sinnett and reported in many other biographies, and is in agreement with the details that HPB herself revealed in an exchange of letters with her friend, Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, which we can see in *HPB Speaks*, vol. II.

In her book, Mrs Pissarev reports the accounts of Madame Yermolov, the wife of the governor of Tiflis at the time, a close friend of the family, especially the Fadeyevs, the maternal line of the von Hahn family. Madame Yermolov states that in 1849 Helena went missing from home, probably to follow Prince Galitzin, who apparently was involved in esotericism and was considered a sorcerer. He used to frequent the house of HPB, and in their lengthy discussions, Helena was probably able to embark upon inner reflection, which other contributors in her entourage could not manage. Thanks to the collection of books belonging to her

maternal great-grandfather she had started those reflections at fourteen years of age. According to the direct account of HPB, he had a strange library containing hundreds of books on alchemy, magic and other occult sciences, which she had read with the greatest interest before reaching fifteen. She was so fascinated by these teachings that one day she disappeared from home and, to avoid other scandals, her family decided to set up an arranged marriage on her return, something which, to everyone's great surprise, HPB accepted.

According to Madame Yermolov, her aim as a married woman was to obtain a passport and lead an existence which was freer from the constant supervision that a single aristocratic woman had to endure at the time in her country.

During talks with her future husband when they were engaged, he had revealed to her that he believed in occult disciplines and in the mysterious sciences of the Kurds and Persians, unlike many other young people who laughed at the so-called magic superstitions. She considered him a tool therefore to proceed with her intentions.

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However, her husband did not embark on this study with the same intensity, dedication and readiness to sacrifice, as HPB. After a few months of arguments and a walkout, she left him because she wanted to carry on with her studies, dedicating herself to them totally.

Her first destination was Constantinople, again according to Madame Pissarev, who remembered that Prince Galitzin had introduced her to an occultist who put HPB's psychic abilities to the test and provided her with an address in Egypt, probably Paulus Metamon's, who became her first teacher.

From then onwards, HPB's life was a succession of trips of every kind, to Turkey, Greece, Egypt, France, the UK, North America, Ceylon, Japan, Burma, India, even to Tibet which then was considered practically inaccessible to foreigners, and where she is stated to have been several times, etc. Indeed she travelled to every corner of the world from 1849, also to study with the Masters and gain experience that would serve her in her commitment to spreading Theosophical ideals. In his diaries, Colonel Olcott said she was faithful only to her mission and to the Masters, for whom she would have sacrificed anything else without hesitation.

Italy was also included in her pilgrimage, and Blavatsky stayed there in 1865, 1867, 1868, and between April and August in 1885.

During the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Unification of Italy (which took place in March 2011), the figure of

Blavatsky returned to the limelight in Italy, along with Garibaldi and Mazzini. These distinguished fathers of the homeland — and this has not been well known until now — dedicated themselves to esotericism; they believed in reincarnation, and were involved in spiritualism and psychic phenomena, etc., but they certainly were not alone, as politicians and scholars in the Risorgimento (The Resurgence) period had the same interests.

It is not surprising that Blavatsky, with her impetuous, fiery character, had a liking for our patriots. An essay by Dr Riccardo Scarpa explains how she reached those figures in Italian politics:

Theosophists noted the friendship and deep sharing of values that connected Helena Petrovna Blavatsky to General Giuseppe Garibaldi, which culminated in her participating in the battle of Mentana, reportedly on 3 November 1867, in which Helena was seriously injured, maybe trying to save the Hero, and how the Hero himself was symbolically present at the first encounter between Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, in the Garibaldi red shirt also worn then by HPB as she often used to do.

What must be remembered however is how the figure of the Hero of the Two Worlds was perceived during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in India, a Hindu and chiefly Brahmanic<sup>1</sup> environment, revealing his action as an action of the Great White Lodge, also an inspiration for the 'Risorgimento' in Hindustan.

It would have been Surendranath Banerjea,

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from a Brahmanic family and a participant in the syncretistic movement *Brahma Samāj*, founded by Ram Mohan Roy, who introduced the figures of Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi to the Indian world, in a conference held in Utterpara in 1876.

In 1897 another Brahma Samāj supporter, Lala Lajpat Rai, published a biography on Garibaldi in Urdu in Lahore, which was part of a trilogy that included the biographies of Shivaji by Dr Gita Devi Srivastava, and Giuseppe Mazzini, where all three personalities were considered as *avatāra-s*, incarnations of enlightened Masters, who came down to Earth to light the path of mankind, and of nations.<sup>2</sup>

In Lala Lajpat Rai the two *avatāra-s* establish the ideal, archetypal thought-action combination, according to the relationship that binds the Holy Rāmdās in the act of conferring the *diksā*, the initiation, on the warrior Shivaji.

But let us go back to Blavatsky and the Battle of Mentana (3 November 1867). According to HPB herself she was injured defending Garibaldi and thrown into a common ditch as she was believed to be dead, but was then saved and cured by the Masters, who watched over her as a great task was awaiting her in the bosom of the Theosophical Society which she was to set up just eight years later.

In his book *Esoterismo e Personaggi dell'Unità d'Italia (Esotericism and Personalities in the Unification of Italy)* Pierluigi Baima Bollone writes on the subject:

. . . the alleged wounding of Blavatsky at Mentana could have symbolic value, considering that her position is very critical with regard to Christianity, especially Catholicism, and positively anti-papal, and also the battle was fought against the papal army . . .

Some scholars also speak of a possible encounter in Naples with the anarchist Bakunin, who met Garibaldi at Capera during his first trip to Italy (January 1864), and during his second, established among the many secret associations he founded, the 'International Brotherhood', probably before his encounter with Blavatsky in the Neapolitan city, but the cultural and ideological contamination seemed evident at that point.

Let us now consider what has remained from this union between the Risorgimento and esotericism. According to the writer, Gianni Santamaria, the traits we have inherited from this period could be:

The idea of the theory of evolution, despite the fact that today this is in difficulty. The existence of other worlds inhabited by intelligent creatures — Mazzini believed that extra-terrestrials existed. Then there is an underground current of Theosophy, a bit like the grandmother of the New Age, which brings syncretism and gnosis with it. The entity of the cosmic Christ is separated from the figure of historical Jesus, considered only as a prophet. Finally, the re-evaluation of polytheism, seen as an aspect of civilization. These are the seeds that have flowered today. Look at the case of the city of Turin, still considered a

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magical city today. This is due to the fact that the Savoy dynasty welcomed sorcerers, occultists and spiritualists from all over Europe in an anticlerical role. These characters and groups took root in the Savoy capital and became a reference point.

Even from accounts of trips to Italy, HPB emerges as a keen researcher, with a desire to know, examine, and study esoteric sciences, who had frequented all kinds of occultists and had learnt to use and strengthen her natural higher talents with awareness.

It is therefore difficult to make logical sense of her movements; as A. P. Sinnett explains in HPB's biography:

... we will rarely find any logical reason which explains her actions and even she herself often found herself in the position of not understanding why at a given moment she was getting ready to go somewhere. The real reasons for these actions and movements were due to the orders she received through occult perception channels ...

Whatever her reasons for travelling were, we have to recognize that she knew how to capitalize on them, working to recover Indian religion and culture, which she brought to the West to be rediscovered

and developed, but also leaving a wealth of spiritual teachings that have enriched all of humanity.

Blavatsky had also learned how to travel well in another way — without moving from the chair she could describe the world and places, books and events that had happened along the most varied space–time coordinates, taking her astounded conversationalists or readers with her, fascinated by an exhibition which was as faithful as it was expressive.

Yet, according to G.R.S. Mead, she was not a teacher in the strictest sense of the word:

... she had no idea what it meant to convey something in an ordered and systematic fashion; in actual fact she herself hated the idea of being considered a master of ethics and spiritualism, and strongly objected to this title, protesting that she was the least suitable person for such a position. No, she was something better than this; better than any formal teacher because she was a natural flame so to speak, whose contact awakened enthusiasm for a greater life, a wonderful incentive that aroused and faced the problem of self-awareness, an extraordinary motivator of a longed-for return to our origins, a real singer of songs from our homeland ...

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1. Cfr. G. Borsa and P. Beonio Brocchieri, *Garibaldi, Mazzini e il Risorgimento nel risveglio dell'Asia e dell'Africa (Garibaldi, Mazzini and the Risorgimento in the Reawakening of Asia and Africa)*, Milan 1984.
2. *Rassegna storica del Rinascimento Italiano*, Nr. II, 1975, pp. 258–529.

# Visit to the House Where H. P. Blavatsky was Born

JAN JELLE KEPPLER

## Visit to Kiev

The aeroplane arrived around midnight at the airport in Kiev, which is situated some fifty kilometres from the city centre. Kiev is the capital of the Ukraine and has about five million inhabitants. Chernobyl, where the nuclear power station melted down, is situated only eighty kilometres to the north of the capital, close to the border with Byelorussia.

Our apartment was situated in an old building close to the centre of the city, next to the Iranian embassy, the office of the European Commission and a German Protestant Church. It was well after midnight when we arrived at the building, where it appeared that the elevator did not work, so we had to carry our luggage to the fourth floor ourselves. This was a good introduction to the general state of affairs in the country. But it must be said from the beginning, that despite the many inconveniences that were encountered during this trip, the people we met were mostly very gentle and helpful.

During the tour of the town, we saw the old West Gate of the city, the Twin Churches, with their towers facing each

other instead of both being oriented in the same direction.

The town made one think of Athens, probably because of its orthodox way of life and organization. We had supper on our way home at 'Traly Valy', a self-service restaurant with a choice of many traditional national dishes.

## Visit to Dnepropetrovsk

The journey from Kiev by train was very comfortable. The landscape was a lush green, but closer to the city there were large areas of obsolete factories, which had fallen into ruins.

Because the house where HPB was born, is not in a very good state, we were taken first to the Museum, under whose authority the house is. This is the Literature Museum and most of the articles, which should have their place in the 'Blavatsky Centre' once that is created as a museum in its own right, are kept there. The Literature Museum is under the hierarchy of the Historical Museum, so we first had to go there and meet the director.

The house of HPB is situated near the centre in the old part of the town, which is a couple of kilometres downstream

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from the new centre. The level of the river changed when dams were built in order to have a large seaport. Before that, the water was considered to have healing powers, as it went over a number of cascades just before it passed the place where the city was founded. The first foundation of Yekaterinoslav or Ekaterinoslav (renamed Dnepropetrovsk, in 1926) was in 1776, just after the eight-year war with the Turks had ended on 21 July 1774. It was meant to 'open the window' into the Occident. The foundation of the town formed an integrated part of a colonizing strategy against the Turks, who had at least five main fortresses downstream on both sides of the river Dnieper. Because of the yearly flooding and the swamps, the town was moved upstream after two decades. In 1792 (the year of the French Revolution), Tzarina Catherine II signed a blueprint for the new town. Today, it is the industrial and scientific centre of the Ukraine. Since Perestroika the number of its inhabitants has gone down from over 1.5 million to some 1.2 million.

At the time HPB was born, the town was just half a century old, thus rather new and promising, considering the spirit of that time. While going through the streets, we saw a tramway which had been constructed in the middle of a wide avenue, in the same manner as the Tervuren Avenue in Brussels, and it looked strikingly alike. Our hosts told us that Belgian engineers had conceived the project some time in the eighteen-eighties as a copy of the Tervuren Avenue, which we

knew was a gift from the Belgian king to his people at the celebration of the fifty years independence of that country in 1880.

In the museum, there was a statue of an ancient god, which was discovered nearby, which some historians think is Vishnu, and therefore, they also think that the *R̥g Veda* happened there and that the struggle, in which light won over darkness, took place almost exactly on the same spot where HPB was born.

The museum is situated on the highest point of the city, next to a cathedral, for which Catherine II and the Austrian king at that time, laid the first stone. The cathedral was meant to become the biggest ever, but the building, when finally constructed, represented only a small part of the original plan. On top of that, the building had served as a museum for atheism, during Soviet times. The restoration was almost completed and it had a rather neutral atmosphere inside.

The Historical Museum itself was in its original old building in classical style, to which was added at the back, a new modern-style building with big exhibition rooms. Inside this museum we were introduced to the director, who seemed pleased to be able to welcome visiting TS members from abroad. There was a portrait of the mother of HPB, who is still a well-known Russian writer by the name of Helena von Hahn. Later, we were told, that in the Literature Museum were stored some 5,000 objects of HPB and her family, waiting to be put on exposition.

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### Centre of H. P. Blavatsky and Family

The house where HPB was born almost 175 years ago on 12 August 1831 is in a rather busy road. One had to drive by car along the bank of the river to the south of the city, where the old town was situated. The area around the house has become industrialized and most of the old buildings have been demolished. As if by a miracle, H. P. Blavatsky's house has stayed almost completely intact.

Andrey de Fadeyev, HPB's grandfather, who was a government official and who ended his career as a Provincial Governor, bought the house in the year 1815, when he became head of the Bureau for Foreign Colonists.

It was probably in the big room on the ground floor that the baptizing ceremony of Helena Petrovna took place in 1831, during which ceremony one of her nieces set fire to the dress of the priest leading the ceremony.

Behind the smaller room on the ground floor was the other big room, where HPB's grandmother, Helena Pavlovna Fadeyev, had her quarters and where the children used to come very often. She was a princess and member of the Dolgorukov's family, descending from the Viking King Roerik, who had founded the Russian Empire ten centuries ago. It was he who was known as the Prince of the Roes, the people who gave their name to the Russian people and their country. The grandmother was an exception in her time, being an artist and musician as well as an autodidact in botanical and archeological science. As a woman, she had not been

able to go to Universities, but she had become such a learned person, that she was corresponding with other scientists in Western Europe. She spoke five languages and taught ancient and modern Greek to her granddaughter HPB, who spent much of her youth in her grandparent's house.

In the smaller room at the back of the house was the library inherited from the family of HPB's grandmother, where as a child she spent a lot of time reading books. It contained hundreds of books, many of which were on subjects of a spiritual nature and occult science, such as magic and alchemy.

There was a big garden at the back of the house, where HPB's grandmother had a vast collection of plant species. Her family had some fourteen servants, some of whom belonged to a family of serfs, who had been there for generations.

The director of the Literature Museum informed us that the river Dnieper is described by HPB and by her mother, Helena von Hahn, in their books. The director said that the novel, *The Animated Violin*, in which HPB describes the river, would become obligatory literature for the secondary schools in the Ukraine, in the next school year.

In the Literature Museum we saw two exhibitions of modern art and an exhibition of the different study rooms of six Russian writers, among them the one of Helena von Hahn, HPB's mother. There was a small exhibition in a separate room with objects of HPB and her family. It contained a portrait of the





HPB Museum Centre, Dnepropetrovsk



HPB with her mother

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fourteen-year-old Helena Petrovna with her mother, painted after the death of the latter.

The HPB Museum Centre is open to the public two days a week, during the summer period. The local TS organizes a programme for visitors.

### Stay on the Crimea

One of the sightseeing stops on the way to the Crimea, was at the Gung Fu Centre of Valeriy Marjin on the north side of the Crimea. We were told that, several years ago, when he came back from the war in Afghanistan, he started his Centre there on a couple of hectares of an old tobacco farm and that he reopened a well, which seemed to have been the only one with water during a recent drought. In one of the rooms there is an altar, where objects of all faiths and religions are gathered together, including an icon of H. P. Blavatsky, from whose works Valeriy repeatedly gave citations.

During the summer, in the relatively small town of Yalta, which has only about 100,000 inhabitants, the tourists who come to stay there for their holidays, increase the number of inhabitants by more than a factor of ten. In this town there are so many trees, that when we came out of the apartment in the evening, we had the impression that we were entering into a dark forest.

On the last day, we went to a place called Koktebel, which is situated a four-hour drive away some 150 kilometers to the east. The scenery we saw there is

unforgettably beautiful. The African and Minor Asian geological plates have pushed up mountain formations and there is even proof of volcanic activities.

In his beach house, in Koktebel, which looks like a church or chapel, lived and worked a painter, writer and poet by the name of Voloshin, who was a Theosophist for many years, before he became an Anthroposophist. He also was a Free Mason and constructed his house of stone according to Masonic principles. The paintings he made look like the ones made by Roerich, but they appear to be more refined and subtle.

On the last day, we were able to purchase a large book with reproductions of the works in the museum that has been established in the house of Voloshin. There are some 60,000 objects conserved by the second widow of this artist, who returned from the Impressionists' scene in Paris to his motherland, after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

### Conclusion

The visit to the Ukraine and the birthplace of Mme Blavatsky was an unforgettable experience. The local TS members did their utmost to make our stay in their country a success. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts and hope to meet them again.

Those who would also like to visit the Ukraine and the Blavatsky Centre in Dnepropetrovsk are advised to contact the president of the TS Lodge in Kiev by e-mail: [kiev@theosophy.in.ua](mailto:kiev@theosophy.in.ua) ✧

# The Evolution of Consciousness

JEAN DELAIRE

AT the root of all our modern misunderstanding of life — life in its true, its innermost aspect — is the fact that we have studied Evolution without its corollary, Involution; we have watched man's ascent from the brute and forgotten his prior descent from the Angel.

All life 'descends' from the heights, from the world of Divine Plenitude; and it is this 'fall' of Spirit into Matter which necessitates the long and often painful re-ascent which we call Evolution.

In that amazing book, the *Pistis Sophia*, the Bible of Gnosticism, those arresting words are placed in the mouth of Jesus, when, after the Resurrection, He instructs his chosen disciples in the ultimate secrets of creation:

The mystery which is beyond the world, the mystery whereby all things exist, it is all Evolution and all Involution.

Throughout antiquity — in the ancient schools of Hindu philosophy; in Greece, among the Ionian and later philosophers; among the Neoplatonists of Alexandria — Involution was always conceived as the inevitable complement, the twin aspect, of Evolution. Because the Divine Life was

*involved* in matter, did it *evolve* out of matter. In other words, if the universe evolves towards God it is because He is himself *involved* within it.

The great Neoplatonist Proclus admirably described that threefold process which epitomizes the whole universe with all its laws:

First — the Cause (God Transcendent)

Secondly — the Effect (God Immanent or Involution).

Thirdly — the Effect reverting to its Cause (Evolution, or God Immanent seeking reunion with God Transcendent).

In a last analysis the evolution of man is the evolution of consciousness, which may be described as an ever-increasing awareness of the world around him, and in the more developed man, of the world within him. In metaphysical terms it might be called an ever-widening circle of relationship between the Self and the not-Self.

The question thus inevitably arises: Is self-consciousness the ultimate realization attainable by man? Or is there something beyond, above, the self-conscious state, the knowledge that 'I am I'?

Probably every student of the ancient

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## The Evolution of Consciousness

Indian philosophies would answer in the affirmative, since the attainment of universal consciousness is the ultimate ideal in every form of Hindu faith, and there is not a learned Brāhmana who has not made a study of those states of super-consciousness, practising the methods whereby they may be attained, so that universal or divine consciousness might be realized here and now.

Universal consciousness! Words of tremendous import, for they foreshadow a state of existence as far beyond our ordinary self-consciousness as this is above mere animal or vegetable sentience; they foreshadow the aim and ideal of every religion known to man, the merging of the 'self' into the 'All' — Nirvāna — or, as the Christian devotee would express it, the ultimate union of the Soul with God.

We talk of cosmic consciousness, universal consciousness, God-consciousness, yet not many of us fully realize what simple consciousness means, or how absolutely it comes under the sway of that great law of progressive evolution which all the worlds obey.

If we cast our minds back to the early days of our planet, can we not trace in imagination its first feeble manifestations in the lowest forms of life, in those vague movements of sentient beings, still apparently hovering on the threshold of

existence? Do we not see those small creatures that are as yet neither animal nor plant, expanding under the influence of light and warmth, contracting when exposed to the cold — dim foreshadowing of that law of attraction and repulsion which is destined later on, under the name of Pleasure and Pain, Love and Hate, to rule the world of men?

In more highly developed forms, as one sense after another is evolved, the creature becomes ever more clearly aware of the outer world; it discerns the light, it hears sound, it discovers other forms besides its own; its sense of touch becomes more delicate, pleasure and pain are intensified, memory is born, the reasoning faculties are awakened; until, with the advent of man, consciousness for the first time becomes individualized, becomes *self*-consciousness.

Here we see the first process of differentiation between the Self and the not-Self, the first wondering outlook of man on something outside himself, the first faint realization: 'I am not this: I am I.' Later on, eons of time later, comes the formidable question: What am I? Sphinx's riddle which all the wisdom of the ages has not yet fully succeeded in solving, but which mystics of every creed, in every age, have answered by the stupendous assertion: 'I am God.' ✧

**O worshipper of the formless Infinite,  
Reject not form, what lives in form is He.**

Sri Aurobindo



# Krishnamurti's Method

DANIEL ROSS CHANDLER

**K**RISHNAMURTI encouraged people to recognize the psychological predispositions that prevent persons from accurately perceiving reality immediately.

When presenting a public speech, he was not concerned primarily with delivering a carefully predetermined address to a passive audience listening quietly in agreement or disagreement. Krishnamurti was neither advocating a sectarian religious philosophy or theological perspective, nor was he seeking an intellectual agreement that leads listeners logically to a specific conclusion. Instead, speaking to audiences on several continents he developed an experiential method through dialogues and discussions. He demonstrated that listening happens naturally when people confront directly the fundamental problems and essential questions that concern human existence. However, listening becomes inhibited when hearers critically compare what the speaker states with what the hearers believe, or when hearers translate a speaker's message into the hearer's previous knowledge. Qualitative listening emphasizes 'what is', and qualitative listening develops when the mind is quiet and no longer separate from what is immediately observed. In this

silence, there is no centre to which a person can relate what is heard or seen; experiencing directly 'what is' inevitably evokes consciousness of beauty, order and love.

Krishnamurti encourages a creative process of dispassionate, individually initiated self-discovery based upon his belief that spirituality and education stem from stillness in which mind is free. Needleman describes Krishnamurti's communicative behaviour as an expression of the teacher's self-observation. 'Nothing about Krishnamurti', Needleman stated,

is as interesting as his work from moment to moment with people who come to hear him speak. The problems he addresses are perennial with man: war, violence, love, fear, time. But his uniqueness lies in his effort, and in the effort he demands of his audience, then and there to experience these problems directly as objects for impersonal, ongoing self-observation. Without this constantly renewed effort of immediate verification, one cannot well follow the procession of his thought. It becomes merely elegant, or, on the other hand, discontinuous, full of unwarranted leaps and unorthodox juxtapositions of

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## Krishnamurti's Method

ideas. And one thereby ends by either agreeing with him or disagreeing.<sup>1</sup>

Needleman indicates:

If we try it, now, and only if we try it — it makes no difference what we find — it may then be said that we are communicating with Krishnamurti. Communication is possible only between people, not between thoughts or images. To communicate with another, there must be the common instantaneous movement of something that is quicker (or 'higher') than thought. There is no process of communication, for process implies time, the future, which means the search for what is recognizable. Communication is out of time because outside of thought.<sup>2</sup>

Encouraging self-initiated effort of self-observation, Krishnamurti teaches an audience to experience thought quickly and immediately, without further thought and hence continuous deception. He indicates that a mind liberated from social and psychological conditioning becomes a religious mind; that a group of serious and sincere seekers who recognize the nature of the psyche and the nature of society create a complete revolution; and that their experience may evoke an entirely new understanding of spiritual and psychological freedom and the conviction that all social organization creates an obstacle that thwarts that freedom.

Education, Krishnamurti emphasized, should encourage children and young persons in developing instantaneous self-observation. A specific example

suggesting Krishnamurti's method is contained in *On Education*:

As you go into one particular thought you are beginning to understand the instrument which is examining that thought. Then what is important is not the thought but the observer who is examining the thought. And the observer is the thought which says: 'I do not like that thought, I like this thought.' So you attack the core of thought and not just the symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

Krishnamurti insisted that the students demonstrate his method themselves and confirm his instructions through their experiential education:

Look not with your mind but with your eyes. After having looked at all the colours, the shape of the land, of the hills, the rocks, the shadow, then go from the outside to the inside and close your eyes, close your eyes completely. You have finished looking at the things outside, and now with your eyes closed you can look at what is happening inside. Watch what is happening inside you, do not think, but just watch, do not move your eye-balls, just keep them very, very quiet, because there is nothing to see now, you have seen all the things around you, now you are seeing what is happening inside your mind, and to see what is happening inside your mind, you have to be very quiet inside. And when you do this, do you know what happens to you? You become very sensitive, you become very alert to things outside and inside. Then you find out that the outside is the inside, then you find out that the observer is the observed.<sup>4</sup>

## The Theosophist

Krishnamurti's educational method, like contemporary scientific method, emphasizes verification through demonstration; but Krishnamurti's philosophy is non-dualistic while Western philosophy assumes an inevitable dichotomy between seer and seen.

Analysing Krishnamurti's method is problematic for Westerners. Observing that the world teacher's confoundingly simple teaching is inevitably paradoxical, Raiola concluded correctly that examining Krishnamurti's example or philosophy is 'like trying to grasp a child's blown bubble: as soon as you think that you have hold of it, you discover that your hand is empty.'<sup>5</sup> This difficulty did not prevent Raiola from studying the educational principles and practice of experiential learning professed by John Dewey, Earl Kelley and Krishnamurti. When Currie and Breadmore compared and contrasted the educational philosophies presented by Maria Montessori and Krishnamurti, these two researchers found that both theorists condemned the traditional approach towards education. Currie and Breadmore analysed Montessori and Krishnamurti's teachings about how children learn and the role that children should assume in their education; the attributes, characteristics and training of teachers and the teacher-child relationship; and the proper educational environment without emphasizing discipline, competition, evaluation and the teaching methods. These researchers concluded that Montessori and Krishnamurti shared more similarities than differences and that the principal

difference was that Krishnamurti scorned developing and employing any particular method while Montessori attempted to construct a method based upon her observations of the 'natural child'. Currie and Breadmore stated:

In their desire to construct a new society, Montessori and Krishnamurti do not advocate collective upbringing or the control of education by the state. This is why both writers could not be described as social reconstructionists in the political sense but more as psychological reconstructionists[;] that is, both see that change in society can only truly come about in an enduring way when the individuals who comprise society undergo a radical psychological change. This change would be to develop critical awareness through self-education. This, they have both written, demands schools that are small where children receive individual attention and where schools are autonomous, not controlled by any government body. Krishnamurti would add that schools should also not be controlled by any religious body.<sup>6</sup>

Especially interesting is the observation that Krishnamurti experienced a radical transforming process. Recognizing that the world teacher attained fame by presenting a unique version describing Indian mysticism and philosophy through a charismatic and mesmerizing style of listening, White wrote that Krishnamurti reported that throughout his life he was subject to a profound spiritual purgation called 'the Process'. 'This purgation', White explained,



## Krishnamurti's Method

came to be called 'the Process' and suggested to those who witnessed it that his 'higher self' departed from his body and entered into what appeared to be a transcendent state of consciousness. This state was accompanied at times by severe pain in his head and back. Krishnamurti's experience has been likened to the awakening of the *kundalini* power, practised in some forms of Indian spirituality. The suffering accompanying this experience occurred only under certain circumstances and did not impede his teaching work; in fact, it contributed to the exalted state in which Krishnamurti knew the oneness with all life and the unconditioned freedom that he tried, through his continual lecturing and the books, tape recordings and videotapes published by his organization, to convey to thousands of persons under his influence.<sup>7</sup>

Through talks and discussions that were observed immediately and simultaneously recorded with audio and audio-visual cassettes for subsequent instruction, Krishnamurti professed and practised a particular 'philosophy of perception' that is verified empirically through pragmatic application. Krishnamurti taught and demonstrated that learning requires constant observation and listening.

An essential, elementary teaching is that the problem confronting a person is not the world; instead a person's relationship with another person constitutes the problem; and when a person's problem becomes extended or amplified, then the problem becomes an apparent world

problem. Understanding this reality requires knowing oneself; within a person is discovered the foundation of understanding as well as the beginning and ending of everything. Being an integrated person entails understanding the complete process of one's consciousness, the hidden depths and the open aspects. Inevitably a person *is* the world.<sup>8</sup> When a person commences to comprehend himself without attempting to change himself, then that person experiences transformation.

Krishnamurti's life and teaching confirm that he laboured to create a new generation of humans who evidence a new quality of mind, a new sensitivity, a new feeling towards the environment. The world teacher worked to develop a new consciousness that is not an old consciousness remoulded into a new consciousness; instead he encouraged a completely new mind uncontaminated by the past rather than altering a mind that constitutes a continuity of the past in a new mould.

Krishnamurti taught that when a person affiliates with an organization that requires embracing a belief based upon dogma, then the mind becomes enslaved and thought cannot be free. He accepted nothing as truth without discovering that truth for himself. Never opposing the opinions articulated by other people, he accepted neither their authority nor their beliefs; he simply disregarded their assumptions, arguments and assertions.

Learning constitutes art. And like art, learning requires a distinct disengage-

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ment or an important impersonalization. Krishnamurti said that a true artist must be beyond the vanity and the ambitions of the self — never taking a stand, assuming a position, resorting to memory or permitting memory to dominate.

What is true is discovered in doubt by examining the numerous illusions, questioning the traditional values and analysing the accepted ideals. Discovering what is true is derived from finding what is false and true within an environment pervaded with suffering and oppression. Doubt, Krishnamurti stated, prompts a persistent understanding, although doubt never constitutes an end in itself. Truth frees, and is not an effort to be free. Truth is not an insight that is achieved; either truth is seen or truth is not seen; however truth cannot be perceived gradually.

Krishnamurti explained and exemplified that a person can live happily when no importance is attached or appropriated to the self; and this understanding constitutes an essential segment within correct

education. It is not simply possible but it is preferable to live in the world without ambition, remaining always anonymous and completely unknown. A person who is happy and loves does not desire possessions; such a person is not intimidated or overwhelmed with success, frustrated or dominated by position, or controlled or manipulated by authority. Happiness arises where goodness and love exist when a quiet mind seeks what is true, rather than when a person seeks happiness.

Through observation, a person must die to the continuity of everything.<sup>9</sup> Love, Krishnamurti taught, entails dying every day. Love is neither memory nor thought; love is not something that continues as a duration in time. There is love, and with love comes creation. Living completely and enjoying every moment as though each morning is a new beginning requires dying to everything of yesterday; otherwise a person exists mechanically and experiences neither love nor freedom.

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# Spiritual Alchemy

S. SIDDHARTH

ANNIE BESANT'S name is one which spontaneously touches the innermost chords of every Theosophist's heart. Though Theosophy, as such, was set out by Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott, it was Annie Besant who established it on a firm footing by nurturing it in various ways over a long period of time.

One of the ways adopted by Annie Besant was lecturing — which involved talking, explaining and answering. In August 1895, she gave a series of lectures at the Blavatsky Lodge, London. These were printed in the form of a book, which was titled *In the Outer Court*. She has imagined a mighty Temple on the top of a mountain, which symbolically represents the Supreme One. The Seeker who wants to attain it, climbs the hill and reaches the outer courtyard after much effort. Now he has to reach from the outer court to the Inner Sanctum Sanctorum that again is an arduous process for which she envisaged the cultivation of various qualities and explained them, one in each chapter.

First Chapter — Purification, Outer and Inner

Second Chapter — Thought Control

Third Chapter — The Building of Character

Fourth Chapter — Spiritual Alchemy

This last is the topic which describes the ultimate transformation.

Alchemy, as explained in the dictionary, is:

(a) An early form of chemistry, with philosophical and magical associations, studied in the Middle Ages. Its chief aims were to change baser metals into gold and to discover the elixir of perpetual youth.

(b) A method or power of transmutation, especially the seemingly miraculous change of a thing into something better.

According to the previous three lectures, the foundation for the final entrance of the aspirant, from the Outer Court into the Temple, is well laid. He is cultivating the three requisites — *purification, thought control* and *character building*. All these are simultaneously taken up, not one after the other.

After this, he has to take up the task of cleaning, polishing and shaping the potential in him, to bring out the best in him and more. This is explained by Annie Besant by bringing in the analogy of the alchemist, who changes the baser metal

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into a more valuable one: like copper being changed into gold.

In the same way, the candidate wanting to enter the temple has to cleanse his forces and transmute them from the gross aspect to the refined and spiritualized level. The forces are not destroyed or annihilated, but they are processed. Energy, vigour, power — all these life-forces are there but they have to be groomed. For example, we can imagine an unbridled horse. We are not to break his limbs or bones but utilize his horsepower judiciously, which is not easy at all. It is not easy and that is exactly why we must learn more about it.

First of all, let us see how these forces are manifested in our life and what is the thought process behind it. Our energy manifests as Action, physically. The life-force manifests as Thought, mentally. This thought leads to feeling, desire, longing, enjoyment — all because of ignorance. And desire results in action. Action brings bondage. But we cannot be without action. Or else the progress of the world would stop. So what are the means to 'Freedom from Bondage'?

Annie Besant says: Use the process of Spiritual Alchemy. Desire — is desire for self. By awareness (wisdom) try to change it gradually.

Desire for self ⇔ Family ⇔ Community ⇔ Society ⇔ City, so on and so forth; ultimately culminating in the Desire for Humanity as such.

She says this is nothing but the 'Fundamental Law of Sacrifice'.

a) The lower aspects of Sacrifice are a continual wheel of give and take. Annie

Besant quotes the *Bhagavadgītā* to explain the relation of Sacrifice and Action, thus suggesting the essentiality of both.

Creature (is the modification of) from Food

Food from Rain

Rain from Sacrifice

Sacrifice from Action

Action from Brahmā

Brahmā from the Imperishable

This wheel should not be broken, says the *Bhagavadgītā* (III.16). This change from one form into another is indeed alchemy. This idea of Sacrifice is there in all religions. Whether symbolic or real, they had a message to convey that *sacrifice is the quintessence of all action*. That means actions should be performed not out of desire but because they are right, in keeping with the harmony of the Universal Law. So 'Sacrifice and Action' is the common thread which binds us all together.

This sublimation — this change of Action into sacrifice is a process of Alchemy (chemical change). Just as fire burns up the impurities of gold or any metal, so also this alchemical process burns up all base aspects of action — selfishness, desire, ignorance. The knots of bondage automatically give. She calls this Fire of Spiritual Alchemy as Wisdom. Burnt in the Fire of Wisdom, action is no longer a burden or liability to the SOUL.

As we all know, where the action is done as duty, it becomes part of the Universal Harmony and helps in the

## Spiritual Alchemy

*evolution* and *raising* of the race. So the first lesson for the person trying to enter the Outer Court is — Train yourself to perform all action in this *sacrificial* way, realizing that you seek nothing, no fruit, no gain, no reward. This is the lower aspect of the Law of Sacrifice.

b) The Higher Aspect of Sacrifice — Sacrifice is a *Giving* or a *Pouring forth* as seen from the Inner Side.

(i) What is precious to oneself is poured forth for the *helping* and *joy* of others.

(ii) It is a gift from one who wants to share his joy. There is no agony in it, because *Brahman is bliss*.

This is clear also from Rāja Yoga, which speaks of the different sheaths of the soul on its way back from the lower worlds.

1. Sheath of bliss — causal frame
2. Sheath of intellect or will or life — subtle frame
3. Sheath of nourishment — gross frame

The Supreme too gives away by Self-Limitation of Its own Glory. It becomes *saguna* from *nirguna* and creates, so that more can share in the joy.

So Sacrifice has two meanings — from the view of the *Higher* and *Lower* Nature.

- i. Giving, which is Joy
- ii. Renouncing, which is Pain

Giving is the highest joy, because it is the essence of the Divine Nature. Renouncing is pain because the lower nature is used to grasping; it is avaricious, and so on. But this Pain too is useful. It helps to remove ignorance.

Here comes the *process* of Spiritual Alchemy once again.

Trouble and conflict ⇒ Pain ⇒ Consciousness ⇒ Realization or Awareness ⇒ Translating into the Higher Nature ⇒ Conviction ⇒ Full Control ⇒ Removal of Ignorance ⇒ Purification ⇒ Perception of the Real Nature of things.

### A Question

If Sacrifice is good, why connect it with Pain at all?

This is because in the lower nature there is a wrong perception of this phenomenon, Sacrifice. The lower nature is greedy, lacks far-sightedness, goes for quick pleasures, appearances, and the gratification of the animal nature.

But all these instances lead to the knowledge that they are useless and not what the lower nature thought they were. This pain of the experiences gives enlightenment and leads to knowledge. Pleasure of the Higher Nature too leads to knowledge.

Here there is again a Spiritual Alchemy.

Pain + Pleasure



Experience



Knowledge



Wisdom

Wisdom becomes the Guide, which is Pure Joy.

In the Higher Nature, Pain is Fire.

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Therefore, man emerges doubly lustrous because of the experience of pain. However, when both the lower and the Higher work together, there is Conflict. The lower suffers, but the Higher tries to control it and then puts some sense into it. This is seen everyday in everyone's life, through Reason and emotion — and their conflict.

Here is another Spiritual (Divine) Alchemy

Desire⇒Pain⇒Knowledge⇒Wisdom  
+ Discrimination of Higher⇒Suffering  
by Higher⇒Joy

This process of Alchemy sheds limitation, the bondage which prevents us from realizing the oneness with our Brothers and oneness with the Divine. 'He who feels himself as one with thee, is also one with every other', says the Universal Prayer. Once ignorance is destroyed, Pain also disappears.

Examples of Alchemy:

1) Pleasure-seeking is changed into the Joy-spreading faculty. Power, Knowledge and Truth tell us that Joy lies in the act of *giving*, not in the act of *gaining*. If you do not give what you have but just store it, it will get rusted.

2) Selfish love becomes divine Compassion — Alchemy happens not by diminishing but by channelling the love. Break down the walls of ignorance and let the joy spread out.

When divine Nature burns the limitations there is the liberation of

Spiritual Energy; subtle forces of the higher nature are set free. So spiritual life is FREE. The Soul shares its spiritual experiences and achievements. It does not go away. It stays for the good of the whole community.

True joy is in helping the common evolution. The help is given in a logical way. The one who sowed the bad seed is not allowed to escape the burden of harvest by passing it on. The Higher One stands by, and helps the lower one by putting strength and energy into its soul.

The highest reward for the Higher Soul is to be able to give its strength to the weaker one, enabling him to stand on his own. The Great Souls are happy to see their brothers rise towards the Light, which they have already achieved.

This path, as perceived from the mortal world, appears to be the Path of *woe*. Why?

a) Because much has to be done in a short time. So it is mind-boggling.

b) We leave behind much of the so-called pleasures to come to that Path.

But agony lasts only until the Light comes. Then it is no longer a path of woe.

Even Buddha was full of woe until he attained enlightenment. So ignorance is the cause of woe. Woe is within us, not outside, and it vanishes when divine illumination comes.

To conclude, if copper turns to gold, so also does an ordinary man become an Adept. ✧

**From people who merely pray, we must become people who bless.**

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

# Theosophical Work around the World

## **The Vice-President**

Mr M. P. Singhal and his wife have just returned from Delhi and North India after a very useful time there. They have brought their belongings to Adyar to live comfortably and will stay at the headquarters, ground floor apartment.

They visited Allahabad and saw the children whose education is looked after by TS members there. Mr Singhal gave a public lecture which was well attended. They then visited Lucknow and met the members of Satya Marga Lodge. Next day, they went to Kanpur where there is the Chauhan Lodge and answered questions before coming back to Delhi. There were also meetings with high-ranking police officials whom they could contact because of Mr Singhal's past work. The Besant Lodge which was meeting in their home in Delhi had a session of meetings at which they could be present.

## **West Africa**

The West African Section's General Secretary, Mr John Osmond Boakye, says that the Section organized a public lecture on 28 March 2012, at the Society's Headquarters in Accra. The topic of the lecture was 'The Challenges of Life and How Theosophy Addresses Them'. The speaker was Dr Kwadko Tutu, a publicity officer of the Theosophical Society and Senior Lecturer at the Economics Department of the University of Ghana.

Over forty people attended the lecture which was opened towards the end, to questions and contributions from the audience. Dr Douglas Adu-Gyamfi, a senior lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Ghana, gladly obliged to chair the lecture.

The Section held 'The School of the Wisdom' on 28 and 29 April 2012, on the theme, 'The Birth, Evolution and Destiny of the Human Soul'. Bro. I. K. Zaney was the Director.

## **South Africa**

The bi-annual Convention of the South African Section was held in Johannesburg on 17 and 18 March, the theme being '2012 and Beyond — A Theosophic Perspective'. It was well attended, and all agreed that it was a good Convention with professional speakers and well-organized discussion. An interesting topic was 'The Heroic Spiritual Journey of the Woman', which raised many questions and much worthwhile discussion.

Mr Jack Hartmann was voted as General Secretary and Mr Desmond Chapman as Assistant General Secretary. The Section is setting up an educational committee with representatives from three Lodges to discuss new initiatives in TS lectures, seminars, correspondence courses and publicity in order to keep the present membership and encourage more people, including the youth, to join. ✧

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*Date refers to the date of formation*

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† *Presidential Agency*

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