



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.

The Cause of Sorrow

RADHA BURNIER

THE Lord Buddha spoke of right perception as the first step on the Eightfold Path. To be able to see things as they are, not through coloured glasses of some kind, is one of the problems, perhaps the most important problem, with which we are faced. The Buddha also said that the first truth to realize is the truth of sorrow.

At first one wonders whether sorrow is a truth. We know that sorrow exists everywhere, but to perceive sorrow in the way He indicated is not easy. There is tremendous misery in the world: millions of people are starving, millions lose their lives, their homes, their limbs in the wars which take place. Tension, conflict and hatred exist in every part of the world: race against race, religion against religion and so on. All this is sorrow. When we read about it in the newspapers we may say: 'What a pity it is! Dreadful things are happening in the world.' But we do not really know what sorrow is. We do not see it with the whole of ourselves, because we give only a moment's thought to it and then it is brushed aside. Being far removed from us, we are not really troubled if tens of thousands are in utter misery somewhere. Our daily life goes on much as usual; we have our little pleasures, our little worries, our particular egoistical problems, and that is all.

Apart from the tremendous misery and sorrow that exists in the world, of which we know superficially with a part of our minds, there is much in our own lives and in the lives of the people around us, which is of the nature of sorrow, however little we realize it. There are the innumerable anxieties, the irritations, frustrations, the cravings which end in disappointment, which are not usually named as sorrow. But if we take the life we lead as a whole, it does not consist of that kind of happiness which may be called true happiness.

The Mahāyāna Buddhists say that enlightenment comes only when there is a deep compassion, a deep feeling for the misery and the suffering which exist in the world. Enlightenment may not come when we seek enlightenment and say: 'I am going to achieve something in the spiritual life.' The real reason for finding enlightenment should be an altruistic sympathy and compassion for all who suffer. There is a beautiful saying that Compassion is the mother of all Buddhas. A Buddha comes into existence when he sees how people suffer and when he feels the great urge to find a way out of this suffering. So to be able to perceive the futility, the misery, the meaninglessness, the sorrow of life is the first step.

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If we felt that deep concern about the suffering which exists in the world, we would want to know the way out. Most of us continue to live commonplace, mediocre lives, because there is nothing that deeply moves us. We do not feel that urgency to bring about a change. To see that necessity is the first step. When we see that, then naturally we will try to find the answer.

The Lord Buddha gave His answer in a very simple way. He said that the cause of all sorrow is craving, the thirst which exists in each one of us in a number of different forms. When we think that we have conquered this thirst in one shape, it arises in another form.

Thirst exists not only for objects. Some of us who are in the Theosophical Society may not have a craving for, let us say, money; we may not want to belong to the jet set, or to cover ourselves with jewels. But we have a craving for other things, such as spiritual advancement. We have preconceived ideas about relationships with other people. If I imagine a relationship with you in which you are very fond of me, there is a thirst in me for the type of relationship which I have imagined. When that does not turn out as I desire, I feel unhappy. Thirst also takes the shape of a desire for domination, of aggressiveness, of self-promotion in various forms, which if we are objective, we can see in ourselves. There is also the desire to escape from some things, and the desire to impose ideas on other people.

Desire or thirst exists because we do not have a sense of true values; we mistake

what is less valuable for what is more valuable, what is less real for what is more real. So, to see things in their true nature is extremely important. The spiritual life consists in knowing what is essential and what is not essential.

It is obvious that whatever has a conditioned existence and is dependent on something else for its being, has less value than that which is unconditional. Let us take, for example, the kind of happiness many of us enjoy. We may consider ourselves to be reasonably happy, but our happiness is dependent on external conditions and on other individuals. If you behave in a particular way, I am happy. If you behave otherwise, I immediately become unhappy, if you call me a fool, for instance, it makes me unhappy. My happiness depends on your accepting an image which I have created of myself as not being a fool, but on the other hand a very fine person. If we possess various things which give a sense of security, we are happy. Otherwise not. Every such form of happiness which is dependent on a particular condition or on another person is obviously not true happiness. But we are all the time trying to cling to these things which are dependent.

Whatever is conditional and dependent is of a temporary nature because no condition in the world remains exactly the same. When the condition changes, the happiness ends. This is an 'obvious' fact, obvious only to a superficial layer of our minds, not to the whole of ourselves. An instance of this is the fact that we 'know' that existence in the physical body is

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dependent on many conditions. We 'know' that life in the body will cease when the conditions are altered. And yet, if life disappears from a certain body, we feel very unhappy in spite of what we 'know' and the philosophy that we may preach.

We are continually clinging to the impermanent; the impermanent in the form of ideas, of attachments, in the form of organizations and systems, in a number of different forms. One of the Upanishads says that the Eternal can never be found through grasping at perishable things. But that is what we are seeking to do. We are all the time concerned with the things which will pass away.

When we are not attracted to certain things, it does not mean that thirst does not exist. To run away from things is not absence of thirst; to be repelled by something means the craving exists. We may want a particular thing, we are disappointed and therefore we are repelled.

Whether we are repelled or clinging to something, we have to try and see what is the true nature of the thing, whether it is worth seeking. We should try to discriminate between the real and the unreal. This requires extremely clear intelligent perception. A mind which is normally not clear and logical, is not capable of becoming suddenly receptive with regard to spiritual matters. Therefore we should always be logical and clear in our thinking as far as we can.

It is important for anyone who wishes to understand the spiritual life, not to make any concessions to himself. We very often see things better when our own self-

interest is not concerned, but when something touches ourselves, then we are not able to see it at all. When we are attracted to a thing, it is possible that we feel a sense of guilt, but that also makes it difficult for us to perceive. Attraction is not in itself 'wrong', obviously. There is nothing 'wrong' in the world in a certain sense. To see beauty is a form of attraction, but if we crave for that beauty again, then we are caught in the web of desire. Whenever there is pleasure, we want that pleasure again. We should see that in such a case it is not the object which matters but it is our own mind which is creating this pattern. It is the mind which creates images of the pleasure which has once been felt and then desire is renewed. If there is to be freedom from thirst, then the freedom has to come through renunciation by the mind, not necessarily of the object. One may be surrounded by any number of objects and yet feel untouched by them. One can be surrounded by all the illusory, evanescent things of the world and yet not run after them. One can also outwardly renounce everything and be full of this craving within, which makes of us hypocrites, as the *Bhagavadgītā* says. Attraction to certain things and repulsion also become a habit, a mechanical process. To pull oneself out of this, requires sustained effort and extraordinarily keen intelligence.

In the long run, the evolutionary process teaches man to cease from craving. Again and again pleasure is sought and pain ensues. In the earlier stages, man attributes the cause of the suffering to other people and to circumstances outside.

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But, at a later point in evolution he wakes up to the fact that the cause of pain is in his own action and outlook.

We are capable of learning through a conscious effort and need not undergo suffering. This is the difference between the man who has set his foot on the Path and the man of the world. The former begins to try to find the truth for himself and not let the mere process of evolution teach him. Each one of us can make this

effort to see things as they really are, to know what is truly valuable, to realize that all the passing things of the world will lead nowhere if we cling to them.

We have to turn our eyes to the Eternal. It seems as if it is a long way from seeing the sorrow which is in the world to the Eternal, but to see the suffering, the sorrow, to go into the reason for it, leads towards the path which is the way to the Eternal. ✧

Clinging, in bondage to desires, not seeing in bondage any fault, thus bound and fettered, never can they cross the flood so wide and mighty.

Blinded are beings by their sense desires spread over them like a net; covered are they by cloak of craving; by their heedless ways caught as a fish in the mouth of a funnel-net. Decrepitude and death they journey to, just as a sucking calf goes to its mother.

Buddhism. Udana 75-76

The Secret Doctrine — Discovering the Mysteries of the Universe

BHUPENDRA VORA

IN the proem to *The Secret Doctrine* Madame Blavatsky quotes from a prehistoric record about the mystery of creation. The symbolism in this record is pregnant with deep meaning about the process of evolution and the manifestation of life in the cosmos. The proem states:

An Archaic Manuscript — a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific and unknown process — is before the writer's eye. On the first page is an immaculate white disk within a dull background. On the following page, the same disk, but with a central point. The first, the student knows to represent Kosmos in Eternity, before the reawakening of still slumbering Energy, the emanation of the Word in later systems. The point in the hitherto immaculate disc, space and Eternity in Pralaya, denotes the dawn of differentiation. . . . The one circle is divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns: its circumference — a forcibly limited symbol, in view of the limitation of the human mind — indicates the abstract, ever —

incognizable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul, although the two are one.¹

The *Śiva-Sutras*² describe the point of differentiation as the *Śakti-cakra* or Great point or Centre through which potential Divine power descends from the unmanifest into the world of manifestation and that portends the coming into being of the universe. Conversely when the night of Brahmā comes and the dissolution of the universe takes place the Divine power returns to the Unmanifest Brahman from the same point of differentiation. It is interesting to note that the 'Big Bang Theory' of modern science also posits that the Universe came into being from a point of energy no bigger than the head of a pin.

The mystical statement from the ancient manuscript quoted in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* leads us on a voyage of discovery about the coming into being of the Cosmos and the evolution of life. The Seven Stanzas on Cosmogogenesis and the twelve Stanzas on Anthropogenesis deal with the evolution of life on Earth. Therefore only a small part of the scheme

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of evolution is examined out of the vast scheme of evolution. But an understanding of the microcosm gives an insight into the working of the macrocosm in accordance with the 'Great Hermetic Axiom':

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. Nothing is Inner, nothing is Outer; nothing is GREAT, nothing is Small; nothing is High, nothing is Low, in the Divine Economy.³

A comprehensive picture of the processes of nature, and the Laws governing the universe, are presented to the reader for his consideration in the volumes of this great work. In a conversation with Com. P. G. Bowen,⁴ Madame Blavatsky said that *The Secret Doctrine* is only quite a small fragment of the Esoteric Doctrine known to the higher Members of the Occult Brotherhoods. She stated that it contains, just as much as can be received by the World during this coming century (Twentieth Century). Her writings state that the knowledge revealed is from only one of the volumes of the books known as the 'Books of Kiu-ti'.⁵ What has been revealed however is very profound and provides a much more comprehensive picture of the evolution of the Cosmos and Man than ever presented before. A considerable amount of the teaching in *The Secret Doctrine* has come directly from those elder brethren who are members of the Occult Hierarchy. In a letter to Dr Hubbe Schleiden, the Master known as M wrote:

If this can be of any use or help to Dr Hubbe Schleiden — though I doubt it — I the humble undersigned Fakir certify that *The Secret Doctrine* is dictated to Upasika (HPB) partly by myself and partly by my brother K.H.⁶

Madame Blavatsky advised Com. Bowen not to read *The Secret Doctrine* page by page as one would do with any conventional book. Many a people have found to their disappointment that this method of study has not been helpful and has left them discouraged about their ability to read *The Secret Doctrine*. HPB advised that the reader must firstly grasp the fundamental principles of occult philosophy in order that the whole teaching becomes comprehensible.⁷

The occult philosophy enunciates the basic tenet of the existence of One Fundamental Law that she describes as:

The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature — from star to mineral atom, from the highest Dhyān Chohan to the smallest infusorium, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual or physical worlds — this unity is the one fundamental law in Occult Science.⁸

The meaning of this statement is that every single unit of existence whether it be an atom or man or any other being are separately or collectively, Absolute Being in their last analysis. This concept is very well conveyed in the Śānti mantra of the *Isha Upanishad* that states:

That (Supreme Brahman) is infinite, and this (Conditioned Brahman) is infinite. The infinite (Conditioned Brahman) proceeds from the infinite (Supreme Brahman). (Then through knowledge), realizing the infinitude of the infinite (Conditioned Brahman), it remains as the Infinite (unconditioned Brahman) alone.⁹

All other teachings have to be understood in the context of this principle of the fundamental unity and oneness of all existence. It also indicates that each unit of consciousness or *ātman* is a plenum or wholeness. Madame Blavatsky stated that man is the Microcosm and therefore the hierarchies of heaven are contained within him. But as the Hermetic teaching states, there is One Life and One Law.

An aphorism in the *Light on The Path*¹⁰ advises the aspirant to ‘Kill out all sense of separateness’. This does not mean that the reality of the manifestation of life in differing species and forms is not recognized. It means that an underlying indivisible consciousness is the ground well of all manifestation. The innumerable forms of life manifest in this world with an infinite variety of expressions are all the handiwork of this One Divine Consciousness, but ultimately merge into the source from which they arose, on the completion of the evolutionary journey.

The symbolism in the ancient manuscript quoted in the Proem relates to this process of the Unmanifest Brahman manifesting into the conditioned state and through experiences gained in the physical world, through a variety of expressions, returning

to its infinite unconditioned state. In the write-up of the Proem HPB makes a comparison of the teaching in Christianity and in Hindu thought when she states that: ‘There is no difference between the Christian Apostle’s “in Him we live and move and have our being,” and the Hindu *Rshi*’s “the Universe lives in, proceeds from, and will return to Brahma”’.¹¹ In her Diagram of meditation HPB refers to the same principle of the fundamental unity of all existence.

All subsequent understanding of the philosophy has to be in relation to this teaching and hence the first object of the Theosophical Society that mentions ‘Universal Brotherhood’ without any distinction. The other significant statement is that there is no ‘Dead Matter’. The occult doctrine proposes one living, pulsating universe that expresses itself in the myriad forms of life. Vedāntic thought gives a similar view of the nature of the universe. It states that the universe is produced from the one undivided *Ātman* by the on-going process of manifestation and is therefore a unified system. It is described as a mighty organism in which the inmost nucleus and pervading Spirit and Self is the one abiding Being, the one Supreme Person (*Purusha*) in his aspect as Brahman.¹²

Following the proposition of the One Fundamental Law, Madame Blavatsky puts forward the ‘Three fundamental Propositions.’¹³ In themselves these propositions put forward the whole scheme of evolution and are stupendous. The first proposition states:

An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and

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Immutable PRINCIPLE, on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of the *Māndukya Upanishad*, ‘unthinkable and unspeakable’.

Beyond the manifested world of *Saguna Brahman* with its multiplicity of life in its innumerable species lies an unmanifest consciousness or *Nirguna Brahman*. Madame Blavatsky refers to this Reality as having a ‘Centre everywhere and circumference nowhere’. The Rshi of the Upanishads states that due to the incomprehensibility of Brahman, the only way to describe this Reality is through the negation of all description of Brahman as ‘Not this, not this’ as it is beyond the reach of words and thought. Paradoxically however it would also be true to say that it is all that is seen or experienced by the senses, as its existence is in the One Self and nothing can be outside that Reality.

In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Lord Krishna signifying the Universal Consciousness granted his disciple Arjuna the privilege of the higher vision of His Universal Self or Cosmic form. The symbolism of this vision is evident. The birth and death of stars and galaxies as also of all life under the operation of the laws of nature are reflected in this vision of the totality of life of the Cosmos.¹⁴

*The Light Of Asia*¹⁵ describes this Reality beautifully. It states:

OM, AMITĀYA! measure not with words

Th’ Immeasurable; nor sink the string of thought

Into the Fathomless. Who asks doth err,
Who answers errs, Say nought!

The Books teach Darkness was, at first
of all,

And Brahm, sole meditating in that Night;
Look not for Brahm and the Beginning
there!

Nor him, nor any light

Shall any gazer see with mortal eyes,

Or any searcher know by mortal mind;

Veil after veil will lift — but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

The second fundamental proposition states:

The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically ‘the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing’, called “the manifesting stars” and the “sparks of Eternity”. “The Eternity of the Pilgrim” is like a wink of the Eye of Self-Existence (Book of Dzryan). “The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux.”

The Universe is a vast field of activity or a playground where *Purusha and Prakṛti* perform their cosmic drama. This drama involves the coming into being of every existent thing from the smallest life form to the largest star systems, galaxies etc. under the operation of the laws of nature. The Intelligence that has manifested this wondrous creation is meticulous in every aspect. Under the working of the laws of nature all life is subjected to the cycles of

day and night, waking and sleeping, birth and death, tide and ebb and so on.

There is mathematical precision in the movement of stars. Planets move around the Sun in their orbits and the Sun with its planetary family moves precisely in its orbit with the Milky Way Galaxy. If this were not so there would be chaos in the universe. As *The Light of Asia* states, it is ‘The ordered music of the marching orbs’. The Sun rises and sets at its precise times otherwise life would not be possible on Earth.

Under the same cyclic laws are the days and nights of Brahma, the periods of activity and rest. The occult teachings in *The Secret Doctrine* state that the process of evolution under the operation of natural laws takes place at microcosmic and macrocosmic levels over vast periods of time referred to as Yuga-s and days and nights of Brahma.

In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*¹⁶ the Mahatma M discusses the Law of Periodicity in terms of the coming into being and dissolutions of worlds during the days and nights of Brahma. Following the end of a Mahayuga or great cycle of time, the awakening of consciousness is described in one of the letters:

But the dead worlds left behind (by) the on-sweeping impulse *do not* continue *dead*. Motion is the eternal order of things and affinity or attraction its handmaid of all works. The thrill of life will again re-unite the atoms, and it will stir again in the inert planet when the time comes. Though all its forces have remained in *status quo* and

are now asleep, yet little by little it will — when the hour re-strikes — gather for a new cycle of man — bearing maternity, and give birth to something still higher as moral and physical types than during the preceding *manvantara*.

The teachings in *The Mahatma Letters* complement those in *The Secret Doctrine* and are deeply esoteric. Discussing this subject further the Mahatma mentions the coming of *Pralaya* in the same letter:

For, as planetary development is as progressive as human race evolution, the hour of the *Pralaya*’s coming catches the series of worlds at successive stages of evolution; (i.e.), each has attained to some one of the periods of evolutionary progress each stops there, until the outward impulse of the next *manvantara* sets it going from that very point — like a stopped time-piece rewind.

The third Fundamental Proposition deals with the evolution of life and states:

‘The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former through — the Cycle of Incarnation (or ‘Necessity’) in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term. In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi (divine Soul) can have an independent (conscious) existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal sixth Principle — or the Over-Soul — has (a) passed through every elemental

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form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and (b) acquired individuality, first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts (checked by its Karma), thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest Archangel (Dhyāni Buddha).

The three Fundamental propositions put forward the foundation structure of esoteric philosophy. The evolution of life from the tiny atom to the largest star systems and galaxies is governed by natural laws. The descent into matter of consciousness through the various planes in the process of involution and the subsequent ascent in the evolutionary process provide very profound teachings on the flowering to perfection, of the monad in the manifest world.

The human evolutionary journey is part of the process of evolution of the entire scheme of things involving life at all levels of manifestation from the tiniest form of life, like that of an ant at the microcosmic level to the mighty star systems and galaxies at the macrocosmic level. To get a proper perspective we have to see the Universe as a Whole evolving through immense cycles of time during which creation and dissolution take place followed by a period

of rest or the night of Brahma. Each succeeding cycle working on a fresh impulse that takes the consciousness to a new level upon the experiences of the old.

The study of human evolution, discussed in *The Secret Doctrine* should be done in the context of the overall plan of evolution and the truth of the fundamental oneness of life. The various stages of human history and that of nations and religions as well as those of worlds, solar systems or universes are but the expressions of the evolutionary intent of Brahman.

The monad being the spark of the divine is the pilgrim in the vast evolutionary journey, whose course of development takes it through the various kingdoms of life to the level of a human to superhuman and Dhyani Buddha. The innumerable realms of existence are only manifestations of the needs of the monads to experience them, for as Madame Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine*, visible reality grows from within outward. With the understanding of the fundamentals of the occult philosophy the journey of discovery of the cosmo-genetic processes of Earth and the development of the human beings through various root races becomes productive. *The Secret Doctrine* is a book of reference that has inspired many people and its wisdom is perennial. ✧

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In brief, HPB has fused all the worlds of every possible thought and of every possible action into one Whole. Mankind is being forced towards this Whole by the very necessities of civilization today; HPB's task has been to give to all thinkers a vision of that cosmic skeleton-framework which underlies all the processes which we term Evolution.

That God and Evolution are the obverse and reverse of one inseparable Unity is the Wisdom which HPB has restored to the world. From now onwards, the Theosophist who has accepted that wisdom, wherever he may go, takes the Universe with him. This is the miracle which H. P. Blavatsky has performed for us who follow her; little by little the whole world will discover what a miracle it was indeed.

Insightful Living

V. V. CHALAM

MAN has a great spiritual heritage and the power of divinity is enshrined in him. We can acquire these by insightful living. Insightful living demands strong will, resolve and determination. *At the feet of the Master* says:

This resolve must fill your whole nature so as to leave no room for any other feeling. It is indeed the will to be one with God, not in order that you may escape from the weariness and suffering, but in order that because of your deep love for Him you may act with Him and as He does. Because He is love, you, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love also.

We are often overpowered by problems of life. We seek help from some external source. But it is wise to look within, to find peace and harmony. Then the outer life becomes much more beautiful, if it is connected with the inner spiritual grandeur. By insightful living, we can integrate the inner and the outer. Then we are endowed with love, forgiveness, sympathy, tolerance and other blessed qualities which come from within. They are the result of insightful living. Then there is greater

understanding and a better kinship with all beings. These are natural qualities and are expressed spontaneously.

As a spiritual master said:

Outer clarified vision comes as a result of inner clarified vision. Only those who have clarified vision can see, feel and touch the Infinite. By meditation, we clarify our sight. In meditation, we do not become inactive, but the channel through which our usual activity flows become blocked and our higher faculties force open other avenues of activity.

By insightful living, we find our connection with our Inner source. Then we experience fullness of life. Our life is filled with real joy and peace which we can also share with others. We are rid of fears, doubts and self-seeking. We can soar high into the transcendental.

Ramana Maharshi said:

Turn the mind inward and cease thinking of yourself as the body; thereby you will come to know that the self is ever happy. Neither grief nor misery is experienced in this state. Insightful living allows the release of all physical, emotional and

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mental blocks. Insightful living enables us to touch the very core of the individual, allowing him to experience 'oneness' with the self and oneness with all. Insightful living leads to a harmony that binds all to a clarity of sight that is essential in spiritual life. Insightful living results in penetrative thinking. There will be capacity to truly wish and the much needed wisdom and also the ability to perform rightly and skillfully (Kriya Śakti). Then we are filled with abundant joy as we get connected to the source of Bliss. Insightful living is possible only if we look within. When we are indrawn, there is a deeper way of thinking. Then we can establish a connection with our Inner Source.

A spiritual teacher said:

The richest experience of life comes when we find our Inner Refuge, where we can retire and feel security. The Buddha calls it an island. We can find this inner point of contact by deep aspiration and meditation and a sincere spirit of consecration.

Generally, our body, mind and heart do not work in unison. They go in different directions. We achieve so little. But when we unite all our faculties, we can gain insight. Within this power of insight, we have the fineness of vision to see Truth. This requires patience, perseverance and unwavering trust in oneself. Then spiritual qualities manifest spontaneously. There is greater spiritual understanding. We do not blindly cling to beliefs, dogmas, rites and rituals. There will be greater patience, purity and self-control in all our thoughts, words and deeds. Our lives

become more compassionate.

Peace and tranquillity are absolutely necessary for our inward journey. Turbulence of the mind must cease. Then mental equipoise is restored. A new vision is born within. One can turn within and listen to the inner voice. The essential qualities for insightful living are love, steadfastness, unselfish devotion, and unfaltering loyalty to One's Ideal. According to Dr Annie Besant:

As these qualities become lived realities and not only beautiful theories, all life becomes splendid, no matter what the outer circumstances may be.

A spiritual guru exhorted us:

You must not let your life run in the ordinary way; do something that nobody else has done, something that will dazzle the world.

A person who is, a master in the art of living should remember these stirring words, as also what Mr J. Krishnamurti said:

Living is not this tawdry, mediocre, disciplined thing which we call our existence. It is abundantly rich, timelessly changing and as long as we don't understand that eternal movement, our lives are bound to have very little meaning.

Only insightful living makes our lives spiritually rich and full of meaning and splendour.

Insightful living demands resilient living, with equanimity, mental equipoise and fortitude. He has to be, as the *Gita* says,

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a *Sthithaprajna* or a man of steadfast wisdom. Such a person is not perturbed by adversity, is not craving for pleasure, is free from attachment, fear and anger. Ramakrishna Paramahansa said:

The man given to envy, anger and timidity never grows in spiritual stature.

Patience is to be displayed at the approach of sorrow, and restraint at the approach of pleasure. Joy and grief should be received mindfully, alertly, and wakefully. One must not be overpowered by either of them nor should be getting entangled by them. We should also make a special effort to eliminate fear and anger. Only then will wisdom grow steady and stable. Let not the mind cling to anything or seek a shelter. Let us keep our heart detached. Deep emotional disturbances leave a mark on the mind. The mind must remain unperturbed. Chanakya said:

if I must lose everything, I shall accept the loss. But let my intelligence remain unclouded.

According to Taoists, there are 10,000 sorrows and 10,000 joys, with the joys turning to sorrows and the sorrows changing to joys. We should, therefore, recognize their impermanence. The Buddha declared that everything is impermanent and insubstantial. Hence our response to them should be equanimous and balanced. To remain unmoved by success or failure is a sign of stability and equipoise. A mindful response for all situations that arise is, therefore, essential for upward movement on the spiritual

path. Insightful living results in right thinking, right perception and resilience.

Another prerequisite for insightful living is 'dhruti' or unwavering firmness, inspired by sublime thoughts, receptivity and open-mindedness.

Madam Blavatsky taught that there was no easy path to Divine Wisdom. She said: 'There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road and it leads to the very heart of the Universe'. She gave the 'The Golden Stairs' by which progress could be made until man achieved Divine Stature. This gives the key to insightful living. There are thirteen steps. No step can be omitted if we should reach the top. The stairway embodies pure, shining and untarnishable principles. They lead to a high standard of human development and self-control.

One of these steps is 'a pure heart'. *The Voice of the Silence* declares:- 'O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey.' The Bible says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' *Adi Granth*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, also emphasizes the importance of a pure heart: 'By purity of heart alone is the holy Eternal attained.' A mirror stained by dust shines brilliantly when it has been cleansed. Similarly a heart is like a mirror. Cleanse it with love and compassion so that God can shine within it.

The 'heart' is the testing instrument for all that the mind has transmitted. The heart weighs more carefully than the mind alone. A pure heart is selective and will allow the mind to transmit only the true and the good. The heart transmutes

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all that the mind receives.

The Voice of the Silence states: 'Before that path is entered... cleanse thy mind-body and make clean thy heart.' Before we take the first step on the solemn spiritual journey of insightful living, the very first requirement is a pure heart.

A guiding principle for insightful living is given by one of our Masters who

tells us: 'Try to fill each day's measure with pure thoughts, wise words, and kindly deeds.' Only then will there be purity. Insightful living leads to chastity of thoughts, words and deeds. Illumination comes from within. Meditation is the only way to probe deep within to discover Truth. Meditation is the basis for insightful living. ✧

The duty of a Theosophist to himself is to control and conquer, through the Higher Self, the lower self. To purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of his own conscience. Never to do a thing by halves; i.e., if he thinks it the right thing to do, let him do it openly and boldly, and if wrong, never touch it at all.

Blavatsky Quotation Book

Truth and Theosophical Truths

JOHN ALGEO

THE Christian Bible makes a notable statement about truth: ‘And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’ (Gospel of John 8.32). But truth is a mysterious thing.

In an article entitled ‘What Is Truth’ (*Lucifer*, February 1888), H. P. Blavatsky wrote: ‘There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them. In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself.’

The truths that make us free, as the Gospel says, are inner truths — truths, not about the outer world, but about our inmost being. Those are Theosophical truths, which free us from common erroneous assumptions. Yet, if it is the case that Theosophical truths can free us from the illusions of ordinary assumptions, how do

we know that our Theosophical truths are true? Is it possible that they too — although far better than our ordinary assumptions about life — are only partial and distorted?

The Mahachohan has said that the teaching the Masters proclaim is ‘the only true one’ and that ‘Theos-Sophia, Divine Wisdom, . . . is a synonym of truth.’ But is the Theos-Sophia of the Mahachohan the same as the Theosophy we understand and proclaim? Is it possible that our understanding of the Divine Wisdom may not be quite the same as that of the Mahachohan, not quite on the same level as his?

Truth is like light. The cosmos is pervaded by electromagnetic radiation. Our eyes can perceive only a tiny portion of the full spectrum of the radiation, and we call that tiny portion ‘light’. The cosmos is full of an enormous range of electromagnetic radiation that we cannot see — a practically limitless display of energies, of which we are completely in the dark. And even that tiny portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that we can see, we do not see directly. Light is invisible until it is reflected by some object.

Truth is like that. The full truth of

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Theos-Sophia is like the full range of electromagnetic radiation. It is eternal. It is absolute. But we are temporal, and we are relative. Our limited perceptions of Theosophical truths are as much as we, with our imperfections and limitations, are able to receive of the one whole truth. The radiation of truth is everywhere, but we can see only a tiny portion of it. So we must remember the wise words of Hamlet to his friend: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' Or, as HPB wrote: '... though *absolute* truth is not on earth and has to be searched for in higher regions, . . . there still are, even on this silly, ever-whirling little globe of ours, some things that are not even dreamt of in Western philosophy' ('What Is Truth?' *Lucifer*, Feb. 1888, *CW* 9:33).

Moreover, even the tiny portion of eternal Truth that we can perceive, we do not perceive directly. It is like light. Astronauts who travel in space vehicles to the moon or elsewhere are travelling through sunlight, which radiates continuously into empty space. But because that space is empty, the astronauts see no sunlight in it. Space in itself is therefore lightless and black to the eye of an observer. In outer space, one is aware of the sunlight only when one sees it striking some object: a part of the space vehicle, another object rotating above the earth such as the moon, or the earth itself. Then the sunlight reveals that object.

Similarly, we perceive truth only as it is reflected off the objects around us. And the process of reflection distorts its light.

Our Theosophy is filtered through our environment and heredity. So Truth appears as a many-coloured, diverse thing, a bit different to each of us. That is not bad. Indeed, in its own way, it is quite glorious, a many-splendoured, limitless thing. When the tiny portion of electromagnetic radiation that we can see is reflected into our eyes, we see it as of various colours, depending on the quality of the thing reflecting it. Some objects absorb all the light, so they appear to us as black, just like space itself, because they send back no reflected rays to our eyes. Other objects reflect all or most of the light, so they appear to us as white, the full spectrum of light. The colour of any object we look at is that portion of the light-range of electromagnetic radiation that has bounced off it. We think an apple is red; the apple itself is really every colour except red, because it has absorbed all the waves of light except those that impress our eyes as red. Paradoxically, we see the apple as red because it has rejected the red rays, while accepting all others.

We must take care to remember that the truths we see are conditioned and relative. There is an absolute truth, just as there is an absolute light. But we cannot see absolute light and we cannot understand absolute truth. We need to take care not to assume that the truths we think we know are the only or absolute truth. Oliver Cromwell was a dictator in mid-seventeenth-century England, who was, in some ways, not a nice man. But he wrote some very wise words to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: 'I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ,

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think it possible you may be mistaken.’

Those great souls who see more fully and accurately into the nature of things than we do see a somewhat different world from ours. Because of their enhanced vision, the Masters, and those like HPB who are close to them, see the unity, orderliness, and purposefulness of life with a directness and immediacy that we cannot achieve. And because they are alive to that vision of truth, they embody unity, orderliness, and purpose in their own lives. To be alive to the truths of Theosophy is to know how its great truths are expressed in small details. Yet we must not become bogged down in those details, but remember always that the white light of truth encompasses all the colours and synthesizes them in a splendour that surpasses even the peacock’s tail.

This article suggests two things. The first is that, if we are alive to the truths of Theosophy, they can free us from the conditioning of our ordinary assumptions — those assumptions that are called ‘conventional wisdom,’ but that contain little true wisdom but are instead merely the collective prejudices of a community. Theosophical truths are thus liberating. Those truths liberate us by helping us to discover who we really are. The second is that what we understand to be Theosophical truths are themselves adaptations to our limited understanding of the full truth of Theos-Sophia, which is absolute and timeless wisdom. Therefore we should never mistake our understanding of Theosophical truths for absolute truth, but instead say with those who are wisely humble, ‘Thus have I heard.’ ✧

Truth never descends to our world of error; he who would know it must ascend towards that world of Reality where he can see face to face and, for a while, become living truth. It is possible for man to know the mystery of life; solve it he never can, still less contain it in an intellectual system, however logical. Life is not logical, though logic is the alphabet which we must learn if we would speak the language of life, which is truth.

Two Approaches

MARY ANDERSON

ONE might say there are two approaches to a spiritual life. We could speak of the approaches of the occultist and the mystic. Both are worth considering.

But what do we mean by a spiritual life? And how is it different from the life we and most people are leading — a worldly life on the whole; and who are we who lead such a life, at least on the whole?

Who are we then in actual fact? Let us look at the matter from the point of view of our Theosophical teachings on the constitution of a human being.

One way of considering a human being is that he or she is said to exist at three levels: the level of the physical body, the level of our thoughts and feelings and the level of Spirit, at which level we are not conscious, though we may have certain intimations which may remind us that this is our true being.

We might say that the occultist starts from where we are at present, that is, at the level of the body and our present consciousness, while the mystic strives to start from the level of spirit, which seems much more difficult because at the level of spirit we are mostly unconscious, our consciousness being mostly at the level of

our thoughts and feelings. But both approaches are necessary to some extent.

The occultist concentrates on purifying and perfecting the lower nature. The danger for the occultist is that the lower nature must be refined only in order to be left behind, to be abandoned. For example, the occultist would cultivate virtues. This is all very well. Indeed, various virtues are sometimes suggested — but only suggested — for meditation and practice; for example, sympathy, harmony, compassion, humility, truth, courage, equilibrium, steadfastness, purity, devotion, love, righteousness and cheerfulness. This list may not be exhaustive or exclusive.

If we meditate on and practise these virtues one at a time and perhaps spend longest on those that attract us, we risk forgetting the others. Some of these virtues require and foster strength and will power, such as courage, steadfastness and purity. Others emphasize gentleness and love, such as sympathy, harmony, compassion, devotion, love itself. Some others tend in the direction of wisdom, such as truth and righteousness. Thus we have the three aspects of will, love and wisdom, which are stated in *At the Feet of the*

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Master to represent the qualifications for the spiritual path.

But perhaps, if we follow this way, that is, cultivating virtues, we should not emphasize one set of virtues more than another. For one danger is imbalance, for example trying to foster love to the exclusion of wisdom and will, so that we may, for example, spoil a child or be too lenient in cases where a firm hand is necessary and indeed beneficial for the other person. If we emphasize will or what we consider to be wisdom at the expense of love, we may become hard-hearted and actually indifferent to the feelings and the suffering of others. Fortunately, there are three virtues which should keep us, so to speak, on the rails: equilibrium, cheerfulness and humility.

Equilibrium means balance, not emphasizing, as mentioned, let us say, what we consider to be love at the expense of will and wisdom or what we consider will, at the expense of love and wisdom, or what we consider wisdom, at the expense of love and will. The words 'what we consider to be' are important. Remember that our consciousness is at a superficial level and so we see will, wisdom and love as separate qualities, whereas at a level of perfection they are ONE or they are aspects of THE ONE; they are facets of the diamond of virtue, of perfection in itself. Thus equilibrium would prevent us from emphasizing one virtue more than another. Indeed, this is common sense, which Mme Blavatsky, perhaps in fun, stated was the first requirement for a spiritual life.

Cheerfulness is another safeguard. It

may prevent us from becoming discouraged if we tend to think that we are failing or making no progress. Cheerfulness implies a sense of humour. In this respect, Zen Buddhism has much to teach us. Humour is something which rights the balance when we tend to take things and above all, to take ourselves, too seriously. Mme Blavatsky is said to have stated that a sense of humour is the second most important qualification. We should be able to relax and laugh, also and above all at ourselves, not taking ourselves too seriously.

So here humility is called for. Humility does not mean that we say, 'I am a poor sinner', which can be a form of pride — the opposite of humility, for pride lies in emphasizing oneself, whether we see ourselves as especially good or especially bad. It has been said that there is no such thing as an inferiority complex, that is, considering oneself inferior. The so-called inferiority complex is really a superiority complex, meaning that we may consider ourselves interesting. Humility lies in forgetting oneself, neither in considering oneself interesting and important nor uninteresting and unimportant, but in not thinking of oneself at all, forgetting oneself, not on purpose but quite naturally. And this self-forgetfulness is the whole object of the exercise.

Why then practise all these virtues? Perhaps because in doing so we examine ourselves in their light and we begin to know ourselves better — not only our strengths but also our weaknesses — and we may begin to perceive both objectively. What we know, that of which we

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are aware, we might be able to leave behind us, to transcend.

Self-knowledge was emphasized in the words over the entrance to the temple in Delphi: ‘Man, know thyself . . . and thou shalt know . . . everything.’ But what is meant by ‘thyself’? And what is the connection between knowing oneself and knowing all?

The human being is the microcosm of the macrocosm. He is a small universe, following the same pattern as the cosmos: His outer nature is physically material, also belonging to the world of form, and mentally-emotionally material (referring to finer matter than the physical but still in the world of form), as is the nature of the cosmos. And his inner nature, his true nature, is spiritual and belongs to the formless world, like the inner nature of the cosmos. Thus, knowing himself, man will know the cosmos. The self we should know is not only the spiritual self but also our present conscious nature, for man is, as mentioned, the microcosm of the macrocosm. Thus self-knowledge may mean awareness of our everyday outer nature but also of the spiritual self, merging in awareness of that which is the SELF of all. At this level awareness means unity; knowing is being.

It is here, in the true spiritual nature of man, that the mystic begins his spiritual journey. We must not suppose that any of us can enter into ‘the joy of (our) Lord’ (Matt., 25:21,23). Certain conditions have to be fulfilled, whether they are fulfilled in a logical, scientific manner, as in the case of the occultist, through slow development of virtues, with the necessary

reserves as mentioned, that is, without the swelling of the ego but in such a way as leads to self-forgetfulness, unselfishness and selflessness, or whether they are achieved apparently — but only apparently — all of a sudden. In the Zen Buddhist tradition, which speaks of sudden enlightenment, we nevertheless hear that this is possible only after ‘the long ripening of the Dharma womb’.

Once selflessness is there, ‘All is accomplished and the work is done’. It is not easy, even for the mystic, although his is the spontaneous path, the path of love, said to be the safest, the easiest and the shortest spiritual path. He has also to be cleansed. ‘Be of clean heart before thou startest on the journey’ (*The Voice of the Silence*, 111).

True mystics have spoken of the mystic path, consisting of stages of joy and inspiration, alternating with stages of depression and struggle. Such is life ever: alternation of day and night, summer and winter, happiness and sorrow, called by Mme Blavatsky ‘periodicity’. This path from one opposite to the other is summarized in the Christian tradition as

1. Awakening or conversion
2. Self-knowledge or purification
3. Illumination
4. The dark night of the soul (surrender)
5. Union

To which may be added

6. The return of the pilgrim, the Bodhisattva.

Let us consider these stages:

1. *Awakening or Conversion*: Awakening means that we have been asleep or unaware, and suddenly we are awake; we

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are aware that we know that there are, as Hamlet said to Horatio: 'More things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy', the philosophy of the so-called sensible man, like the servant of Faust, Wagner, in Goethe's play, who said: 'What one has written down in black and white one can take home and feel comfortable with'. It means leaving 'head-learning', 'the eye doctrine', behind and embracing 'the heart doctrine', 'soul-wisdom'.

For the mystic at this stage, a whole new world, hitherto unsuspected, opens its doors. Thus this stage is an *awakening* from the sleep of spirit hitherto involved in and stifled by matter and materialism. It is also a *conversion*, a turning about by 180 degrees, a complete change of direction. As Krishnamurti said: 'You have been travelling south and suddenly you begin to travel north.' Or as in Plato's cave, the prisoners are freed and can turn around and see the real world and no longer the world of shadows.

This is not what has nowadays often been called 'conversion', often meaning a sensational ego-trip at the emotional level induced by some evangelist or some charismatic preacher or some sensational guru practising psychic tricks. But it is a spontaneous flowering arising from within, from the highest in us, and not induced from without and affecting us at the emotional level.

2. There follows *self-knowledge or purgation*. Self-knowledge can be a devastating experience, but devastating only for the little 'I'. In the light of the vision of divine perfection, we are like Arjuna, when

Lord Kṛṣṇa, representing the Lord of the Universe, shows himself in his terrible splendour to the mortal Arjuna. This devastation in itself leads to self-knowledge, meaning awareness of the gulf between that overwhelming perfection and our own imperfection and thus it leads to purgation, a spontaneous attempt to cleanse our conscious self in order to approach that splendour, for it is only by leaving our world and coming into that other world 'as the pupil to the master, without conditions', that we can do so. No cause remains without its effect and no effort without its result. And the next stage follows:

3. *Illumination*: This is again a state of happiness. It is said that many mystics never go beyond this stage and that many artists have shared this state, which is not true union with the highest but, for example, a sense of the divine presence.

True to the principle of periodicity, there follows:

4. *The Dark Night of the Soul*: The most terrible of the experiences of the mystic way, final and complete purification, mystic death. Having sunned itself in the light of the divine presence, the soul now suffers under the divine absence. The human instinct for personal happiness must be killed out. This is the 'spiritual crucifixion'. The self then surrenders completely. This stage is known in theosophical parlance as *avichi*, complete isolation from all, the contrary of Nirvāna, complete oneness with all. Thus the mystic comes to know the suffering of those who isolate themselves and who experience what is called 'hell'.

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There follows the stage of

5. *Union*: Here absolute life is not only perceived and enjoyed by the self as illumination but the self is ONE with it, indeed is ONE WITH ALL. Evelyn Underhill states that:

Oriental mysticism insists upon a further stage . . . (as being) the true goal of the spiritual life. This is the total annihilation or reabsorption of the individual soul in the Infinite.

The Sufi tradition states:

Oh, let me not exist! For Non-Existence proclaims in organ tones: 'To Him we shall return'. (Jalalu d'Din)

This is not the end but the beginning of the Sufi life.

In the Buddhist tradition it is said: 'The dewdrop slips into the shining sea'. So does the individual cease to exist? Or does he or she follow the mythological interpretation of an individual: undivided, no longer separate from others? Another version speaks of the dewdrop *becoming* the shining sea. Which version is correct may be an irrelevant question to which an answer cannot be given in words at our present level of understanding.

The Zen Buddhist tradition, for example, adds a further stage, which we might call:

6. *The Return of the Pilgrim or the Bodhisattva*. This is illustrated in the 'Ox-herding Pictures', portraying the story of an oxherd. There are various versions but the story runs thus:

The oxherd has lost his ox. Then he

sees hoofprints, he sights the ox, he catches the animal, he tames it. Then he rides away on the ox's back, playing his flute. They have become one.

What does the ox represent? Perhaps *manas*, the mind, which runs away with us and which has to be caught and tamed and transformed from *kāma-manas* to *Buddhi-Manas*. But in a final picture the oxherd, who has ridden away on the back of the ox, reappears and 'goes into the market place to teach fishmongers and prostitutes the way of Buddha'. Thus he becomes a teacher, a saviour. He is a *Bodhisattva* or an *Avatāra*. 'Not for himself but for the world he lives.' He may become a great king, like King *Rāma*, or a great teacher, like the Lord Buddha, or he may work in anonymity:

Like the pure snow in mountain vales, cold and unfeeling to the touch, warm and protective to the seed that sleepeth deep beneath its bosom — 'tis now that snow which must receive the biting frost, the northern blasts, thus shielding from their sharp and cruel tooth the earth that holds the promised harvest that will feed the hungry or self-doomed to live through future *Kalpa*-s, unthanked and unperceived by men, wedged as a stone with countless other stones which form the 'guardian wall', such is thy future. (*The Voice of the Silence*, 292–3)

This may seem to us a dismal future, but to the ONE concerned it is simply the right thing, the only thing to be done. Perhaps it is the culmination of the path of the mystic. ✧

Jainism — Religion of Humanity

KUSUM GALADA

IT is a well known fact of history, that Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism together form the cultural heritage of India. From Vedic literature and excavation of Harappa, there is a consensus among scholars that Jainism is the oldest living religion of the world. The *Bhāgavata Purāna* endorses that tirthankara Risabhadeva was the founder of Jainism. There is reference to the first Tirthankara in *Manusmriti* also. It is an established fact of history that many rulers in ancient Bihar and adjoining territories were either patrons or followers of Jainism.

Many well known philosophers confirm the antiquity of Jainism. Dr Radhakrishnan, the former President of India and world renowned philosopher, observed that 'there is evidence to show that as far back as the first millennium B.C. there were people who were worshipping Bhagavan Ādinatha (another name of Rṣabha Deva), first Tirthankara of Jainism'. There is no doubt that Jainism prevailed much before Pārshvanātha and Mahavira. It is an original religion which goes back to the pre-Aryan period.

Jaina philosophy has much to offer to the world. Today all the leaders of the world are constantly engaged in exploring ways

and means to achieve to find peaceful solutions to the problems of the world. Jainism stresses on non-violence. Ahimsa is the central theme of Jainism. In her address to the world vegetarian Congress Dr Annie Besant, the second President of 'Theosophical Society' said 'The constant use of meat hardens the heart, and man becomes bereft of the feelings of mercy.' Ahimsa is the law of human beings, violence is the law of beasts in the jungle.

In Jainism, violence includes not only physical violence but also verbal violence and above all mental violence, because it is in the mind that the cause of all misery is born. It was Lord Mahavira the last and 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, who proclaimed that there should be a total ban on production of weapons and that mankind should follow the path of non-violence.

Gandhiji, the modern apostle of Ahimsa said: 'If anybody developed the doctrine of non-violence, it was Lord Mahavira.' Mahavira has been the source of inspiration for the past twenty-six centuries and will probably remain so for many more centuries to come.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, identified Jainism as the highest

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principle of Indian civilization and the doctrine of Ahimsa a gift to humanity by Jainism. I quote his words: 'It is Jainism which has contributed to the world the sublime doctrine of Ahimsa. No other religion has emphasized the importance of Ahimsa and carried its practice to the extent Jainism has done. Jainism deserves to become the universal religion, because of its Ahimsa doctrine.'

Jainism is the religion propounded by *Jinas*. Jina means a conqueror, a conquest in this sense means to win over passions. A Jina is one who has conquered himself, that is, his greed, envy, pride, ambition and pursuit of self-importance, by his own strenuous efforts. That person can be you, I or anybody for that matter. So it is not necessary to be born in a Jaina family to be a Jaina. But the people who have faith in Jaina tenets are real Jainas. Everywhere in the world there are individuals and groups who have faith in their hearts the principle of non-violence, because they feel that is what the world needs the most, but lacks the most.

Ahimsa, Aparigraha and Anekantavada together form the central theme of Jaina code of conduct. Ahimsa as the world knows is non-violence, Aparigraha means non-possessiveness and Anekantavada stands for the principle of manifold points of view.

Ahimsa according to Jainism means life in any form, size or shape has a soul. It means that right from tiny earthbodied beings to the highly developed human beings are all same as far as the element of soulhood is concerned. So protection

should be given to all in equal manner. It was Lord Mahavira, the great hero, who found out thousands of years ago that life extended beyond humans to animals and plants and even beyond water, forests and deserts and that all living beings depended on each other, and were crucial to the health of the planet. Science has established this fact only hundred years ago. The popular aphorism of Jainism is in Prakrit language '*Parasparopgraho jivanam*', Which means all life is interdependent on each other.

Mahavira preached 'As we experience pain, all living beings experience pain. As we desire happiness all living beings have keen desire for happiness, existence and happiness is dear to all.' He proclaimed in Acharanga Sutra the oldest Āgama (scripture) of Jainism: I have friendship with all living beings, I do not have enmity with anybody. To nurture compassion and fraternity for all life forms, macroscopic as well as microscopic is the unique feature of Jainism. In Jainism, Ahimsa is nothing but love, love for all, even to the meanest because it is love that sustains the earth; a life without love is death. Mahatma Gandhi practised Ahimsa in his battle for freedom for India. He said: 'law of love will work, just as gravitation works, whether we like it or not'.

Ahimsa is tolerance, forgiveness and friendliness. Ahimsa could convert a foe into a friend and bring about mutual understanding and reconciliation between two opposing parties. Thus we see Ahimsa in Jainism stands for elimination of wars, cessation of conflicts between nations and

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maintenance of universal peace and love for our environment.

Aparigraha is non-possessiveness. This doctrine of Jainism if applied in day to day life means limiting possession. It does not mean as many think it to be, running away from normal life. It is not necessary to become a hermit or retire to the Himalayas for penance. This Jain concept of non-possessiveness simply means self restraint and voluntary control of wants. Non-possessiveness begins with attitude of mind. It is conscious turning away from material possession or *parigraha*. Mahavira said 'virtual possession is attitude'. Wealth, house, family, etc., no doubt are possessions. But if we discard them we cannot survive. Having a thing is one thing, but having a lust for it, that is hoarding them and using them in improper and unsocial way is unethical. Aparigraha is the process of inner transformation, reflected in outward behaviour and values. It is transition from the fast mode of life to the reflective.

In today's world of consumerism, humans have been caught with never ending multiplication of wants; so possessiveness has become a passion. This greed leads to anxiety and exploitation and blood letting. Today our definition of happiness is linked to more money, bigger house, fancier clothes, fleet of cars, etc. There is no doubt these things provide physical comfort, but also a false sense of security and happiness. This happiness is transitory, destructive and unfair, and brings about greater unhappiness, because greed knows no limit.

This greed has resulted in increased wasteful consumption and wasting of earth's precious resources and the result is tremendous degradation. For instance, it has become clear that the rupture in the protective ozone layer is the result of man's mischief with nature, due to his unrestrained violence and reckless possessiveness.

The fury of flash floods that rained down on Uttarakhand in India in June 2013 shows that we ignore the environment at our own peril. In the name of development, unchecked construction of residential buildings, hotels and tourist rest-houses on the flood plains of Ganga has extracted huge human cost. It is a stark point that we cannot continue with unbridled consumption. The culture of economic growth is of attachment and possessiveness in which the Nature is violated and spiritual dimensions ignored. As Mahavira pointed out at that time 'one who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and plants, disregards his own existence, which is entwined with them.'

This doctrine of limiting possessions makes us conscious of the environment around us. In fact it can be called 'ecological wisdom.' It encourages us to limit our possessions, so that we can live harmoniously in a state of interdependence with all in the eco-system. Not only that, by choosing to live humbly we can free our mind from ever nagging desire for wanting more. Aparigraha gives us a state of mind which is not disturbed by the prospects of losing any of our possessions and also that we become indifferent to momentary joy and pain associated with

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gain or loss. Above all it maintains the economic health of the society and sees that wealth does not accumulate in few hands and create a division of rich and poor in society.

The third doctrine of Jainism, which is the need of the hour is Anekantavada (the doctrine of many sidedness of truth). According to this doctrine, only the liberated beings are capable of knowing the truth, we worldly beings are affected by our own bias and perceptions. This doctrine suggests that every viewpoint should be holistically examined and explored before examining it or rejecting it. It encourages us to be respectable and patient with the views of our adversaries. It calls for acceptance of views of other faiths and paths and not to consider them as our rivals in today's interdependent world where cultural boundaries are blurred.

This philosophy can also be called the non-violence of the mind, this doctrine is of open mindedness, if followed it can give rise to a society in which variety of culture, respect for each other's beliefs and also exchange of ideas. The assumption that only we have privileged access to truth is the most powerful engine of conflict between human beings. It destroys relationship between friends, families, nations and gives rise to terrorism.

It is only by the virtue of this doctrine that Jains have been able to appreciate the viewpoint of other religions in the field of philosophy. Jain saints have always tried to maintain harmony among different religions and faiths and they have tried to avoid religious conflicts. That is why

Jainism has survived through the ages.

According to Anekantavada every situation, every thought possesses infinite aspects and different dimensions. So declaring others as false and regarding ourselves as true is nothing but blind ego full of ignorance and arrogance.

The popular story of The elephant and the five blind men, expresses very well the philosophy of Anekantavada.

Once seven blind men, were taken near an elephant to know what elephant was like. One of them placed his hand on the ear of the elephant and yet another on the leg of the elephant and yet another on the tail of the elephant and so on. When they were asked to describe the elephant, one of them said, the elephant was like a big flat fan. 'No' said the other, 'I touched the elephant and it certainly was like a huge round pillar'. The third one shouted, 'you both are wrong; it was like a big rope like thing with lots of hair on it, it moves up and down all the time.' Thus we see that each one claimed that he alone was right.

Finally the owner of the elephant said, 'all of you are correct in whatever you have described, but you are also wrong because you have touched only one side of the elephant.' The story illustrates the multi-layered nature of reality. It shows that truth can be arrived at from various angles.

Today the spectacular contribution of science has eroded the foundation on which our beliefs and values of life have rested for centuries. In spite of great achievements of science, one thing is really sure. Are human beings really happy? Has science been able to bring

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mental peace and tranquillity? Is it not true that one violence has brought another violence. Many of us are disturbed by the violence in the world. But the violence that we see in the world is nothing but the projections of our restless, competitive, greedy mind. The real fact is, unless we create peace inside, we will not be able to create peace outside. Whoever has violence in his heart, one day that violence will explode into worldly activities. Because it is the innerself that is the source of all good and evil. These emotions of hatred, greed, jealousy do not allow us to experience the nector of love.

Jainism is a spiritual and scientific philosophy. The principles of Jainism have reverence for life and ecology. If this philosophy is rightly studied and understood and practised, it can make human life better, and the world a better place to live in where peace, prosperity and universal brotherhood would reign supreme.

Jainism appears rather ascetic, strict and rigid to practice, but in reality it is not anti-life but life affirming as Swami Chinmayananda once rightly pointed out.

Jainism expects austerity from those who have the capacity to renounce the world and self-control from those who are still enjoying the pleasures of life.

The philosophy of Jainism is such that it provides a rational, ethical and judicious approach to world problems, considering

how the violent ego in human beings has brought the entire universe to the brink of disaster.

Lately there is rising ecological consciousness and desire for more satisfying and less materially demanding and stressful way of life. There is a refreshing welcome impact of Jain philosophy beginning to make itself felt on the world community. The realization is slowly and steadily growing that the principles of Ahimsa, Aparigraha and Anekantavada make Jain religion a religion of humanity. The world today is warming up to the message of peace and non-violence, racial equality and human dignity.

It is believed that if Lord Mahavira's basic tenets are imparted to the present generation as part of education, a new world may be ushered in course of time, where there would be no violence but permanent bliss, a bliss, which most of us are seeking and also it can enlighten our future generation for the betterment of our life.

As Dr Annie Besant had said, 'The message of Jainism to Humanity is peace between man and man, man and animal, peace everywhere and in all things, a perfect brotherhood of all that lives'.

In the end I would like to quote Swami Chinmayananda again who forecast 'The heart and soul of Jainism will eventually be embraced by humanity as a whole, indeed that blessed day is fast approaching.'

'Knowing the Supreme to be all beings, the wise extend love to all creatures undeviatingly.'

Vishnu Purāna. I.19.9

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

WHEN you are walking alone, or elsewhere, glance at the general will of God, by which He wills all the works of his mercy and justice in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and approve, praise and then love that sovereign will, all holy, all just, all beautiful. Glance next at the special will of God, by which He loves his own, and works in them in diverse ways, by consolation and tribulation. And then you should ponder a little, considering the variety of consolations, but especially of tribulations, that the good suffer; and then with great humility approve, praise and love all this will. Consider that will in your own person, in all the good or ill that happens to you and may happen to you, except sin; then approve, praise and love all that, protesting that you will ever cherish, honour and adore that sovereign will, and submitting to God's pleasure and giving him all who are yours, amongst whom am I. End in a great confidence in that will, that it will work all good for us and our happiness. I add that, when you have performed this exercise two or three times in this way, you can shorten it, vary it and arrange it, as you find best, for it should often be thrust into your heart as an aspiration.

St François de Sales

As We Teach We Learn

U. S. PANDEY

IN her book *Practical Occultism* HPB quotes a passage from 'Path' December 1886 as under:

Knowledge increases in proportion to its use — that is, the more we teach the more we learn. Therefore, Seeker after Truth, with the *faith* of a little child and the will of an Initiate, give of your store to him who hath not wherewithal to comfort him on his journey.

The Master of Wisdom in one of his letters to A. O. Hume says:

Men seek after knowledge until they weary themselves to death but even they do not feel very impatient to help their neighbour with their knowledge; hence there arises a coldness, a mutual indifference which renders him *who* knows, inconsistent with himself and inharmonious with his surroundings. Viewed from our standpoint the evil is far greater on the spiritual than on the material side of man.

The above two statements have profound significance for all and especially for those among us who are practising Raja Yoga through study, meditation and service. Each of these three limbs individually is

incomplete by itself and the three must be worked together. Whatever we study from the vast Theosophical literature, we must meditate on the substance of it so as to digest and adopt its essence in our life and do the service of transmitting that wisdom to others so that it may help them to overcome their ignorance.

The statement quoted from HPB that we must give our knowledge and wisdom with complete faith like a child, but the strong will of an Initiate, is also important. A common behaviour of man where he himself studies but is hesitant to share his knowledge with others is due to indifference or sometimes lack of confidence. He would create disharmony with his surroundings and neighbours because they would not be able to see the view point of his knowledge.

It is also said that you may study and love knowledge for its own sake, but you must also study in order to teach the ignorant, else the knowledge may prove a fetter binding you to the interest of the smaller self.

In *Isis Unveiled* it is stated that Magical (Spiritual) power exists in each man. Spiritual power can manifest only when we

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sincerely teach what we know to be true, with utmost discipline and with the only object of benefiting others by helping them in dispelling their ignorance.

In *The Key to Theosophy* to a question by an enquirer whether it is the duty of every member of the Theosophical Society to teach others and preach Theosophy, the reply given is:

It is indeed. No fellow has a right to remain idle, on the excuse that he knows too little to teach. For he may always be sure that he will find others who know still less than himself. And also it is not until a man begins to try to teach others that he discovers his own ignorance and tries to remove it.

This is another forceful and profound statement telling each of us not to have any excuse in telling others what we know and further, that in so telling it will make us acquainted with our own ignorance and help us to proceed to deeper study.

We are told that 'man ought to be ever striving to help the divine evolution of *Ideas* by becoming to the best of his ability a *co-worker with nature* in the cyclic task.' By teaching others the wisdom what we have gained we help ourselves and also others to become such co-workers.

In order to make our study of Theosophy fruitful for ourselves and useful to others we should learn with accuracy, understand with an open mind, apply and teach with a dedicated heart and the result will be wise service of our fellowmen.

Light on the Path says:

Speech comes only with knowledge.
Attain to knowledge and you will attain

to speech. It is possible to teach and help others only if we have obtained some certainty of our own.

Krishna in *Bhagavadgītā* while describing various types of sacrifice says, by the sacrifice of wisdom people realize the One everywhere present. Study and teaching of profound wisdom as in Theosophy becomes an act of sacrifice of wisdom on the part of both one who teaches and the other to whom the teaching is given.

One of the Beatitudes, teachings given by Jesus as part of his 'Sermon on Mount' says;

Let your light shine before man in such a way that they may see your good work and glorify the Father who is in Heaven.

A Master of Wisdom wrote;

It is not enough that you should set the example of a pure, virtuous life and a tolerant spirit; this is but negative goodness. You should even as a simple member learn that you may teach, acquire spiritual knowledge and strength that the weak may lean upon you and the sorrowing victims of ignorance learn from you the cause and remedy of their pain. If you choose you may make your home one of the most important centres of spiritual influence in the world.

Annie Besant quotes from the 'Immediate Future':

Money perishes in the using, but knowledge and love multiply as you give them away and share them with your fellow

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men; if you have knowledge and give it, you are none the poorer, you yourself know the better, because you have tried to teach.

C. Jinarājadāsa during his talk on membership of Theosophy delivered during the American Convention of 1949 quotes Blake: ‘Study well, but remember also the eagerness to share. The cistern contains, the fountain overflows — you must be a fountain and not a cistern keeping the knowledge to yourself. Your whole aim should be like a fountain so that whatever you have gained of inspiration overflows to others. Just like a fountain overflows in a natural way, so while giving our knowledge to others it should be an effortless and natural action.

When we study something particularly the noble and higher ideas, it makes only a temporary impression on our mind. It is a common experience that when we listen to some speaker on a great subject, though we may understand his expressions while listening and retain such knowledge for a while but soon we start forgetting. However when we tell others, things we listen or study, in that process of telling itself the particular idea makes deeper impression on our mind. By repeated teachings/telling the impression on consciousness becomes lasting; the more conviction in teaching, the more lasting impression.

When we teach something to others there we become two learners. The listener by raising points of doubts and the speaker

by replying to such points, both gain deeper insight of the subject matter.

In the study of subjects of deeper nature, the higher manas becomes active and starts teaching or guiding the lower manas which in turn starts getting transformed and becoming one with higher manas; this in reality becomes the practice of Yoga.

By this process of learning-teaching with conviction, lasting changes occur in the composition of our mental body at subtler level and our nature, attitude and way of seeing things change. Thus by teaching-learning we start a process of transforming ourselves.

When we study alone, there usually remain certain gaps in understanding the subject, particularly if the subject is of a deeper nature. But when we try to teach the same to others, our subconscious mind or our higher manas becomes active in filling up some of these gaps and our learning becomes more complete.

So whatever we study we must not keep the same to ourselves only and try to find out opportunities to share the same with others; not to exhibit our learning but to help dispel ignorance of others and our own and thereby expedite progress on the spiritual journey. In fact sometimes sharing our knowledge in an informal manner becomes more effective in helping the listener to dispel ignorance. Jnāna Dāna or giving of knowledge is considered to be the highest form of giving. ✧

To a mind that's learning, the heavens are open.

J. Krishnamurti

Theosophical Work around the World

USA

The 127th Summer National Convention was held in the United States on the theme, 'Be the Change'. The focus of the conference was Applied Theosophy. The remarkable group of speakers for the conference were — Sister Gabrielle Uhlein, a Franciscan nun and internationally known author and retreat leader, Vic Hao Chin, founder of the Golden Link School, Fernando de Torrijos, TSA member, and Dorothy Bell, TS Australian educator. The gathering was attended by TS members from fourteen countries.

International Vice President, M. P. Singhal and his wife, Sashi, were special guests for the 3rd International Conference of the TOS which immediately followed.

Mr Tim Boyd, TSA President, travelled to Brazil and presided over the 19th Inter-national School in July, on the theme Essentials of Spiritual Practice and delivered the opening address for the second annual Luso-Hispanic Meeting.

Ukraine

Moscow Theosophical Society reports that the Museum Centre of H. P. Blavatsky and her family is being created now, in the main manor house on Peterburgska str, (now 11, Leningradskaya str.) where she was born. The Museum, even today, needs our help, as the following works are proposed; the cleaning and reparation of the roof, antifungas processing of the walls, renovation of the rooms and

windows etc. All those who wish to join this noble work are welcome to contribute to the reconstruction of the H. P. Blavatsky Museum Centre. The annual Scientific lectures were arranged in the Museum Centre on August 12th, 2013 to celebrate the 182th birthday of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Contact Museum website: <http://museum-blavatsky.com.ua/ru/>

India

The Centenary Celebration of Raghava Theosophical Lodge, Chintamani of Karnataka was held from 2nd to 4th August 2013 at Chintamani and more than 350 delegates attended. Mr C. A. Shinde, National Lecturer of the Indian Section conveyed greetings and good wishes on behalf of International President Mrs Radha Burnier and delivered the Inaugural Address on the Theme — *Dhammapada*. On 3rd August Mr C. A. Shinde and Ms K. Parvathamma, Secretary of KTF inaugurated the new building. The three-day programme was presided by Mr B. V. Thippeswamy, included speeches of regional lecturers and National Lecturer Dr L. Nagesh and Mr K. V. L. Kanta Rao, Secretary of TS Hyderabad on the theme, Cultural programme of school children, musical concert by Ms V. Chandrika Mehta, and felicitation of Senior members of the Lodge. Mr C. A. Shinde after his valedictory address appreciated the efforts of the members and organizers. ✧

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† Presidential Agency

▲ Lodge attached to Adyar

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