



# THE THEOSOPHIST

BESANT COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

## THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is a world-wide international organization formed at New York on 17th November 1875, and incorporated later in India with its Headquarters at Adyar, Madras.

It is an unsectarian body of seekers after Truth promoting Brotherhood and striving to serve humanity. Its three declared Objects are :

**First—To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.**

**Second—To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.**

**Third—To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.**

The Theosophical Society is composed of men and women who are united by their approval of the above Objects, by their determination to promote Brotherhood, to remove religious, racial and other antagonisms, and who wish to draw together all persons of goodwill whatsoever their opinions.

Their bond of union is a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by service, by purity of life, and by devotion to high ideals. They hold that Truth should be striven for, not imposed by authority as a dogma. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or of intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. 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 offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and demonstrates the inviolable nature of the laws which govern 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, thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence as, in their original purity, they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition. The Society claims no monopoly of Theosophy, as the Divine Wisdom cannot be limited ; but its Fellows seek to understand it in ever-increasing measure. All in sympathy with the Objects of The Theosophical Society are welcomed as members, and it rests with the member to become a true Theosophist.

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As The Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the civilized world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of The Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher nor writer, from H. P. Blavatsky downwards, has any authority to impose his teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to attach himself to any teacher or to any school of thought which he may choose, but has no right to force his choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office, nor any voter, can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion he may hold, or because of membership in any school of thought to which he may belong. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of The Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of The Society, and also fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

# THE THEOSOPHIST

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EDITOR: GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

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The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this journal, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

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DR. ANNIE BESANT



## ON THE WATCH-TOWER

BY THE EDITOR

**IMPORTANT:** These Notes represent the personal views of the writer, and in no case must be taken as expressing the official attitude of The Theosophical Society, or the opinions of the membership generally. "The Theosophist" is the personal organ of the President, and has no official status whatever, save in so far as it may from time to time be used as a medium for the publication of official notifications. Each article, therefore, is also personal to the writer.

### THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

I HAD been intending to dedicate this October issue to incomparable China, treated so outrageously by the great Powers during the earlier years of her struggle against Japan, when it did not pay to help her, and only now flattered as if these Powers had been her supporters from the very beginning of the attack upon the world by the forces of evil. But it seems better, especially in the dangerous conditions prevailing in India at the present time, to devote this issue to those great writings of our President-Mother which very specially relate to such troublous times

as these and which lay down, as she alone had the wisdom and insight to lay down, the great principles of right government. In this issue, therefore, we shall commemorate her birthday on October 1st by remembering the principles she set forth more than twenty years ago, and sometimes a quarter of a century ago, but which apply as forcibly and truly today as they applied then, and which will more and more apply as the world draws nearer to its rebirth.

I write towards the end of August, so that by the time this issue is in our readers' hands, the situation may, please God, have vastly improved. While I am most

optimistic as regards the eventual outcome of this great clash between Good and evil, I feel within myself that the world and India have to go through much more tribulation and darkness before the signal is given by our Elders for the light of Peace to dawn upon the horizon.

#### HOMAGE TO ANNIE BESANT

Dr. Besant's wonderful work in the first great struggles round about 1916, 1917, 1920 and 1921, 1925 and 1928, might have changed the very heart of world affairs, had her words been listened to, especially here in India. Had India responded to her great call, there would have been Home Rule for India, and Dr. Besant would have lived on as the great Sannyāsi, blessing the mighty work she would thus have brought to a still more mighty triumph—India free and the brightest Jewel in the crown of Humanity.

I happened to be one of the lesser helpers associated with her in her magnificent efforts to save India from what she so rightly called "the threatened anarchy," and I want to bear the most heartfelt testimony both to her heroism and to her wisdom in those dark days, and I want to bear testimony, too, to her sublime loneliness as she stood steadfastly against the angry noise of crowds and the narrow obstinacies and jealousies of individuals throughout the country.

For the cause she had been sent by the Elder Brethren into the world to espouse with her incomparable warrior-spirit, might have been won. A united India might have begun its new life. The East and the West might have entered into a Brotherhood ensuring the Peace and Happiness of the peoples of the world.

But her noble life was cut short at its Crucifixion when it might have moved splendidly onwards to its Resurrection. Alas that the forces of destruction were then destined to know no real halting, overwhelming at that time those who stood uncompromisingly for the Right, and today threaten those who in these times are privileged to stand for the Right! And this despite the so-called "victory" of the Allies in 1918 which later years have proved to be no victory at all.

#### THE ISSUE TODAY

I have repeatedly said, and I still say, that the world will be saved from the present menacing darkness. The Allies, I still say, despite the dangerous crudity of their conduct of the war, and the no less dangerous indefiniteness of their war purposes, despite all their defeats and unseemly boastings as to what is going to happen to the Axis Powers, will win the war.

But what kind of winning will it be? Will it be the victory of

Righteousness, or will it be but the triumph of weight of numbers ?

Will the war be won through devotion to Justice and Duty, or will it be won because the Allies have been able to last longer than their enemies ?

Part of the answer to these vital questions lies in India, for without a free India—I say this, too, with the utmost deliberation—the war will not be and cannot be rightly or finally won. But a free India must emerge out of her own unsoiled probity and determination to united purpose, and not out of anarchy.

This is the issue which today confronts India and indeed the whole world, for India, if only the western Powers could realize the fact, is the central Sun round which the nations of the world revolve. If the Sun be dim, the nations degenerate. If the Sun be brightly shining, the nations will draw together into a Universal Brotherhood.

As I write, India is at the parting of the ways. The forces of darkness are for the moment in the ascendant. There is violence throughout the country. There are everywhere mobs of hooligans destroying life and property. The forces of law and order are frequently and rightly compelled to fire upon unruly crowds. Students leave their educational institutions and march up and down the streets in procession shouting

and hating, though this particular element has so far tended to die down, partly because of the tactful handling of the natural ebullitions of youth by the educational authorities. And there is the imminent danger—here and there a danger come to pass—of mill workers and factory workers going out on strike to add to the unrest and to the facilitating of the aggression of the Japanese. Indeed, it is obvious that the anarchy which is being developed is largely promoted by Japanese agents in various parts of the country through a vague and nebulous body sometimes referred to as the Hindustan Red Army, who are only too glad to take advantage of that mass struggle which Mr. Gandhi has brought into existence so disastrously to India in what is called by him a Mass Struggle, which has simply meant mob violence.

Will India shake off all this evil, or will she succumb to it ?

Will India and India's greater leaders remain under the hypnotization of Mr. Gandhi, or will his paramountcy, at all events in the political field, be shattered into pieces, so that right counsels may prevail in the very urgent work of planning for India an Indian freedom broad-based on the great Indian science of government and not on those western forms which are so alluring to innumerable western-educated Indians, but which



are feeble indeed as compared with the high democratic wisdom of the Indian systems ?

It ought to be most clearly understood by lovers of freedom in other parts of the world that while Mr. Gandhi surely leads an impeccable, and, we are told, saintly personal life, and is pre-eminently fitted above all others to lead India's reforms in the purely social field, nevertheless as a statesman, and even as a politician, he has proved over and over again a complete and unhappy failure, and has often led those who believe in him, among them the masses of the people who are moved by blind and despairing credulity, into disasters of the first magnitude, involving misery to those who participate in them, such as, for example, the mass struggle, ridden with violence, which the world now witnesses. Dr. Besant, great statesman that she was and builder of nations, clearly perceived not only his general limitations but still more the menace that lay in his ideas and methods so far as regards India's political regeneration.

#### HER CALL FROM THE WATCH-TOWER

In the Watch-Tower of THE THEOSOPHIST dated November, 1920, Dr. Besant wrote most memorable words, true, of course, then, but word for word true today. The circumstances are similar, but worse, and I can only echo the Call

so nobly uttered by my great predecessor in this very journal. Here are her words :

"This movement for Non-Cooperation [today called a Mass Struggle] is no movement of party politics, to which The Theosophical Society can remain indifferent. It has passed into a phase in which it menaces the very existence of India, her spiritual life, and her spiritual mission to humanity, India, as an original member of the League of Nations, that glorious Herald of the far-off Federation of the World—spoken of, I may remind students, in the book *Man: Whence, How and Whither*; India, as a Free Nation among sister Free Nations in the Indo-British Commonwealth, in the realization of which lies the future peace of the world; India, from whom the light of true spirituality shall shine forth for the illumination of the Nations; India, the great Daughter of the Rishis and Devas, whose immemorial age stretches back beyond the dawn of history—for history tells us of no time when she was not prosperous and wealthy—the contemporary of Babylon the Great, of ancient Egypt, of Greece and Rome in the days of their glory; India, sleeping for nigh two centuries, but now awake and on her feet; this India is now the mark of all the 'Powers of the Darkness of this world,' driven back in the West by the downfall of autocracy

in Germany, and now turning their defeated, but still tremendous, energy on India, by whose undoing and hurling into chaos the onward march of the world may yet be checked for centuries to come. These hosts, ever the enemies of the Lords of Light—called Asuras by the Hindus, Ahriman and his agents by the Zoroastrians, Satan and his angels by Hebrews and Christians, Eblis and his armies by the Musalmans—they have caught hold of this movement of Non-Cooperation, *because it is a channel of hatred*, their favourite weapon, and are pushing its leaders onward, step by step, into wilder and wilder methods. The gospel of Tolstoy, so fascinating in its beginnings, but so fatal in its inevitable ending of anarchy, the dragging of all down to the sordid level to which society had cruelly reduced its producing class, was one of the causes of Bolshevism in Russia. That infection has been brought over here by Tolstoy's disciple M. K. Gandhi, with all the fascination of its philosophical side and the deadly implications covered by that philosophy, while the masses have not yet become obedient to the Inner Ruler Immortal, the Hidden God in man. The profound truth of that God hidden in every man makes the great force of the movement; the ignoring of the truth that God manifests in His world and works by evolution to prepare men for such

manifestation in themselves, is the deadly error which leads to anarchy. Men not yet self-ruled from within, and thus determined to righteousness, must be ruled by Law from without. The destruction of reverence for Law, ingrained in the Hindu religion, the doctrine of 'civil disobedience'—the breaking of any law, hitherto obeyed as not against conscience, as a protest against a bad law—was the step which marked the parting of the ways which lead respectively to Freedom and anarchy. It led to the brief madness so cruelly and brutally repressed in the Punjab and, by England's crime in condoning the wicked vengeance inflicted, to the hatred felt against British rule today. Mr. Gandhi at the time saw and confessed the error he had made in forgetting the evil elements in society. But his penitence was short-lived, and he is now rushing along the downward path. He began comparatively mildly, by a passive withdrawal merely from Government; step by step he went further, and now advocates rebellion of sons against parents while still dependants and minors, and his last panacea, so far, is the celibacy of husbands and wives until India is entirely free. This is obviously madness, and what further devices he may start no one knows.

"Under such circumstances, I call on all students and lovers of Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, to range

themselves under the banner of ordered and progressive Freedom, and to oppose the threatened anarchy, unknown in India until brought here by the disciple of a western anarchist, who had at least the merit that, while sowing revolutionary ideas, he confined himself in action to peasant clothing and the making of shoes."

In the Watch-Tower of the following December Dr. Besant added:

"Because so much lies in the scales of Destiny—no less than the world passing on into peace and happiness, strongly aided by the Indo-British Commonwealth, the model of the World Commonwealth of the future, or the setback of the world for many generations—because of this did I call, last month, 'on all students and lovers of Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, to range themselves under the banner of ordered and progressive Freedom, and to oppose the threatened anarchy'; I have no authority to command—for The Society is democratic in its constitution—and can only call from the Watch-Tower, and warn all who are intuitive of the peril in which we stand. If India, the Mother, fails, then will Bolshevism triumph for the time, and spread red ruin over the world. But I believe that she will not fail, that she will recognize her Dharma and take her place in the World-Order."

Alas that in her Presidential Address of 1921 Dr. Besant should have had to declare that "political unrest and excitement, with the revolutionary movement of Mr. Gandhi, have for the moment almost stifled the spiritual life of India."

#### NOT POLITICS BUT HIGH TRUTH

It may seem very strange to some of my fellow-members here in India that I thus use the Watch-Tower of THE THEOSOPHIST for what they may regard as political propaganda. Apart from the fact that in truth it is no political propaganda at all but rather a statement of high truth which no instructed Theosophist lover of India dare ignore if it be his intention to serve her without fear or favour, it also happens, as the above extract shows, to be but a repetition of Dr. Besant's own statements made in similar circumstances over twenty years ago.

I should not dream of venturing to "lay down the law" as she, a Lawgiver, was entitled. I should not have ventured to write as I am writing in the Watch-Tower but for the fact she deemed it right to use a portion of the Watch-Tower for an identical purpose. There come times when the world is moved by great situations and cataclysms which are above mere politics of the party kind and demand a far wider vision and a

far more enlightened approach. This is such a time. This is a time when the half-Gods go and the Gods Themselves take charge. It is a time when the smaller and more time-limited principles go and the greater and more eternal principles come to hold sway. This is not a time for the little men to judge the situation in the light of their own particular orthodoxies and conventions, of their own experience and readings of the Scriptures. It is a time for the great in the world—the really great, not just the conventionally great—to “lay down the law” for the great times as they alone can lay it down. And the little men have the opportunity to set themselves aside with all their certainties, and to listen to their elders to whom such times as these belong.

It is in this spirit that for many, many years I have been privileged to listen to Dr. Besant, and if I venture to appear to “lay down the law” it is only in fact a laying down as best I can of Dr. Besant’s law, coming as this law did from the Gods Themselves. I am always trying in these catastrophic days to remember her practical statecraft as expressed when she was at the height of her efforts to win Home Rule for India. And I think that since I am not just advancing my own personal opinions, which certainly might be regarded as the intrusion of party politics, but am

doing my best to echo hers, I am justified in using the Watch-Tower on this very special occasion so that my fellow-members may be reminded of the great principles observed by a spiritual leader in action in the outer world.

We are thus treated to a picture of Theosophy in action such as we do not often encounter in our normal lives. We may come into touch with many kinds of Theosophy in action—in the social field, in the educational field, in the religious field, in the economic and industrial fields, and so forth. We may encounter Theosophy in the field of theoretical politics and of the sublimation of politics in statecraft. But how rarely do we encounter Theosophy *in action* in this field of statecraft and politics, and Theosophy in action under the generalship of one who is a Theosophist General of age-old experience?

In such times as these THE THEOSOPHIST owes to Theosophists throughout the world, and in particular to its readers, the duty of showing the practical application of Theosophy by an expert to the building of a nation and to the rebuilding of the world, and even if there are references to individuals in the course of the application these must not be omitted, for they have formed part of the reasons for the particular line of statecraft adopted.

Needless, I hope, to say that the views expressed in this or in any other Watch-Tower, and the statecraft outlined, together with such references to individuals as are necessary to indicate the reasons for the various pronouncements, are themselves personal to Dr. Besant and to myself and are binding upon none.

#### MORE TELLING EXCERPTS

As a sort of appendix to this Watch-Tower, I venture to add a few more extracts from pronouncements of Dr. Besant's which have already appeared in *THE THEOSOPHIST*.

In the same August issue, of the year 1920, Dr. Besant wrote :

"Mr. Gandhi lives in a world of his own, quite different from the world of human beings, with their crude ideas, their easily aroused passions, and their sudden bursts of activity. He is dangerous, well-meaning man as he is, because his imaginary human beings whom he arranges so nicely are not the human beings who live in our world, and do not dance to his piping, as he expects them to do. His imaginary Government which is paralyzed by Non-Co-operation bears no resemblance to the actual Government, prepared to take a part in the game not laid down for it in the drama. Thus, when a Non-Co-operator lately said he would not co-operate with the Government,

the Government serenely declined to co-operate with him and would not supply Government water to his land. There was a certain humour in the situation, but the first Non-Co-operator was naturally indignant when the Government acquiesced in his proposal. Unhappily, the outcome, when the proceedings really begin, will not be of this farcical nature.

"It all means alienation, hatred increasing between the two Nations in whose union lies the hope of the world. Are things to go from bad to worse till He comes who can heal the wounds of the world? We had dreamed of a World Peace in which the Way would be prepared. But nothing seems further from the world than peace."

\* \* \*

In the Watch-Tower of March 1929, Dr. Besant made the following great statement which I feel sure holds good today :

". . . But I do ask Theosophists to remember that the Freedom of India within the great Federation of Free Nations linked together by the British Crown, is a condition essential to the Great Plan which must ultimately succeed, because it forms a part of that Inner Government of the World, which is seeking to begin the founding of a Federation which will ultimately include all the civilized Nations of the world, on a basis of perfect internal Freedom and complete

equality between the component Nations. That perfect internal Freedom is necessary, so that the individual qualities of each Nation may be fully developed, and thus create the National Chord. That Chord is 'the Word' of the Nation, its message to the world, as Mazzini said: 'the Word which God writes over the cradle of every Nation', its individuality, which can only develop in the atmosphere of Freedom."

#### "THE END IS SURE"

I close with Dr. Besant's splendid words—"The end is sure." Whatever has happened, whatever is happening, "the end is sure." But we must work for it—standing uncompromisingly for the Right and no less uncompromisingly against the wrong. It is in this spirit that I have tried to write this Watch-Tower, having been for very many years a very close watcher of one of the greatest Messengers of the Right the world has known for a century and more.

"The end is sure; for the world has climbed too far on its upward way to be again cast down into barbarism. Victory will crown the arms of those who are fighting for Freedom, and are at death-grips with Autocracy."

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#### THIS BESANT ISSUE

I am happy to acknowledge the very great help given by Mrs.

Adeltha Peterson in compiling this commemorative issue of *THE THEOSOPHIST*. Indeed, it is she who has sought out, with the help of a number of kindly workers, the many extracts from Dr. Besant's writings, and has put them together in suitable sequence.

I hope this issue, which as a special case we have dared to increase to 98 pages, will be treasured by every subscriber not only for the great value of its record of the principles and activities of one of the world's most splendid figures, but no less for the wisdom with which it should inspire us as we strive to help the Forces of Good finally to overcome the forces of evil; and as we also help in the building of that new civilization of which Theosophy and The Theosophical Society are to be the corner-stone.

Our opportunities in these days are magnificent, and we have the power to seize them to the full. But in order to do so we need the Warrior-Generalship of Dr. Annie Besant, for it was she who interpreted to us the Will of the Guardians of Humanity not only for the time in which she last worked on the physical plane, but also for these times, and for the times, when the war is near its close, in which the foundations of a New World Order will be in process of being laid.

It is wonderful to think that H. P. Blavatsky was permitted to

reveal to the world the tremendous Truths Eternal, and tempestuously to live them in an almost incomprehensible contact with the outer world. Tempestuously—yes, but with an extraordinary tenderness which I fear very few have appreciated as compared with her dramatic word-painting of living pictures of the evolutionary process which have never before been disclosed outside a Scripture. H. P. Blavatsky is ever the background for the whole world of the Truth that alone can make man free.

It is wonderful, too, to think that her comrade H. S. Olcott not only helped to make the channel, which is The Theosophical Society, for such Truth, but contributed his own unique genius to hers.

No less wonderful is it that Annie Besant came splendidly to apply the Blavatsky-Truth, as it may be called, to the dying of the old world and to the building of the new. She too brought her own genius to the work specially entrusted to her by the Hierarchy of Adepts. But she always referred to H. P. Blavatsky as the immediate origin of her impetus. Every word she wrote dealing with the great process of helping the old world to die finely and the new world to be born nobly is doubly precious today, and it is because of this that I have not hesitated to reproduce some of her utterances—I hope to publish a little book in the Besant Series con-

taining a number of these—so that today's generation may read of the great principles both of statecraft and of living generally which some of us had the privilege of seeing embodied in her life and in her work.

As I work in India in these most difficult times I perceive more and more that her judgments of persons and her policy for the building up of an Indo-British Commonwealth, as she liked to call it, are as valid now as they were for the times with which she had more immediately to do when she wore a physical body.

I am sure that all who work in the political field, in reconstruction, and in every other department of human life, will find, as they seek to act righteously without subordinating themselves to the dictates of public opinion, that Dr. Besant has given principles which are not only essential to the establishment of Righteousness everywhere, but give to every sincere worker a sense of courage and steadfastness.

As was Dr. Besant in the closing few years of her life, so am I now in infinitely humbler degree, outside the pale of public appreciation in India. Yet never was it more important that some at least should be happy to be alone and ignored for the sake of the preservation of a principle.

The world needs minorities, even of one, more than it needs majorities. Anyone can form part of a

majority. Only the few can be in a minority and make its principles live. Some of us must do this work. Dr. Besant knew what it was at one time to be adored by the public and at another to be so unpopular that the public did not want to hear her. Yet her Truth is more than ever true today, and it must be remembered.

George S. Arundale

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India is a country in which every great religion finds a home. Go back as far as you will and you will find that Hinduism exists. Go down later and you will then find Buddhism establishing itself with its wonderful ethics. Go down further still, and you will find Jainism almost contemporary with Buddhism. But you will find Christianity in the first century after Christ and on the West Coast. It has to become one of the Indian religions and no longer only the religion of the foreigner. Then still later you will come to the great Prophet of Arabia and his people together with the exiles from Persia, the Parsis; the whole of them are here in India in a common Motherland, and have a common interest, and should have a common pride. It is in these ways by studying each side that so much will be gained.

—*The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, by ANNIE BESANT



## "I CALL . . . "

What shall be the immediate future of The Theosophical Society, when the effects of this crisis, now closed by the General Council, are over ?

Unless our future belies our past, it will be one of great expansion, of enhanced importance, of vigorous energy. The faint-hearted and the inimical may cry: "The work of the T.S. is over," as they have done before, but the future will once again prove the magnitude of their error, and they will then marvel at the fears that oppressed them. The Theosophical Society will, from 1910 onwards, enter on a period of unexampled power, of world-wide influence, until it stands before the world as the recognized standard-bearer of Religion—liberal, spiritual, and therefore free. This is now sure, for The Society, as a body, has declared for toleration, freedom and Brotherhood.

And I, the humble servant of the Masters who founded it ; the appointed successor, by Their own mouths, of H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott ; President of The Society by the will of the Masters, the nomination of the President-Founder, and the vote of the members : I do not ask those to follow me who are unwilling to do so ; it is for them to cast aside, if they so choose, the opportunity offered but once at the beginning of each cycle, and to find out in due time the greatness of the opportunity rejected. But I call on those of you who are willing to follow me into the new cycle—in which the Elder Brothers are again, by Their own gracious declaration, the First Section of Their Theosophical Society—to labour with me in the name of Theosophy, for the peace of Nations, and the enlightenment of the World.

—*Presidential Address, 1908*

# ANNIE BESANT—WARRIOR-GENERAL

[THE GENESIS OF THE PRESENT CONFLICT AND OUR DUTY IN IT]

WE are cut off from our brethren in Central Europe, and we know not if we shall clasp hands with them again in outward greeting, so deeply flow between us the rivers of blood which have been shed in the tremendous War which is shaking the very foundations of civilization in the West. Were the War an ordinary one, it would not rend us apart, but in this War are in conflict not men, but principles, Principles of Good and Evil, in which a spiritual Society cannot remain in the safe and pleasant fields of neutrality without being false to its fundamental verities. . .

In evolution there is the Will to Progress, and in resistance to evolution there is the Will to Inertia, and these Wills are embodied both in men and in supermen, who strive against each other for the mastery at the critical stages of evolution, when a civilization is to choose between the downward grade that ends in disappearance, and the upward grade which begins a New Era. The men fight desperately, visible on the earth; the supermen fight in the world invisible to mortal eyes. There is ever War in Heaven as well as on earth in these struggles that decide the

fate of the world for thousands of years.

We call the Supermen who fight for the victory of the Divine Will in evolution and are Themselves the embodiment of a portion of that Will—the Occult Hierarchy, the Guardians of our world. And we call the supermen who fight against it, who would preserve the old outworn ways that have become poisonous, the Dark Forces, in the poetical eastern nomenclature, the "Lords of the Dark Face." Both sides work through men, and through men their triumphs and defeats are wrought out, the shadow here on earth of the events above. For it is the fate of Humanity which is in the balance; it is the Judgment Day of a race.

It is because the present War is the shadow of such a struggle in the higher worlds, that no Occultist can remain neutral, but must throw every power that he possesses on one side or the other. *To be a neutral is to be a traitor.* Now the Central Powers, in this great struggle, are the pawns played by the supermen who follow the Lords of the Dark Face. They embody autocracy, militarism, the anachronistic forms which are ready to perish,

for which there is no place in the coming New Age. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Not by the isolated acts of a few soldiers, mad with blood-lust and sex-lust; but by their official policy of "frightfulness," deliberately adopted and ruthlessly carried out, by a style of warfare renounced by all civilized Nations, belonging to a far-off past, a revival of cruelties long ago outgrown. By these we know them as the tools of the supermen of the Night, and the occultists of the Darkness are fighting on their side. They have raised Hate into a National Virtue, and the Lords of Hate are with them.

We, who are servants of the White Brotherhood, who regard Love as the supreme Virtue, and who seek to enter into the Coming Age of Brotherhood and Co-operation, we can but follow the Guardians of Humanity, and work for the triumph of the Allied Powers who represent Right as against Might and Humanity as against Savagery. The Theosophical Society, the Society of the Divine Wisdom, founded by Members of the White Brotherhood and Their Messenger in the world, must throw itself on the side which embodies the Divine Will for evolution, the side on which are fighting the Supermen of the Day.

If by this we lose the members we had in the Central Empires, after the War is over and the mad-

ness of it is overpast, it must be so. Better to lose our members than to lose the blessing of the Brotherhood; better to perish, faithful to the Right, than to become a fellowship of Evil.—*Presidential Address, 1915*

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Courage, fearlessness, splendid generosity, throwing away of life in the defence of the weak and in the discharging of one's duties—that is the Dharma of the Kshatriya. His duty is to protect what is given him in charge against all aggression from without. It may cost him life, but never mind that. He must do his duty. To protect, to guard, that is his work. His strength is to be a barrier between the weak and the oppressive, between the helpless and those who would trample them under foot. Right for him the following of war and the struggle in the jungle with the wild beast. Because you do not understand what evolution is, and what the law of growth, you stand aghast at the horrors of war. But the great Rishis, who made this order, knew that a weak soul can never attain perfection. You cannot get strength without courage, and firmness and courage cannot be got without the facing of danger, and the readiness to throw away life when duty demands the sacrifice.

Our sentimental, weak-kneed, pseudo-moralist shrinks from that teaching. But he forgets that in

every Nation there are souls that need that training, and whose further evolution depends upon their success in attaining it. I appeal again to Bhishma, the incarnation of Dharma, and I remember what he said, that it is the duty of the Kshatriya to slay thousands of his enemies, if his duty in protection lies in that direction. War is terrible, fighting is shocking, our hearts revolt from it, and we shrink before the anguish of mutilated and mangled bodies. To a great extent this is because we are utterly deluded by form. The one use of the body is to enable the life within it to evolve. But the moment it has learned all that that body can give it, let the body break away, and let the soul go free to take a new body that will enable it to manifest higher powers. . . . Does not the soul require a new body for its higher growth? Let then the body go. This is the hard lesson the Kshatriya learns, and so he throws away his bodily life, and, in this throwing away, his soul gains the power of self-sacrifice, he learns endurance, fortitude, courage, resource, devotion to an ideal, loyalty to a cause, and he pays his body gladly as the price for these, the immortal soul rising triumphant and preparing for a nobler life.—*Dharma*

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I look to The Theosophical Society in the future to bind up the

wounds which are caused by this terrible fratricidal war. When the war is over, I hope the influence of The Society in the various countries may draw the Nations again more nearly together, and sure I am that no Theosophist will allow for one moment any feeling of hatred to enter into his heart against any Nation. It is, remember, also your duty to recognize the ideals which are separating the two, and to throw the whole of your thought and energy into those ideals for which we must ever stand—of justice to small States, of public faith, of public honour, and the recognition of international treaty obligations; and it is our duty to do that, because the whole future of the world depends upon the word of a Nation becoming a matter of honour to the Nation as well as to the individual. Treaties and international obligations are only useful in time of war. When Nations are fighting, then only is it that these things and other matters of civilized warfare come up. If they are to be thrown aside in war then it is useless to make them, and we are falling back into barbarism. So that I would ask you to remember the teaching of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, to remember what Shri Krishna said about war, to remember that while war may righteously be waged for an ideal, or in discharge of a duty, there must be no feelings of hatred, no feelings of

revenge, no feelings of antagonism against the enemies as such, only against the principles that they may for the time embody: "So fighting, thou shalt not commit sin." And it is for all members of The Society to show that love may be kept pure and true even in the midst of slaughter and misery, so that we may perform at once our duty to our respective countries and also to humanity.—*Presidential Address, 1914*

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Brethren, you are given a great opportunity which, rightly utilized, may carry you far. Learn through the present turmoil in India to distinguish the Real from the unreal, the underlying Truth from the veil of passing phenomena. The spiritual life is not disturbed by combat, if the combatant be free from hatred and anger, indifferent to success and failure, peaceful in the midst of strife, calm though surrounded by tumult, fighting for the Right, which is already conqueror in the higher world. Was not the great Scripture of *The Bhagavad-Gita* given "in the midst between two armies"? Was it not given by the yellow-robed Yogi to His disciple, and was He not in a high state of consciousness during the giving, while His strong hand was on the reins of the eager white war-horses, ready to plunge into the fray? Did He not utter as the refrain of His matchless discourse:

"Therefore fight, O Arjuna"? Will any dare to call the Lord of Yoga unspiritual, because He bade His beloved disciple engage in the strife which had been forced upon Him? Therefore stand up, O children of Manu, followers of our great Warrior Master, the Rajput Chief of the Morya clan, resolute to defend our righteous cause. "Taking as equal pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, gird yourselves for the battle; thus shall ye not incur sin." Ours in India is the glorious privilege of standing by our Masters, our true Leaders, in the day of reproach and imputed dishonour. I congratulate you, I congratulate myself, that we are found worthy to defend Their cause.—*Presidential Address, 1912*

[After her internment]

I would ask you, if I may, that in this struggle the unkindness and the unfairness shall be left to our opponents, that we shall not answer evil with evil but we shall follow that example . . . of Shri Ramachandra who forgot a thousand injuries in the evening but never forgot one act of love which had been laid at his feet in life. And so, let us worship the Mother, bring to her pure hearts and loving hands; let us ignore what is said of mischief, of unfairness, and let us remember that those who fight for liberty may not soil their weapons, because her enemies may fight with weapons that are not clean.

# ANNIE BESANT—MESSENGER TO INDIA

TO have the glorious privilege of suffering for India is the crown of a life which has ever striven to stand for Truth and Freedom. I cannot deny in my old age the principles of my youth and maturity. Who shall deny to me the right to call myself a Child of the Motherland, when I suffer for her dear sake? I have been one of God's messengers to India, and He has many more, greater and better than I, to send for her redeeming from bondage. "When half-Gods go, the Gods arrive."—*New India*, 30 August 1916

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India is a continuum, and her Aryan civilization an unbroken whole. There are invasions and conquests, periods of strength and weakness, of unity and division, in her æonian story. But she is always India; always Aryan, the MOTHER Imperishable, who has borne uncounted millions from her womb, but at whose own birth no historian can guess, whose death no prophet can foretell. And this it is well to remember in our judgments of today. With an admitted history of nearly 5,000 years, from the commerce between India and Babylon . . . and the proofs of

high civilization and wealth then existing; with an admitted literature of at least 7,000 years; the period of English rule in India, barely a century and a half, is microscopically small, a tiny ripple on her ocean. Invasions flow and ebb; conquerors come and go; India assimilates what is left of them, is the richer for them, and remains herself. She did without England for millennia, and flourished amazingly; she could do without England for millennia to come; but the two need each other, and will be the better for each other in the near future, and India desires to be linked with England in that future, but on a footing of perfect equality, and *on none other*.—*A Bird's-eye View of India's Past as the Foundation for India's Future* (1915)

## WHICH SHALL INDIA CHOOSE?

. . . It is the ideal that makes the politics and not the politics the ideal. . . There are two great ideals one over against the other, either of which a Nation may choose. One of these is material wealth and increase of physical wants, and the gratification of those wants ever more and more; and the other is

the knowledge of the intellect, is the wealth of wisdom, is the growth of art, is the cultivation of beauty, is the realizing of man's higher nature. Art, science and intellect become the handmaids of the Spirit, so that the ideal is spiritual and not material, enduring and not transitory.

Which shall India choose? There is the point . . . to which the whole of my thought has been directed. On the one side material advancement, on the other side spiritual growth; India between them, looking longingly towards the material wealth and the material luxury, but held back by an instinct that comes from the Spirit within her, that that is not the road to perfection, that that is not worthy of India's choice.

. . . If you choose the material ideal you choose strife, struggle, poverty, dissatisfaction, unrest and final death; whereas if you choose the spiritual you choose a peace that is ever growing, power that is ever increasing, strength that knows no diminution, and immortality of life. Which do you choose? . . .

#### I CLAIM FOR INDIA

I, who love India as my own, for she is mine, India with whom all my hopes of the future and my memories of the past are bound up, this India that is so great and yet so little, so mighty and yet so poor, —I claim from the children that come from the womb of India that

there shall be some worthy of the past, that there shall be some worthy of their Mother, that there shall be some who shall give her what she asks, thought, philosophy, literature, science, the great things that she loves, and not merely the struggles of parties and the questions that divide politicians. Some of the better brains should do this work, some of the abler tongues should preach it. I have told you the place for the politician, but some place is needed for the teacher and some for the thinker. I plead to the young among you, who have not yet chosen their path in life, whose hearts are still soft, and whose hopes are still pure. Turn aside from the struggles of the bar, turn aside from the examinations of the colleges, turn aside from the hopes of civil service, and the employment that is paid for with gold; give yourselves to the Motherland, give yourselves to her help, give yourselves to her redemption. . .

Will you not give to the future what the past has given to you? Will you not hand on to the generations to come some addition to the treasures that the generations of the past have bequeathed to you?

There are so many Nations that are political, so many Nations that are wealthy, so many Nations that in the western sense are great. There is only one Nation the world knows that may still choose the

Spirit instead of the body, and spiritual knowledge rather than material gain—only one Nation amongst all the Nations of the world, only one people amongst all the peoples of the globe. That Nation is India, that people the Indian people; and if you, the last hope of the spiritual life of man, if you give everything to matter, then in your apostacy the world is betrayed, and in your spiritual death humanity shall find its grave. —*The Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation*

#### THE GLORIOUS GOAL

. . . What shall it be for humanity when India herself in her new glory is born into the world? India, from whose lips, in this land of the Rishis, came the religion that uplifts and spiritualizes, the philosophy that illumines, and the science that trains; India, from whose mind, throughout the world of mind, came those great systems of thought which are now recognized as the noblest products of the human intellect; India, whose feet once passed through many States, and made every one of them fertile, prosperous and wealthy; India, who was perfect in spirit and mind; when that India is born into the full vision of the eyes of men, perfect in body, is it too much to say that her coming will be as life from the dead? That is the glorious goal for which we work; that is

the splendid hope that cheers our labour; that is the sublime aspiration that rises perpetually to the ears of the Devas. For India's coming means the spiritualizing of humanity; India's thinking means the lifting of thought on to a higher level; India's prosperity shall be the justification of religion, the justification of philosophy, as part of the life of a Nation; and the world shall be redeemed from materialism—because India is awake. —*India's Awakening*, 1910

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Let those who know not the Indian spirit say what they will, misrepresent as they choose. Let us who work for the Mother forget everything save her cause, and do not make the fight for liberty more difficult by desire to resent insults, levelled after all at the personality which cannot touch the Spirit, which cannot soil the real life. And so with brave hearts but gentle hearts as well, let us go onwards together to the victory which Ishvara will give to His people, for the days of Indian subjection are over and the days of her suffering are accomplished (cheers). The discrowned Queen is coming to her own, and let the Mother, when she comes among her children, find love in their hearts, courage in their actions, that we may be worthy to welcome to her throne that mightiest and holiest of Nations—the Indian people.



We only ask that we may continue to serve you, and struggle side by side with you in this noble battle for freedom [said Dr. Besant to the crowd of Indians who gathered to ask her blessing after her release from internment]. I know that in my own case, and in the case of Mr. Arundale, our skins are not of the colour that gives the right to fight, but inasmuch as our Nation has done wrong in the past and denied freedom in the past; inasmuch as the Nation whose signature we bear on our skins has not given the liberty here that it was her duty to give, we claim the right to stand for England as she

really is and not as Anglo-India has made her. It is well that in this struggle some who were not India-born took part. Did not the father of the Congress wear a white English skin? Did you not have helper after helper of India's cause who were born in other countries? While our skins are white, we have the Indian heart, the India devotion, and with all our hearts we thank you that you allow us to work side by side with you; and though God had not given us the blessing of being India-born, we have won the right to be Indians by the gift of ourselves.—*New India*, 24 September 1917

### TRIBUTES PAID BY TILAK, TAGORE AND GANDHIJI

Addressing Mrs. Besant as an "embodiment of our principles," Lokamanya Tilak said: "You have adopted India to be your Motherland; you have suffered a great deal for her, and found her almost triumphant. India is united for the commonweal, and all our efforts are directed towards reaching the goal of Swarāj. Our reception may not be as magnificent as from others you may have obtained. But I may assure you it comes from the inmost of our hearts. If India is nearer the goal, it is due to your strenuous efforts, and, if I may be allowed to add also, largely to your internment. Regarding you as an embodiment of our principles and our success, we offer you our welcome and wish you long life and inexhaust-

ible energy.—*New India*, 15 October 1917

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Calcutta, Sept. 22—Sir Rabindranath Tagore sends to the press a copy of the letter which he has written to a literary friend in England. In the course of the letter he writes: "In your letter you seem puzzled at my conduct in sending a message of sympathy to Mrs. Besant. I am afraid, compared with your own troubles, it may appear to you too small, but yet sufferings have not lost their keenness for us, and moral problems still remain as the gravest of all problems in all parts of the world. The constant conflict between the growing demand of the educated community of India for a

substantial share in the administration of their country and the spirit of hostility on the part of the Government has given rise, among a considerable number of our young men, to methods of violence, bred of despair and distrust. This has been met by the Government by a thorough policy of repression. In Bengal itself hundreds of men are interned without trial, a great number in unhealthy surroundings, in gaols and in solitary cells, in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide. The misery that is carried into numerous households is deep and widespread. What I consider to be the worst outcome of this irresponsible policy is the spread of the contagion of hatred against everything western in the minds which were free from it. In this crisis the only European, who has shared our sorrow incurring the anger and derision of her countrymen, is Mrs. Annie Besant. This was what led me to express my grateful admiration for her noble courage. Possibly there is such a thing as political exigency, just as there may be a place for utter ruthlessness in War; but I pay my homage to those who have faith in ideals and, therefore, are willing to take all other risks except that of

weakening the foundation of moral responsibility." (A.P.I.)—*New India*, 25 September 1917

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*And Mr. Gandhi said :*

"Cultivate the great qualities of Dr. Besant, namely, firmness, simplicity, self-control, etc. She is one of the greatest orators of the world, because she speaks what she believes and acts according to what she speaks . . . She has the courage of her convictions and always puts her words into action . . . Imitate her unflinching determination and simplicity of life . . . Obtain the same strength and indomitable will that she possesses which alone will bring Swarāj. India is not fit for Swarāj without these qualities. Remove India's chains and then alone will we achieve our goal. Religion is interwoven in Dr. Besant's life and she has built a bridge between politics and religion. Swarāj without religion is of no use. It is Dr. Besant who has awakened India from her deep slumber and I pray that she may live long to witness a free India."

—*New India*, 2 October 1928

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Sacrifices are at present so rare in Indian public life, except among students, that anyone who works for the public is supposed to have some concealed personal motive, and when no such motive can be found, he is supposed to be exceptionally clever in hiding it. Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale once said that anyone who gave himself to work for India must be ready to have his heart broken within five years. That is so, unless his heart be fixed in the Eternal.

—ANNIE BESANT, 1918

# ANNIE BESANT—STATESMAN

**D**URING the short space of three years in the Indian political field, Dr. Besant secured that which has not since been achieved—the union of the dominant Hindu and Muslim elements and the union of the conflicting Congress elements. Forgotten were differences. India alone was remembered.

Mr. Jinnah, whose present intransigence blocks the way to India's unity, in the days of Dr. Besant's leadership worked for a "united India." Hindus spoke from the Muslim League platform and Muslims from the Congress platform, their two Congresses having concurrent gatherings.

If anyone doubts that Dr. Besant was the uniting force between the Hindu and Muslim communities, the tribute of the Hon. Syed Ali Nabi, the last speaker before the fateful "Self-Determination" resolution was put to vote in the 1917 Conference of the All-India Muslim League, will make the position clear :

"I should be untrue to myself, untrue to the Muslim community, untrue to the community at large if I failed at the moment to publicly acknowledge the services rendered by that great and sincere lover of India, Mrs. Annie Besant, who was mainly instrumental in bringing about the spirit of unity between the two great communities." The reporter here inserts the words "long and continued applause." The speaker concluded :

"It was she who made that union possible and we cannot be sufficiently grateful to her."

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"It was Dr. Besant's efforts with the great leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, at Poona in 1914, and ever since, which brought about the happy union, whose full significance has been seen and felt at Lucknow . . . which has closed the gulf of nine long years. *New India* has been instrumental in bringing the two Parties in the Congress together, so that today there are no Moderates and Extremists, but all Nationalists, the majority of whom have seen the wisdom of Mrs. Besant's contentions."

—*New India*, 3 January 1917

"So the Home Rulers have at last captured both the Congress and the League. Glory to Mrs. Besant! Her bitter persecution has not gone in vain. Practically the whole of the educated Indian community has caught the cry of Home Rule in right earnest, first raised by this illustrious lady. Even moderate Congressmen, who did not see things eye to eye with her, have become converts to her views."

—*Amrita Bazaar Patrika*

## A LESSON IN STATESMANSHIP

How was this miracle accomplished, a miracle that all today would see repeated? Dr. Besant herself reveals the secret :

“Nothing is too great a sacrifice if it secures a united front.”

Of the deliberations of that historic Congress, Dr. Besant tells a story that might well be called “A Lesson in Statesmanship”:

“The Committees of the Congress and the Muslim League met for some hours, and were profoundly interesting. On all the main principles the representatives of both bodies were thoroughly at one, a few very minor points of difference having been settled at Calcutta. The difference was on the details of the representation of the two communities in the Legislative Councils of the future, and the interest lay in the thorough threshing out of every aspect of the question, the grasp of principles and of details, the statesmanlike willingness to come to a common agreement, and the admirable spirit of sacrifice and the good feeling manifested by almost every member of the two parties. If proof were wanted of the capacity of the Indians to govern themselves it was found in that Chamber; both parties

made sacrifices, the Muslims in Bengal, the Hindus in the United Provinces. With the utmost patience, a *via media* was sought, almost found, lost again, again acquired, until finally complete agreement was reached, and Hindus and Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart. All honour to the leaders of both communities alike, for both realized that Indian unity was the supreme necessity, and refusing to yield to the clamour outside among the more ignorant of both communities, they resolutely led the way to union. Posterity will bless them for their patriotism and their courage. How ringing were the cheers which later on welcomed the Muslim leaders to the Congress platform, and those which welcomed the Congress leaders to the Muslim League platform! The representatives of India in both Halls passionately acclaimed the union, and the joint scheme is now accepted by a United India, to be presented to the British Nation as the demand of a Nation awake to its own needs, and conscious of its own strength.”

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“One noteworthy characteristic of her political work is its constitutionalism,” wrote Sir S. Subramania Iyer, at one time Chief Justice of the High Court of Madras. “Never for a moment has she hesitated to denounce violence in every form. . . Mrs. Besant is a profound mystic, and when after twenty-one years of strenuous life in India she entered into the political field, it was as a practical mystic of a unique type. . . Mrs. Besant is unique in that she only uses peaceful persuasion; she achieves her work by calling forth the powers of faith within men. It was well said by Sir Arthur Lawley, when he was Governor of Madras: “Her voice is never raised save to move her hearers to some nobler impulse, to some loftier ideal, to some higher plane of work.”

—*New India*, 1 October 1917

## ANNIE BESANT—WORLD CITIZEN

### UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

LOOKING forward to the next war, it is rather a question as to whether civilization will not go down in it and whether there will be any victors to triumph over the vanquished.

What then ought we to aim at? Can we not put before the civilized people of Europe some great ideal that will stir them to enthusiasm? It is no use simply arguing for justice; you must rather hold up a great ideal which will stir the hearts of the people and make them determined to bring it about, because it attracts by its beauty, because it allures by its fascination. And I submit that such an ideal might be the United States of Europe. I do not mean that we shall win it easily, but I do mean that if that ideal could gain the hearts of even a minority of the people, they would come back to it again and again after every failure, until they had made it at last a great success. And let us notice for our encouragement in putting before ourselves such an ideal, that the changes made by the last war, creating a number of small States into which Eastern Europe has been cut up, are against the whole tendency of the evolution of mankind.

The tendency has been very very strongly felt, and well carried out, to unite smaller States together into larger areas, where the language was the same and the traditions the same. . . . Large countries are in the line of evolution and the little States should join up. . .

So I would submit to you that the ideal of the United States of Europe should be autonomous States joined together in a great Federation, when the only army in Europe—if you must have an army—would be the army of the Federal Government—although you would do better to have only police. In those United States of Europe, each State should be self-governing—a Federation of free Nations. And after all that is not surely so impossible; for, if you take Britain herself and consider the Colonies that she formed in the past, which are growing into separate Nations that have been turned into Dominions—a great Federation of free peoples; and when India gains Dominion Status—a necessary preliminary, if a war of colour is to be avoided—it will be no longer a British Empire but a British Federation of great and free peoples. . .

The first great step will be the Federation of the Teutonic subrace, composed of the United States, Britain and Germany, forming a pacific and cultural World Power, too strong to be attacked, each autonomous as now, but federated together for mutual advantage.

We cannot get the United States of Europe at once, it is clear, but why should we not begin to prepare for it and plan out and create certain small steps that would make the Federation inevitable in the long run?

The first thing we should try to do is to enable the people to travel more freely amongst each other, so that they should get to know each other; for intimacy and knowledge, these are the parents of friendship and understanding. We fear and distrust those we do not know, those whose motives we suspect, those whom we think may turn out to be enemies to us. The more we know them, the more we find they are like ourselves, just ordinary human beings with the usual faults and virtues of humanity—not really terrible people, as we used to think when we imagined that all our enemies were wicked and all those who fought with us were good. Friendship is the only way to get over that difficulty. Travel and interchange of communications and thoughts are ways of drawing the Nations together. . . Get rid of your passports for one

thing. . . Let us try to get rid of these barriers which make things dearer for everybody, and try to dwell like reasonable people, shaping our markets in co-operative ways, not by competition. . . One way towards international friendliness would be to promote international culture. . .

Could we not begin in our own homes and towns never to speak evil of other Nations, but try rather to speak good? Can we not work for international education. . .? There is no stronger way of drawing people together than the school and college. . .

Soon I am going back to India, to strive there to increase the movement for India's freedom. That has a great part in this future, because as long as India is outside, a subject Nation, a war of colour may break out at any moment—the most disastrous war to which any civilization can be exposed. Before we can look for the United States of Europe we must make friends with our coloured brothers everywhere; and India is the one place where that is at once possible, because she is within the Realm of what should be the great British Commonwealth of Free Nations instead of an Empire ruling over a subject people. . . —*The Future of Europe*, 2 October 1927

#### EXPANDING POLITICS

All the parts being interdependent, so must each part recognize

its duty to the whole, and thus reach harmonious evolution. The whole to which he owes duty depends on the extent of his consciousness; with the expansion of his consciousness he recognizes a larger and larger whole. Service therefore begins in the nearest and expands over ever wider areas. The Ancients called this relation of man to his environment Politics, and the relation was made harmonious by the development of Political Virtues. In modern days we have a similar idea gradually developing among us, under the name of Civics. The two words are identical, being both derived from the "city," the first from Greek, the second from Latin. This duty of Service begins in the individual, Self-regarding or Individual Politics; it expands to the Home, Home Politics; it expands to the School, School Politics; it expands to the city, Municipal Politics; to the country, National Politics; to the commonwealth, International Politics; to Humanity, Human Politics. In the coming Civilization, the sixth of these will be mastered; the civilization of the Seventh Race will accomplish the last . . . Each human being has his duty of "National Service" to as many of these stages as the unfolding of his consciousness enables him to compass. If he refuses to yield it, he has no part in any organ of the Body Politic. He is a self-made outcaste.

He has no right to enjoy the protection and happiness of a Social Order to which he does not contribute.—*Presidential Address, 1917*

#### A UNION OF EAST AND WEST

*Speaking to Indians, in December 1920, Dr. Besant said:*

Nobody can say that the Allies have wholly triumphed. There is a state of turmoil and unrest which is persisting throughout Europe. Nor can that end, unless India comes to her place.

The next stage of the Plan is the building up of a Commonwealth of free Nations in which India plays her equal part. That is why the English came here and others had to go away; and the one Nation that is free in her institutions in her own island, if not free in her practice outside her own island, is the English Nation, chosen to come here and blend with the Indian Nation in the building up now of the World Empire, to be really a World Commonwealth, not a World Empire which was to rule by force, but a World Federation which was to govern by love and in peace. That is the ideal towards which some of us are trying to work, towards which the Manu is working, and He asks for co-operation from His elder children here, to bring together East and West, not for themselves alone but for the future good of the world,

to draw them together ; not losing their characteristics but harmoniously blending them for the helping of future generations, with the great spiritual ideals of India and the great material and scientific progress of Britain. These two are to be the main constituents of this Commonwealth, which is to be the model of the World Commonwealth of the future. It is a model on a small scale, of internationalism—the British race consisting of different Nations scattered all over the world, drawn into equal partnership, equal Commonwealth of mutual service, of mutual love, of mutual help, and not of tyranny on the one side and of subjection on the other. That is the great building which Vaivasvata Manu is trying to bring about, against the clashing wills of men and against all the strivings of the ignorant, and, far worse, against those Powers of Darkness who are ever the opponents of the Brothers of Light.

You have heard of Asuras, and you know that in the long run even Asuras are compelled to co-operate with the Divine Will. All that they can do is to resist the speed of progress. Asuras cannot stop the chariot of God which rolls along the track of evolution, but they can delay it, retard it, and inflict greater pain and suffering upon men.

It is on the men in India that the great burden of that choice is

falling today.<sup>1</sup> India is now divided into two great camps and two only: one camp marked by love and the other by hate, one camp marked by love of liberty and the other by desire to tyrannize, one marked by co-operation and the other by antagonism. It is for you to choose which of these camps you will strengthen. I cannot say to you, members of The Theosophical Society: "Join that camp, join this camp," but I can say to you as Theosophists, you as members of The Theosophical Society, that for forty-five years this teaching has been in the world and you ought to know more about it than the outer world. The outer world may be moved by temporary injuries, carried away by wrongs inflicted and sufferings endured, but you, students of the Wisdom, ought to realize that behind all these outside things the Inner Government of the world is ruling and ultimately must have its way, in one of two ways, by destruction or by evolution: yours is the choice. If you find a movement marked by hatred, if you find a movement marked by tyranny over the opinions of others, by trying to force people along lines that some of them may adopt, if you find those means are means of compulsion, of tyranny, of social ostracism, of spreading hatred in India and dividing her more than she had ever been divided before,

<sup>1</sup> December 1920.



I tell you, no matter who may lead it, no matter who may join it, that is a movement of the Brothers of the Shadow and leads to destruction. Those are the marks that show what they are. The Lords of Light sent our Society for this great crisis, to save the Indian Motherland. Every movement They instigate is moved by love, every movement They instigate is moved by drawing together, by co-operating for the common end, for the common purpose, and for common work; and as the mark of the sixth sub-race is to make a union and not to combat further, to work hand in hand and not strike each other, therefore, in this great critical moment of transition, the decision has come to the Mother and to her children scattered over the far wide world to choose. Will you follow the teachings of your ancient Rishis? Will you reform abuses, but keep the central treasure in your hands in which there is the spiritualization of the world? You alone can save the world from going down into the gulf of materialism; India alone, with her glorious past, with her religion which contains everything that every later religion has given to a portion of the Race—India, the Mother, has the right to spiritualize the world, and with spirituality to bring back to the world intellectual greatness, to bring back to it all the beauty of devotion as well as the splendour

of the mind. The centre of the conflict is transferred from Europe to Asia. India is the heart of Asia, and on the decision of India the whole immediate future depends.

—*The Great Plan*, 1920

#### WORLD COMMONWEALTH

*To Britons in London, a few months later, she said:*

Now of Great Britain, I ask: What is her place in the Plan? Great Britain has a possibility before her, and a power of accomplishing that possibility, which are not so great in any other Nation in the world. . . . The tendencies everywhere are not only towards Union within the Nation, but of Union of larger and larger Nations as we go on in evolution. . . . Now Britain has the opportunity to make a mighty Empire—Empire I call it for a moment, for its name has been Empire hitherto. . . . Britain's opportunity is hers, because all round the world there are Free Nations that have sprung from her, that you call the Self-Governing Dominions, and other lands that have been acquired largely by the help of their own people, and which you call Dependencies or Colonies; they, all that huge possibility of all those varied Nations, not only of white people but of coloured, not only of western Nations but of eastern, not only of Europe but of Asia, are awaiting federation. Think what it means

if, for the first time in the world, a Power as strong as you admittedly are today, instead of relying on strength, tries to seek for and to do justice. Instead of trying who can arm the most, try who can serve the best. Instead of trying to tyrannize over others, open to them the gates of Freedom, and say to all the Nations that make up this great Empire: "Come and form with us not an Empire, but a great Commonwealth of Free Nations; not a white Commonwealth, but a Commonwealth into which men of every race, of every colour, of every ancestry, of every creed, of every tradition and custom, shall come willingly as free members." Ah! If Britain can do that, then she will do her part in the Great Plan. That is her place; that is her opportunity. No other Nation with dominions so widespread and so varied can build up that mighty Commonwealth of Brotherhood, of all the races of every faith, of every colour, of every line of thought. Have you the strength to do it? I believe you have. Have you the love to do it? I hope you have.

That is your place in the Plan; take it or leave it. It is your decision, your right to say what you will do. But if you can do it, if you *will* do it, if you will encourage Freedom and not try to hold her back, if you will welcome her everywhere where your power extends; if you will help, strengthen, inspire, lead, but let the Nations take their Freedom and be your brothers and not your subjects—then you will do more than make a great Federation, then you will do more than build a mighty Commonwealth; you will build a Model, which the world shall copy; you will build a Temple, which shall become the model for the Temple of Humanity; within your own power you will make Freedom extend everywhere over your Dominions, and thus set an example that other Nations shall follow; for you will never reach true Internationalism until the Nations have recognized their Brotherhood, and have willingly joined together in bonds of Love, of Amity, and of Freedom.

—*Britain's Place in the Great Plan*, July 1921

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At Dr. Besant's proposal, the Third World-Congress of The Theosophical Society sent a letter to President Hoover of the United States of America, "who saw in Europe the devastation wrought by war, and who nobly devoted himself to the relief of its victims, to lead the Nations of the world to the outlawry of war, and to the establishment of arbitration for the decision of international disputes."

—*Presidential Address, 1929*

# ANNIE BESANT—MASTER-BUILDER

[THEOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF WORLD RECONSTRUCTION]

*The Foundation of a Stable Society* must be BROTHERHOOD ;

*The Need of Every Human Being* is for HAPPINESS and for conditions favourable to his evolution.

*The Duty of Society* is to supply an environment which yields these.

The birth of a human being into an organized society gives to him a claim, and to society a duty—the claim of a child on its parents, the duty of the parents to the child. It is this natural and proper claim of the younger on the elder that has been perverted into the aggressive doctrine of “rights”; animals, children, the sick, the ignorant, the helpless, all these have rights—the right to be kindly used, protected, nursed, taught, shielded; the strong, the grown-up, have only duties.

*The Purpose of Organized Society*: The happiness and the welfare of its members, and where it fails to secure these it stands ipso facto condemned. “*Government exists only for the good of the governed.*” So said Pythagoras . . . and the phrase has echoed down the centuries, and has become the watchword of those who are seeking the betterment of social conditions.

*The Theosophical Ideal of the State* spoken out by Pythagoras :

The Father-Mother of its citizen,  
The Protector of all.

<sup>1</sup> *The duty of the State, of organized Society, is to secure to every one of its members at least the minimum of welfare—of food, clothing, shelter, education, leisure—which will enable each to develop to the full the faculties which he brought with him into the world.*

There is no necessity of overwork and absence of leisure, of lack of comfort and the means of enjoyment. Human brains are quite clever enough to plan out a social system in which every citizen should have enough for happy life.

*The Only Obstacles* are selfishness and want of will.

*It Was Done Long Ago* under the King-Initiates who ruled in the City of the Golden Gate and in Peru. It was done in the time of King Rāmachandra, as may be read in the *Rāmāyana*. It was done when the Manu ruled in the City of the Bridge.

*The Builders*: But it must be planned out by wisdom, not by ignorance, and brought about by the love and sacrifice of the higher, and not by the uprising of the lower. Mobs can make revolutions; but they cannot build a State.

<sup>1</sup> Italics Dr. Besant's.

### PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW ORDER<sup>1</sup>

Basing itself on the study of the past, Theosophy can lay down certain principles, to be worked out into details by the highly educated and experienced. The principles are :

1. That Government should be in the hands of the Elders, *i.e.*, the wisest, the most experienced, and the morally best ;

2. That the possession of ability and of power imposes the duty of service ;

3. That freedom brings happiness only to the educated and self-controlled, and that no one, so long as he is ignorant and un-self-controlled, should have any share in the governing of others, and should only have such freedom as is consistent with the welfare of the community ;

4. That the life of such a one should be rendered as happy and useful as possible, under discipline until he is fit to "run alone," so that his evolution may be quickened ;

5. That co-operation, mutual aid, should be substituted for competition, mutual struggle ;

6. That the fewer resources a man has within himself, the more means of outer enjoyment should

be placed within his reach by society.

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[On the application of the principles of Theosophy to the Reconstruction of Society Dr. Besant observes :]

The competitive system is for the brute in the jungle; the co-operative system is for the man in society. The unrelated efforts for Social Reform, dealing with an intolerable evil here and there, must be changed into a combined effort to theosophize society, and as long as a single avenue of human activity remains unaffected by Theosophical ideals, the work of The Theosophical Society remains incomplete. All who have entered into the spirit of the Masters know that to follow Theosophical ideals is to become profoundly humanitarian and international, and to be pledged never to cease from improving social conditions all the world over. To be a Son of God is to be a Servant of Man. The work of The Theosophical Society must always develop to meet human needs. Theosophists must throw themselves into every kind of activity, until there is no corner of the earth where God's will is not done as it is done in the higher world.—THE THEOSOPHIST, Watch-Tower, March 1923, pp. 4-5

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Besant's own heading.

# ANNIE BESANT—ARISTOCRATIC SOCIALIST

## THE NEXT STEP UPWARDS IN CIVILIZATION

[Telling a "Fairy Tale" of an ancient State which was built on the idea that he who had most should sacrifice for those who had least, Dr. Besant puts forth "certain lines of reorganization" which, she modestly states, "are well worthy of consideration and discussion."]

*The Village Unit*: A small area should be the unit of administration—a village, a township, any small area that may be named, so long as it is small.

*The Elders*: The people in that area should have the right to elect those who are to guide; but only people over a certain age, or with a certain definite experience of life—the "elders" in the old sense of the term. It should be their right to choose those who immediately should guide their little polity, so that the administration of the small area may be always under the control of the people who have to live in it.

*The Head of the Council* of the area should be chosen out of those elected by the people living therein, but chosen by the authority immediately above it. That has not been tried for many thousands of years, but it is a sound system. . .

### EVER-WIDENING AUTHORITY

The whole life of the people as regards agriculture, crafts, amuse-

ments, libraries and sanatoriums, should be in the hands of these local councils; so that the life of the unit in each State should be self-contained to a very great extent. The next area would be the area in which many of these were gathered together into a single organization, say a Province.

All the primary councils would advise the Province council, and only those would have the right to rule in that larger organization who had proved themselves good rulers in the smaller organization below—not fresh from ignorance, but partly trained, would be the rulers of this next greater area, and their chief, again selected by the authority next above.

A Parliament of the Nation, which should guide national affairs, would be chosen again only by and from those who had shown themselves efficient in provincial politics. And international affairs I would not give to the ordinary parliament at all, but to the ruler of the State, the Monarch, and to

the men old in knowledge and experience, the best of the Nation, who should be round him as his council ; to the hands of that body only should international politics be trusted.

#### THE KEY-NOTE OF STATECRAFT

The general idea is that each man should have power according to his knowledge and capacity. None should be without some share, but the power that he has should be limited to his knowledge, experience and capacity ; and only those should rule the Nation who have won their spurs in good administration of national affairs. In this way, we should restore to the State something of the knowledge that it wants, and we should take away from the State the danger of

allowing a mass of ignorant electors—who are really fighting to elect a man who will look after their mines, their drains, their local interests, matters they understand—to upset international arrangements, and possibly plunge us into war—or worse, into dishonour. Those are the general principles which might be worked out, and might be applied to modern days.

And the key-note is that of my fairy tale : “From every man according to his capacity ; to every man according to his needs.”

A democratic Socialism, controlled by majority votes, guided by numbers can never succeed ; a truly aristocratic Socialism, controlled by duty, guided by wisdom, is the next step upwards in civilization.

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## ANNIE BESANT—ECONOMIST

#### ON TAXATION

THE whole system of laying taxes on the necessaries of life is radically vicious in principle. To tax the necessaries of life is to sap the strength and to shorten the life of those men and those women on whose strength and whose life the prosperity of the country depends ; it is to enfeeble the growing generation ; it is to make the children pale and stunted ; it is, in fact, to undermine the constitution

of the wealth-producers. To tax food is to tax life itself, instead of taxing incomes ; it is a financial system which is, at once, cruel and suicidal. As a matter of fact, taxes taken off food have not decreased the revenue, and when this policy of taxing food shall have become a thing of the past, then a healthier and more strongly-framed Nation will bear with ease all the necessary burdens of the State. Indirect taxation is also bad, because it

implies a number of small taxes (some of which are scarcely worth the cost of collecting), and thus necessitates the employment of a numerous staff of officials, whereas one large direct tax would be more easily gathered in.

It is also bad, because with indirect taxation it is almost impossible for a man to know what he really *does* pay towards the support of the State. It is right and just that every citizen in a free country should consciously contribute to the maintenance of the Government which he has himself placed over him; but when he knows exactly what he is paying, he will probably think it worth while to examine into the national expenditure, and to insist on a wise economy in the public service. I do not mean the kind of economy which is so relished by Governments, the economy which dismisses skilled workmen, whose work is needed, while it retains sinecures for personages in high places; but I mean that just and wise economy which gives good pay for honest work, but which refuses to pay dukes, earls, even princes, for doing nothing. This great problem of fair and equal taxation ought to be thoroughly studied and thought over by every citizen; few infringements on equal liberty are so fraught with harm and misery as are those which pass almost unnoticed under the head of "collec-

tion of the revenue"; few reforms are so urgently needed as a reform of our financial system, and a fair adjustment of the burdens of taxation. . .

#### ON LAND-OWNERSHIP

With our great and increasing population it is absolutely necessary that all cultivable land should be under cultivation. To hold uncultivated, land which is capable of producing bread and meat is a crime against the State. . . Then instead of sending the cream of our peasantry abroad, to seek in foreign countries the land which is fenced in from them at home; instead of driving them to seek from the stranger the work which is denied to them in the country of their birth; we should keep Englishmen in England to make England strong and rich, and give land to the labour which is starving for work, and labour to the land which is barren for the lack of it. "Land to labour, and labour to land" ought to be our battle-cry, and should be the motto engraven on our shield. . .

Land, like air, and like all other natural gifts, cannot rightly be held as private property. The only property which can justly be claimed in land is the improvement wrought in the soil. When a man has put labour or money into the land he farms, then he *has* a right to the advantages which accrue from his

toil and from his invested capital. . . . It is the farmers and the labourers who have a right to life-tenancy in the soil, or more exactly to a tenancy lasting as long as they continue to improve it. The farmer, whose money is put into the land, the labourer, whose strength enriches the soil—these are the men who ought to be the land-owners of England. . . . Sacred rights of property! But what of the more sacred rights of human life? The life of the poor is more holy than the property of the rich, and famish-

ed men and women more worthy of care than the acres of the nobleman. If these vast estates are fenced in from us by parchment fences, so that we cannot throw them open to labour, so that we cannot make the desert places golden with corn, and rich with sheep and oxen; if these vast estates are fenced in from us by parchment fences, then I say that the plough must go through the parchment, in order that the people may have bread. . . .—*Civil and Religious Liberty*

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The majority of men on the earth today are men of the Fourth Race, but the Fifth Race—the key-note of which is individualism—is leading human development. The dawn of the Sixth Race is yet afar in the future, and of that the key-note will be unity not individualism, brotherhood not combat, service not oppression, spirit not intellect. And the birthmark of the spirit is the longing to pour itself out in sacrifice, never asking what it can take but only what it can give. The fundamental unity of mankind is the central truth of the coming race, and the Nation which first grasps and practises that great conception will lead the future, humanity falling into line behind it. Those who see it, who teach it, may fail for the moment, but in their failure is the seed of inevitable success. It is for us who are Theosophists, who hold as truth the spiritual unity of mankind, to put our belief into practice by teaching peace, brotherhood, the drawing together of classes, the removing of antipathies, the recognition of mutual duty; let the strongest do the best service, the wisest the loftiest teaching; let us all be willing to learn and ready to share; so shall we hasten the dawn of a better day, and prepare the earth to receive the coming race.

—*Some Problems of Life*



## ANNIE BESANT—PROPHET

### ON EUROPE: GERMANY

**W**HAT will be the result on the Central Powers? Will the thrones of the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs follow that of the Romanoffs? It will be a happy day for Europe if the contagion of the revolutionary spirit spread, as it well may, and if we see the great European tyrannies crumbling into pieces before our eyes. Germany, above all, has chosen the evil path, and her fall is sure, and we may well hope that the brief Imperial sway of the Hohenzollerns, dating only from 1871, will soon be over. But the German people, well educated as they are, may yet be less fitted for Liberty than the ignorant Russians, for the Germans have been so drilled and organized, all initiative has been so starved out of them, that they may be like a limb paralyzed by long inaction in a casing of plaster, into which the power of movement returns but slowly.—**THE THEOSOPHIST**, Watch-Tower, April 1917

### ON ASIA: CHINA AND RUSSIA

Towards each other also the Nations have developed a realization of their common interests and their mutual interdependence, aggression, annexation, the imposition of

foreign yokes on subject Nations, will pass away. Free Russia has struck the note of the future, and Free Russia means Free Europe and Free Asia, for Russia in Asia is huge as Russia in Europe, and the Asian Russia will bring Freedom to the Asiatics. A Russian Republic, a Chinese Republic, will ensure Asiatic freedom, for they will join hands across the huge continent, and over them will float the banner of Liberty. The East, as well as the West, will reap the harvest which will follow the War. Brotherhood in each Nation will be accompanied by the Brotherhood of Nations, and all imposed yokes will be broken.—**THE THEOSOPHIST**, Watch-Tower, June 1917

### GERMANY'S FIFTH-COLUMN ACTIVITY

The world cannot feel assured of lasting peace with one-fifth of its population in a state of unrest, held down by repressive legislation. Is it conceivable that India, an Asian country, will look around Asia, and see Japan, China, Persia, Afghanistan, Siam, autonomous, self-determining, working out their own national destinies, growing in prosperity, masters of their resources, despising India as their inferior, because subject to an alien

Autocracy, and that India, once the greatest of them all, will remain satisfied and content under the yoke? Surrounded by a jeering ring of free and self-determining Nations, will not the humiliation pierce her very heart? Will not the world-jury recognize the danger of a new conflict arising between Great Britain and Germany, of Germany, beaten in the West, turning eastwards to seek her *revanche* in the East, carrying on a subtle propaganda in India, hypocritically posing as a friend of liberty, reversing her present role of a defender of autocracy into that of a defender of liberty, and throwing Britain, the destroyer of autocracy in Europe, into the odious part of an upholder thereof in Asia?

Would not true statesmanship, instead of tinkering with petty reforms and leaving untouched the citadel of autocracy, the Government of India, recognize the gravity of the situation, accept the principles of the C. L. [Congress-League] Scheme as now reaffirmed and inserted into the M.C. [Montagu-Chelmsford] proposals, and thus turn India into a buttress of the British Commonwealth, the Premier Nation of Asia, the pledge of the world's enduring peace, a field made fertile for all good by mutual love, instead of sterile by distrust on one side and resentment on the other?—*New India*, 11 September 1918

#### ON INDIA

*To her British Labour Colleagues, 3 December 1917:*

. . . If we are free, Britain's Empire in the East is safe, and we can guard Australasia, too thinly peopled to protect her immense coast-line. When with you in 1914, I said the price of India's loyalty is India's freedom. Now I say the price of your Empire's safety is India's freedom. . . Help us to become a free Commonwealth under the British Crown, and we will bring our man-power to secure the World-Peace.—*New India*

Even five millions of Indians out of 315 millions trained as soldiers under military discipline could save the Empire and make further attacks on the Empire impossible.

—*New India*, 10 February 1917

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. . . I submit that India, independent and alone, will recommence the old story of invasions and subjections, and must at once begin to prepare for these by increasing her huge military expenditure in preparation for the near withdrawal not only of British troops, but of the great protection of Britain's mighty name. As part of a great Commonwealth, the strength of the whole Commonwealth is her defence. As she rushed to the defence of Britain, overmatched in Europe,

so would the Nations of the Commonwealth rush to hers, if she were attacked from outside. Britain's navy is still the largest in the world, and that navy will be a sister-guardian of her long coast-line, even after she has created a navy of her own. All the strength of the Commonwealth will be at the call of every Nation in it, and that knowledge is sufficient to protect. In mere numbers, China is the only country that matches the Commonwealth, and in organization, in effectiveness for self-defence, there is no comparison between the two.

Nor can we leave out of account, in thinking of an independent India, the fact that one-third of her area is occupied by Indian States, which, with the cessation of the British Overlordship, would become independent kingdoms, as of yore. Many of them have well-trained troops and full treasuries. In a Home Rule India, these States would be autonomous units, and it may be that the Council of Princes might form a part of the Parliament of India. But in an Independent India, a desire to remove their neighbour's landmarks would probably arise, and the New India might have to defend her freedom against the aggressiveness of the armed major States, while she was still incapable of armed defence.

. . . If India were independent, the Muslim part of the population

—for the ignorant masses would follow those who appealed to them in the name of their Prophet—would become an immediate peril to India's Freedom. Allying themselves with Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey and Egypt, and with such of the tribes of Central Asia who are Musalmans, they would rise to place India under the rule of Islam—those in (now) "British India" being helped by the Muslim Indian States—and would establish Musalman rule. . . . In thinking of an Independent India, the menace of Muhammadan rule has to be considered.

#### INDIA AND JAPAN

To break the British connection would mean not Freedom but only a change of masters, for Japan is armed *cap à pie*, her population is overcrowded and needs an outlet; India at present cannot defend herself alone, and Japan would seize the hour of her weakness. To declare Independence now would be madness, and Britain would not be foolish enough to protect, while Independent India was preparing for future self-defence. She would either clear out at once, and leave India to be overrun, or would try to hold her down by force, while encouraging dissensions among her people, to the ultimate ruin of both great countries. For, without India,

Britain would fall from her position as the greatest of World-Powers, while with India, and possibly re-linked with the United States in close alliance, she would lead the forward evolution of Humanity for centuries to come. . . .

. . . . But in future, unless India wins Self-Government, she will look enviously at her self-governing neighbours, and the contrast will intensify her unrest.

But even if she gains Home Rule, as I believe she will, her position in the Empire will imperatively demand that she shall be strong as well as free. She becomes not only a vulnerable point in the Empire, as the Asian Nations evolve their own ambitions and rivalries, but also a possession to be battled for. Mr. Laing once said: "India is the milch-cow of England," a Kama-dhenu, in fact, a "cow of plenty"; and if that view should arise in Asia, the ownership of the milch-cow would become a matter of dispute, as of old between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Hence India must be capable of self-defence both by land and sea. There may be a struggle for the primacy of Asia, for supremacy in the Pacific, for the mastery of Australasia, to say nothing of the inevitable trade-struggles, in which Japan is already endangering Indian industry and Indian trade, while India is unable to protect herself.

In order to face these larger issues with equanimity, the Empire requires a contented, strong, self-dependent and armed India, able to hold her own and to aid the Dominions, especially Australia, with her small population and immensely unoccupied and undefended area. India alone has the man-power which can effectively maintain the Empire in Asia, and it is a short-sighted, a criminally short-sighted, policy not to build up her strength as a Self-Governing State within the Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown. The Englishmen in India talk loudly of their interests; what can this mere handful do to protect their interests against attack in the coming years? Only in a free and powerful India will they be safe. Those who read Japanese papers know how strongly, even during the War, they parade unchecked their pro-German sympathies, and how likely after the War is an alliance between these two ambitious and warlike Nations. Japan will come out of the War with her army and navy unweakened, and her trade immensely strengthened. Every consideration of sane statesmanship should lead Great Britain to trust India more than Japan, so that the British Empire in Asia may rest on the sure foundation of Indian loyalty, the loyalty of a free and contented people, rather than be dependent on the continued

friendship of a possible future rival. For international friendships are governed by national interests, and are built on quicksands, not on rock.—*The Future of Indian Politics*, 1922

#### HER CLEAR VISION

[How clearly Dr. Besant saw the danger-points in which Theosophists must work is revealed in her Presidential Address of 1909; wherein she sets before them the task of The Theosophical Society as revealed by "the Guardians of Humanity."]

In three countries, above all, is the spread of Theosophy necessary, if, in two cases, they are to be saved from ruin, and if the third is to take its place among the Nations. In France materialism has drained away the very life of the people, and the terrible bigotry of persecuting unbelief—as narrow and as cruel as that of the religious fanaticism which has generated it—is threatening the country with political and social destruction. Only Theosophy—as Dr. Schultz pointed out in her admirable report to the French Minister of Education—can save it, by destroying materialism, by restoring mysticism and rationality in religion, and the sense of high civic duty to the people.

In South Africa, a white race, given Self-Government too soon, is oppressing the Indian immigrants, disgracing the Empire in the face of the civilized world, and stirring up anger in India. What a nom-

inal Christianity is apparently impotent to accomplish there, true Theosophy must endeavour to perform, by raising the standard of Brotherhood, and by declaring that colour should be no bar to citizenship, where education, sobriety and good character justify its grant; it is for our Theosophical Society in Africa to lead the way to Justice and to Peace, so serving alike South Africa, India and the Empire.

In India, Theosophy alone can weld together Hindu and Musalman, Parsi and Christian, Jain and Sikh and Hebrew, and knit them all in bonds of loving friendship with their younger brethren of the West. Let us all seek by mutual love and mutual respect, to understand and sympathize with each other, never harbouring suspicions of evil motives in our minds, never allowing harsh or contemptuous phrases to escape our lips. In these days of crisis and of growth towards self-government in India, let every Theosophist be a centre of peace and goodwill; let the Englishman trust the Indian, the Indian trust the Englishman; "forgetting the things that are behind, let us reach forward to the things that are before," and work together for the happier age that is dawning, the age of equal citizenship, of the abolition of differences between races and colours, an abolition now existing only in The Theosophical Society, but which is to spread

from it over the whole of India. Over the storms of the time, let the White Dove of the Wisdom hover, emblem of knowledge and of love.

Thus, my Brethren, great is the task placed before the Guardians of Humanity in the hands of The Theosophical Society. May our feebleness be uplifted by Their resistless Power, our ignorance enlightened by Their pure Wisdom, our policy guided by Their high Activity, until Love reigns upon earth and the Oneness of the Self is known.

#### THE FUTURE IS UNVEILING

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We are standing on the threshold of a New Age. We are beginning the building of the foundation of the New World—or rather, we are the workers who are gathering together the materials for the building—to help the great Master-BUILDER in His building that part of the Temple of which the Great Architect has drawn the Plan. . . . That is the work of The Theosophical Society. To that it is pledged; for that, consciously or unconsciously, every member of it is more or less working; and the great Lodge has turned in that direction the forces of the Hierarchy, which are pouring through our Society. . . .—*Presidential Address, 1921*

### THE CENTRE OF THE EMPIRE

[Miss Kate Smith writes to the Editor of *THE THEOSOPHIST*, under date 9 June 1942.]

Dear Sir: The uncanny prescience of Dr. Annie Besant is manifest again. Members will remember how often she spoke of "the balance of power passing from the West to the East once more," and once, at least, amplified the statement as follows:

"Benjamin Disraeli, who became Premier of Great Britain, Lord Beaconsfield, was a man eastern in heart, though he dominated a typical western Nation, a man revelling in the splendour of an eastern imagination, and with his mind ever steeped in the poetry and glamour of the East. When he won for the British Monarch, in the teeth of British prejudice and democratic feeling, the splendid title of Emperor of India, he argued for the adding of the Imperial to the Royal Crown, and he said that in the changes among Nations Asia again might have her turn in Empire, and that it might be that the centre of the Empire might shift from the unruly West to the loyal East, when the Monarch of the Empire might be enthroned in the great continent of India, instead of in the little Island of the northern seas." This comes from the *Adyar Popular Lectures*, No. 5, "*The East and the West*, A lecture delivered at Mylapore, Madras, in the Ranade Library, to the South Indian Association, on 29 February 1908," page 27.

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We may note that the Eastern Group Supply Council found in India a much more central spot than Capetown. Would it not be glorious to have an Imperial Federated Capital in India, if India and the Empire-Commonwealth could be sufficiently united?

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# ANNIE BESANT—CREATOR OF LEADERS

## TO A YOUNG PRINCE: THE IDEAL OF KINGSHIP

DOES it seem strange in these democratic days to hold up the Ideal of Kingship? But human beings are much the same, whatever be their label, and one of the deepest longings of the human heart is to find and follow a true leader.

We "needs must love the highest when we see it," and the strongest Democrat is loyal to his Leader, if the Leader be worthy of loyalty. The pity is the Leader and the Ruler are not now always found in one and the same person, and the "Hero as King" is not always one with the wearer of the royal robe; it is likely that one outcome of the present anarchy in western Nations will be to prove that ignorance cannot rule, whether embodied in a mob or in an autocrat, that folly, whether in purple or in fustian, spells ruin. Democracy will probably work out some way of finding a Nation's best, and placing them in the seats of power; for superior wisdom and character are the only true credentials of authority. Eugenics justifies the value of breed, of race purity, of physical type. But the essentials of breed have been disregarded in princely

and noble houses, and descent loses value where the factors which should mark it have long been disregarded. Birth and *Dharma* together preserve the purity of descent, and where the second has been neglected the value of the first disappears. Princely by birth, see to it that your character is princely, and that the inner life corresponds to the outer label.—From "Advice to a Prince," in *New India*, 18 February 1932

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emotions, the root of your happiness or sorrow, your virtues and vices; your mind, the builder of your character and the director of activity; yourself, the Spirit, the Inner Ruler Immortal, the broken rays of whose perfection are what we call down here the Good, the Beautiful and the True.

The body, the emotions, the mind, form the Field, which you, the Spirit, must till and cultivate, where the seeds of a noble harvest must be sown. . .

Now you must train your body for the sake of the Motherland; it is hers, and she has need of strong, vigorous, enduring bodies, hard in muscle and steady in nerve. Soft, flabby, fat, lazy bodies are not bodies for freemen; they are only fit for slaves. And remember that youth is the only time for making a strong and vigorous body. . .

The emotions of youths are strong and apt to carry them away. Yet if you would serve the Motherland in the future, you must learn self-control, you must encourage Right Emotion, and starve out wrong by turning away from it. You need to cultivate courage and endurance, kindness and helpfulness, truth and generosity. You must show reverence to all that is worthy of it: to God, to your parents, to your teachers. You must protect the weak, show tenderness to the aged, be courteous to the poor, to all below you in rank.

Never speak a rough word to one whose position renders impossible a rough retort, and never cringe to a superior. Never lie, either from fear or greed, nor play the hypocrite to please . . . Play well the great game of life. . .

If you would serve the Motherland well, you must study hard and deeply. Remember that education does not mean storing the memory with facts; it means drawing out the faculties of the mind, and bringing them under control, so that you can address them to any question, and deal efficiently and adequately with the problems of life as they present themselves. You need to cultivate observation, accuracy, discrimination, the power of classification, the seeing of things in true proportion—that is, the perception of values, and of the relation of one object to another. Thinking is the establishment of relations. You must cultivate attention, both alert and sustained, for concentration is only formal and developed attention, and without concentration no mastery of great questions is possible. . . But whatever you study, remember to do it for the Mother's sake, and that dedication of all to Her, of all as the preparation for Her Service, shall make all drudgery fascinating, and gild the dullest study with the promise of future use. Body, emotions, mind, all are consecrate to Her, are held in trust for Her Service.

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you brought with you into the world; your thoughts in the past of this life have moulded it year by year into its present form; your present thoughts are creating the character of your manhood, shaping the citizens who shall be India, when we, the elders, shall have passed away. India gave you birth, she is your Mother; yet you shall recreate her as your daughter, in the years to come. In the great chain of life, in which each generation is a golden link, every link is supported by those that are before it, every link supports those that are after it. These are, indeed, but truisms, but they are truisms that live, and should guide and inspire. . .

Young India, then, means the youth of the Nation, rising above all divisions, forgetting all ancient animosities, with its watchword, United India, with its banner on which is inscribed: Worship the Motherland, *Vande Mātaram*.

#### FIRST RIGOROUS TRAINING

To send men to fight without training, without discipline, without knowledge, would be sending them as sheep to the slaughter-house. And, gentlemen, in the service of the Motherland, in the service of the Goddess Liberty, do you suppose that you can enlist and go straight into the noblest and holiest of struggles, the struggles which create National

Self-Rule, which set free a Nation, without serving as National Recruits, without undergoing the preparatory discipline which alone makes the citizenship possible, the training which develops the youth into the man, the man into the citizen of a free country? Do you feel in the flush of the hot enthusiasm which leads you to enlist in the Service of the Motherland, that you want to act—to act at once? So feels the recruit. But he has to pass through the hard training which alone can make a soldier, worthy to wear the uniform of his country. Does it chill your enthusiasm when you are told that National Service begins with rigorous training? If so, your enthusiasm is only like a fire of twigs that blazes up furiously with much crackling and then dies down. The only enthusiasm worthy of a Patriot is that which remains white-hot under difficulties, under drudgery, under discipline. Do not venture to profane the Altar of the Motherland with a fire that dies down under the breath of disciplined training. The only enthusiasm useful in the cause of Liberty, is like the tempered steel; it has been purified in the furnace of discipline, hammered on the anvil of knowledge, poured red-hot into the ice-cold water of drudgery, until it has a strength that naught can break, a resilience that naught can overstrain, a keenness that naught can resist, a flexibility that

naught can escape. Only when your characters are like tempered steel will you be worthy to go on active service. . .

#### TO BECOME SOLDIERS OF FREEDOM

You, the students of today, boys in school, young men in college, are to go out into a New India, an India that is rising out of Other-Rule into Self-Rule, like Lakshmi out of the ocean churned by the Suras and Asuras. That New India will be shaped, guided, developed by you, and by thousands like you, all over the land. Among the students in schools and colleges today, among you, are the future statesmen, the future leaders, the future generals, the future admirals, the future merchant princes, the future scientists, the future rulers of India. Nay, among you are also the future members of the Imperial Council, the Council which shall control the destinies of a mighty Empire, which is to be a blessing or a curse to the whole world—a blessing if guided by noble, unselfish, pious, righteous statesmen, a curse if guided by the base, the selfish, the materialistic, and the bad. . .

Now that things are changing, you must change with them, and you must bear in your youth the training of the free. For in the maturity of your manhood you will be responsible for India's peace, India's order, India's progress; with the glory, you must take also the

responsibility of Freedom. And Freedom is a Goddess beautiful but austere; she is the armed Warrior, strong and unstained. The Heroes who follow her are mighty men, not weaklings, and she needs for her service men and not drones.

Without preparation some of you would rush into action, raw recruits into the firing-line, more dangerous to their own army than to the army of the foe. Many of you do not realize how serious a thing is political action, how far-reaching are political movements, how interdependent the parts of the complex body of a Nation, how rashness means ruin, and folly spells catastrophe, and blunders slip insensibly into crimes. In politics men play with human lives, with the prosperity of Nations, with the plenty or starvation of peoples, with the safety or destruction of homes, with the happiness or misery of millions of men, women and children. If Temples of stone are held to be holy, are guarded from the foot of the profane, shall any unclean and unfit enter the Temple that is built of human lives, that is consecrate to the service of Humanity? Would you enter it in manhood, you who are students?

#### THE SOWING OF THE SEED

You are constituted of four important elements; your body, the instrument of your actions; your

emotions, the root of your happiness or sorrow, your virtues and vices; your mind, the builder of your character and the director of activity; yourself, the Spirit, the Inner Ruler Immortal, the broken rays of whose perfection are what we call down here the Good, the Beautiful and the True.

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**THE SPIRIT**

What shall I say of this, your very Self? The religions of the world have all one aim—the Realization of the Self, the Knowledge of God. Their outward rites and ceremonies are intended for the training of the body, to overcome its sloth, to teach temperance in all things, to make it a useful servant, not a tyrannical master. Their moral precepts are directed to the training of the emotions to the loftiest end. Their metaphysics and philosophies aim at the highest development of the intellect. But the essence of Religion is Unity, the Realization of the One God, within and without, flowering into the Brotherhood of all that lives.

In India, all the great religions find a home, and some say that religious differences must ever prevent the growth of a true Nationality. Ill do they think, who thus assert. The details of religions vary, and the unspiritual fight over non-essentials. But the heart of Religion is one—the Love of God and Man. . . . Let a common pride replace religious jealousies all over India.

**THE RECRUIT MANOEUVRES**

I have spoken much of the training which should fill the student's days; but what of his touch with the outer world? Our recruit learns to dig trenches, to march, to manoeuvre, to fire. How else should he become ready for the battle-

field? And so with you. You should take interest in the political questions of the day, read them in the papers, debate on them in your debating societies; if possible, as in the Central Hindu College, make a Parliament, where you can learn the forms of Legislative Assemblies, learn to argue cogently, to bear opposition with good temper, to be sound in your logic, accurate in your facts, clear in your exposition. Or have a Union, like those of Oxford and Cambridge, where Gladstone and others won their first laurels. Your opinions will often be crude, one-sided, exaggerated; how can they be aught else in the beginning? Better to have them crude now than when you go out into public life, when the crudity will affect the lives of others. These discussions will force you to study; if you are not to make yourselves ridiculous. If you have fluency, a facile tongue, take care that your knowledge outruns your speech, not your speech your knowledge, and do not let your fluency tempt you to hide ignorance with words. Oratory should cover a plenum, not a vacuum, and for its support it needs constant study; it must be uplifted by the pillars of Wisdom and Strength; not by Beauty alone. And let your debates deal with questions of details, the formation and work of Pañchāyats and Local Boards; with sanitation and hygiene, urban and



rural; with the establishment of village schools, with curricula, elementary, secondary, technical; with the uplift of the submerged classes; the questions of mendicancy, charity, co-operation, and the like. You will need all this when your college work is over.

This study, this debate, are the manœuvres of the recruit, his last preparation ere he goes to the front.

#### PRELIMINARY SERVICE

But to make knowledge fruitful, it must be lived, not only studied. Organize yourselves for social service. Let a group of you take up a night-school, and in rotation be responsible for its supervision, say each for one evening in the week; subscribe for a regular teacher, but share and supervise his work. Let another group visit a hospital, collect books and papers and take them to the patients, sit with the convalescent, and if they need it, look after them a little when they come out. Let another group take charge of a reading-room, again in rotation, one evening a week. Let another group organize a little Loan Society for the very poor, and relieve them from increasing debts. But in all such things remember that you must carry them on upon sound business principles, and be rigid in your accuracy. In this, especially, it would be well to have the help and guidance of a good man of business, lest you should do more harm than good. Where

there is a branch of the Servants of India Society, you could always have such affectionate guidance, alike in your study and in your practical work. Let another group work for the helping of poor students; collect school-books that are done with and supply poor boys with them; arrange meals for them in one place, instead of letting them wander from one house to another for their food. Help in your town, if there are melas, taking care of the aged, of women and children especially. There are endless ways of helping, if only the spirit of service is in you. In these works among the poor and suffering you will learn their needs, understand their troubles, and gain a fund of practical knowledge that you can utilize when you go out into the world.

You see there is work, more work than enough to fully occupy your leisure in these days of preparation. Then when you go out into the world, you will be ready for the more responsible work, fit to play your part as men, not raw recruits but trained soldiers in Liberty's Army. Rarely in the long history of the world has youth opening before it a manhood so full of noblest possibilities of achievement . . . Take as the motto for the coming years:

Be God-loving and Man-serving;  
Be Pure, be Brave, be Strong.

—*The Future of Young India*

# ANNIE BESANT—SCOUT

[A MESSAGE DATED 7 MARCH 1929]

If I had a dozen sons—I have only one—I would send them all into the Scout Movement, as soon as they could enter its lowest grade. And I would send the daughters into the Girl Guides, under similar conditions, to begin at the beginning. Now do you think that I could say anything stronger than that, as a recommendation to you, who read this, in the way of advice as to joining the Scouts or the Guides, according as you are a boy or a girl?

If you are wondering why I write so strongly, I will tell you why I do. It is because I have seen Cubs, and Scouts, and Rovers, and I know what a useful lot they are, as boys and as men. And so also with the girls.

They are good citizens of their country, ready to work for it; ready to live for it; ready to die for it. That is the idea conveyed by the word "citizen." It means a man who is fit to live in a city; in other words—a man who is fit to live in society, fit to live among a group of other people.

We put this in another way in our Scout pledge. We promise to "do a good turn every day." As you know, a good turn is some helpful act, for which you are not paid in any way, except by love which cannot be bought or sold. And you promise on your Honour. Honour leads you to do good things without being made to do them. It is the Voice of God within you, bidding you to do some good act which you are not ordered to do by someone who has the right to give an order to you.

You see why you should do a thing that you feel, inside you, that you ought to do. That inner feeling is God's Voice speaking inside you; and if you do it, you will become a good and noble man, and help your Nation to hold up her head among the Nations of the world.

And so good be with you, Brothers, for, I, though in a woman's body, am your Brother Scout.

\* \* \* \*

Perhaps you may like to know that I took the Scout's pledge from our Chief Scout, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, here in Madras, at a big Scout Rally.

# ANNIE BESANT—EDUCATIONIST AND SCIENTIST

OF a Village Improvement Society to teach the villagers spinning, weaving, carpentry, and other crafts, Dr. Besant said :

Thus are we trying to carry out the injunction of one high in the Hierarchy, given through H.P.B., "Theosophy must be made practical," for Theosophy is Their chosen instrument for the redemption of India from bondage, for the revival of her religions, her intellectual greatness, and her material prosperity, and for winning back for her her place among the Nations of the world. . .

I would urge upon each of you, who talk about the service of the Masters, what are you doing to prove your earnestness ? What real sacrifice do you make to render possible the Coming of the Lord by preparing his way ? . . . Our educational work is especially stressed by the Lord Himself. I trust our 363 Lodges will remember how vitally necessary this work is for the future of India, and how the Theosophical plan of education, embracing the whole nature of the student, and developing him physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, is one of the chief methods which is needed for that Future. It is the surest method of

bringing about Hindu-Muslim Unity, for Hindu and Muslim students learning together, playing together, and led to reverence each other's religion as they join in a common daily act of worship to the One God, in which prayers from all faiths are used, results in an attitude which cannot be lost in later life, but sweetens the whole character, and broadens it unconsciously, while deepening the individual faith. Think of your monthly gifts to this work as offerings made directly to the Masters, one of whom described Theosophy as the corner-stone of the religions of the future, not as supplanting any one of them, but as holding them together in Unity. . .

A great project is in front of us, no less than a regularly chartered Theosophical University, wherein the successful line followed by our Schools and Colleges, and universally praised for its results on education and character by Government Inspectors, will be more thoroughly and completely carried out. Only then shall we, by a striking practical example, succeed in theosophizing the system of Education.

—*Presidential Address, 1924*

Education is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Problem of

Peace, and to its solution the recognition of Reincarnation is necessary. . . . To educate a child aright, he must be seen as an enduring Spiritual Intelligence, ensheathed in coats of matter, and must be studied for his helping, not forcibly pressed into an unsuitable mould. . . . Reincarnation is, again, the basis of any true system of penology, both in theory and in practice.

—*Presidential Address, 1917*

Let me close on a note . . . which cannot be sounded too often. Some Indians would say that I, as an Englishwoman, ought not to speak on Indian national education . . . . But ill do they read the signs of the times who rashly strive to rend apart and to set in hostile camps the Asian and European branches of the great Aryan Race. . . . The English have much to teach the Indian; the Indian has also much to teach the English. From India will come the spiritualization of all religions, the profoundest ideas of Deity, the most philosophical conception of the solidarity of mankind, the deepest science of psychology, the saving of the world from the nightmare of industrialism, the lifting of human life to nobler dignity. From England will come the practical sciences that yoke the forces of Nature to the service of man, the energy and accuracy which turn commerce into an art, the imperial power of organization, and the genius for applying prin-

ciples to practice. Let the twain unite for the world's redemption, rather than destroy each other to the world's undoing. For the hope of the future lies in the twinship of these Nations, and they who would tear them apart are the enemies of mankind.—*Education as the Basis of National Life*

\* \* \*

Science ought to be the gathering of greater and greater knowledge of the laws of Nature in order that humanity may be helped, may be raised, may be strengthened; it should be the servant of humanity and the handmaid of religion. . . .

Where men's noblest qualities of compassion and tenderness, of sympathy with pain, where those are silent before the desire for knowledge, or the yet baser desire of discovering some weapon of war more deadly than those already possessed by some Nation . . . such science is on a path downward and not a path upward, and those of us who know it have no right to profit by any one of their discoveries even if it be temporarily curative. . . . Many years ago in the history of The Society, the Masters were asked to give some help to the science of that day, and the answer was significant: "We will never help your science until the social science is more developed in your Nation."—*Some American Lectures*

## ANNIE BESANT—PHILOSOPHER

**E**VIL does not exist in and by itself, as we may judge from the phenomena around us; evil, like good, lies in the relationship between one thing and another; it is relative, not absolute. What we speak of as evil in one place may be not evil in another; for evolution implies this changing character, and what is good at one stage may be evil at another. . .

There are the two opposite aspects of the one Eternal Life, and the process of evolution consists in that life in its dual aspects going outwards to cause diversity, and when the limit of diversity is reached, drawing inwards to reintegrate the diverse separated units into a mighty and enriched unity. The outward-going life seeks diversity and may be said therefore to tend to the pole of matter; the inward-going life seeks unity, and may be said therefore to tend to the pole of Spirit. Here is a truth that the thoughtful should ponder over. If we take good to mean all that is working in harmony with the Great Law, and evil to mean all that is working against it, then qualities now regarded, and rightly regarded, as evil—selfishness, desire for material gain, etc.—would have been good during the “descent into matter,” as only by these could

diversity be obtained, whereas now they are evil as retarding the process of integration, as checking the inward-flowing tide of life towards the pole of Spirit. . .

There is nothing evil in itself, for these are simply destructive and attractive forces at work, and the Being who is the source of all life, the Great One, the Lord, is known sometimes as the Destroyer and sometimes as the Regenerator, for until the lower is destroyed the higher cannot be born, and every death is but the lower aspect of a higher birth. . .

Why should identification with the retarding forces lead to destruction? The answer is this: because the Divine Life, going on and causing evolution, returns to unity, and everything which harmonizes with its mighty course is carried onwards without waste of energy; whereas everything which sets itself against it, and causes friction and retardation, wears itself out by the very friction which it causes. . . For the development of all positive qualities, it is necessary that they should be exercised against opposition. Without opposition no development is possible; without opposition no growth is possible. . . Muscularity is drawn out and developed by

working against the opposing weight . . . for as the muscle increases its capacity for holding life, life flows into it, and ever the strength we can draw from the surrounding Divine Life is limited only by our capacity to receive and hold.

*There* is the use of evil. . . Nor must we forget, as a fundamental use of evil, the evolution of the power to discriminate between good and evil, and thus of volition, of choice. How should we distinguish Truth save by discerning it as different from that which is not true? How should we learn its value if we did not find from experience the destructive effects of falsehood, in man and in society? . . .

Useful also is evil as a scourge that drives us to good . . . Evil inevitably brings suffering as a result, not by an arbitrary penalty but by an inherent necessity. And suffering gives rise to a feeling of repulsion towards the cause of suffering, and so drives man away from the side of nature which inharmoniously and tumultuously is plunging into disintegration, and carrying with it the personalities who elect to identify themselves therewith. . . Hence is pain, mis-called an evil, one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon man, in order to turn him from the transitory and fix him upon the eternal; for only by pain can he possibly learn, only out of disgust with the world will arise those inward aspirations

which shall at last be gratified in the vision of Truth Divine. . .

How then can we break our bonds? . . . The bonds are broken by these inevitable experiences which life after life teach the Soul the nature of the universe into which it has come. But desire is a binding force, and as long as there is desire so long must men come back to birth. . . For the man of action who performs every action because it is his duty, and remains indifferent to the fruits thereof, that man in the world is the servant of God; he is one who performs every action, not for what it brings him, but because it fills up something lacking which ought to be done in the world in which he lives as an agent of God . . . And therefore the devotee who acts, not in order that he may get anything but in order that the divine purpose may be fulfilled, he works by way of sacrifice, he offers all his actions as sacrifices to God . . . Such a man makes no Karma, for such a man has no *desire* . . . and the life of such a man is as an altar, and burning upon that altar is the flame of devotion and of knowledge. Every action is cast into the fire and is consumed therein, rising up as the smoke of a sacrifice, and leaving behind on the altar nothing save the fuel of knowledge and the fire of love. . .

We have seen that evil originates in limitation; we have seen that

evil is but a relative thing, and how what we call evil is often only a veil of evil and beneath it a future good. We have seen how actions of men, when they are developed, become evil, which in a lower organization would not at all be evil; how as man proceeds onward and onward he can use evil for his own perfecting; how man tries to escape from pain and to pursue pleasure; how desire remains in his heart, and brings him back to earth; how he goes forward and forward, purifying desire, identifying himself with the Divine Actor in the universe; then how no further actions have binding force upon him; how such a man is free from evil, and free from all those bonds which tie the Souls of men; and finally how he becomes an altar from which the smoke of sacrifice goes up continually to the Eternal. . .

And then realize that Brahman is bliss. Bliss, but how? Bliss, because there is unity; bliss, because there is absence of desire; bliss, because there is knowledge of permanence, which nothing that is transient can disturb. So shall the despairing human Soul find hope, if he is fixed on Brahman; so shall the disturbed human Soul find peace. Who can disturb the peace of the Soul that knows his source, that has found the Self?

Thou art Brahman. There is nothing which can shake that; there

is nothing which can undo that; there is nothing which can change that. He is fixed indissolubly upon the changeless, upon the Eternal Truth. He has nothing in him of earth, that he should ever pass away. The body is not the Self; disease may mar it, accident may injure it, death may strike it away, but the Self remains unchanged. The lower mind you may destroy, but there is no real loss; changed may be the individual circumstances, but the "I" is changeless. Separation between bodies may come, but the inner unity remains unbroken, and so any outer change must fail to drive to misery or to despair. Such a Self stands as a rock in the midst of warring, surging billows. The waves of misfortune boil up around it; they may dash up against it, but only to be shattered into foam against its sides, and fall in snowy wreaths to decorate its base, and thus render it more beautiful than it was before. So is it with the soul which identifies himself with the One; so is it with the Self which by knowledge and devotion has removed everything which is fleeting, and has founded himself on that which is divine. That is the goal; the goal which may be reached by you all, and the reaching of that goal is the Use of Evil in the Universe.

—*The Use of Evil*

## ANNIE BESANT—OCCULTIST

### A NOTE ON IDEALS

RUSSIA has been pre-eminently the "martyr Nation," "not willingly but helplessly, serving perhaps as a lesson to the world, that humanity is not yet fitted to follow, as Nations, the life of the Sannyāsi, and that the lofty teaching of the Lord Buddha as to perfect love, and of the Lord Christ for those who were strong enough to obey the command: "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect," needs to be checked by His other command in the same sermon: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." The efforts of Tolstoy to teach the one without the other, to address to men full of desires, full of greed and covetousness, the precept which only the self-controlled, the desireless, could practise without encouraging violence and lawlessness, has borne bitter fruit in the Red Terror, where the violent rose into power and trampled under foot the gentle and the weak. God grant that similar unbalanced teaching here, based on the theories of Tolstoy, may not plunge India into similar horrors. The exquisite balance in

Hinduism of duties according to faculties, the dharma of each individual and each caste—when caste was real and ere the confusion of castes set in—was the foundation on which was built the marvellous structure of Indian civilization, stable throughout millenium after millenium. Until the Inner Ruler Immortal rules the lower manifestations of consciousness, and the whole nature is conformed to that of the God within, mankind needs the pressure of external law to check the violence of the lower nature, and at the peril of ruin does a State forget that "order is Heaven's first law." If Russia's agony teaches this lesson to the foolish, her suffering will not have been in vain.—*Presidential Address, 1923*

If we set before an unprepared soul an ideal so lofty that it does not move him, we check his evolution. If you give to a peasant the ideal of a Brahmana you are placing before him an impossible ideal, and the result is that he does nothing. When you tell a man a thing too high for him, that man knows that you have been talking nonsense, for you have commanded him to perform that which he has no power to perform; your folly has placed before him motives



which do not move him. But wise were the teachers of old. They gave the children sugar-plums, and later the higher lessons. But we are so clever that we appeal to the lowest sinner by motives which can stir only the highest saint, and thus instead of furthering, we check his evolution. Place your own ideal as high as you can set it. But do not impose your ideal upon your brother, the law of whose growth may be entirely different from yours. Learn the tolerance which helps each man to do in his place what it is good for him to do, and what his nature impels him to do. Leaving him in his place, help him. Learn that tolerance which is repelled by none, however sinful, which sees in every man a Divinity working, and stands beside him to help him. Instead of standing off on some high peak of spirituality and preaching a doctrine of self-sacrifice, which is utterly beyond his comprehension, in teaching his young soul, use his higher selfishness to destroy the lower. . .

Make your aspirations high. They are the germs of powers in your next life. Through ever keeping the ideal high you will grow towards it, and what you long for today you shall be in the days to come. But have the tolerance of knowledge, and the patience which is divine. Each thing in its own place is in its right place. As the higher nature develops you can

appeal to the qualities of self-sacrifice, purity and utter self-devotion, to the will firmly fixed on God. That is the ideal for the highest to accomplish. Let us climb towards it gradually, lest we fail to reach it at all. . .

In the past separateness was right. . . Separation is the mark of descent into matter, and unification is the mark of the ascent to Spirit. The world is on the upward trend, although thousands of souls may lag behind. The ideal now is peace, co-operation, protection, brotherhood and helpfulness. The essence of sin now lies in separateness. . .

Even a crime is less injurious to the soul than a continued brooding over it in the mind, the growing of a cancer at the heart of life. An action once done is dead, and the suffering that follows it teaches the needed lesson, but thought is generative and living. . .

—*Dharma*

You can always judge of a man's likelihood of success by seeing how far he will subordinate everything people most care for to gaining one particular object. Is he willing to undergo hardship for it? To be frugal for it? To go through all sorts of difficulties for it? To choose his friends only as they help him in it? To give up all that hinders him? If so, he will gain his object, no matter how great the difficulties. It is the same with the spiritual

life; if it is the one thing a man cares for above all, then, let his life be what it may, he will gain his end. . .

The unspiritual man is not a bad man . . . but the object of his work is to gain certain objects for himself and for those connected with him. As long as this is his motive he belongs to the world. . . He may be an admirable man, but he is not spiritual. The only man who is spiritual is the man who sees but one Self everywhere and himself as an activity of the Self, and an organ of the one universal Life. That is what is meant by "spiritual," nothing else. All individual ends are thrown aside, so that in all he does he asks himself: "Am I discharging this particular function in the world as God would discharge it through me?" That is the test of all his activities.—*Development of the Spiritual Life*

#### BROTHERHOOD

. . . No one soul can separate itself and its destiny from that of other souls, since it is constantly affecting them and being affected by them on all planes. On the physical plane the continual interchange of the tiny lives of which all bodies are composed brings about a physical brotherhood that we cannot escape, and lays on each a duty to purify all lives to which he is host, and to send them out

improved not worsened by their stay with him. On the astral plane, we affect each other by the subtle vibrations of astral matter that carry influences from the three planes next above—vital-magnetic, emotional, intellectual—and so establish a bond of brotherhood that is a source of blessing or of curse according to the nature of the influences sent forth by each. *We must influence others*, but we can choose what kind of influence we will use; we cannot escape brotherhood, but we may either help or harm our brothers. And the vast ethical value of the Esoteric Philosophy is not only that it establishes the fact of human brotherhood, but that it also gives the knowledge which enables us to make that fact fertile of good for man. Now it may be seen why the true Founders of The Theosophical Society, as the guardians of the Esoteric Philosophy, made the establishment of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood the one essential and obligatory Object of The Society.—*An Introduction to Theosophy*

#### ON DEATH

Death consists, indeed, in a repeated process of unrobing, or unshathing. The immortal part of man shakes off from itself, one after the other, its outer casings, and—as the snake from its skin, the butterfly from its chrysalis—emerges from

one after another, passing into a higher state of consciousness. . .

The sunlight ranges over the universe, and at incarnation we step out of it into the twilight of the body, and see but dimly during the period of our incarceration; at Death we step out of the prison again into the sunlight, and are nearer to the reality. Short are the twilight periods, and long the periods of the sunlight; but in our blinded state we call the twilight life, and to us it is the real existence, while we call the sunlight Death, and shiver at the thought of passing into it. Well did Giordano Bruno, one of the greatest teachers of our Philosophy in the Middle Ages, state the truth as to the body and Man. Of the real Man he says:

“He will be present in the body in such wise that the best part of himself will be absent from it, and will join himself by an indissoluble sacrament to divine things, in such a way that he will not feel either love or hatred of things mortal. Considering himself as master, and that he ought not to be servant and slave to his body, which he would regard only as the prison which holds his liberty in confinement, the glue which smears his wings, chains which bind fast his hands, stocks which fix his feet, veil which hides his view. Let him not be servant, captive, ensnared, chained, idle, stolid and blind, for the body

which he himself abandons cannot tyrannize over him, so that thus, the spirit in a certain degree comes before him as the corporeal world, and matter is subject to the divinity and to nature.”

When once we thus come to regard the body, and by conquering it we gain our liberty, Death loses for us all his terrors, and at his touch the body slips from us as a garment, and we stand out from it erect and free. . .

Love “has its roots in eternity,” and those to whom on earth we are strongly drawn are the Egos we have loved in past earth-lives and dwelt with in Devachan; coming back to earth these enduring bonds of love draw us together yet again, and add to the strength and beauty of the tie, and so on and on till all illusions are lived down, and the strong and perfected Egos stand side by side, sharing the experience of their well-nigh illimitable past. . .

This one thing is sure: Man is today a living Soul, over whom Death has no power, and the key of the prison-house of the body is in his own hands, so that he may learn its use if he will. It is because his true Self, while blinded by the body, has lost touch with other Selves, that Death has been a gulf instead of a gateway between embodied and disembodied Souls.

—*Death and After*

## ANNIE BESANT—ARTIST

ONLY an Artist could write as an artist, could dream as an artist, could understand the intimacies of the artist heart and ideal. Were only the following words to remain they would acclaim Dr. Besant as "Artist and Worshipper of the Beautiful."

"Theosophy . . . sees Beauty as the Law of Manifestation, to which all objects should conform. Ugliness is against Nature, unnatural, intolerable."

\* \* \*

"The flower-spangled meadows, the reaches of snow, the fire of the sun, the cool shade of the grove, are modes of His beauty; He speaks in the highest flights of the sweetest poesy, in the stateliness of noblest prose, in the linked melody of exquisite symphonies, and the mighty harmonies of crashing chords . . . 'I established this universe with a fragment of Myself, and I remain.'"

\* \* \*

"In the older world the Beautiful was placed on a level with the Good and the True, and the cult of Beauty made fair the common lives of men . . . The sense of the Beautiful is a priceless part of the emotional nature, and is to it what Truth is to the Intellect and Goodness to the Intuition . . . Nature . . . with her myriad voices . . . preaches that Beauty is the essential condition of divine, and therefore of all perfect, work."

\* \* \*

"Looking at an exquisite flower . . . the Artist . . . can see far more than we; he sees the many-sided thought of which the flower-form is only a facet; he sees the ideal, and it is *that* which we ask him to show us."

\* \* \*

"Rafael painted a woman with a child in her arms; we have seen many women carrying their infant sons. But the painter of the San Sisto Madonna saw the ideal Mother and the ideal Child, infinite tenderness and protection in the Mother, exquisite sweetness and candid simplicity in the Child. He saw not only mother and child, but Motherhood and Childhood, the eternal perfection of the Idea, and he painted it for the wonder and the love of every succeeding generation. And we blind ones can now see the Madonna and the Baby in every mother and child, and the whole world is fairer because Rafael lived and saw."

\* \* \*

In a New World Dr. Besant saw the artist protected so that "he worked at his leisure and carried out his artistic ideas without difficulty and without struggle." She saw Beauty brought into the environment of those who were the scavengers and degraded of the land, saying: "For the fewer resources a man has within himself, the more means of outer enjoyment should be placed within his reach by society."

\* \* \*

Decades back, Dr. Besant spoke of a new inspiration Theosophy can bring to Art, and prophesied the coming of a new Theosophic impulse in Art, saying:

"In the realm of Art, Theosophy gives the inspiration which is wanted for all true Art. Now Art, in our modern days, has become far too imitative. It reproduces natural objects. And you call a man an artist who reproduces very exquisitely and truly. But that is only the alphabet of Art. The artist is not the man who reproduces but the man who creates.

"Has it ever struck you to ask: What is natural Beauty? And have you thought that all the beautiful objects round you are divine thoughts materialized into objects, and shaped and moulded into those objects by the work of those tiny artificers whom we sometimes call Nature-Spirits, the lowest orders of the Angelic Hosts, who are ever turning the divine thoughts into objects of beauty?

"Now man is higher in intelligence than these workers in Nature. He ought to see more of the divine thought in all natural beauty than that lower type of intelligence which fashioned the object; and the artist is the man who can see more of the divine thought than is expressed in the material object, and gives out to the world that surplusage of beauty which the moulding of the object has not succeeded in giving. The great creative artists are those who are able to come into touch with the Divine Mind, to reproduce more beauty in form than the more limited intelli-

gences could do; those who see beneath the veil which only gives part of the Divine Beauty, drawing more of it out and thus transfiguring the object, making what is called the real into the ideal, the ideal being far higher and truer than the real, because it is nearer to the Divine Artist who thought.

"And so, along all lines of Art, Theosophy, in bringing a new inspiration, makes the possibility of a greater and a higher Art. Art always flowers out of spiritual ideals, and it is the dullness of those ideals in our days that has made Art more a copy than a creation. With the new thrill of life which is passing through the world, with the more mystical view which is gradually replacing the more literal, with all of that which is the Theosophical element in Religion, we may look for the birth of a new Art, even loftier and greater than the splendid Art of the past."

\* \* \*

"Unless Theosophy can give a new inspiration to Art, it will have failed in part of its purpose; for Beauty is one of the most potent instruments for quickening evolution, and harmony, without which life cannot be happy, finds its natural expression in Art. Perfection in form must accompany Perfection in thought . . . Art is unthinkable without Religion . . . with the lack of its inspiration Art has become imitative instead of creative. *The new Theosophic impulse will bring about a new blossoming of Art, and already its fragrance is borne on the breeze blowing from the future.*"

# ANNIE BESANT—POET

## GOD'S THOUGHT OF HIMSELF

Never yet has been broken  
The Silence eternal :  
Never yet has been spoken  
In accents supernal,  
God's Thought of Himself.

We are groping in blindness,  
Who yearn to behold Him :  
But in wisdom and kindness  
In Darkness He folds Him,  
Till the Soul learns to see.

So the veil is unriven  
That hides the All-Holy :  
So no token is given  
That satisfies wholly  
The cravings of man.

But, unhasting, advances  
The march of the ages :  
To Truth-seekers' glances  
Unrolling the pages  
Of God's revelation.

Impatience unheeding,  
Time, slowly revolving,  
Unresting, unspedding,  
Is ever evolving  
Fresh truths about God.

Human speech has not broken  
The stillness supernal.  
Yet ever is spoken  
Through Silence eternal,  
With growing distinctness,  
God's Thought of Himself.

## PRAYER

Who pants and struggles to be free,  
Who strives for others' liberty,  
Who failing, still works patiently,  
He truly prays.

Who loving all, dare none despise,  
But with the worst can sympathize,  
Who for a truth a martyr dies,  
He truly prays.

Who, when a truth to him is known,  
Embraces it through smile or frown,  
Who dares to hold it, though alone,  
He truly prays.

In musing strength must come to dare,  
Petitions are but empty air,  
Brave action is the only prayer,  
Thus learn to pray.

## INDIA

God save our Motherland,  
God bless our much-loved Land ;  
God save our Ind !

Sing of her story old,  
Sing of her heroes bold,  
Sing of her hearts of gold ;  
God save our Ind !

Sing Ramachandra's praise,  
Sing of the Rajput days ;  
God save our Ind !

Sing of great Akbar's sway,  
Sing of Shivaji's days,  
Sing boldly Freedom's lay ;  
God save our Ind !

Lord of the Burning Ground,  
Send forth Thy damru sound ;  
God save our Ind !

Grant us the hero heart,  
Careless of loss or smart,  
As men to play our part ;  
God save our Ind !

# ANNIE BESANT—DEFENDER OF THE OPPRESSED

## IN DEFENCE OF WOMANHOOD

[Dr. Besant's first public lecture, delivered on 25 August 1874 was upon "The Political Status of Women." Her stirring conclusion marks the deep idealism that moved her from the very inception of her career :]

Injustice is never good ; it is never even safe. There is a higher life before us, a nobler ideal of marriage union, a fairer development of individual natures, a surer hope of wider happiness. Liberty for every human being, equality before the law for all in public and in private, fraternity of men and women in peaceful friendship, these are the promise of the dawning day. Co-workers in every noble labour, co-partners in every righteous project, co-soldiers in every just cause, men and women in the time to come shall labour, think and struggle side by side. The man shall bring his greater strength and more sustained determination, the woman her quicker judgment and purer heart, till man shall grow tenderer, and woman stronger, man more pure, and woman more brave and free. Till at last, generations hence, the race shall develop into a strength and a beauty at present unimagined, and

men and women shall walk this fair earth hand in hand, diverse, yet truly one, set each to each—

*"As perfect music unto noble words."*—Reprinted in *New India*, 3 September 1924

## IN DEFENCE OF HUMANITY : ON LIBERTY

I crave for every man, whatever be his creed, that his freedom of conscience be held sacred. I ask for every man, whatever be his belief, that he shall not suffer, in civil matters, for his faith or for his want of faith. I demand for every man, whatever be his opinions, that he shall be able to speak out with honest frankness the results of honest thought, without forfeiting his rights as citizen, without destroying his social position, and without troubling his domestic peace. . .

Liberty is immortal and eternal, and her triumph is sure, however it may be delayed . . . and hers is also the triumph of tomorrow, if only we, who adore her, if only we can be true to ourselves and to each other. But they who love her must work for her, as well as worship her, for labour is the only prayer to Liberty, and devotion

the only praise.—*Civil and Religious Liberty*

#### ON A RATIONAL SOCIAL ORDER

The problem of Capital and Labour arises from their divorce. . . . They must again be linked together, for only by that linking can the Capital and Labour problem be solved. . . .

A more rational Social Order would hold up wealth as a prize to the less evolved, power to the energetic and more evolved, honour to the most advanced. Each would then possess what he most desired, and content would replace dissatisfaction. . . . Every one born into a civilized society should have the opportunity of developing to the utmost all he has in him. The multifarious needs of society give opportunities for the most varied lines of Service, and a man should be able to pass into the line of work which suits him and enables him to evolve, and to obtain the prize which he most desires. Then will Labour become a joy, and all forms of Labour needed for the welfare of society will receive their appropriate recompense. This is the fundamental meaning of Dharma, and by the recognition of Dharma will the present anarchy of society be replaced by order.

Every competitive civilization has, as its base, a mass of poverty-stricken people on whose bowed-down shoulders the happier classes stand. In England some twenty

or more years ago, they formed one-tenth of the population; that must now, I think, have been diminished by free and compulsory education. In India they form one-sixth of the population, and the country cannot rise into full national life until these are redeemed from their servitude and their disabilities are swept away. Every earlier civilization has perished, dragged down into the waters of the past by the weight of its submerged classes.

[Having set before the 1917 Convention a magnificent vista of rebuilding a future civilization (see the Master-Builder for the idealism of her vision), Dr. Besant said :]

Brethren, such is the mighty task set before The Theosophical Society, the Messenger of the Hierarchy to the modern world. Will not each of you, whose good Karma has brought you into it, take up your share in the glorious work? So great an opportunity is rarely offered to men, and to let it slip by, unregarded, would be an act of madness, to be mourned over for lives to come. May the Lord of all pour out on you His blessing, giving you the heart and strength to do His Holy Will.—*Presidential Address, 1917*

Only the hand of the brother who is on his feet can raise the brother who has fallen, and it must be outstretched without any authority, save the authority of love and



wisdom. These alone are mighty to save.—*Presidential Address, 1918*

#### IN DEFENCE OF YOUNGER BROTHERS

Man . . . is continually a destructive agency, either carrying on wars against his fellow-men, or destroying the lower animals, slaying in every possible way. He has finally evolved in himself this peculiarity—a quite unique characteristic, one is thankful to see, shared in by none of the wild animals—that he kills for the mere sake of killing . . . The wild animal . . . will not hunt for itself unless it is hungry. . . . An unhappy exception, however, must be made with regard to the animal most closely trained by man—the domesticated dog. These creatures, so promising in their development of loyalty, fidelity and affection, have caught from man the delight in killing for amusement . . . It is curious that the love of killing for amusement seems to grow with what is called civilization . . .

One would imagine that to people who talk so much as we do about brotherhood and love and kindness and compassion, this knowledge of the way in which we are looked on by our younger brothers would be painful. One would think we should be struck first with astonishment and then with horror, at finding our very presence chase everything be-

fore it, at seeing these creatures who are so happy in our absence, convey themselves out of the way at our approach, taking it for granted that we are enemies; butterflies and birds fly away, rabbits scuttle off to their burrows, deer gallop out of our sight, and we have to walk through a desert when we might have walked through a place crowded with friendly forms. For so many thousands of years oppression and cruelty towards animals have been wrought into human magnetism that the wild creatures fly from the atmosphere of men, even from that of any one man who may love them; and it is only by a long process of "making friends" that they learn that such a one is their friend and lover, not their enemy, and then the ancient antagonism slowly fades away. . . .

Every man has around him a certain protective coating that keeps him safe from the many lives around, which might be hostile to himself. He walks, as it were, angel-guarded as long as he breathes the life of love, the love that is divine and makes all creatures friendly. But if you do a cruel thing to an animal, or slay an animal, you attach that animal to yourself by the link of fear and hatred. The animal cannot by itself do much. One animal's feelings are not much in this great world. You have done more by that act of cruelty; you have broken through the covering which keeps

you safe from the evils around you. You have opened the door by your cruel act, and through that open door all the animal suffering in the world can pierce you ; the one becomes a channel through which the whole can pour into you and affect you for evil.—*The Birth of New India*

There is only one way that men can turn toward God ; there is only one way in which the Divine Life can expand in us and develop, and

that is by loving everything that surrounds us, by helping and by cherishing everything. Whenever we see a wound, we must try to heal it ; whenever we see a sorrow, we must try to lighten it ; whenever we meet a pain, we must try to stop it ; and if we can take it upon ourselves and set the sufferer free, then indeed the law of love is becoming perfected in us, and we ourselves are beginning to be divine.—*Against Vivisection*

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To write fully about her activities in the social and political life of Britain would be to write almost in full the story of social and political change from 1874 to the time she left for India over twenty years ago. There was no movement in which she did not take a prominent and distinctive part ; and all through her long stay in India her interest in great social and political questions has never died down. . . .

Mrs. Besant will live in the future as a great teacher of great truths. I shall remember her most as a brilliant orator rousing me and thousands more to go out and work for the social salvation of mankind. I shall remember her toiling long, laborious days that hungry, starving children should be fed, that unhealthy children might be made whole. . . .

And now today when, at the call of liberty and freedom, she has ranged herself alongside the people of India in their struggle for freedom, and when, as a sign of confidence in her and trust in her ability and capacity to lead them, the people of India have elected her as President of the forthcoming National Congress, she is only doing as she has done all through her life, standing by those who need a friend, giving her experience, her energy, her wonderful power of tongue and pen to those who are crushed in the struggle of life. . . .

It is good to remember the long roll of women, young and old, rich and poor, with whom I have been associated in the work of organizing and rousing the workers and people of all classes. One of the best and bravest is the woman of whom I have tried to write, who, at seventy years of age, has once again set out on a great adventure—the greatest, perhaps of all her life—calling to each one of us to join her in the great work of spreading abroad the principles of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and bringing together in one great Brotherhood all the Nations of the earth.

—GEORGE LANSBURY, *New India*, 3 December 1917

## ANNIE BESANT—BHAKTA

[“For mind you, on this Path of Devotion there is no help given to the individual as individual ; it is only given to him by the Great Ones beyond him if in his turn he passes it on to others.”]

**I**N a few words . . . Devotion is the tuning of the heart. Knowledge may be needed for the different strains that are wanted, but devotion tunes the heart and the soul so that every strain may come out in perfect harmony. Then is the growth in love, then is the growth in knowledge, then is the growth in spiritual purity : then all the forces of the spiritual spheres are helping onwards this Soul that fain would rise for service, and all the strength of Those who have achieved is used to help on the one who would fain achieve in order that he may better serve.

And what does devotion mean in life ? It means clearer vision so that we may see the right ; it means deeper love so that we may serve the better ; it means unruffled peace and calm that nothing can shake or disturb, because, fixed in devotion on the Blessed Ones, there is nothing that can touch the Soul. And ever through those Blessed Ones there shines the light which comes from yet beyond Them, and which They focus for the help of the worlds, which They make possible for our weak eyes to bear.

And then there are the peace, the vision, the power of service—that is what devotion means in life ; and the Self whom the spotless devotee is seeking, that Self is pure, and that Self is

Light—Light which no soil may sully, Light which no selfishness may dim, until the devotee himself vanishes in the Light which is himself. For the very Self of all is Light and Love, and the time at last comes, which has come to the Masters, when that Light shines out through spotless transparent purity and gives its full effulgence for the helping of the world. That is the meaning of devotion. That, however feebly phrased—and all words are feeble—that is the inner life of those who love, who recognize that life is only meant for service, who recognize that the only thing that makes life worthy is that it shall be burnt in the fire of devotion, in order that the world may be lighted and may be warmed. That is the goal which ends, not in liberation, but in perfect service. Liberation only when all Souls are liberated, when all together enter into the bliss unspeakable, and which, when that period of bliss is over, brings them out again as conscious co-workers with unbroken memory in the higher spiritual regions ; for they have won their right to be conscious workers for ever in all future Manvantaras ; for the Life of Love never gives liberation from service, and as long as eternity endures the Soul that loves works for and serves the Universe.

—*Devotion and the Spiritual Life*

## ANNIE BESANT—PRACTICAL YOGI

[A Note on SELF-RECONSTRUCTION, compiled by Miss Kate Smith, of Blavatsky Lodge (England) and Colwyn Bay Lodge (Wales).]

“DO good to those who hate you.” Now, why should you? That is a question which is very often asked. One day I was talking with a man who was not religious, and when I quoted that precept to him, his retort was: “Why should I? Why should I do good to a man who does harm to me? Shall I not encourage him to do it another time?” He was not willing to take it as a statement of the Great Teachers in the world. He demanded a reason for obedience. Now the reason is profoundly simple, although it is not so very often given. Let me remind you that you are made up of Spirit and matter. . . Suppose, then, you have a feeling of anger. That feeling of anger in you will assert itself in the matter connected with you by violent vibrations. Those vibrations in you tend to stir up in the body of any person with whom you meet similar vibrations; and so you have two sets of similar vibrations increasing each other as they strike against each other continually. . .

How is that to be put an end to when two people meet, so that one angry person may not provoke another, and bring about a violent

quarrel? By the second person setting up the opposite emotion, which will be accompanied by a series of vibrations exactly contrary to the vibrations of anger, and so will tend gradually to soothe them instead of intensifying them. . . You can silence the vibrations of anger in another by sending against him a current of goodwill. Now there is the simple scientific explanation of the moral precept. The Great Teacher said: “Return good for evil”; but He was expressing in that a fundamental law in nature: that you can only stop evil by the opposite good, and not by meeting it with a thing of its own nature, a repetition of itself. . . It is the right way to meet any wrong emotion in another. In the case of the man I spoke of, the moment I told him that as a scientific fact, he accepted it. It appealed to reason, by showing him the natural facts underlying the moral law. And to know that that is a law, to know that this influence we have upon each other is an influence we can use for good or evil, that we can extinguish anger or intensify it, and that on us lies the responsibility when we meet those

who do not know how to rule their emotions, of supplying the emotion which will hinder the bad and strengthen the good; this is one of the valuable facts in the Science of Morality that every one should know, first taking the statement, and then experimenting with it, and finding out that the law works, as laws of Nature always work, invariably and changelessly.—*A Sketch of Theosophy*, pp. 16-19.

If you want to know with absolute certainty that thought makes character—try. And the way of trying is very simple, and proves the law to be true in a very short time. I say that because modern people are always in a hurry. But remember that no first-hand knowledge can be gained without patience and effort. Suppose you want to find out whether by thought you can add or take anything from your character—selfishness, or any other weakness; let us take as an example that you are irritable; this is not a crime, but a very common and ordinary weakness. You recognize that you are very easily made irritable. Having recognized it, never think of it again; because, if thought builds character, thinking about a weakness will put more life into it and make it grow; thought on your irritability would make you more irritable, and strengthen the undesirable characteristic. Instead of thinking about irritability you will think about the opposite quality

—patience. Think about patience for some minutes every morning; not once, and then forgetting it for three or four days, and then doing it again. Irregularity undoes what you have done, and you will be only marking time. . . You must do it regularly, for this is a scientific experiment. Every morning, then, you will think for five minutes about patience. Think in any way you like; vary the thinking; for it does not matter much what you think, provided you think about it.—*The Law of Action and Reaction*, pp. 9-10.

You meditate in different ways according to your ingenuity in planning them. One favourite way of mine—for I was very irritable in my younger days— . . . was making myself an embodiment of patience; you never saw such a saint as I was in my meditation; whatever I might have been outside of it during the day, I was absolutely, completely and perfectly patient in it! Then I brought up round me mentally all the most unpleasant and provoking people that I knew, and I heightened their power of provocation as much as I increased my own power of patience; and so I made a little mental drama, in which they provoked me in every possible way, and I answered as a modern Griselda. After a time, when I met the people, I found that their power of provocation had gone. “Why did I think that person so

annoying?" I would wonder. I found that, unconsciously and gradually, I had established patience as a permanent part of my character. Any one of you can do it.—*Man's Life in This and Other Worlds*, pp. 11-12.

. . . Repeat that, with whatever variations you like, every morning for a week. Then you will find that the thought of patience comes up in your mind without being summoned in the course of the day. That is the first sign that your morning thought is working. You have made in your mind the tendency to think patience. At first it will come up after a little outburst of irritability; the morning thought asserts itself and you think: "Oh! I ought to have been patient." Go on still, until *with* the provocation comes the thought of patience, and there is an effort to be patient. Go on still, until the thought of patience comes *before* provocation, and the provocation glances off from the mental habit of patience. Still go on, until you will find at the end of a few months (the time will depend on the force of your thought) that you have established patience as a part of your character, and you no longer feel the least irritability under the small provocations of life. I know that this is true because I have done it, I was naturally irritable, but am now a very patient person. Try it for yourselves, and when you have

proved the law you will have a feeling of certainty, you will *know* that it is true that thought makes character. In that way we can go on, eliminating weakness after weakness, until each is replaced by the corresponding strength. You can definitely build up character. . .

And if you will try that simple experiment, and, remembering the importance of the question, be willing to sacrifice to it five minutes a day for a few months, you will find that you have that power; then, as far as character is concerned, you have become the master who knows how to make it, and your success is only a matter of time and of resolute effort. Is not this enormously better than going on all your life sighing: "Oh! I wish I were good!" and yet going on every day doing the same stupid wrong things? There is no other sure way. The power of thought is the power of creation. God made the worlds by His divine thought. We build our own little worlds by our human thought. There is no other creative power in the universe. . .—*The Law of Action and Reaction* pp. 10-12.

. . . If you want to succeed, it means steady persistent thought along one line. A mason who is going to build a house does not put a brick here one day, another there another day, somewhere else the next day, and then in somebody else's garden the following day, and

across the road some other day. Why, if he did that it would be a long time before he got his house built! That is what you are doing with your character. Today you are trying to be truthful, tomorrow patient, and the next day sympathetic, and so on, and you wonder why you never get any result at all,

and you mean so well, too—you are trying to be “good.” Give up the trying. Concentrate and practise in thought on one thing at a time, and thus build in the qualities, and then you will make progress, and the goodness will be inevitable as progress is made.—*Australian Lectures*, 1908, page 108.

## ANNIE BESANT—TORCH-BEARER OF THE WISDOM FAITH

TO whatever land we may go, through whatever country we may pass, we have still Humanity as “the great orphan” crying for the Spirit, striving after Light, after spiritual unity, striving to find in the many exoteric religions the one Spiritual Truth which alone can satisfy the soul. . . In this land there is more hope of a spiritual revival, and if a spiritual revival here there may be, then it will pour outwards to all the four corners of the world. For spirituality is more easily awakened in India than elsewhere. The spiritual heart here is only sleeping, whereas in some other land it has scarcely yet come to birth; for you must remember that in this land is the birthplace of every religion, and that from India, outwards, religions have made their way. Therefore it is that the soul of our Mother India

is so important for the future of the world, and therefore it is that the materialism of India is so fatal. For it is here alone that lies the hope that man has of looking for spiritual life: for, in truth, unless the life of the Spirit come in this land, by reviving here, then the hope is baseless that spirituality is to spread over the world. . . If you cannot revive spirituality in India through *Hinduism*, if you cannot thus reach India, then there is nothing else you can hope to do. . . . If this shall again become a living thing, India shall herself live; and with the revival all the sleeping truths of other religions shall look again towards their Indian Mother, and make her once again the spiritual teacher of the world. . . .

There is one thing that is eating the heart out of India, and that is modern materialism. There is one

thing which is poisoning the mind of India, and that is the kind of science which is the teacher of materialism and works against Spirituality in the mind. How should I be able to tell you of the moral regeneration of India unless first I can strike at that which is piercing her heart and sucking out her very life-blood? So, as I have been trained in the science of the West, trained in the knowledge of the physical Universe, which is so much used to make men believe that nothing but the physical remains—I take for my first subject, this undermining of materialism by science, and I attack it with the weapons that were once used to build it up. . . .

It is from the Supreme Will that forms emanate and build the Universe. And you may understand that this power of the Supreme is more manifest in the power of the mind than in the powers of the body, and that true activity is shown not in running about from place to place, held in the bonds of physical facts, but in quiet thinking, in the use of the imagination and the will. Therefore the Yogi sitting apart, with body absolutely still, with eyes closed and mouth not communicating with other men, if he be a Yogi indeed, a Yogi in heart not only in dress, he has an inner life, a spiritual life, and he may do more than the man of action by his

thoughts, by his meditations, by the forces which are going out from him. On these more than on the work of politicians may turn the life of the Nation.

Nor is this work only for the Yogi. Every one of you is sending out thoughts that, passing into the astral atmosphere, will take form, and thence affect the lives of men and in their totality the Nation's future. If only every one of you would give one brief quarter of an hour's thought each morning to the future of India, and send out earnest wishes for her welfare, hopes for her revival, aspirations for her spiritual greatness, believe me you would make a force that would raise the Nation and would mould her future. Your thoughts would gather together, modelling, as it were, an ideal India that should take shape in the external world; your prayers would gather together and ascend to the Feet of Mahādeva, whence would flow forth a regenerating energy that would manifest itself in teachers, in leaders, in guides of the people, who could move the hearts of men, and unite them into one mighty Unity. Such is your power over the future, such the service you may render India, for in thought is the power of the Supreme, and it is man's, because "thou art Brahman."—*Materialism Undermined by Science*



## ANNIE BESANT—THEOSOPHIST

[Of the Special Duties of Theosophists in this chaotic world which she heralds as "a sign of a new birth for the Nations," for "catastrophes like those of today have always heralded a great new birth of civilization," Dr. Besant spoke in December 1916.]

### OUR DUTY TO RELIGION

THE special work that we have to do for Religion . . . is to proclaim with all the energy that we can the unity of religions . . . for what is true Religion, of which all religions are only the outer forms? It is the realization of the Oneness: that we are one with God, and therefore we are one with every child of God, with every son of man. That is our special religious duty today: not only to say it, but to live it; not only to talk about it, but to practise it; that the Hindu and the Musalman shall join hands as sons of a common Father; that the Brāhmana and the Pariah shall join hands as sons of one God; that whatever we have of larger possessions, whether it be of knowledge or of anything else, we shall share them with those who are poorest in the things of which we have the most; to realize that Brotherhood does not only go upwards seeking equality with our superiors, but it goes downwards to lift up our inferiors until they stand on the same level as that on which we stand ourselves. That,

then, is our great duty—the unity of all religions, the unity of men.

The last duty that I want to lay stress upon is one which is essentially Hindu . . . namely, that there is nothing, . . . which can be separated from Religion. . . If in God we live, move, and have our being, if God dwells in your heart and in mine, what can you and I do that is not divine activity, and that ought not to be penetrated by the spirit of Religion?. . . Nothing is outside Religion. They say: "Mrs. Besant is a religious teacher; she must have nothing to do with politics." But I assure you that just because Mrs. Besant is a religious teacher, therefore she has everything to do with politics. . . Wherever I am, I do my own work, which is God's work. . . People give me money, and to me they are God's agents. Money comes, because I do not want it for myself, and it is only the empty hands that are filled by God. As Shri Krishna said: "When I have stripped a man of everything, then I give him Myself." And where Shri Krishna is, there is power, there is

wealth, and there is victory. That is what I mean by a life of Service. . .

#### OUR DUTY TO OUR BROTHERS

Three things you must remember as guiding principles, when you deal with social matters. Karma must never be forgotten. Reincarnation must never be forgotten. Brotherhood must never be forgotten.

Let us apply these principles first to the large numbers of our people here whom we call the submerged classes. . . *Submerged* is my word. I do not like *depressed*; it sounds so dull, so sad, so miserable. I prefer *submerged*. They are down below the surface of happy society, and we have to lift them up. There lies the first great Indian duty of service. . . Our duty is to lift our submerged brethren on to the level of national consciousness, so that they may know themselves as part of a living Nation. . . We look down on these submerged men and women, but we are standing on their shoulders, and they keep us out of the mire in which otherwise our feet would be plunged. . . . Their hands keep our civilization clean by doing all those lower functions which we should have to do for ourselves were it not for them. . . They are brothers— younger brothers, yes, that I grant—but the younger brother is more kindly treated than the elder. If

anybody goes short in a household, it is not the baby that goes short—it is always the elders. . .

The duty of the Theosophist to the submerged classes is to begin with those he meets in his daily life, to say a kind word, to answer a salute. . . Respect is the first step, then education, then training in trade or profession, giving them every opportunity of rising. . . It all comes back to Brotherhood. . . so long as our younger brothers, so long as our lower classes, are not tenderly cared for, trained and nurtured, so long our society cannot take its place in the comity of Nations. More is expected from you than from the younger Nations of the West. In a kind of rough and tumble way they have claimed their citizenship, but you are an ancient people; you have thousands of years behind you; God expects more from you than He expects from the western Nations, and He is calling on you to take your place as leaders in the civilization of the world. India is destined to take the highest place in the advancing ranks of Nations, and I hope and pray, as I have hoped through all my Theosophical life, that England and India may go forward hand in hand as the leaders of the highest civilization in the East and West together. I hope that the wisdom of the East may permeate the rougher mind of the West, that the spirituality of the East, no longer

dreamy but practical, as it was in the old days of India, may show that the spiritual man is not a sluggard, is not a dreamer, is not a visionary, but is the greatest force in the world for the uplift of Nations and for the uplift of man; and this is because I know something of what India is.

I do not pretend to know her thoroughly—for who shall know the Mother of Nations, the Mother of civilizations, with her thousands and tens of thousands of years behind her? But I know her by twenty-three years of loving life among her people, I know her by my own incarnated past, and by the love of India, that makes me reckon nothing worth having in comparison with her service. I know her, I love her, I worship her, as I know and love and worship no other country on the surface of the earth, and therefore I would fain see her what she can be, what she is in reality, what she must be in the lives of the men and women born of her; and because I believe that Theosophy is but your own Paravidya come back to you in a modern phase, therefore I call on every Theosophist—whether a member of The Society or not—to yoke himself to the service of Indian society and put it in the place in which it ought to be—an example, a model, which Vaivasvata Manu gave for the great Aryan Race, and which will be perfected

in you, if you will add your ancient knowledge to the modern thought of the world in which we are.

#### OUR DUTY TO OUR NATION AND TO THE WORLD

. . . Wherever there is a need that a Theosophist can supply there he must spring forward in order to offer his services. . . In every Nation, one great duty lies upon the Theosophist, to help, to improve, to supply the deficiencies in the education of the Nation to which he belongs . . . and I want you to realize that it is an individual duty, that it is not exhausted by good wishes, that it is not exhausted by a speech on the platform, that it is not exhausted by writing in the papers. The Theosophist's duty is a personal duty, and that duty must be discharged according to the environment in which he lives. . .

The object of the Indian Nation must be to educate its own sons and daughters, so that they may be good citizens of their Motherland. The education must be based on the needs of the people. . . You must . . . make a National System of Education, running side by side for the present with the Government system. . .

What has Theosophy to do with politics? I say that it has everything to do with them. It has to build up a State of which Brotherhood shall be the foundation; in

which the rule should be accepted that every child born into a civilized Nation has a right to be surrounded by the conditions that enable him to develop to the utmost every faculty that he brings with him into the world. Until that is the rule of a State, there is no true civilization. There lies, then, the duty of a Theosophist: he has to deal with politics in order that a Nation may flourish. The question of the Liberty of a people—do you call that politics or not? I call it politics, because to me "politics" means the organized life of a Nation. It is not party politics, it is not a question of this man up and the other man down; it is not a question of quarrelling between different detailed views and methods; but the Liberty of a Nation is a point that no one, who feels the duty of a religious man to his Nation, can ever possibly put aside on any pretext. . . The great reason why a Nation should be Free and Self-Governing is that because without these a man is not a man: he is only a half-man. . .

The duty of a Theosophist here is to help in the liberation of India—not of The Theosophical Society, because our Society is international, everywhere, and you cannot ask a Russian Theosophist to help in the liberation of India. I speak only of the Indian Theosophists and Theosophists who are

residents here. The duty is not imposed upon them by The Society, but by the principles of Theosophy. *There* lies the duty of the true Theosophist—a human duty, a National duty, a duty which comes from service to the Motherland, which none has a right to forbid. Your individual influence on the lesser political movements will be valuable, because it should be guided by the wisdom you have gained amongst us, and by the application of those great laws of Karma, Reincarnation and Brotherhood—the only sure foundation for the continued life of any Nation. . .

A Theosophist must be a citizen of the world at the same time that he is a citizen of his own country; he must love all other Nations, he must try to draw them together . . . he must be a peace-maker outside his Nation and also within it—within the Nation, drawing the communities together into one, outside the Nation, trying to draw Nations into a Brotherhood—so that there may be no more war, none of the misery through which the world is passing today. Therefore, in your life outside your Nation, do nothing to increase the spirit of hate, even towards those who are our enemies in the physical world today; remember that they also are our human brothers, separated now by a gulf of blood and of misery; but love

can build bridges across the gulf and look forward to a future where the Nations shall be once more at one. . . You cannot go wrong in love; you are sure to go wrong in hate; hating dulls the intellect and hardens the heart. Take due care that, in this terrible strife, in your struggle also in your own Nation for constitutional liberty, you re-

member also your duty to Humanity, that you work by love and not by hatred, that you try to raise all and not to degrade any. Let us draw our bonds together, let us approach each other, and not repel each other; for only thus will the Will of God be done, and the Brotherhood of Humanity be realized in our world.

—*Duties of the Theosophist*, 1916

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To you the path is clear in sight, proclaimed again in the hearing of all. Coming into The Society you take, as it were, your first step in that direction of which the ending is to be one of the Saviours of the world.

What magic lies in those four words! What music in the inspiration which they bring to the human soul! To be a World-Saviour—what does it mean? It means that all the world's ignorance is less because you know; that all the world's sin is less because you are pure; that all the world's sorrow is less because you are sharing it; that all the world's weakness is less because you lend to it your strength. Struggle to be strong, not in order that you may be strong, but that the world may be stronger. Struggle to be wise, not that you may be wise, but that the world may be the wiser. Struggle to be pure, not that you may be pure, but that the whole world may be nearer to the purity that is divine. Care not for your own joy, for your own happiness, for your own satisfaction. Care only for the upward treading of the world and the little help you may bring to it. You must either be lifted or lift. You must either be a clog or wings to lift the world upward on its road. That is the great choice which lies before you in coming into this movement.

Your Self has chosen that destiny even if your brain as yet knows it not. That your brain may know it as your Self knows it, that your intellect may recognize it as your Self has recognized it—that may be the outcome of your worship, of your devotion, of your learning; for this only is worth living for—that the world may be better because we have been living in it; this only is the one crown of humanity—that the man crowns himself with thorns in order that others may be crowned with Life Immortal.

—*The Inner Purpose of The Theosophical Society*, 1914

# ANNIE BESANT—PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

[EXCERPTS FROM HER PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES]

## 1907: HER FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE condition of the continuing life of The Society is its perfect toleration of all differences, of all shades of opinion. None has the right to exclude his brother for difference of thought, nor to claim for his own thought a fuller liberty of expression than he claims for that of another. Complete liberty of thought must be guarded by all of us—by me, as your President, most of all—not granted as a privilege or a concession, but recognized as the inherent right of the intellect, as its breath of life. Tolerance, even with the intolerant, must be our rule. And this must be our principle in life and action, not only in words, lest a fatal orthodoxy, checking new initiative and new growth, should stealthily spread in The Society. We must welcome differences of thought, and give free play to their expression, so that our windows may be kept open to all new light. This is not only sound principle, but it is also sound policy, for thus only can new avenues to knowledge constantly open before us. We

possess only portions of the Truth, and no searcher must be hindered or frowned upon, lest The Society should lose some fragment that he may have found. Better the temporary life of a thousand falsehoods than the stifling of one truth at the hour of its birth. I claim the help of every Theosophist in this guarding of our liberty, for universal and constant vigilance is necessary lest it should be infringed.

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Our work is . . . the spread of Theosophical ideas, and the growth of our knowledge.

For the first, our Lodges should not be content with a programme of lectures, private and public, and with classes. The members should be known as good workers in all branches of beneficent activity, The Lodge should be the centre, not the circumference, of our work. To the Lodge for inspiration and knowledge; to the world for service and teaching. The members should take part in local clubs, societies and debating associations, and should both offer Theosophical lectures, and lectures in which Theosophical ideas can be put on the

questions of the day. They should, when members of religious bodies, hold classes outside The Society for members of their faith in which the spiritual, instead of the literal meaning of Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and other doctrines should be explained, and the lives of the great mystics of all religions should be taught. They should see that children receive religious education, according to their respective faiths. They should in every way hand on the light which they have received, and replenish their own torch with oil at the Lodge meetings. People belonging to kindred movements should be invited to the Lodge, and visits should be paid to them in turn. Lodges with a numerous membership should form groups for special work. For the second, the growth of our knowledge, groups should be formed for study under each of our Objects. Under the first, the intellectual and social movements of the day should be studied, their tendencies traced out and their methods examined; the results of these studies would help the outside workers in their choice of activities. It would be useful also if, in every Lodge, a small group of members were formed, harmonious in thought and feeling, who should meet once a week for a quiet hour, for combined silent thought for a given purpose, and for united meditation on some inspiring idea;

the members of this group might also agree on a time at which, daily, they should unite in a selected thought-effort to aid the Lodge. Another group should study under the Second Object, and this group should supply lecturers on Theosophy to the outer world, and no lecturer should be sent out by a Lodge who was not equipped for his work by such study. A third group might take up the Third Object of The Society, and work practically at research carrying on their work, if possible, under the direction of a member who has already some experience on these lines, and thus increasing our store of knowledge.

\* \* \*

Let me close with a final word to all who have aided and to all who have worked against me in the election now over. We all are lovers of the same ideal, and eager servants of Theosophy. Let us all then work in amity, along our different lines and in our different ways, for our beloved Society. Let not those who have worked for me expect me to be always right, nor those who have worked against me expect me to be always wrong. Help me, I pray you all, in filling well the office to which I have been elected, and share with me the burden of our common work. Where you agree with me, follow and work with me; where you disagree, criticize and work against me, but without bitterness and rancour. Diversities

of method, diversities of thought, diversities of operation, will enrich, not weaken, our movement, if love inspire and charity judge. Only through you and with you can the Presidency be useful to The Society. Help me so to fill it as to hand it on, a richer legacy, to my successor. And so may the Masters guide and prosper the work which they have given into my hands, and blessed.

#### 1914: "HELP ME GUARD LIBERTY"

As you know, about 1909 . . . it was my duty to say to you that from 1910 onwards The Society would grow in public influence, and much more rapidly than before. That progress is continuing and is bringing to us new duties, new responsibilities, new lines of activity. I want to ask from each one of you a development of that perfect Tolerance which is one of the great qualifications for becoming a disciple of the Masters of Compassion. I want to ask each of you, as members of The Society, to guard the liberty of thought within The Society as its most precious possession, and to guard that neutrality of The Society of which I spoke in my public lecture. . . If you can only hold steadily to the neutrality of The Society for a few years, until the numbers have become very much larger, then you will find that no one line of activity will run the danger of compromis-

ing the neutrality of The Society as a whole. That is your duty. . . Every member has an equal right . . . to translate Theosophy in his own way. . . It is not desirable that we should so fossilize our own opinions, that we shall have to break them to pieces when we come back centuries hence. Many of us have had to suffer from breaking the fetters into which we were born; many of us have had to go through bitter agony, when we had to break away from the old ties which we had outgrown. Let us, by the memory of our own past suffering, guard our children and our grandchildren from similar pain; let us take the humble position that we are imperfect, that we only catch glimpses of the Truth. If even the Masters Themselves are on the line of upward evolution, what of us who have not attained liberation? If They are evolving, how much more are we? If They are still discovering new Truth, how much more Truth there must be to be unfolded to the purblind eyes of man? Our duty is to seek for Truth, and Truth is infinite, and infinite also is the search thereafter. Therefore I ask you to help me to guard the perfect liberty of thought, the perfect liberty of expression, in the T.S.

#### 1917

When The Theosophical Society fears to stand by Freedom, then



shall it be cut down and left to wither away; better a prison for the body than a dungeon for the mind.

**1918: "THE MANDATE OF THE GREAT ONES—THAT THEOSOPHY MUST BE MADE PRACTICAL"**

It is indeed characteristic of The Theosophical Society, that it sows the good seed, with much effort and suffering, and when the harvest is ripe, hands over the reaping thereof to other hands. Thus should do the Pioneers of the Spirit, for in this mortal world the Spirit must bear the Cross, that the body may wear the crown.

\* \* \*

First will come the clearing away of the ruins of the old systems, the work of which is done; then the preparing of the ground for the new, and the storing up for use of whatever good material can be carried over for such use in the new building. For all that work must The Society supply many workers, utilizing the knowledge gained through the six cycles of study and of preparatory work. It has passed through its cycles of apprenticeship, and must now enter on the work of the craftsman.

**1921**

Friends, I should be behaving very badly in this first Convention after my re-election for the third

time as President of The Theosophical Society, if I did not say in this address . . . most gratefully a word of thanks to those who have placed me once more in the most responsible position. Perhaps I feel the responsibility more than the position. . . . To influence men's minds is more than to control their bodies. To be able to send out through the revelations of The Society new views of Truth, new possibilities of practice, new thoughts about the Great Ones who guide us, new gratitude for the help that always flows into The Society—certainly to belong to such a Society and to be sufficiently trusted by it to be for the third time its representative is a matter for gratitude, but far, far more a matter for humility. There is but one Worker, one Thinker, one Feeler, one Doer. What can anyone do, save to try to purge out of his nature everything that is an obstacle to the clear passage of that one Will, that one Wisdom, that one Activity? It is not we who work, it is God, Ishvara, who works in us, and even all that we can do is not ours. The little we have is His, and we can only give Him of His own; the little that we can do is so to purify our nature, so to control our lower vehicles, so to realize the Reality and disregard the unreality, that that Great Will may flow through us unchecked to the whole world.

1922

We cannot but marvel that anyone who has had the good fortune to become a member [of The Theosophical Society] should ever dream of leaving it, because someone attacks it, or someone deserts it, or someone misbehaves, or someone thinks awry. What have their follies, their sins, if you will their crimes, to do with the great Ideals of Theosophy, its profound teachings, its radiant hopes, its realized triumphs? . . . Shall we not rather register our vow: Let who will desert The Theosophical Society, I will never desert nor betray it. It brought me the Light; it unveiled to me the reality of worlds invisible; it turned death from an enemy into a friend; it led me to realize my own eternity; it has changed my whole attitude towards life, and has transfigured the world. Brethren, let us walk in the Light, as children of the Light, for the Ancient Wisdom guides us, and the foot-prints of our Teachers mark the Path we tread.

1923

The Society is a little nucleus of Brotherhood in the midst of the population of our globe, and being a tiny fragment in that population, it cannot escape sharing in the storms which sweep over the earth's surface. These are but the breaking waves which result from storms far out at sea, results, not causes.

If The Society were composed only of those who live Brotherhood instead of including also those who merely profess it, then it would not be shaken by the storms around it, but would return calm for disturbance, serenity for turmoil, and thus help the world back to peace. . . You may notice, if you care to study the psychology of lip and life-brothers, that Brotherhood has been the test in each of our little storms. . .

It was probably because the Masters took so grave a view of disunion within The Society, that denunciation of a fellow-member was regarded by H.P.B. as an action which should entail expulsion from the nucleus. . . I should myself be inclined to add "persistent denunciation, with a view to bring about the expulsion from The Society of the offender, or supposed offender, with the result of causing continued dissension within The Society." Such conduct is obviously inconsistent with the very existence of The Society as a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood.

#### 1931: HER LAST PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Friends: The point I want to impress upon all of you today is that only as you live Theosophy can you spread Theosophy. It is not our words, it is our life, that affects people. And I want each one of you and all whom you have

influence with to remember that the man who lives a Theosophical life is the best propagandist of Theosophical ideas. It is not our words that influence people so much as our lives; our lives, if they are unselfish, pure, loving and helpful, are the best propaganda of Theosophical ideas; for it is no good to talk Theosophy unless we live what we talk.

Also, although physically I am very weak, still I am glad it is not quite true that I am absent. I am here. After all, you know, we have got several bodies; you know that as a theory, don't you? And some of you, I dare say, now and then have various lively dreams, and you can do what you like in your dreams more than down here on the physical plane. That is literally true. The more you can use the higher bodies, the more you can help the people among whom you live.

Now you can only use the higher bodies by living Theosophy, so that every one of you, in proportion as you live the Theosophical life, becomes an active propagandist for Theosophical ideals. Do not imagine that because you are not learned, because you do not know many foreign languages, you cannot influence people all over the world. You can; because they see your life, and they translate that life into their own language. If you do a kind thing and people see

you do it, you do not have to tell them it is a kind thing—they will see it is, and they will say to others: "Oh, So-and-so is a Theosophist, so we know he will be helpful." Never mind a man's speech, it is his actions that matter. And if you can get that into your mind strongly, so that it influences you every day and all day long, you are not only helping those around you, you are teaching others how they can help by working on the higher planes of our being.

Most of you are afraid to trust yourselves; but that is a great mistake. The deeper you go into yourself, the more the real you can be trusted. The weakest among you physically may be very, very strong on the higher planes. Give everything you can, and there are plenty of Devas, as we call them, or fairies if you like that word better, who take up what you give. They understand it. They see us doing kind things all the time. They say: "Here are people who help others. We can help others by helping them"; and they pour out their life to you who are willing to give it away. It is not what you hold on to that is your real character; that is your life that spreads its example everywhere round, just as the rose sends out its fragrance much farther than it is able to spread the sight of its beauty.

Learn to trust the Divine in you. There lies your real strength. You

are divine. You don't want to look up to the skies to find the Divine; look into your own heart, and the Divine is alive in you. It is you who can send out, each of you round himself, the Life that comes from above. Do not be distrustful; that poisons your usefulness. Trust God in you more than you trust God up in the sky, or God down somewhere in the world, you don't know where. Trust God in your own heart; and He is always with you, for your heart is always the Life in you, and that Life is divine.

If only I could inspire you with what I know to be true—that the very best of us is when we pour out love to those around. You know the old story about one of the Apostles of the Christ who was very very old, older than I am now, over one hundred; and they used to carry him down every day to the meeting, and he could not talk to them but could send out his love to them. And his love went into their hearts and spread in every direction, and his most useful days were the days when he did not talk, but lived the God within him. And so, I say that to you, I say it to myself; often I speak to myself and say: "Oh, you old woman, what is the good of you? What can you do for people?" Then I answer: "Because very deep within me I am God, then I can do all things because I am divine." Be-

lieve that as the reality, do not think of it only as dreams.

I am seeing here something I said to you here last year, that we are bound together by common ideals, and not by a common belief. It matters very little what you believe, it matters enormously what you are. What you are will improve what you say. There is no good talking unless you live better than you speak. Give the God in you a chance. Open yourself, and pour out to all around you. There must be somebody you can help—some child perhaps who is still perhaps not very strong on his feet. He tumbles down on the road. Do not say: "Somebody ought to pick up that child." Go and do it. Then somebody else will help another child, and presently every one will be working away helping each other.

And so we shall learn how to love, which is the lesson we have to learn while we are here. It is just because the world is imperfect we can learn to help. We are not perfect creatures, but let us pour out love. Love is always good, even when sometimes its expression may be foolish. You see a baby tumble; as you run to help it never mind that your skirts may get muddied. Your skirts will wash; they will be cleaned; and when the angels look at them they will see them shining brightly because they are full of love.

Believe in the Self within you, the God within you, and then you will live the noblest life because it is a life of love.

Never mind about yourself. If we do not take care of ourselves,

then the higher powers will take care of us. If we think of ourselves, they look at us, and They say: "He is not much use, let us find somebody who is giving himself fully."

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The Hierarchy, I have said, chooses men to lead, and casts them aside if they prove too weak for their great task. Order, discipline, study, an enduring will, those are the qualities the Hierarchy demands from the great men who serve it, generally unconsciously, in Nations. You find these splendid qualities embodied in a man like Mr. Gokhale. There is a leader of whom any Nation may be proud. . . .

And I know something of this great work. I know from the Great Teachers themselves, I tell you in Their names, that India has a possibility before her now that she has not had for thousands of years in the past; that there is a part for her to play; that there is a contribution for her to make; and the opportunity will come to you so swiftly that it will be reached almost before you realize the fact. It is on the threshold. The door is opening. There may you see Mother India, standing ready to send you among the great federated Self-Governing Nations, which own the King-Emperor as Monarch. Such is the destiny of India. You, friends, can take part in it, if you will. The privilege is offered to you also, brothers and sisters of Great Britain, who are in this ancient land. You have the opportunity by coming here, and you may do your share in the helping of this work—you may show that you have no race feeling; you may associate with your Indian brethren as brothers and sisters. That is the message to the English who live in India; throw aside the fancy of colour. Unless mutual respect arises, two different peoples cannot ever act together. Love removes the barrier of suspicion and pride. And I, who regard India as my Motherland—for the Motherland of the evolving Individual is greater than the Motherland of the physical body—I ask you to go along with me in Service, serving along your own lines, not taking me as one who would dominate or rule you, but working beside me in co-operation along your own lines. But, if you can, come with me as one who is working for this great land, and for the Great Plan which I have been privileged to some extent to see. . . .

And so let us walk together as far as we agree; but remain friendly always, whenever we disagree. Let us realize that in the individual thought lies the salvation of the world in the future, and let us show that, in The Theosophical Society, we can differ in opinion and remain one in heart and aim, working for that great Humanity of whom the Elder Brothers are the Guardians, the Occult Hierarchy the Guide.

—*The Occult Hierarchy*, 1914

# ANNIE BESANT—SPIRITUAL TEACHER

[This, the last great Presidential Address planned by Dr. Besant, was given in 1930, for the very short 1931 address was extemporaneous. In this especially significant Message to all Theosophists, Dr. Besant speaks of the Way to the Elder Brethren, and of Adyar.]

## THE WAY TO THE MASTERS

. . . A sound piece of advice . . . was given very early to the members of The Theosophical Society by one of the Masters who said: "You must come out of your world into Ours." That, I think, is a point that needs our careful consideration.

The Masters do not force Themselves on anyone; They do not press Themselves, as it were, on us, seeking admission to our inner lives. . . . "Behold! I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in." It is a statement of a fact in this life; a Master never presses Himself as an authority on anyone, never rejects one who truly seeks Him, by whatever road he approaches, if above all things he is moved by the desire to serve others better. . . . They do not need any service at our hands. It is really They who help us, rather than we who help Them. It is enough for Them if, by purity of life, by intense and unwavering devotion, we try daily—nay, hourly—to live as in Their Presence. That is surely the only

service we can render Them, because in that way we may hope to become channels of Their beneficent influence to those with whom we come into contact.

And then, many of our members, out of misplaced humility, shrink from trying to serve Them, because it seems that we can do so infinitesimally little for Them. But to approach Them opens up to ourselves illimitable possibilities, like a lamp in a dark place, like a friend's strong hand clasping ours in the moment of danger, giving to us a peace and a serenity, which do not make us indifferent to the sufferings of the world, but make us eager to help, and to help in the best possible ways. They are ready to be our Elder Brethren; shall we reject the help so graciously offered to us? . . .

I do not think you could be in the room of H.P.B., talking with her on any subject, without finding in a short time some words about the Masters coming into the conversation. They were generally related to the Master's wish, the Master's desire, the Master's work

in life ; those were the things which, to her, made the supremest claim, and we learned to realize, if we had the privilege of living with her for a time, however short, how to serve her Master. . .

#### ABOUT ADYAR

In connection with the things for which she wished, there is one of which we seldom speak, but I should like to suggest it to you.

It is about Adyar, the place which was some years earlier chosen by the Masters for the Centre, to which They sent her, that she might live there for some time and create there an atmosphere which would make it easy for it to receive Their influence, or any spiritual influence which was sent. She loved Adyar deeply. That is one reason which is strong in the minds of many of us, as to the value of Adyar ; and another is that there is a direct communication between Adyar and the place that will be familiar to all of you who are Hindus, as a spot of special sanctity, Shamballa, the great City which was once on the "White Island." She always seemed to bear in mind the method by which she could prepare a place in which people, coming to it for a short time, would receive real help in the spiritual life. And so she dwelt, at her Master's wish, in Adyar for some considerable time, in order that that place might become consecrated to Their service,

and inspire all who came to it with the desire to draw nearer to Them.

It has been pointed out to me lately, and that is why I am mentioning it specially, that we are not all of us doing our duty to Adyar as we are not helping to make Adyar what it ought to be ; I had a hint on that subject from the two Masters who are most concerned with The Society, because They accepted the responsibility of starting this public spiritual Movement in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Therefore I pass on the hint to you. You can carry out the thought of it in your daily lives, if you desire to do so, and also you can work for it quietly along those lines which are laid down. The emphasis which is laid upon Adyar is a matter in which, as the President of our Society, I most earnestly ask for your help. We can do a good deal at Adyar, if you decide that you will help us. You probably remember that we built a fairly large kind of Guest House, so that each National Society which wished to do so might send a representative thither to be trained in what I may call the attitude of Adyar to the outer world, and, above all, the attitude to the Masters. Perhaps enough advantage has not been taken of the suggestion by the different countries. Yet, forty-seven of them are Sections. Each country should choose some promising young man or woman

and send that young man or young woman to stay at Adyar for a time, so that he or she may live in the atmosphere of the place, as well as receive the teachings; this would be of great use when he or she returned home. What I specially wish to do, if I can, as the result of our present meeting, is to send out the influence of the Masters into The Society, the atmosphere of the Masters from the place They founded to benefit the world. There are many of you who do not shrink from saying that you believe in Their existence. Some of you can go further and say: "We know that They exist." It is a personal matter for each to decide. But I would ask you to remember that on Their help and on Their blessing, and on our working along lines They laid down, the life of our Society really depends.

#### OUR YOUNGER BRETHREN

We must practise Brotherhood more thoroughly than we do, trying to help those who have had few of the advantages which we have had. We must remember that Theosophical work is a work which is beneficial to mankind, and I would not shut out from our work our younger brethren, our brethren of

the animal kingdom. Do not let us forget them in our Theosophy. They also are on the road of evolution; they have not yet passed the critical point at which they enter for the first time into a human body, and on the type of that human body much of their future depends. It is of course a matter of Karma. But, on the other hand, it is part of our karmic duty to make the conditions as easily accessible as we are able to do by our best efforts.

#### LET US LIVE THEOSOPHY

Above all, let us remember that the best preacher and the best machinery for spreading Theosophy is by leading the Theosophical life; that example is more powerful than the most fervent speech of the most eloquent orator; *that* every one of us can strive after as an ideal, an ideal that will grow into a reality as we patiently work. Our life is like a piece of marble, out of which we have to carve a statue of the perfect man. Let each of us carve it to the best of his ability, and then we shall become more useful to the great Helpers of the world, and be less unworthy when They call us Their brothers.

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As service becomes our habitual attitude to every one whom we meet, we shall gradually find that every one is profoundly interesting, and that the giving of service is the greatest joy in life.—A.B.



## ANNIE BESANT—DISCIPLE AND SERVER

IT is a fact that "the Elder Brothers" restored Theosophy to the world through Their Messengers, H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott. No one is obliged to believe this in order to come into Their Society, but it is Theirs none the less. No one need believe in Their existence, nor in any of the communications They have made. But the right to deny facts does not include the right to impose silence on those who affirm them. H. P. Blavatsky bade me affirm publicly my own knowledge of the Elder Brothers and my discipleship, and I shall continue to do so. It is rather curious that some who accept H.P.B. and admire the courage with which she asserted her knowledge blame so bitterly any who follow her example. . .

Some day, perhaps, These will reveal Themselves more fully to the younger brothers, and the partial "Universal Brotherhood" now accepted will include the subhuman and the superhuman kingdoms. Happy for all the three kingdoms will be the day when that Brotherhood will be acknowledged, and the whole creation which groaneth and travaileth in pain together,

shall enter into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

But that can only come when The Theosophical Society desires it.—*Presidential Address, 1925*

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It was in 1913 that I first came into direct conscious touch with the Rishi Agastya, the Regent of India in the Inner Government. He desired me to form a small band of people who were brave enough to defy wrong social customs such as premature betrothal and marriage. This was done, and carrying out His wishes, I gave some lectures that autumn on Social Reform, published under the title of *Wake Up, India*. These prepared the way for the desired political reform, and this was started in that same year by the resolve to begin a weekly newspaper, *The Commonwealth*, in January 1914. To guide me in its conduct, I was summoned to Shamballa,<sup>1</sup> where still abide the King and His three

<sup>1</sup> This city is in the Gobi Desert. Its outskirts have been partially uncovered by an American expedition. But I do not think they will find the White Island, with its great white marble Temple where abide "The Four." It is there the great gathering takes place every seven years that H. P. B. speaks of in *Isis Unveiled*, and which I have attended.

Pupils, the "four Kumāras" of the Indian Scriptures, He the Eldest. There I was given what I always call "my marching orders":

**"You will have a time of trouble and danger. I need not say: have no fear; but have no anxiety. Do not let opposition become angry. Be firm but not provocative. Press steadily the preparation for the coming changes, and claim India's place in the Empire. The end will be a great triumph. Do not let it be stained by excess. Remember that you represent in the outer world the Regent, who is My Agent. My Hand will be over you, and My Peace with you."**

These words necessarily mark out the policy I follow. India to be within the Empire, but free. This is only possible by winning Dominion Status. To win it means that India becomes free within her own territory, but in a Federation, not in isolation, as C. R. Das put it. It means the avoidance of a War of Colour, of Asia against Europe. It means the Peace of the World, the necessary addition to Mr. MacDonald's splendid efforts to make a lasting pact with the United States. The two countries will be as the two pillars of Solomon's Temple, Boaz and Jachin.—THE THEOSOPHIST, November 1929, pp. 150-51

## THE JOY OF SERVICE

Brethren, do you recognize the Joy of Service, when it is rendered as a humble aid on earth to that Will which makes for Righteousness and Bliss, that is served so perfectly by our Elder Brothers? We speak of it as a "Service which is perfect Freedom." It is far more. It is a Service which is Joy so profound that it is uttermost Serenity; a Service which is fed by an ever-upwelling fountain of intarrisable strength; a Service which accepts every frustration, every set-back, knowing each as a seed of a vaster good, that acknowledges no failure; no defeat, because victory is ever with Ishvara, the Ruler, and a fragment of His Being is the Hidden God in man, the Inner Ruler Immortal. O my Brethren! if in the silence of the mind and the calm of the emotions, you had ever caught one glimpse of the Glory, of the Majesty, of that Supreme, you would not need my feeble words; for you would hear the Voice of the Silence, the Silence which speaks more eloquently than any sounds which are known to mortal ears, the Silence, because the REAL is ever inexpressible.—*Presidential Address, 1924*

## UNDER THE SHINING OF THE STAR

[More excerpts from the Presidential Addresses of Dr. Annie Besant, reiterating how THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is "the latest Messenger of the Great White Brotherhood to the world of men"; exhorting the Theosophists to be worthy of their charge and to spread the Light. "There is no failure for those who march beneath the Shining of the Star."]

1913

**B**RETHREN: Another year of corporate life lies open before us; the road that we must tread is hidden from our eyes, but we know that our Leaders are treading it in front of us, and in our hearts is glowing the steady flame of trust in Them, of eager desire to follow Them, and of a constant will to serve. As in a windswept sky, dark clouds may sweep over the moon and obscure its silver radiance, and yet the watcher knows that beyond them the moon is ever shining untouched, undimmed, so do we, "the dreamers, the derided," lift our eyes to the Hills whence our help shall come, and behind all clouds, beyond all threatening storms, we know that there is shining in the stainless blue of heaven, in those azure heights which no cloud can soil, which no storm can reach, the Star, the Blazing Star, which is the symbol of earth's KING.

1915

Brethren, great is your privilege, to have been the heralds of the

coming Age, ere the world had perceived its coming, for you proclaimed it in the night, ere yet the first faint light of the Dawning touched the eastern horizon. Many of you believe in the coming of the World-Teacher, who alone can bring to us the New Age, and outline the fashion of its growth. Sore and bitter is the travail of the Nations ere that New Age can be born; the earth shivers and writhes in the agony of her birth-pangs, but the fair Man-Child of the coming time shall ere long cause her to forget the anguish of her throes. Not without great agony may any high work be wrought, and we are in the ante-chamber, preparing for the birth of a new and nobler Age. As part of the earth, as part of humanity, we must share in the agony, but sure is the joy that cometh in the morning, sure the coming of the Lord of Love, with the Babe of the Future in His arms. Fear not then, nor be troubled, for none may stay His Coming, nor frustrate His great work of Love and Peace. Storms may rage, tempests may roar, the

very foundations of the earth may rock ; but the storm will pass, and clear skies again will arch over an earth at peace. Have you ever watched in the darkness of the night, when storm-clouds veiled the heavens, and the distant thunder rolled around through the heavy air ; and as you watched, seeing no sky, no stars, suddenly the clouds were rent asunder, and in the violet depths there shone out the Star of Love, shining undimmed and lustrous beyond the earth-born veil which had hidden it from earth's sad peoples? So, to those who know, shines in mid-heaven the Star which is the sign of the ever-presence of the King, and tells the earth that it is lying safely in the Bosom of His Power, cradled in His Love. Lift up your eyes, Brothers, now when clouds hang thick, and see His Star.

### 1916

Welcome to the Forty-first Anniversary of our beloved Theosophical Society, the latest Messenger of the Great White Brotherhood to the world of men. . . May Those who are the embodiment of love continue Their gracious protection to The Society established to do Their will on earth ; may They ever guard it by Their Power, inspire it with Their Wisdom, and energize it by Their Activity.

Again we meet under the terrible clouds of war, which shut out the

world from the Sun which ever shines undimmed in the blue vault of heaven. Nor do those war-clouds show any signs of passing away, nor is there any loosening in the death-grip of the wrestling Nations. But in spite of all the horrors of the struggles, in spite of the destruction wrought, and of the ever-increasing burdens entailed by the prolongation of the strife, we, who believe that the destinies of mankind are guided by the highest wisdom to the noblest end, cannot but remain secure in that strong faith, and we wait patiently through the long night for the breaking of the Day. . .

My Brethren, the times are times of transition ; the civilized world is cast into the melting-pot, is being purified of its dross, that the great Craftsman of our globe may shape the glowing metal into new forms of usefulness and of beauty. For the reception of that precious metal, moulds have now to be prepared, moulds religious, intellectual, moral, political and social such as may be used by the Great Messenger of the Occult Hierarchy. . .

Is our Society to stand aside, to look on indifferently at the whirling chaos, and, fearing to soil its white robes by contact with the turmoil, leave undone the work which is needed, and to plead its spirituality as a reason for cowardice and for sloth? Have we gathered wisdom to hide it away

as a treasure for ourselves, instead of using it for the enriching of the world? For what have we been preparing ourselves for these forty years? For what have we developed insight, studied underlying causes, mastered the mysteries of Karma, offered ourselves in self-surrender to the Will which makes for Righteousness, to the Power which works for good? There are problems, religious, intellectual, moral, political and social, which need for their solving the wisdom we have gathered, the insight we have developed, the knowledge of causes we have obtained. Are these for the service of the world, or for our self-glorification? Are we to be misers or redeemers? . . .

It is now no question of party politics, no matter of party strife. It is the moulds into which Nations are to be cast for a new civilization, that are preparing; it is these which we are summoned to help in the shaping. Away, then, with fear and with the shreds of futile shibboleths. Away with a false neutrality, which is but a cloak for indefiniteness of thought and irresolution in action. The Theosophical Society is called to take its share in the mighty world-creation, to spread its ideals through the mental atmosphere, to work them out into the physical forms for the new civilization. I summon you, my Brethren, to set your hands with me to this great task, to march

forward boldly to prepare for the New Era, to repay as far as you can, by helping in Their work, the loving care showered upon you by our Elder Brethren for the last forty years. Come with me into the darkness and the peril. There is no failure for those who march beneath the Shining of the Star.

### 1920

Brethren, in your hands is placed the greatest of all trusts, the helping forward of the spiritual life of the world. For Those who rule and teach the world have sent The Society out into it, and pour out Their Life through it, far and wide, for the uplift of mankind. Many Masters help various Societies, for everywhere They seek channels for the outpouring of Their Life on the world. But into this Society of the DIVINE WISDOM, Their special Messenger, the Herald of the coming Teacher, the whole Hierarchy sends forth the stream of Their abounding Love and Strength, in order that the whole world may receive Their benediction.

In the Āshrama of the two Masters who founded The Society is a map of the world, a map with living motion, whereon are traced in lines of glowing colours the great religions of the world, like rivers beginning at a source and with many branches and streams and

rivulets irrigating with spiritual life the countries of the world. And our Theosophical Society is there, a line of living light, white light, since it is the custodian of the Ancient Wisdom, which sends its currents into every Faith; and every Lodge is a little flame, like an electric spark, and glows or becomes dim as it lets its light shine forth or grow feeble. And there They who sent out the life-current, glance at its streamings, and see how each little centre is shedding its light on the world, or is letting it grow dull and faint.

Such is your trust, your privilege and your responsibility. The Eyes that never sleep are watching over the world in this hour of its travail. They see the helpers and the sluggards, the workers and the idlers. See to it, each of you, gathered here in the heart of The Society, that you do not prove unworthy of your charge, unfit for your trust. Go out into the world, and spread the Light.

1923

Brethren, it is needless for me to say to you that the world today is in the midst of a crisis, a crisis which will either result in a period like that which followed the fall of the Roman Empire, and the subsequent slow climbing of the sub-race towards civilization, or—as we hope—in the avoidance of that catastrophe and the peaceful evolution

of the new civilization, based on the recognition of Brotherhood in every relation of life. You are, or ought to be, students of Theosophy, and most of you should have mastered sufficient of its teachings, as to be capable of applying them to the helping of the world. Of what use your knowledge, if you wrap it up in a napkin and leave it on a shelf? What are you doing, what is each of you doing, to bring what you know to the rebuilding of our shattered world? . . .

Theosophy is not neutral but all-prevading, all-enlightening, all-directing, for it is the Divine Wisdom which sweetly and mightily ordereth all things. Nothing useful to humanity is alien to it; no science, no art, but is within its purview; every department of life is illumined by it; and only in its Light can we find the Truth of anything. Do you ask me how we, with our partial knowledge can venture to apply it to the healing of the world? My answer to you is that Theosophy is the Paravidya, the knowledge of Him by whom all things are known. You are Gods, but the God who is your Self is enveloped in the matter that blurs and blinds His outlook. Seek for Him, find Him, set Him free, and you become Saviours of the World. Do you say that you are ignorant and helpless? Rise out of your illusion, and shine out as the Gods you are.

O ye of little faith; wherefore do ye doubt? Believe what you profess; let the Light in you shine out upon the darkened world. You know, at least, that ignorance, dirt of body, emotions and mind, poverty, dying of want and wealth, dying of satiety, cruelty of man to man, of man to animals, impurity, greed, hatred, separateness, are all crimes against Brotherhood. Use this knowledge: where you see ignorance, carry your knowledge; where you see dirt, carry your purity of body, emotion and mind; where you see poverty and wealth confronting each other, seek the causes in the Light of Theosophy and apply the root remedy of fraternal economics; where you see cruelty, interpose to stop it, not by hasty denunciation which increases anger, but by compassionate tenderness to the doer of it even more than to the victim. Let not a day pass that you do not give something of help to others, something of your-

self; then as you rise and share what you have, you shall find your emptied hands filled to overflowing with more wealth to share; wealth of knowledge, wealth of insight, wealth of intuition, wealth of understanding, shall fill you with power, and the God within you shall call out the Gods around you in those who, as a Master said, turn their backs on the sun, and standing in their own shadow call it dark.

Have confidence in your Self; have confidence in the Self in all you meet; realize that all selves are One Self. Go forth into the darkness and change it into Light. Make every department of life consciously Divine, as it is Divine in reality. From God come all Power, all Wisdom, all Love-in-Activity, and these are the world's Redeemers. Then shall the desert through you blossom as a rose. That is your work. Go forth, and do it.

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Superficial and slovenly work becomes criminal, when put out by members of the T.S., and they must remember, as public judgment becomes less harsh, that they must themselves become more severe judges of themselves. Pledged to Service, as is every true Theosophist, let him take care of what sort is the offering he places upon the altar, for "the fire shall try every man's work," and only the pure gold can come out unchanged from the burning.

—*Presidential Address, 1915*

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