

# On the Watch-Tower

RADHA BURNIER

## The Path Before Us

It is good to remind ourselves that the path is within and the real source of mischief and unhappiness is in our own psyche. It is created by the sense of separateness, and to end it is like breaking up a prison. Being one with all Life is release from self; it is the Path. When the self is no more, there is freedom; everybody will come to it. Wisdom comes slowly by distilling experiences, but this can be done during waking life also, if we have discrimination.

Ordinary religion instils fear of punishment, etc., but there is nothing to be afraid of. Fear retards progress and many religious practices, like ceremonies and forms of worship, are heresies. In *The Key to Theosophy* we are told that praying to get something for oneself is out of fear. We must learn to have confidence in the goodness of the evolutionary process, and realize that whatever comes to us must be good (*śivam*). This does not mean that one will not help another, a child, an animal, a human being, etc., but the attitude is one of knowing that all is well.

Fear does harm to all equally. In *Light on the Path*, the first of the three truths states that the spirit of man is immortal and its growth has no limit. So we have

nothing to be frightened of, as the ordinary man has. Cutting down the poisonous weed of fright makes us watchful. The unfoldment of faculties and the power to use them are within us.

The Theosophical teaching discourages search after power in the worldly sense. Power in the spiritual sense is selflessness, and the wisdom to use all the faculties which we already have. We must use wisely even that power in a small way, so that the other person is helped to bring out his own talent, and the goodness that is in him. Seeking power in the ordinary sense is only ambition, the self wanting something. So can we not seek without any fear, but concentrate on bringing about a state of purity within? Everything needed will come in due course. Nature will provide what is necessary when we are ready. The Buddha said: The good law is at work everywhere. Where certain conditions are created, the result will follow. Therefore let us work in the present for what is right.

J. Krishnamurti says: Give your attention to the present moment and do not let the mind go to the future. Action is in the present and not in the future. Each man is the absolute lawgiver to himself, which is the meaning of karma; for causes and

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results are related. Therefore neither reward nor punishment is given by another, and we are our own gurus.

So we have to study what is beneficial. Whatever is done with complete harmony and not for the separate self, goodwill, sympathy, etc., involves harmony as a state of mind. So the path involves responsibility. It is not a reward from god or priest; law is supreme in the universe. This must be for our consideration, since it is fundamental to Theosophy and should be clear to us.

It is a strange thing that we see with great difficulty what is within us. We think we see but we do not. We think we know, but we understand very little. It is convenient to come to a quick conclusion. But clarity of perception involves keeping our conclusions in abeyance. A scientist makes many experiments before he comes to a conclusion. So also should we, if we want to continue to learn. If we really see the truth of a problem, then there is no difficulty in action. If we see that Brotherhood is the only sane and health-giving way of living, for ourselves as well as for others, then we see. But we do not see this simple truth and go on damaging ourselves as does an angry person who blames others for his anger. Can we see that there is no sanity in going against Brotherhood? All tension and disturbance in ourselves is due to this. Can we see more strongly that all the miseries of life are created by unbrotherliness and experience the joy of living simply?

The Buddha spoke of a great Truth: the 'Sorrow of Life'. If we only *see* it we

will have more energy to change. The notion of separateness is the basic source of unhappiness. Happiness is the true state. But some other concept of self 'has built this sorrowful state'. *Light on the Path* says: expunge the source of evil within you, but we would rather keep quiet and this is the source of evil. To expunge it entirely is synonymous with Universal Brotherhood, to do away with psychological barriers of separateness.

*Light on the Path* says: Do not think you are apart from the bad man or the foolish man. They are yourselves. Their sin may have been yours as well, either in the past or maybe in the future. It can happen to the extent the self continues to exist. J. Krishnamurti spoke about that state of mind where one is only aware, not comparing or evaluating but observing. Often, when we criticize others, we have the same weakness in ourselves. We do not realize this. The Theosophical student has to be committed to the aim of universality, working at eradicating everything that stands in the way of universal brotherhood. The blind cannot lead the blind.

### Reincarnation — A Fact?

Any good Theosophist would base his life upon the principles which he considers to be fundamental to theosophical understanding. In the Theosophical Society we are not bound to accept what anybody else says; on the other hand, if we think carefully we may come to the same conclusions and thus have a common basis. This does not mean that

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we have the same ideas, but refers to principles which should guide our lives. One of them is that from the physical, astral and mental, everything has to be in alignment with the spiritual nature of the true Self. When all the animalistic tendencies are completely eliminated, what is called the lower nature, that is mind contaminated by personal desires, is no more active. Then the person can be used by the highest, purest, aspect of himself. The inner or higher side of man knows that all of us are part of a unity, and therefore are related, in an inextricable way.

We have relationships in the East with our servants, but we regard them as not belonging to our group. They may not be, in a sense, as they do not have the same opportunity for education or for improving themselves. At the same time, we require their services. We need to have a relationship which shows that we appreciate their services. They may have faults or deficiencies, but when we find these, we try to help them and not simply condemn them. Brother Rājā comments that those who were born as servants are not necessarily people with less intelligence or fewer capacities than ourselves.

Another point he makes is also important. We may think of non-virtue as vice, and not necessarily vice as being evil. It can be a form of ignorance. Vice is not a part of the real self at all, but shows the absence of virtue or absence of the good. We can take it that in every person all virtues exist but they are dormant, and

they have to be made awake. We must remember that other lives are as important as our own life. A person may be depraved, but if we have benevolent feelings towards that person, we can help at least a little bit. So while we are still egotistic, and virtue has to be built up in those in whom it is absent, every incarnation is an opportunity.

Arithmetical progression means two, four, six, eight, ten, and so on. That is, increasing by two every time. But once a person understands what his life is meant for, and tries to live according to that, the progression becomes geometrical, not arithmetical. So instead of going slowly, a person goes two, four, eight, sixteen, and so on. He begins to make more rapid progress. I suppose all of us are at the stage only of arithmetical progress and not the geometrical. But when we realize to some extent the spiritual truths, and begin to live accordingly, even though faults may exist, the progress is fast. And that is one of the reasons why one is helped by knowing about evolution. Once a person becomes fully human and begins to act and live truly as a human being and not continue to act like a developed animal, he becomes different. He cannot immediately change his whole character, but he has the power to understand and that understanding will change him. His actions and thoughts fall in line with the one life and develop strength in this direction. His determination to tread the path is greater. We see the difference between some people who are very serious about the spiritual path, and a vast number of people who do not

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have any particular idea, and therefore turn in varied directions.

Brother Rājā, quoting perhaps from *The Lives of Alcyone*, says: The Lord Maitreya spoke on a certain occasion and said: You cut down a tree, THAT is the life of the tree; you have dug up a stone, THAT is what holds the particles of the stone together. THAT is the life of the sun, THAT is in the clouds, in the roaring of the sea, in the rainbow, in the glory of the mountain and so on. THAT is very often used in the Upanishad-s, because our words cannot really describe the glory, the power, and the beauty that is part of the path. The entire universe is made up of THAT. But we make it ugly. When we cut down a tree, we are making short the life, the great life that is manifesting itself in the tree. If we pick up a stone, THAT is what holds the particles of the stone together. The Upanishad-s are also quoted: One thing is right while the sweet is another thing. What is sweet for the present is different from what is really sweet and right. The wise man prefers the really sweet, that is what is right, while the foolish man takes hold of the sweet.

But reincarnation helps us to find out what is right, and good, what is true in

life. Otherwise, we let the stupid things of life lead us here and there without any direction. So reincarnation has a great value if one understands it rightly, but if one understands it wrongly it is better not to know it. A time will come when everybody will realize that reincarnation is a fact in nature.

A person like Krishnaji, for instance, who in a sense followed the teachings of the Buddha, knew about reincarnation. In the present day, when desire is strong, people will only use the idea of reincarnation, to try and get in the future what they cannot get in the present. This is not the purpose of learning about reincarnation. If we really understand what reincarnation is, from being an insect to arrive at the human stage, we can go very far on the path. A person can do what is good, and reach what is very near — the True and Beautiful.

In *Light on the Path* there is mention of the real path, after shedding all the useless tendencies. What we think is the path, is only the preparation. The real path begins when the preparation is fully finished and the person is pure. We do not know now what he will find, but apparently there are great things beyond our ken. ✧

**The religions of the world have all one aim — the realization of the Self, the knowledge of God . . . The essence of religion is Unity, the realization of the One God, within and without, flowering into the brotherhood of all that lives.**

Annie Besant

# A New Day Beckons to New Shores

MARY ANDERSON

THIS quotation from Goethe may conjure up an image before our mind's eye: We are on board a sailing ship in the 'Age of Discovery'. Or we are perhaps on the vessel of the Greek hero Ulysses, who on his way back from Troy had many adventures before he could at last return home to Attica, where unknown difficulties faced him.

In any case, let us imagine we are on such a ship. It is long since we have seen land. Dawn breaks and we can just distinguish on the horizon unknown shores beckoning to us. Filled with at once hope and anxiety, we do not know what awaits us.

Today, practically the whole world has been explored. There are few places which are not known to us, at least from books or television. But this sentence of Goethe's expresses a feeling which we certainly all know.

This feeling may take different forms.

Even if we are not early risers, it sometimes happens that we waken in the early morning after a refreshing sleep. The

sun is shining. We have many plans and look forward to carrying them out. We feel enthusiastic and full of energy. We do not know exactly what awaits us, but the unknown beckons.

Or we are about to go on a journey or take up a new job or move house — or perhaps to marry. Under these circumstances we may also of course be afraid of the unknown future! It all depends on our temperament and our momentary mood.

Many people, it is said, are afraid of death. But surely not Theosophists! I knew a Theosophist who said, when he was dying, that he felt very curious and was looking forward to what was to come! We could also imagine and look forward to what is to come — or be afraid — when we are about to begin a new incarnation. Now we shall have to face the bill for past misdeeds!

We may experience this joyous — or anxious — anticipation of the unknown not only on a bright spring morning or before a turning point in our life, such as death or rebirth, but at any time. And what

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follows? Often we are sooner or later disappointed. The daily routine makes its claims on us again. Our expectations are not fulfilled. Or they are fulfilled — and we are disappointed. What has gone wrong? Our life may change, but *we* remain the same. Above all we put our hopes in outward things and forget that we ourselves are responsible for our own fate.

For example: we may have difficulties in relationship with our parents, in marriage or at our place of work. We think it is the fault of others. If others really are responsible, then an outer change is indeed called for and will solve our problems, and we are justified in leaving home, divorcing or changing our job. But it often happens that we encounter the same or similar difficulties in our new surroundings, with our new partner, in our new place of work. Should we then change our surroundings or our job — or divorce — again? Or should we reflect whether the root of the trouble might lie not in circumstances and in other people but in us? Perhaps *we* should change. If we can really change, then every single moment in our lives may be like a new day, beckoning us to new shores.

There are new shores of another kind which beckon to us and fill us with anticipation. A new world may be revealed to us the first time we encounter the Ancient Wisdom. Now we have the explanation for our difficulties and their justification, the solution of our problems. Now our efforts to improve are motivated. We may place our hopes in future evolution, thinking that we automatically

become better with each life on earth (analogous to the idea: ‘I am getting better every day’!)

We sometimes forget that efforts are required on our part and that those efforts will cost us much strength and many sacrifices. Even if we enthusiastically set about improving ourselves, sooner or later we discover with a shock that it is not so easy.

What prevents us from changing? Do we really want to change at all? What does it mean to change, to become transformed — no longer to be ‘oneself’, perhaps not to ‘be’ at all, that is, as we have so far imagined we were?

To become transformed means to break with the past, i.e., no longer to cling to the past. Things cannot go on as they did. There is a complete reversal of direction. In this sense, transformation is not growth, as we have hitherto understood it.

When we look forward to something — the object of our wishes or perhaps a goal — we usually imagine it. We think that we know that object or goal. We may even have an exact image of it in our mind. But how that goal actually turns out to be depends to a great extent on ourselves. We do not always realize this, which would mean that we do not really know ourselves! It is mostly as if we were approaching a mirror, the mirror which we call the future, reflecting the past. In other words, what we are approaching is not the future at all but a projection of the past. A future which we can imagine is not the future but our present mental image of that future.

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These are not new shores. There is nothing new in a future which we imagine. Such a future would be like leftovers warmed up. What is truly new is fresh, pure, untouched and always unknown. It evokes wonder in us. Can we approach the future without imagining what it will bring?

We sometimes think we see new shores on the horizon. But when we approach these new shores, we discover again and again that this is not the end of our journey. The horizon is not static. What is truly new is always beyond the horizon. 'Veil after veil will lift — but there must be veil upon veil behind' (*Light of Asia*, Book 8).

Are we then to expect endless efforts before us? Like the eternity which Christians imagined in earlier times, giving rise to many jokes.

An example: After death a man had the choice between heaven and hell and he asked to see both places before deciding. He was shown heaven, where people wore wings, sat on clouds and played the harp for all eternity. He found that really boring. In hell, on the other hand, he saw tables laden with all kinds of good fare, merry companions, pretty girls. He of course chose hell. There is an epilogue: Hardly had he entered than little devils seized him and pushed him into the fire. 'Stop!' he cried, 'this is not what I was promised!' The answer was: 'What you were shown was the Public Relations Department!'

Or: After his death a man went to hell. He was asked what he wanted. Now, his hobby was fishing. And according to his wish he was led to a pond and given a

fishing rod. He could then fish to his heart's content and with considerable success. With time, however, he became tired and asked to go home. 'No', was the reply, 'you must fish for all eternity!'

That is really hell . . . doing something, even something one likes, for all eternity! . . . knowing what the future holds. No new shores and no new day. An eternal life on earth would be hell. Why do people wish to live longer and longer? Do we not have in death a wonderful opportunity to practise 'right forgetting'? And do we not have in reincarnation a new day which leads us again and again to new shores, freed from our past? . . . until the earth claims us again, or rather the past which we create for ourselves in every new life?

For new shores a new day is necessary. But *we* must bring the new day, we must *be* the new day, with eyes which are wide open for everything, eyes for which everything is new, bathing everything in light, like the sun. Only when the new day is present in us can there be new shores. Then everything — all objects, people, events — will be new shores for us.

Knowing the new day, being the new day means always living in the present, not in the past with its memories or the future with its hopes and fears, which are reflections of past experiences. Thus every day and even every moment, new shores beckon to us to discover them. Behind every horizon further horizons are hidden, but not in boring repetition.

Everyone must himself or herself find this out in his or her own way. It is said that there are as many paths as there are

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human beings. But many of us belong — perhaps only temporarily — to a certain type, e.g. we may for a time or perhaps for a few incarnations be predominantly either thinkers or emotional or active people. All these possibilities are in every one of us.

The spiritual path of the thinker, the Jñāna-yogi, is described by HPB as follows: We have an image of life which satisfies us. For example we have discovered the philosophy of Theosophy in a simple form. It satisfies us and fills us with enthusiasm. But a time comes when our enthusiasm turns to ashes in our mouth. Why?

It is of course not Theosophy which disappoints us but the mental image we have of Theosophy. We do not know Theosophy in itself — who can know the Ancient Wisdom? — but only our impression of it. Theosophy in itself belongs to another dimension, the dimension of the eternally New, the dimension of the Eternal Now, not the dimension of linear time. And we live mostly in linear time. As the poet Shelley put it:

We look before and after  
And pine for what is not.  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught.  
Our sweetest songs are those which  
Tell of saddest thought.

To return to our theme: The mental image which satisfied us at first no longer does so. It bores us, it has become too narrow. We must give it up. The perfect little house which we built and furnished

in thought, where everything had its place, has become too small for us and we must abandon it. Thus we live for a time in uncertainty until again we build a house, a somewhat larger house which again satisfies our mind to begin with, until it also becomes too small for us.

Thus we go on, from house to house, from shore to shore, from horizon to horizon, from one image of life, one system, to another, until we realize that no mental picture, no system, no form, can satisfy us. Only the formless which is the source of all possible forms can be our true home, for the formless is unlimited and our true nature is also unlimited and contains all possibilities.

Thus at last the new day breaks, beckoning us no longer to the old shores but to shores which are truly new, to shores which are always beyond — beyond the mind.

These new shores cannot be found by thought, although we must presumably experience many shores accessible to thought before we can approach those that are beyond thought. The shores beyond thought have nothing to do with linear time — with past, present and future — although we must probably first learn from the experiences and disappointments of past and future before we can free ourselves from them.

Our intellectual thought and linear time are only the mountaineering gear which makes it possible for us to climb ever higher mountains and discover ever further horizons, or the raft with which we cross ever broader rivers or the ship on



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which we approach ever newer shores. But when we realize that those horizons are always only relatively further, those rivers only relatively wider and those shores only relatively newer, we turn in another direction. We then abandon our mountaineering gear, our raft or our ship — i.e., intellectual thought and consciousness within linear time — and suddenly we are, if only for a moment, in the absolutely new.

Those horizons which are only relatively and apparently new, which are always further away but which never lead to the goal, are discovered in the world of the thinker. Something similar takes place in the world of the religious person in quest of what he perhaps calls 'God'.

A religious person may find his god in an object, be it a picture or a statue of the Virgin Mary or Jesus or Kṛshna. Why not? . . . as long as it satisfies him and he does not impose his beliefs on others. With time, however, it will no longer satisfy him. He learns that he must seek behind or beyond the image. Then he imagines a god that is not physical but still limited, *His* god, in contrast to other gods of other faiths. It may be that he then discovers that God, in order to be God, must be the God of all men, the God who is worshipped in all religions. This discovery may lead to difficulties with his co-religionists. It takes courage to leave the flock. But this God of all men is still outside creation and therefore a stranger.

Later there comes the realization — perhaps at first only as a theoretical concept — that God is not outside but

everywhere within his creation, in the earth, the starry sky, in Nature, in all beings, in all humans, also in those who are capable of crimes. Not only is he — or it — in them, but they *are* God. Everything is God, is divine.

Perhaps we do not like the word 'God'. It is linked with so many images which we could not but reject. Perhaps we prefer to say that one single sacred Life is in all things and all beings — or *is* all things and all beings.

Those transformations in our concept of the Divine are like a voyage from shore to shore, from horizon to horizon, a journey which always takes us beyond. The truly new shores always lie beyond.

It is the path of *neti-neti*: 'not this, and not that', a repeated denial of what we hitherto accepted. This path is known not only in Hinduism. Dionysius the Areopagite said:

For it is, as I believe, more fitting to praise Him by taking away than by ascription; for we ascribe attributes to Him, when we start from universals and come down through the intermediate to the particulars. But here we take away all things from Him going up from particulars to universals, that we may know openly the unknowable, which is hidden in and under all things that may be known. And we behold that darkness beyond being, concealed under all natural light. (*The Perennial Philosophy*, A. Huxley, p. 43)

HPB too calls that which is beyond light and darkness, as we know them, the Great

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Darkness. We read in *Light on the Path*:

Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence.

Listen only to the voice which is soundless.

Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense. (II. 19, 20, 21)

This is to me the highest form of devotion. The way of denial rids us of all limitations and leads to transformation. For it implies also denial of ourselves as we know ourselves at present. Only if we give up the smaller can the greater emerge. We give ourselves up, as we are now. That means sacrifice — a word which many people do not like, because they associate it with suffering. But I maintain that only in such sacrifice, only in giving up what is dear to us, ultimately in giving up ourselves, does true happiness lie.

Those who tread the path of Wisdom — Jñāna-yoga — discover this. They give up lesser, superficial concepts. Only then do greater, deeper concepts arise, which ultimately lead to the formless. Religious people also discover this, giving up the more limited concept of God in favour of the wider concept, until they reach the formless, that which embraces all. And that is also what active people discover, when they give up actions for their own benefit in favour of service to others. All those paths lead to self-forgetfulness and therefore to the New — to a new day and to new shores. But this renunciation, this

sacrifice must be voluntary and spontaneous and must come about only when the time is ripe.

We must not restrict ourselves to one path, for our being comprises different possibilities: action, emotion, thought.

... the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. . . .  
(*Light on the Path*, I.20)

On whatever path we approach those new shores, what we find there cannot be conceived or described. St John of the Cross says:

They who know Him most perfectly perceive most clearly that He is infinitely incomprehensible . . . (*The Perennial Philosophy*, A. Huxley, p. 33)

But mystics, true sages and saints of all traditions have stated that those far-off shores, those horizons beyond all horizons are not in the far distance but are here in us and in our lives, in the here and now. To realize this is in itself transformation.

We may see transformation as growth, as increase. I prefer to see it as decrease. 'That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men' (*Light on the Path*, I.16). We only have to renounce that which is in fact the lesser, although it may seem, outwardly, to be the greater. And then the truly Great comes into being.

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It comes into being of its own accord when the time is ripe. If we try to force it before then, we can be led in the opposite direction, towards the suppression of something which will sooner or later come forth again and cause great difficulties. But when there is a certain maturity, we cannot do other than melt with great joy into the One, which is our true being.

Direct knowledge *of* the Ground cannot be had except by union, and union can be achieved only by the annihilation of the self-regarding ego, which is the barrier separating the 'thou' from the 'That'. (*The Perennial Philosophy*, A. Huxley, p. 44)

On the one hand, as already mentioned, we cannot force this annihilation. On the other hand, we can reach the goal — the shores which are eternally new — only when we can and must reject the means which have so far helped us, including ourselves as we have hitherto been.

Only when the new day has truly dawned in our hearts can the new shores beckon. And that new day is our responsibility. Then we shall discover that the new shores are no different from the new day, that we are those shores and that they were always present but remained unseen until the new day dawned in us. ✧

God is neither spirit,  
neither logos,  
neither power,  
neither light,  
neither life,  
neither substance,  
neither time,  
neither science,  
neither truth,  
neither Kingdom,  
neither wisdom,  
neither benevolence . . .  
God is beyond every human notion.

Saint Dionysios, the Areopagite

# Cause the Acorn to Grow into the Oak

N. SRI RAM

THE MASTER to whom one looks up ought not to be, to any one of us, a mere name or just an image, but he should be an ever more beautiful Reality. In terms of our experience, which is the reality for us, relatively speaking, He is the Ideal, the *ne plus ultra*, of our present realization, the embodiment of all that is most exquisite to our imagination. He represents the conception which each one of us has of what we ourselves hope to be, that of human or spiritual perfection.

Perfection is the mark of the Spirit or of Divinity at every stage, and the Spirit is, in one of its eternally dual aspects, always transcendent, elusive, because it can never be wholly contained in any vessel into which it pours itself. It is indefinable, subjective, because it is integral and indivisible.

The perfection that is in each one of us is a germ or a point, from the standpoint of Time, but it exists in its fullness in Eternity. Our conception of ourselves as we really are must change as we change. Time and eternity are but two sides of a single medallion, the disc

of an ever-present Truth. Time is the distance between our present 'knowledge' and our future Being; or, to put it more truly, our Being and our ignorance.

We look at a star in the sky, a lone star, let us say, on which we may concentrate in wonder. It is a sun, unlike other suns, for it represents a Logos among innumerable graded Logoi in a cosmos studded with life. The star is faint only because of the light years that hide its glory. If we diminish the distance the Sun is there. If we have similarly the power of a telescope to see into ourselves, we will see, each one of us, the star in his highest heaven, his true Self, as the Sun of his universe, the Logos-to-be, the fountainhead of whatever is to flow into the universe of his time and space. We are told there is a plane where the Past, Present and Future lie side by side, where the End and the Beginning miraculously unite.

It is the veil of Time, dark as we look backwards, golden ahead, which hides the Perfection that exists eternally. If we can abolish Time even for a moment, we draw

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inside the veil; lo, we are in Eternity.

The seed of our perfection we call the Monad, the spark that hangs from the divine Flame by the finest thread. It is the parent principle of our nature, the lone Star whose glimmering Ray illumines the otherwise dark chamber of our consciousness.

The relation between the highest Self in us and our self down here in its finest aspects, is like that between a Master and a willing Pupil. That Self is the silence from which arises every creative word of our being. In India the prototype of the true spiritual Teacher is pictured as the silent, meditative One, eternally young because past the reach of Time's defacing hand, and he teaches in silence, the depth of that seabed which no plummet can sound, where there is eternal mystery and silence.

The Master unites the Being of the Pupil with His own, and the energy that flows forth is a pure energy which the pupil uses to change himself. That change, which is a series of changes, is part of the work before us, and in its intensity it is Yoga or union, which from the point of view of the technique by which it is effected, is harmonization. We usually want others to change themselves to suit us, to change the outside conditions to fit our convenience or increase our enjoyment. We have to learn to change ourselves, not to fit the world as it is, but by standards capable eventually of harmonizing both ourselves and the world.

This work, in its different stages,

involves the harmonization or telescoping of the Ego with the Personality, the Monad with the Ego, and eventually of the Logos, through intermediate manifestations, with the Monad, and there are also more detailed and subsidiary processes of harmonizing each part of these entities or manifestations with the other parts. Eventually it has to be one consciousness all the way through, one in conscious realization from the innermost spiritual centre of ourselves to the outermost material circumstance.

The process is one of forming links and relationships, the reconciliation of discordant parts, and the merger of each integrated whole into a higher. We have to begin this work of self-transformation, which involves self-purification, even where we are.

At our stage we are concerned with Body, Emotions and Mind. Each of these has to be brought into a perfect state of fitness. Yoga is a state of integral functioning, which requires all-round and detailed fitness. Some systems begin with one part of the individual, some with another, thus the variety of methods and systems.

We cannot do much with the physical body because it is the special vehicle of our Karma. It is the solid substratum of the conditioning to which we subject ourselves in the process of our encounters with the exterior world. But we must do the best we can, and to do one's best under handicaps, to attempt much and achieve little, and be content with the results, argues a superior will and mind to that which we gain by easy success and self-satisfied vanity.

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The centre of the spiritual man's consciousness is not in the body, nor in the emotions or mind. It is at a point whence he controls and integrates all of them. The body has to become a vessel of grace which carries the white flower of a blameless life, a piece of mechanism to be taken up, used and put aside according to the requirements of the spirit that dwells within.

Our main problem in this stage of evolution is with the Emotions and the Mind. For the world at large the problem is not even so much with the emotions as with the Passions and the Mind. We have advanced from the stage in which the mind was wholly governed by Desire; yet in most of us Desire in its subtler forms does sway and direct the mind. We have to learn to put it aside utterly.

Thus we prepare for the union of the Mind with Buddhi; at least we must definitely affiliate our minds with the nature of that spiritual principle. The time will come when the Emotions reflecting that Buddhic principle will reach with the Mind a perfect accord. In all great works of art and literature there is accord or blending. Our nature must take on its qualities. We have to develop in our thinking and emotional functioning the qualities of imagination in the selection of themes, colour, perspective, syntax, lucidity and order. The mind and the emotions should be perfectly matched and true where the mind perceives a birth. The Emotions must react with beauty, and where the Emotions lead by a spontaneous motion, with an instinctive taste, the Mind must be able to follow

and approve. The flow of the emotions and the forms we create by the mind must make a perfect synthesis.

In the *Bhagavadgītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the Logos in the garb of man, asks his devotees to 'Surrender mind and Buddhi to Me.' The lesser when merged in the higher never loses anything of value. When all is surrendered to the Supreme, all is still in motion but according to the pattern of the Lord, as an expression of His Being. The individual ceases to have a will of his own, or rather he has dissolved the false will of egoism and separateness, and acts with the true will, the individual Will in all things. When that unity prevails, all is in order both without and within. Our mind must become an instrument of creation and not usurp the function of the determining Will.

One can understand its part in relation to Buddhi by contemplating the birth of a musical creation. The musician intuits a melody as if in a dream; it comes as if from nowhere. Nothing altogether new as an idea can come to one by a mental process grounded in the known. You cannot imagine for instance a fragrance which you have never known. You may synthesize, but it is only a reconstruction of the old. The musician in his flight of the unknown seizes the soul of his melody as an intangible essence, just a drop of fragrance, as it were; but the fragrance spreads and pervades his musical being. Presently he is able to construct for it a body and shape.

The business of the mind is to create, build, embody, express, formulate, cause

### Cause the Acorn to Grow into the Oak

the acorn to grow into the oak. Thus the Divine Mind inspired with the power of the Divine Word has created the universal mould for the expression of the universal Spirit. The soul of each creation is not in the mind but comes from beyond the mind. The seeds that grow into the oak and every other lovely and magnificent plant and tree in the garden of perfect beauty are seeds that drop from heaven and are not the harvest or Karma.

We have to prepare ourselves to live our lives in a new way, not forever in the old; to live from above, not from below. The Yogi, it has been said, first establishes his home on earth, then in the water, then in the air, lastly in the ether, that is, figuratively. Ultimately he lives, his consciousness centred in the world of divine ideas, where are the archetypes of everything he sees in the worlds below — things, relations, perceptions, concepts.

How shall we link ourselves to that level? Not only by contemplating the True, the Good and the Beautiful, but also by creating them by every little act; not merely envisaging them as summary abstract principles but by giving to those ultimate ideals individualistic and specific expression in each little thought and deed.

This is a night and day job; to live with a universal background, with sympathies

as wide as the heart can reach, and yet pinpointing the attention to the call of the moment, to be looking up to the heavens and to create from the universal background something of lasting significance. What is creation? To convert the spot you happen to be treading into a beauty spot, a spot of fragrance, in an otherwise spiritually dreary wilderness. To plant there if not an oasis at least a garden, if not a garden just a rose, a jasmine, a violet, not necessarily flaunted in the public view; even if hidden in the shy death, the unnoticed shade, of your private aspiration, it is creation still.

When you can make an expanded universe with your heart, and keep it ever open, fresh, and sensitive to the light and every secret cosmic radiation, at the same time constructed to the point of action where you can act with the whole force of your being, you unite the circumference with the centre, you live not with just a little part of yourself but with the whole stretch of your being, positive for action, specific in each deed, yet negative to receive the subtlest impressions of persons and things, with a heart that is empty of desire but ever spread as a prayer-carpet on which you may receive whoever, whatever, is the object of your adoration and search. ✧

**Each truth can only be seen by a man as he develops the power of vision corresponding to it.**

Annie Besant

# Advaita Vedānta: A Religion for Contemporary Philosophers and Scientists (Part II)

KLAUS K. KLOSTERMAIER

### III. The Religious Character of Advaita

The conviction of the essentially religious nature of Advaita was also shared by contemporary Indian philosophers who professed Advaita, such as S. Radhakrishnan and T. M. P. Mahadevan. Radhakrishnan held intellect, unaided by revelation, unable to attain (saving) Truth, and Mahadevan, while introducing Advaita Vedānta to an academic audience, referred without apology or qualification to miracles in the life of Śankarāchārya, and to scriptural Truth as the ultimate norm.

The purpose of Advaita is not what seemed to be the purpose of Western philosophy, since Plato and Aristotle (and up to and including Sartre and Heidegger): either to provide a rational foundation for all aspects of life, and to build up an imposing edifice of higher knowledge, or to critique the statements of former philosophers. Advaita builds on the insight that our Self has nothing to do

with those things which people appreciate or claim to know. The study of Advaita Vedānta as a philosophical system without basing it upon its stated qualifications could be hazardous to a student's spiritual and mental health. The warning which the Buddhist teacher Nāgārjuna gave with regard to the Middle Way, a kind of early Advaita in its own right, that like a snake it should be handled only by the experts and could become a deadly danger to amateurs, applies also to Śankara's Advaita Vedānta.

Krishnadas Bhattacharya, a renowned twentieth century Indian philosopher, stated quite categorically: 'Vedānta is primarily a religion and it is a philosophy only as the formulation of this religion. All religion makes for the realization of the Self as sacred, but the religion of Advaita is the specific cult of such realization understood explicitly as self-knowledge, as sacred knowledge and as nothing but knowledge.'<sup>6</sup>

J. L. Mehta, known as a Heidegger

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scholar and interpreter, rediscovered Vedānta, so to speak, through the medium of Heidegger's philosophy.<sup>7</sup> He is, in consequence, able to throw a contemporary Western light on Advaita as a religion. According to him Śankara's quest for the truth of the Upanishad-s 'was a profoundly religious quest, and yet a passionately intellectual one'. The Śankarite ultimate, 'what is to be heard, thought about, and meditated upon is not a bare ontological principle or a metaphysical ultimate, ground, or arch, but a reality experienceable and experienced as sacred'. All activities relating to the study of Advaita 'are carried on within the dimension of the holy and the ambience of the Divine'. Mehta draws attention to the fact that the texts of Advaita are introduced by *mangala-stotra-s*, invocations and prayers, and he highlights the *adhikāra* of Advaita as including world-renunciation and homelessness.

### IV. Advaita Vedānta as a Religion for Contemporary Scientists

One of the most intriguing developments of twentieth century intellectual life is the mutual rapprochement of the natural sciences and religion. The moves took place from both sides: Albert Einstein had marvelled that more clergymen showed an interest in his theories than professional scientists, and Max Planck firmly believed that science, in particular physics, was a way to God. It is of special interest to see scientists being attracted to Advaita Vedānta. Erwin Schrödinger studied Śankara and found his insights

converging with those of his own science. His insistence on the non-distinction between subject and object, their fusion in the act of knowing, the eternal reality of the here and now over against the unreality of the past or the future, the togetherness of everything are aspects of his understanding of Vedānta.<sup>8</sup>

A crucial question which arises in this context is this: While Śankara advocates a two-tiered truth, *vyāvahārika* and *pāramārthika*, with duality and distinction between the knower and known — 'true' at the level of sense-and-mind, Schrödinger and his colleagues seem to assume a disappearance of that subject-object distinction at the level of microphysics. They feel attracted by a holistic world view and the applicability of such a view to physical and social realities. Is this what Śankara saw as 'ultimate truth'? Is it identical with the *ātman-Brahman* of the Upanishad-s? Is the intuition, which led Einstein to propound his famous formula of relativity or Heisenberg to articulate the theory of indeterminacy, a realization of *ātman-Brahman*? Reasons that would militate against such a notion are the *adhikāra-s*, which Śankara established, and the non-phenomenal nature of Brahman, which would not allow an extrapolation from natural/mental phenomena to a transcendent.

One might wonder why nuclear physicists, the most prominent representatives of an 'objective', exact and 'hard' science, would find Advaita Vedānta of interest. Apart from their own testimony, one can

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extrapolate some likely reasons. Among nuclear physicists, as among other professionals, there are people who have larger human concerns, who participate in the intellectual and social life of their time and who become deeply worried by aspects of life and society that are unrelated to their specific field of work. They are not unmoved by the spectacle of World Wars that bring death and destruction to large parts of the world and they reflect on their deeper causes. They watch with dismay the impotence, the hypocrisy and the connivance of the religious institutions, supposed to act as the conscience of society, as custodians of eternal values, as beacons to show a way of salvation. They are aware of the intellectual flaws of the traditional doctrines, which refuse to take cognizance of hundreds of years of scientific enquiry into many of the issues they are dealing with. They are widely enough read to know of alternative philosophies of life that are easier to reconcile with a scientific mentality. They perceive these to address the real questions more squarely and to leave more freedom of articulation of the quest.

Another, deeper reason may be that, by doing the cutting-edge research that is required in nuclear physics, they recognized the epistemological limitations of traditional science and then explored radically different understandings of such supposed 'givens' as space and time, matter and energy. Classical understandings of these categories did not help to grasp the events taking place at the subatomic level. If one had good reason

to abandon traditional notions of space and time and geometry, without abandoning the search for the foundations of the physical universe, why should one have to cling to traditional notions of God and soul, of heaven and hell, in one's search for the deeper meaning of reality? Apparently the answers to questions at that level which were found in Vedānta and Buddhism made more sense and led deeper into, rather than away from, the centre of gravity of meaningful reality.

Erwin Schrödinger offers a quasi-empirical 'proof' of the truth of Vedānta, which he sees exemplified in the unity of knower, known and knowledge. Using contemporary scientific evidence which makes us aware that 'the conditions of (our) existence are almost as old as the rocks' and reminding the reader that the same view of a landscape has been had by many who lived before us, and will be had by many who will live after us, he makes us ponder the sameness of this experience in all those who shared it:<sup>9</sup>

Looking and thinking in that manner you may suddenly come to see in a flash the profound rightness of the basic conviction of Vedānta: it is not possible that this unity of knowledge, feeling and choice which you call your own should have sprung into being from nothingness at a given moment not so long ago; rather this knowledge, feeling and choice are essentially eternal and unchangeable and numerically one in all men, nay in all sensitive beings.

Schrödinger distances that view from

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any kind of pantheism or panentheism: we should not understand ourselves as a piece of something else or of the whole, but as the whole itself. 'Eternally and always there is only now, and one and the same now; the present is the only thing that has no end.' Schrödinger also holds that 'it is the vision of this truth . . . which underlies all morally valuable activity'. Why else would one sacrifice one's life for a worthy cause or come to the aid of a suffering other being, when helping another will mean suffering for oneself? Schrödinger, through his work as a physicist, is haunted by the question, 'What is real?' and he is not prepared to equate the real with the tangible. After all, even in physics there is nothing left to touch or see after the barrier of the subatomic has been crossed. The 'unseen', however, is the source of the 'seen' — a striking verification of Uddālaka's famous teaching with the help of a fig and its seeds.<sup>10</sup>

### Conclusion

There are some central outstanding features of Advaita Vedānta that clearly make it a 'religion', distancing it from the pursuit of secular philosophies (both of the 'constructive' and the 'deconstructive' varieties). Some such elements are:

- 1) The reliance on *śruti* (specifically, the Vedic canon) as a means to obtain *brahmavidyā*
- 2) The emphasis on *śraddhā* (faith) as precedent to Vedānta study
- 3) The recommendation to practise *bhakti*
- 4) The insistence on *samnyāsa* as

*conditio sine qua non* of liberation.

Furthermore, the very goal itself *brahmajñāna/moksha* is 'religious' insofar as it identifies the purpose of the study of Vedānta as transcendental knowledge and personal liberation from worldly ties. The followers of the Śankarāchārya-s, both *samnyāsin* and lay, leave no doubt that they not only consider the Śankarāchārya a channel of religious grace and wisdom, but also adopt the *matha-s* as places of pilgrimage where they worship in temples to obtain the grace of Śārādā Devi.<sup>11</sup>

Lest someone be tempted to apply the Western distinction between 'faith' (religion) and 'reason' (philosophy and science), one also has to state that the 'philosophical' element is strongly emphasized too: Vedāntic hermeneutics proceeds through the three steps of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*: *manana*, the 'medium' applies also *tarka* (formal logic) and there are numerous examples of rigorous philosophical argumentation in the writings of the major Advaitin-s. Finally, *anubhava*, the intuitive fusing of thinker and object of thought in the act of thinking, is as 'philosophical' an act as any.

By calling Vedānta (especially Advaita) a 'living religious tradition' one not only accepts it on a par with 'other religious traditions' but also changes the meaning of the word 'religion'. In the West the word had (and has) a Christian (usually a very specific denominational) meaning: belonging to a group of people united by a common initiation (baptism) and common (verbally fixed) doctrines and

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beliefs, which include such basics as the existence of a personal God who is creator and ruler of the world, uniqueness of life, an agreed upon set of moral norms and common worship in traditionally set forms. Most of that is not found in Advaita. On the other hand, Advaita considers *jñāna* as of the essence not only of 'religion' but of the purpose of life itself. Little of that is found in the Christian notion of religion. By adopting Advaita as a path, one redefines 'religion' in a substantial way.

This 'knowledge', however, is dependent on the moral/spiritual qualifications of the enquirer: the four *adhikāra-s* are not 'methods' in the 'value-neutral' sense, but 'religious' preconditions that qualify the nature of the truth to be

obtained. This becomes especially clear if one considers that *mumukshutva* has always been held to be the most crucial qualification — clearly a 'religious' aspiration. Also *viveka* makes it clear that a supersensual (*aparoksa*) reality is acknowledged and aimed at. The identity of knowing and being expressed in the *aham brahmāsmi* qualifies *both* knowing *and* being! Both the terms 'philosophy' and 'religion' need to be liberated from their institutional historic cages. If Advaita is again to become a liberating power in our day and age, what has not yet been said by the traditions associated with it has to be revealed: the hidden depth of *ātman-Brahman* must be reached, and the living experience of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* must be regained. ✧

## Endnotes

6. *Studies in Philosophy by Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya*, Gopinath Bhattacharya (ed.), vol. I, Calcutta, 1956, 118f.
7. J. L. Mehta, "Heidegger and Vedānta: Reflections on a Questionable Theme", in G. Parkes (ed.) *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, Honolulu, 1987, 15-45. Also J. L. Mehta, 'Life-Worlds, Sacrality and Interpretive Thinking', (Simla Conference 1987) in: W. J. Jackson, (ed.), *J. L. Mehta on Heidegger, Hermeneutics and Indian Tradition*, Leiden 1992, 209-33.
8. See E. Schrödinger's 'Der Geist der Naturwissenschaft' in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 1946, 491-520.
9. Erwin Schrödinger, *My View of the World*, Cambridge University Press, 1964.
10. *Chandogya Upanisad*, VI.8.
11. See also Y. Sawai, 'Śankara's Theory of Samnyāsa', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 14, 1986, 371-87; Kim Skoog, 'Śamkara on the role of *śruti* and *anubhava* in attaining *brahmajñāna*': *Philosophy East and West* 37, 1987, 67-74; J. K. Suthren Hirst, 'The Place of Teaching Techniques in Śamkara's Theology', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18, 1990, 113-50.

# Krishnamurti: A Facet

DANIEL ROSS CHANDLER

THROUGH speaking, teaching, and writing, Krishnamurti presented a distinctive intellectual-spiritual approach that recommended itself to many aspiring individuals seeking inner transformation. He addressed the persistent questions and enduring problems inherent within the spiritual quest that were pondered in *Freedom from the Known*:

Man has throughout the ages been seeking something beyond himself, beyond material welfare — something we call truth or God or reality, a timeless state — something that cannot be disturbed by circumstances, by thought or by human corruption. . . .

And not finding this nameless thing of a thousand names which he has always sought, he has cultivated faith — faith in a saviour or an ideal — and faith invariably breeds violence. (p. 9)

By blending beautifully descriptive passages picturing nature with explanations about philosophical principles, he presented an experiential methodology that commended itself to seekers. He wrote, for instance, in *Meditations*:

That morning the sea was like a lake or an enormous river — without a ripple, and so calm that you could see the reflections of the stars so early in the morning. The dawn had not yet come, so the stars, the reflection of the cliff and the distant lights of the town were there on the water. . . .

As you watched, a great stillness came into you. . . . The quality of that silence, that stillness, is not felt by the brain; it is beyond the brain. . . . You are so still that your body becomes completely part of the earth, part of everything that is still. (p. 46)

Watching the sun making a golden path across the California seascape, Krishnamurti experienced an extraordinary quality of silence and felt that no one was there, that no one existed. There was simply that awesome stillness, an indescribable beauty, an extraordinary sense of love. As quietly as a coming dawn and arising from somewhere deep within, there emerged an immensity described in *Krishnamurti's Notebook* that 'seemed to have no roots, no cause but yet it was there, intense and solid, with a depth and a height that are not

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measurable' (p. 48). In his *Notebook* Krishnamurti wrote:

Walking along the path that followed the fast-running stream, cool and pleasant, with many people about, there was that benediction, as gentle as the leaves and there was in it a dancing joy. But there was beyond and through it that immense, solid strength and power that was unapproachable. One felt that there was immeasurable depth behind it, unfathomable. (p. 36)

Sitting silently immersed within this immensity, Krishnamurti sensed that the entire universe and everything existing within the solar system comprises a single interrelated and interdependent whole. Every existent being is rooted in the same life-creating Reality intuited as all-pervasive, although that Reality is never completely contained within the parts but transcends the expressions and manifestations. The Reality reveals itself through the purposeful, ordered, and meaningful processes pervading nature and the deepest recesses in the mind and spirit. Recognition affirming the uniqueness within every living creature prompts a reverence for life, compassion for every sentient creature, sympathy for the truth-seekers in every passing generation, and an appreciation of spirituality as inevitably experiential. He indicated in *The Network of Thought*:

Consciousness is common to all mankind. Throughout the world man suffers inwardly as well as outwardly; there is anxiety, uncertainty, utter despair of

loneliness; there is insecurity, jealousy, greed, envy and suffering. Human consciousness is one whole; it is not your consciousness or mine. This is logical, sane, rational: wherever you go, in whatever climate you live . . . belief and faith are common to all mankind — the images and symbols may be totally different in various localities but they stem from something common to all mankind. (p. 10)

An authentically religious person is not an individual who wears a robe or loin-cloth, survives on a single meal daily, or subscribes to specific vows; a genuinely religious person is inwardly simple and not *becoming* anything.

Exemplifying and teaching meditation, Krishnamurti described that practice as not a means for reaching an end but both a means and an end, the seeing of what is and going beyond, discovering a dimension that is not contaminated with what is known. Meditation was explained as the flowering of understanding, the light within the mind that illumines the way towards action, and finding an ending of knowledge and experiencing freedom from the known. Krishnamurti considered meditation as freedom from thought, a momentary ecstasy of truth. He regarded meditation of a completely silent mind as the benediction that humanity ceaselessly seeks; the death that meditation facilitates is the immortality of the new. As he stated in his *Notebook*:

Meditation is destruction to security and there is great beauty in meditation, not

### Krishnamurti: A Facet

the beauty of the things that have been put together by man or by nature but of silence. This silence is emptiness in which and from which all things flow and have their being. It is unknowable, neither intellect nor feeling can make their way to it; there is no way to it and a method to it is the invention of a greedy brain. (p. 82)

Achieving a fundamental revolution within oneself requires understanding the entire process of one's thought and feeling in relationship. Understanding comes through being aware of what *is*; knowing what *is* without condemning or justifying it constitutes the beginning of wisdom. Krishnamurti invited individuals in *Commentaries on Living* (Third Series) to inaugurate a voyage on an uncharted sea where they might experience 'an extraordinary thing, a movement beyond the measure of time, a spring that knows no summer' (p. 197).

Through sixty-five eventful years, Krishnamurti travelled extensively in India, Europe, Australia, and North and South America where he fulfilled speaking engagements through which he worked to make humanity 'absolutely, unconditionally free'. Without espousing a theological doctrine, he laboured to liberate people from conditioning. His seemingly countless conversations, speeches and writings were compiled into sixty books, some translated into numerous languages. He expounded a revolutionary and completely original philosophy that attracted the thoughtful

attention and respectful interest of writers, statesmen, scientists, and scholars. However Krishnamurti's greatest impression and important influence exists in the lives of countless students who sat at this spiritual master's feet or read his inspiring writings. Krishnamurti was primarily an educator engaged in educating students, teaching them that inevitably all education is religious.

Krishnamurti's life-long preoccupation with education blossomed with his *Beginnings of Learning*, in which he emphasizes that education should be learning about living and that the central concern should address dealing effectively with the most fundamental problems of all human life. The first section contains discussion among Krishnamurti and the students and staff at Brockwood Park School in England; and the second presents Krishnamurti's conversations with parents and teachers.

As a reprint of Krishnamurti's early writings and poetry composed between 1923 and 1931, *From Darkness to Light* reveals a facet of Krishnamurti's personality that is characterized by his intense sensitivity and passionate appeal to individuals to see reality. This same passionate concern and sustained vigour is evident in his *The Future is Now: Last Talks in India*, which contains talks and discussions from Krishnamurti's final travels in India in 1985. *Krishnamurti to Himself: His Last Journal* was dictated into a tape recorder at his home, Pine Cottage, in the Ojai Valley.

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### The Singer and the Song

On 17 February 1986, Krishnamurti died at Pine Cottage, Ojai. He occupied a room facing the pepper tree under which he experienced enormous transformations that changed his consciousness sixty-four years earlier. Krishnamurti's ashes were divided into three parts and dispatched to Ojai, England, and India. In India the ashes were consigned to the holy river Ganges midstream at Rajghat, Varanasi; to the source of the river at Gangotri deep within the majestic Himalayas; and carried from Adyar beach in Madras across the turbulent waves towards the sea. Pupul Jayakar explained in *Krishnamurti: A Biography*:

There were to be no rituals after his death, no prayer, no fuss, no great ceremonial processions. No memorials were to be built over his ashes. Under no circumstances was the teacher to be deified. The teacher was unimportant; only the teaching was important. (p. 498)

Close colleagues and companions persistently pondered who Krishnamurti was. Field and Hay concluded in *Krishnamurti*:

Krishnamurti, a spiritual genius without peer in the world, had been 'singing his song' for over fifty years, emphasizing now a certain note, now another one, and now still another. . . .

Some of us have probably had glimpses of that extra dimension Krishnamurti has called the Unknown. But I think it safe

to say that none of us has caught the fire that burned in him. We are not singing our own songs. . . .

Perhaps, to paraphrase his own words, because our mind-heart does not sing, we have instead pursued the Singer, thus missing the essential meaning of the Song. (pp. 130-1)

Biographer Lutyens struggled to discover the source from which Krishnamurti's teaching emanated, attempted to illuminate the nature that characterized a most remarkable human, and traced his development seeking to survey his lengthy life in perspective. Lutyens eventually concluded in *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death* that whatever happened within his body during the experiences described as 'the process' facilitated his becoming 'a channel for some super force or energy that was the source of his later teaching' (p. 46). During his speeches, Krishnamurti said that he experienced a pure, untouchable, and impenetrable strength or immensity from which came his insight, illumination, and imperative. When followers from India regarded Krishnamurti as an Indian, he professed that he belonged to no race, nationality, or religion. Lutyens concluded that Krishnamurti's writings contained in *Krishnamurti's Journal* reveal more about him personally than any of his other publications (p. 190). A specific sample illustrating his capacity for describing nature, contained in *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, could be given:



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The earth was the colour of the sky; the hills, the green, ripening rice fields, the trees and the dry, sandy river-bed were the colour of the sky; every rock on the hills, the big boulders, were the clouds and they were the rocks. Heaven was the earth and the earth heaven; the setting sun had transformed everything. . . . Over that hill it was a vast sweep of purple and gold; over the southern hills a burning delicate green and fading blues; to the east there was a counter sunset as splendid in cardinal red and burnt ochre, magenta and fading violet. (p. 188)

In his last journal entitled *Krishnamurti to Himself* (20 April 1983), he wrote:

At the end of every leaf, the large leaves and the tiny leaves, there was a drop of water sparkling in the sun like an extraordinary jewel. And there was a slight breeze but that breeze didn't in any way disturb or destroy that drop on those

leaves that were washed clean by the late rain. (p. 71)

Born into an ancient tradition that teaches the periodic descent of an avatāra, professing an ageless wisdom that emphasizes immediate intuitive experience, and aware that all creation constitutes a unity, he said in *From Darkness to Light* who he was:

I am the stone in the sacred temple. I am the humble grass that is mown down and trodden upon. I am the tall and stately tree that courts the very heavens. I am the animal that is hunted. I am the criminal that is hated by all. I am the noble that is honoured by all. I am sorrow, pain and fleeting pleasure; the passions and the gratifications; the bitter wrath and the infinite compassion; the sin and the sinner. I am the lover and the very love itself. I am the saint, the adorer, the worshipper, and the follower. I am God. (p. 21) ✧

**J. Krishnamurti and his brother Nityananda met Dr Besant for the first time on 27 November 1909. Ever since, their relationship was one of deep and abiding love.**

**In later years, when Krishnamurti was asked about Dr Besant he said:**

**Dr Besant was our mother, she looked after us, she cared for us. But one thing she did not do. She never said to me, 'Do this', or 'Don't do that.' She left me alone. Well, in these words I have paid the greatest tribute.**

**During the last years of his life, he was often heard speaking about Annie Besant's greatness, love and understanding.**

Extracts from the CD: *Eminent Theosophists*, TPH

# Freedom of Thought

G. P. SIVRIS

‘THEOSOPHY is not the wisdom of God but the wisdom of Divine Beings, which was given to them by God.’ This is an ancient esoteric teaching which was adopted by the TS from the very beginning. But, by allowing complete freedom of thought, and by saying that the Society does not have an official doctrine or teaching which its members have to accept, we seem to renounce the core of the Theosophical teaching. Our bond of union should be the teachings of the Masters as conveyed to the Founders of the Society. Unless we have an ideological basis, we cannot exist as a spiritual organization. Freedom of thought should move within the frame of the Theosophical teachings and cannot be completely free. For instance, we cannot ignore the principle of Universal Brotherhood or the teaching of the Theosophical motto that there is no religion higher than Truth.

Complete freedom of thought usually leads to many voices and conflicts. This is why Krishnamurti says: ‘There is not free thought but freedom from thought; and that for truth to be thought must end.’ Thought cannot lead to Truth, but only to confusion. Only by understanding can we find Truth. Krishnamurti adds: ‘For the

new to be, the old (which is thought) must die.’ As long as thought is on the throne, we necessarily forget about Brotherhood, about Truth and Love. As a Buddhist teaching says: ‘A wise mind is a mind of no-thought.’ Only on an empty and free mind can Truth rest.

When we talk about complete freedom from thought, we cannot ignore that, according to a basic teaching of the esoteric tradition, thought is responsible for human calamities and for tormenting fear. As Krishnamurti says: ‘thought is in fact the human “ego”’. This is endorsed by esoteric Buddhist teaching according to which, since time without beginning, with the appearance of the first thought there has been self-created [basic] ignorance which acts as man’s master, and the ego is what the mind of a living being experiences [as existing]. Thought in fact is ignorance, and, according to Krishnamurti, ‘from time immemorial thought is the factor which has led humanity to a wrong turning’. That is exactly what the Buddhist teaching says: ‘The first thought gives rise to all sorts of unenlightened activities; hence ignorance acts as man’s master, and it is the “I” or ego that holds the field.’

Therefore, when we declare complete

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Mr G. P. Sivris is the former General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Greece.

## Freedom of Thought

freedom of thought, it is as if we were leaving the ego to act without any control and to lead us to destruction. Perhaps we could consider freedom of opinion as a better alternative.

According to the basic concepts of the Society, 'The TS is composed of students who are united by their approval of the Society's objects, rules and teachings.' Our aspiration should therefore aim at the blessings of our Elder Brothers, that they may inspire us with their wisdom. Without their inspiration, every thought or opinion of the human mind is nothing but ignorance. Theosophy itself is the authority of the Society and not the diverse thought forms of its members.

As Mme Blavatsky says: 'Theosophy is the body and the Society is the raiment and we cannot mistake the raiment for the body.' As she also says: 'Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and the members of the TS study these truths and Theosophists endeavour to live them', which means that so-called 'freethinking' of the members cannot be different from the Theosophical truths. Thought is the origin of dispute, the origin of conflicting ideas that divide people and therefore it is the enemy of brotherhood. Under these circumstances how can we praise thought? It is obvious that brotherhood cannot be founded on thought.

Let us therefore negate thought and reject its activities. Thought can never be free if it is conditioned and leads one to slavery and dependence on things, people and ideas. Attachment is the main characteristic of thought, destroying the human spirit from its source, and turning it from the true purpose of life.

Thought creates the idea of the thinker, or an entity that can control our life. But the thinker is an illusion. As Krishnamurti says: 'There is no thinker but only thinking.' The human mind is not itself a thought creator, but an instrument through which thought is produced. Our aim therefore should be to develop the faculty of discrimination between right and wrong thinking. And right thinking comes from the realm of divine beings through our insight. As Krishnamurti says: 'There is evolution only in the ending of thoughts as an ego.' Thought in itself is antagonistic, imposing and irresponsible. It is mundane, materialistic, and has no basis in reason. It should be dominated by our higher Self and not rule our life. Thought creates the idea of a separate self which dominates the world, and because of this there is enmity between people and nations, there are horrible wars and all sorts of disastrous events. If we should revolt against something it is against thought. This is the only Revolution. ✧

**Brotherhood must have its roots in Spirit . . . it can never be imposed from without; it must triumph by Spirit, outwelling from within.**

Annie Besant

# Annie Besant — A Tribute

SAROJINI NAIDU

ALL OVER the world, all that is left of the civilized world is united in celebrating the birth anniversary of one who was born far, far away from India, a small laughing child, a child like any other child, shedding the same tears, laughing the same laughter, dancing in the sunlight. And who could have foretold a hundred years ago that this child would grow to be one of the immortal figures of history. The whole world knows the early history of Annie Besant. When in her youth, she showed some signs of that militant spirit that made her one of the greatest rebels in the world. But it was not till she had passed through a long apprenticeship in England, till she had waged her earliest wars against injustice, till in the comradeship of great reformers she had preached the gospel of emancipation for humanity, that she came to India.

I was fifteen years old, a dreaming child. And when this woman, in the splendour of her middle age, came to India, she burst upon an astonished nation like a figure of some goddess come to life. She was not beautiful in the ordinary

sense; she was majestic and I, who have seen so many queens in my life, have never seen one so regal, one whose prestige had such an immediate and lasting effect. She came as a pilgrim to seek the ways of wisdom which she thought the Indian people could teach her. But when she found that India had disinherited herself from her old heritage, when she found that the sons and daughters of this old land were ignorant of their own culture, their own great philosophy, their own enlightenment, she became herself a teacher.

And it is as a teacher that I knew her. Her oratory was incomparable, the gestures of her hand when she spoke, the radiance of her eyes when she turned round to face the audience! Every fibre of her being was an ecstasy of dedication to the cause of India. Her earliest work was for education — the very fundamental of civilization. In the very city where she first started her work on the banks of the Ganges lies her most enduring monument. Her educational work cannot be appraised as yet. Her work of social reform and her

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From a radio broadcast by **Mrs Sarojini Naidu**, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, 1947. Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, October 1987.

### Annie Besant — A Tribute

fight against every form of injustice is yet to find a historian with the true perspective to appraise it. But she is best known to India, as she is to the world today, best remembered by her great political work. It is so strange that it was a European woman, foreign by birth and more Indian truly than all of us, who taught us that freedom was our birthright and that no sacrifice was too great to attain this freedom. Through the length and breadth of the country she flew on the wings of inspiration and she stirred the dead hearts of our people, rekindling them to life.

Today when our freedom is new to us, when we have not yet got accustomed to the flag of freedom challenging the winds of heaven, and the rising sun, our thoughts go back in gratitude to this great and glorious person who was a leader, among the foremost of those who wrought for freedom. I saw her mellow as the years went by, from being an imperious queen with prestige and authority, to becoming an old woman with bent shoulders, white hair, and failing memory, but greater than in the heyday of her life, more magnificent in her bowed shoulders than in the high noontide of her womanhood. She became not the queen but the sibyl, the priestess, the prophetess. She died because the old must die, she died because she had outlived the normal span of human life. But her work endures. For the freedom of

this country, men and women forever honour her name. She was among that small great band of visionaries, warriors, prophets, who foresaw and foretold the day of freedom and it was she who inspired the hearts of Indians to go forward and fight, not counting the cost.

On the hundredth anniversary of her birth, let us rejoice that it was our privilege to have lived in the radiant shadow of her being. Let us remember the golden words that flowed like a regenerating river from her golden voice to inspire and rekindle our hearts. Let us remember this woman who was not merely a human woman, but the embodiment of all the power, of all the passion, of all the ecstasy and all the glory of womanhood, whose mission is service. Hers was a family that comprised the entire census of humanity. She had no limitations of colour, creed or caste, and as she grew older and older her power got transmuted and mellowed and enriched by a surpassing love that was motherhood incarnate.

To this woman's memory I pay my tribute, my homage not only as an Indian and a fellow-worker, but as one who from her earliest girlhood was inspired to work for the glory of her country and who learnt her first lessons in patriotism from the lips of this woman who was known as Annie Besant in life and as a great mother of the Indian people in her death. ✧

**Tolerance, even with the intolerant, must be our rule.**

Annie Besant

# The Future of the Theosophical Society

ANNIE BESANT

THE KNOWLEDGE of the Great White Lodge came to us in the last quarter of the last century, through the form of that wonderful person, H. P. Blavatsky. She fought against the great enemy of religion, materialism. She succeeded to a great extent. We would do well to remember, when this tendency to go with the majority shows itself, that HPB laid tremendous stress on freedom of thought inside the Society and outside it, realizing the great danger lying in the future.

The great danger to the Society is the process of crystallization. You know how, in chemical solutions, this takes place when a liquid becomes saturated; it changes with great suddenness into a solid body. To me the greatest menace is Theosophical orthodoxy, the danger that we become crystallized in certain particular doctrines, and so become one among many sects of thought in the world.

I am not intending to attack any form of thought, but I want you to realize the danger. The principle of Theosophy is beautifully expressed in the text that Divine Wisdom — and that *is* Theosophy — mightily and sweetly ordereth all things.

In the world there is plenty of strong thought which is not sweet in its expression. The Theosophist has to strive for complete freedom of thought, but also to give the same freedom as a right to everyone who desires it, to be careful not to be aggressive to others, but to give freedom for self-expression, the same freedom that he himself wants, to every individual of those who surround him, never trying to impose his own opinion.

Your wisdom will lie in trying to form your own opinion after considering many opinions in the world, and exercising your own judgement, while not finding fault with those who disagree. You may remember one phrase of Krishnaji's, that perfection lies in the poise between reason and love. He names two great qualities there, which are more evolved in human beings than in animals. He gives full weight both to the reasoning faculty and to love, and if you can succeed in striking a perfect balance between those two qualities, if you think your own best and have no desire to impose it upon another person, then you will soon reach perfection.

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Reprinted from *The Australian Theosophist*, 15 September 1930.

## The Future of the Theosophical Society

In the Theosophical Society we ought to attain that, because we proclaim Universal Brotherhood and our object is to form a nucleus of that Brotherhood. A nucleus sends out forces which are formative forces, giving the shape that is to be moulded through them. Remember the command of the Christ: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.' That is impossible for us under present conditions and at our stage of evolution, but it is to be attained; it must be reached and it shall be reached. Therefore, regarding the future of the Theosophical Society, if it is to carry out its work and to become in far-off days perfect, then we ought in the present day of universal imperfection to give the fullest freedom of expression to every thought around us.

We know that our ideals are higher than our practice, because the ideal is like the sun that draws up the life in the plant and brings it to perfect flower. So in the Society we shall keep the ideal of complete freedom of expression. We shall temper it by love and we shall form it by thought, so that these two may bring us poise. On either side many virtues are built, but we all tend to exaggeration along our own lines. That has to be deliberately corrected by us, realizing that, with the tendency to run to extremes in our own line, the more we feel repulsion, the more we have that quality of exaggeration in ourselves.

You know how Krishnaji speaks against fears of all kinds. Therefore we must aim at the higher indifference, not

the indifference of slavishness, the following of the lower self, but that which realizes that the world is built on love and wisdom greater than our own, which can so make use of evil that we can understand the phrase: 'If I go up to heaven Thou art there; if I go down to hell, behold, Thou art there also.' The statement, then, holds up an ideal unattainable for the moment, but we have a long time before us in which to attain.

You have also to realize that what is good for you at one stage becomes evil at another stage. You are a growing creature. The immortal spirit is your real self, but that real self comes into the world as a fragment of the Divine Life, and there it has to face all kinds of difficulties, though there are encouragements also. What is in line with its own thought it finds good; what is against it, it finds evil.

So I would put before you my belief that in the full unfettered exercise of individual thought lies the safety of the Society, that we ought to encourage differences of opinion in our Lodges, and that we must not cold-shoulder a person who holds a different opinion. The future of the Theosophical Society depends upon its becoming a freethought society. We claim to be a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, and if you take the true meaning of the word, it is the point from which all the forces come that go to build up the body. You must try to find the good way, your own way, of training yourself. My own way would probably not be palatable to anyone else, but when I feel irritation when an opponent is trying to

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convert me, I know that I have not reached that perfect poise in which perfection lies. A delicate balance quivers a little before it comes to a steady position. So we have to strive for perfection, knowing that love is the root of all virtues.

The future of the Society depends on the nearness with which we approach that perfect poise between reason and love. Do not believe a thing because someone else believes it. Do not use the expression: 'So-and-so says such-and-such a thing.' Give full force to all arguments, and afterwards

set yourself to work to examine what attracted or repelled you; see if it is an exaggeration of your own opinion or of your particular dislikes. Take care that you do not criticize until you have appreciated the good qualities, whether in a person or in a subject. In that way you are struggling towards perfection, realizing that each time you check your own exaggeration you are taking a step forward. Set to work! The road to perfection is slow, but the Christ would not have given the command if it were not possible of fulfilment. ✧

**What are Dr Besant's outstanding gifts? . . . She is intensely magnetic, but she does not dominate. She is the first to meet an opponent more than halfway. . . . She is without a particle of resentment towards anyone who opposes her, for she believes he must be aiming to do his duty. She sees things in large sweeps and leaves details to others. In her technique she is the artist. The most popular and significant name for her is 'Mother'. Many an Indian ruler has called her that and hundreds and thousands of lesser folk. She has always encouraged youth in every land, never dampened its enthusiasms because some of its plans were not the wisest.**

C. Jinarājadāsa



# Guru Granth Sāhib

JOGINDER KAUR SEHMI

THE SIKH Scriptures (commonly referred to as the Granth Sāhib) comprise a huge collection of religious hymns written in various Indian languages and dialects. The devotees and followers of the Granth Sāhib revere it as the living spirit of the ten Gurus, who were ten in body but one in spirit.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in the Punjab. He was a God-inspired soul and a great teacher. From childhood, he had a withdrawn, contemplative nature and was fond of religious games. He acquired a deep insight into the various systems of Indian philosophy through keeping company with wandering ascetics. His spiritual illumination came from long spells of meditation.

Guru Nanak's fame spread everywhere he went. Brāhmin-s, Yogi-s, Muslims, Sufis venerated him and accepted the great truths enunciated by him. He was accompanied by two companions on most of his journeys, one a Muslim, and another a Hindu. They sang the hymns of divine devotion which Guru Nanak composed, and these compositions and hymns were recited or sung by all his followers.

All these sacred writings and

compositions were preserved on stray scraps of paper stitched together. They were lying in different places with devotees or relatives scattered all over India. Guru Arjan Dev, one of Guru Nanak's successors, sent messages all over the country, asking whoever possessed the sacred writings to send or bring them to Amritsar, and those who had memorized the hymns should travel to Amritsar.

The very best quality paper then available was obtained for the preparations of the Granth, and a writer who had very beautiful handwriting was chosen to write the scriptures in chronological order. Guru Arjan also included the sacred hymns and compositions of Hindu saints and Muslim sufis who were not Sikhs, but whose teaching conformed to the philosophy of the Sikh Gurus, which was to uplift the exploited and downtrodden, and inspire belief in one God. The themes of these non-Sikh writings included in the Granth manifest a vision of the infinite, moral insights, and devotion to the universal creative energy. The very first copy of this Holy Book is still preserved in the Golden Temple at Amritsar. This volume called the Ādi Granth was thus made ready at

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**Mrs Joginder Kaur Sehmi** lives in Nairobi and finds inspiration in Theosophy. She delivered this talk in the Holy Books of Humankind Series at Nairobi Lodge.

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Rāmsar in AD 1640. Here then is democracy in religion at its best. The Gurus never criticized either the Muslim way of worship, or the worship of Rāma and Kṛshna, although they themselves disavowed belief in the incarnation of God and idol-worship.

The Sikh faith is strictly monotheistic. There is no mythology or angelology. No deities or divine persons, except God the highest, are worshipped. For God the Supreme Being, the holiest name in the Sikh creed is Ek Omkār. Omkār is the sacred syllable Om, and signifies the unity and indivisibility of the Supreme, and the numeral 1 (*Ek*) emphasizes this. The basic Sikh faith is rooted in 'the one, indivisible, supreme being. Ek Omkār is the first phrase of the Sikh creed, known as Mool Mantra (Root Mantra). It is followed by *Satnām*: eternal reality, *Kartā Purukh*: The Creative, cosmic spirit, *Nirbhay*: without fear, *Nirvair*: without hostility or rancour, *Akāl Murat*: timeless nature, *Ajooni*: unborn, *Saibhang*: self-existent, *Gur-Parsād*: realized through divine grace.'

To achieve illumination, grace must be earned through sincere, loving devotion without which all efforts at prayer will fail. The teachings of the Gurus are permeated by the non-dualistic vision, attainment of which is the highest goal of the religious life. To the Gurus the world is real, and the earth is the stage for the practice of righteousness. The materialist is not the one who regards the world as real, but one who is attached to it, is lured by it. With

enlightenment or the awakening of the soul, all the values of the world become unreal. When this awakening, the reception of grace, has taken place, the inverted Lotus Bowl of the mind is turned Godward. There is release from the cycle of life and death. The peace and joy of this state is the theme of numerous passages in the Granth.

Sikhism rejected the division of humanity into castes and the Gurus emphasized the equality of men and women. Guru Nānak said: 'Why should she be criticized who gives birth to kings and saints?'

A Sikh must devote his life to God and stay away from the five vices: lust, anger, greed, worldly love and pride, and set an example of bravery. The needy and the lonely are to be helped. Ten per cent of one's earnings should be given to temples, or for prayers or to the needy in charity. The Sikh way of life is simple and practical. The first step is self-analysis and introspection, followed by purification of the body and mind. The virtues, especially humility, charity, love, truth and contentment must be practised. Ego, pride, greed and love of money are the root cause of all anger, jealousy, and hatred, which create conflicts. Service to God and his creations eliminates the ego. The daily routine of a Sikh is recitation of God's name, honest livelihood, and sharing of meals. The Sikh should love everyone without discrimination, and forgive all those who annoy and hate. ✧

# Theosophical Work around the World

## Change of International Officer

In Adyar there have been various changes. Ms Mary Anderson resigned as International Secretary as of 1 September; Mr Keith Fisher from Australia is now the Secretary. We thank Ms Anderson warmly for the work she has done for the Society during the last few years. She has been both Vice-President and Secretary and her work in these offices and in general has been valuable.

## Other Changes in Office

New General Secretaries have been appointed in several countries in the recent past. Although the names of the current holders of that office appear monthly in *The Theosophist*, readers are not always aware of the latest changes, so it is perhaps useful to point them out.

Some months ago, Mr Eric McGough and Mr Theodoros Katsifis succeeded Mr Colin Price and Mr George P. Sivris as General Secretaries of the English and Greek Sections respectively. More recently, in Belgium and Germany, Dr Henriette van der Hecht and Mrs Elisabeth Schmidt were succeeded by Mr Jan Jelle Keppler and Mrs Manuela Kaulich in the office of General Secretary. Mr Marcos Luis Borges de Resende has succeeded Mr Ricardo Lindemann as General Secretary in Brazil.

The previous General Secretaries had served the Society — and Theosophy — faithfully, in some cases for a considerable number of years, giving of their energy and their talents. They will certainly continue to work for the Society and for Theosophy in their areas. The new General Secretaries may bring new ideas and new talents to Theosophical work in their Sections.

In the case of countries where the Society is represented by a Lodge or Lodges attached directly to Adyar, the President of the Lodge or the principal Lodge in question also figures in the Directory. The countries concerned are Israel, Japan and Singapore, to which Croatia and Ukraine have recently been added.

Thanks to the International Directory, accurate information can be given, for example by the staff at the International Headquarters in Adyar, to enquirers from various countries who wish to join the Society. Visitors to Adyar often think that they can join ‘on the spot’, in Adyar itself, and they have to be referred to the competent representative of the Society in the country where they reside. Only enquirers residing in countries where the Theosophical Society has no national organization can apply to become ‘Fellows-at-Large’, that is, members attached directly to Adyar. ✧

Looking outwards [man] is ever bound . . . looking inwards he is ever free.

Annie Besant



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Editor: *Mrs Radha Burnier*

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

Cover Picture: A tranquil spot in Besant Gardens — by Dr T. P. Alaganantham

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