

Theosophy vs J.K's Teachings

K.V.L. Kantha Rao

The theme of this 97th Easter Conference is 'Theosophy and Krishnamurti'. My presentation this morning about my talk on '*Theosophy vs J.K's Teachings*' will focus our attention on three aspects: 1. Our general and broad understanding of 'what Theosophy means' and its purpose. 2. Briefly, what are the teachings of J.K. to the world and 3. Are these two complementary or contradictory or both – and in any case what my role should be.

Theosophy

Theosophy is Divine Wisdom – Ancient Wisdom - Brahma Vidya. Theosophy is a 'way of life', it is not a philosophy. Theosophy recognizes oneness of life in all forms of nature – not only mineral, plant, animal, human, super-human but also atomic, sub-atomic, etheric etc. This is a source of knowledge and inspiration about every thing – visible and invisible. It narrates a beautiful realistic story about the long journey that a human being had to undertake through evolution systematically involving several stages of unmanifestation to manifestation and back. Theosophy strongly believes and advocates that the man functions as a Sapataparni – the seven planes of consciousness. It also recognizes the Cosmic Builders – the Great Trinity – 1st, 2nd and 3rd Logos with their energy outpourings just as Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara tatvas in Hinduism, and the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in Christianity and may be with many other names in other religions.

Now that man is a sentient being, Theosophy impels upon him the sacred duty of practicing altruistic nature towards all around him. That was the reason to make it public the declared objects of the Theosophical Society – 'universal brotherhood of humanity without any distinction, comparative study of science, religion and philosophy, and unexplained laws of nature & latent powers in man'. Perhaps that is why one of the Divine Masters had said that 'The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone of future religions of Humanity'. Therefore, the Motto of this Society - 'There is no Religion Higher Than Truth' (सत्यान्नास्ति परोधर्मः) is an outward expression of Theosophy having profound meaning. 'The Freedom of Thought' and the 'Freedom of the Society' are, therefore, the real unlimited properties of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. These properties should be protected by all means, at any cost.

All the tools and techniques in the form of abundant literature about Theosophy are aimed at achieving the declared objects. And through these objects, it is mainly intended to bring an awareness in the world to seek and achieve freedom from bondage of all sorts – physical, psychological and spiritual i.e. finally to attain Nirvana – Salvation – Renunciation / Mukti or Moksha. The truths given to us through this literature by the Revered Masters of the Wisdom in the form of their Letters, or from HPB downwards it has been made abundantly clear that ‘Man is the Maker of His Own Destiny’ and no Teacher or Guru can spiritually lift him up, and what all required is only ‘self-effort’. ‘Truth Dawns on us, it does not come burglar like through barred windows and iron sheathed doors’, as one of the Masters have said.

The main inner purpose of the Theosophical Society is to strive for Perfection of Humanity but not for self-glorification of any individual, and that every human being to reach the level of Adept sooner or later. As an organization, the Theosophical Society functions only as a sign-post leading to the PATH, but certainly it is not a substitute for individual’s endeavours to tread any path of his choice. No one can shower boons on any one else.

Now Let us consider some of the **J.K’s Teachings** in relation to Theosophy:

Jiddu Krishnamurti, affectionately called by us as Krishnaji is addressed in common parlance as JK. He addressed many people in many parts of the world – students, parents, scientists, religious leaders and many individuals and groups from many walks of life. He talked on various aspects of life. Let us consider some of his many frequent and familiar phrases and statements he made during his talks:

Conditioning; Freedom from the known; Observer, Observed and the Observation; ‘Network of thought – Experience, Memory and Thought’; Word is Not the Thing; You are the World – Individual Consciousness and Universal Consciousness; Fragmentation and Totality; Life is Relationship; Change – Immediately now; Meditation - ‘Cause becomes Effect’, and ‘Effect becomes Cause’; ‘Die every Moment’; Spirit of Enquiry; Truly Religious Person; Individual – Social Insecurity; Truth is a Pathless Land; Choiceless Awareness, and many more.

Description of Nature

Krishnaji is a lover of nature. If one observes the series of his talks that he gave throughout his life, one can not fail to feel his oneness with the nature. His observation and description of a falling leaf, the flowing breeze from a tree, the song of a bird, stillness of the sky, the movement of a villager fetching a pot of water, the animals grazing in the greeneries, etc. fill our mind with a feeling of peace and mystical experience. Gradually the listeners will be completely under his magic spell and made

ready to be immersed in his forthcoming message. All this shows how deeply and inherently he is one with the nature, and in fact 'he is the nature'.

World Teacher

When he was projected as a future 'World Teacher' his inner Spirit prompted him to seek complete freedom from all identifications and labels. While he was the Head of the organization 'Order of the Star', it was dissolved by him as he strongly believed that 'Truth is a Pathless Land', and that 'no organization can lead any one to realize Truth', and so one has to find one's own way of approach. This view is certainly complementary to what was said earlier i.e. individual's self-effort. JK's statement implied that he left the Theosophical Society, but lived as a true Theosophist all his life. But the world at large, then recognized him as the real 'World Teacher'. His teachings gained importance and momentum from then onwards.

Organization

He responded to an enquirer that what he meant 'organization' was not like a postal department or any other similar service organizations which are always necessary, but the so called spiritual organizations that would preach and promise how to attain salvation. On the surface of it this appears to be contradictory to the very existence of the Theosophical Society, as an organization. But what JK meant was an organization like a postal department is naturally necessary for day-to-day functioning but not for a path to be laid for realizing Truth. Obviously, JK's statement serves as a strong dose of medicine against positions and possessions for a bright future of this Society. If this is viewed objectively, then 'contradictory' disappears and 'complementary' will appear in my view. However JK explained further that his decision was neither due to his personal whim, nor was it motivated by any principle. He just 'renounced' it, not because of any principle, an idea or a conclusion; he just gave it up 'not for something greater, or for some person', or otherwise it would not be called giving up.

Thought

Whatever may be the belief for our existence, we do exist in this world in the present circumstances, whether we like it or not. JK says that, that 'very existence' brings us 'experience' – good or bad, which is stored as 'memory'. Perhaps bad memories are stored stronger. Out of this memory 'thought' is generated. Then the network of 'thought' will not allow us to keep quiet – leads us in leaps and bounds to even remotest past memories, which are mostly unpleasant. Reaction in the form of anger, ill-will, and many other negative feelings cloud above us, and quite often the net result is anxiety, depression and health issues.

Conditioning

Let us now see how this 'memory' puts us in 'conditioning'. JK takes up a very famous example: 'Look at the Tree'. It is funny that the audience immediately will be looking at

a nearby tree. JK does not mean this. There are various ways of looking at the tree. If a botanist looks at it, he would identify it with his past memory relating to its name, botanical classification, its flowers and fruits with scientific names and so on. If a wood cutter looks at it, perhaps he would calculate how much wood benefits him and so on. If a lover of Nature looks at it, he loves it. Not only these three persons, but most of us are conditioned with our memory. JK says 'the word is not the thing'. But if the 'word' 'tree' is seen or heard, our conditioning through memory alerts us to label it, and drifts us to endless thoughts. Thus our lives are under such 'conditioning' almost, unless we make a strong effort for freedom from this 'conditioning', including the 'freedom from the known'. The Theosophical Society constantly reminds us of its 'Freedom of Thought' and 'Freedom of the Society'. These ideas are compatible and hence complementary.

Observation

JK's next famous statement is about the relationship between the 'observer, observed, and the observation. He stated very categorically that there is no 'observation' as long as the 'observer' is aware of this process. Complete 'observation' takes place only when there is no 'observer'. Theosophy, while explaining the Laws of Karma and Incarnation, strongly admits the age old belief of Sanathana Dharma that our lower bodies are only the shadows of our real Atma, and that these vehicles or vestures or upadhis are transitory. It is only when we realize that these bodies are functionally operative to open the doors of intuition, that the true self-observation is possible. So the 'observer' means the 'me' should be totally dissolved which means 'I am not this or that' (नेति, नेति). Thus, when the observer withdraws from the process totally, but be a witness without taking part in the process, total observation is possible. Then one can understand 'Man Know Thyself'. So what Theosophy and JK stated are not different but complementary.

Religion and Philosophy

There are so many religions propounding various philosophies and established various schools of thought. JK never cared to declare that none of these philosophies could uplift the human being to understand Truth in the right perspective nor could alleviate the human sufferings at physical and psychological levels. If some one proudly identifies himself belonging to a particular religion, then JK called him 'arrogant and violent' since he is taking shelter under the name of his religion as a tool to face social insecurity. A truly religious person would never harm others, and on the other hand practices brotherhood by extending his helping hand to make them understand their own religion much better, in stead of narrowing down their ideologies. No religion teaches violence. The traditions, customs and ceremonies of various religions may vary, but their fundamental essence is the same i.e. to 'live and let live'. If the essence is the same, the source of essence also should be the same. The first object of the Theosophical Society viz. universal brotherhood without any distinction whatsoever is a

testimony to the teachings of both Theosophy and JK, which are complementary. However, perpetrators of violence belonging to any religion may not recognize the essence since their attention is focused on outward forms.

Life and Relationship

JK always defined 'Life' as 'Relationship' with the rest of the world, and not in isolation. Every individual seems to be under constant influence of the world he lives in. The 'Evolution' that had brought this 'World' thus far exercises enormous pressure on the individuals and groups - small and large, in various forms. Even before attaining adulthood, if the world puts its heavy hands on you, you are bound to be conditioned, prejudiced, pre-opinionated. So you are not something different from the world and 'You are the World'. So all these variety of forms make us look at the society, in general, as a 'fragmented body' leaving not even an iota of 'totality' / 'wholesomeness' of a single humanity. Mostly, the people find it a matter of pleasure in dividing in stead of uniting. On the other hand, if the combination of this 'Life – Relationship' is properly understood w.r.t. the process of evolution, one can realize that the source is 'absolute unified consciousness', and the so called feelings of insecurity and world pressure will appear to be only relative, and at superficial level. This is one of the doctrines of Theosophy through which the theory of 'evolution' is explained. So the teachings of both Theosophy and JK are in consonance with each other.

Meditation

JK while speaking on meditation asserted that the 'the action of cause becoming effect, and effect becoming cause, is an everlasting chain that binds the meditator'. He categorically denied the normal way of meditating i.e. focusing or concentrating on a fixed point of thought, ideology, philosophy etc. at a fixed time of the day. Because during the meditation when the mind drifts him away here and there, he will bring it back to the point, and he repeats this game for about 40 years or so. Then ultimately he feels that he achieved nothing. This is because the cause for meditating is to achieve an effect, which implies a desire for the meditator, that becomes 'cause' again. So JK asks us whether it is possible to meditate without any expectation, then there will be neither 'effect' nor 'cause'. His message is that the whole life should be meditation, and not a fraction of a day spending some time in silence in a particular posture with a selfish desire including 'Nirvana' which is the greatest desire. Theosophy proclaimed this truth viz. 'cause becoming effect, and effect becoming cause' operative at both macrocosmic and microcosmic levels, i.e. as above – so below, one of the postulates in the HPB's Secret Doctrine, much before while recognizing various cycles of nature, and accepting two great Laws viz. Karma and Re-Incarnation. This is attributable to the higher and the lower stages of 'Manvantara' and 'Pralaya'. If HPB's diagram of meditation, and JK's views on meditation are closely observed at deeper level, we can find those both are one and the same.

Awareness

JK says 'awareness' is awareness, with full consciousness. There is no scope for 'semi-awareness' or 'part-awareness'. It is 'choiceless awareness'. No percentage can be fixed to either quantity or quality of it. In JK's words: 'Choiceless awareness of the manner of your approach will bring right relationship with the problem. The problem is self-created, so there must be self-knowledge. You and the problem are one, not two separate processes. You are the problem'. Theosophy says man is a 'Saptaparni'. If one is aware that he / she is functioning at all these seven levels of consciousness right from 'Atmic' to 'Physical', then self-realization is certain. Having realized this Truth, such an individual does not bother about which religion he belongs to. The motto of the Theosophical Society 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth' (सत्यान्नास्ति परोधर्मः) makes every member to 'live the truth'. Hence JK's statement 'choiceless awareness' and the motto of the Theosophical Society convey the same message.

Conclusion

This process of comparing and contrasting the teachings of Theosophy and JK can continue taking many such statements. Those can be examined at deeper level, but there are limits for such exercise. Any number of such exercises will lead us to understand the same outcome. We could now discuss some of the teachings given by Theosophy and JK. A brief summary of this discussion shows that, all through, some how I have been trying to impress upon myself and others that both the teachings are mostly complementary and very rarely contradictory. I have heard JK personally many times, so are many of you. I feel very earnestly that it is not so easy to be free from his influence. On one hand I am continuing as a member of the Theosophical Society, which is an Organization that gives a lot of knowledge for self-realization by trying to understand Universal Truths. On the other hand something inwardly pricks me that, as an admirer of JK, I am unable to be free from this organization to realize Absolute Truth independent of a Path. So I strongly feel that I need both even if both ideas superficially seem to be contradictory. This has been considered by me for a long time.

However, after analyzing and synthesizing all the above facts, happily I have come to an awareness that the Truths and Teachings given are more important than who gave it viz. an organization like Theosophical Society or an individual like JK or any one, competent. It does not make any difference to me as long as I am lead by these Universal Truths. It all depends upon how one looks at it - as a botanist, or a wood cutter or a lover of Nature. I respect both – Theosophy and JK. During many series of lives, JK must have received enough 'illumination', and therefore during his later period of his life, he could realize the Absolute Truth free from any Organization. Perhaps in my case I have a conviction that I have a long journey to travel with an organization like the Theosophical Society, for which leave alone 'regrets', I am certainly happy to be with it. Thank you all.

* * *