

Work of the TS Members

Cordial greetings and namaste to all on this occasion of 97th Easter Conference. I have chosen to speak on the “Work of the Theosophical Society Members”. The scope of work of TS members is vast, extending beyond the theme of this conference. We will discuss this work in light of the message of Easter. The message of Easter is ‘Resurrection’ and ‘Renewal of Life’. Also, we will try to understand what is the theosophic view of the message of Easter.

Easter celebrations

Easter is celebrated the world over to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to the Biblical story, after Jesus’ crucifixion, his body was wrapped in linen, and he was buried in a tomb. The tomb was then covered with a massive stone. It is also believed that on Sunday morning, angels rolled the stone away, and Jesus walked out of the tomb. The resurrection of Jesus symbolises his victory over sin and death. World over, services are held on Easter, and hymns are sung for this occasion.

Theosophical view of resurrection

The theosophical view puts emphasis on awakening of the mystical Christ principle within each person. This is the resurrection of the divine Spirit within each man (Jivatma) which rises to meet its source (Parmatama), ultimately Parabrahma. There exists the same immutable, undivided Spirit in all, but is expressed differently thru different Forms. Expression is the ability to respond consciously. We say the Consciousness sleeps in the mineral, dreams in plant, is awakes in animals and is self-aware in Man. In Man it is called the Christ Principle, the immortal man. But we live our life, for the most part, unaware of this principle. As if it were sleeping in us too. And so, we must work for this Christ Principle to awaken, to rise, to resurrect, and become one with its source, Parabrahma, the eternal divine Spirit. This view is clearly expressed in the Maha Chohan’s Letter.

Maha Chohan’s Letter

In the early days of the theosophical movement in India, a document of valuable instructions was passed to principal members of that time. It embodies important ideas on principles of action; what the members should work towards. This is known as the Letter of the Maha Chohan who is the spiritual Master of Madam Blavatsky’s Master. The letter mentions:

“Once unfettered [and] delivered from their dead weight of dogmatic interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions and salaried priests, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be proved identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Chrishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different means for one and the same royal highway to final bliss - Nirvana.

Mystical Christianity, that is to say that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through one's own seventh principle — this liberated Para-âtma (Augoeides) called by the one Christ, by others Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit — will be found just the same truth as the Nirvana of mystical Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory apparent self, to recognise our true self in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognise the reality of that transcendental self, the Buddh, the Christ or God of every preacher.”

This forms the basic premise of Theosophy: that theosophy is the truth underlying all religions when stripped of their accretions. Final bliss or Nirvana is the rising of Christ, the merging of the Individual into Universal, rising of Jivatma to meet its source.

Christ and the Adept Jesus

The same context is available in the letter which Mahatma KH wrote to AP Sinnet in July 1883, (letter no. 59).

The letter mentions that “Speech or Vach was regarded as the Son or the manifestation of the Eternal Self, and was adored under the name of Avalokitesvara, the manifested God.

This shows as clearly as can be — that Avalokitesvara is both the unmanifested Father and the manifested Son, the latter proceeding from, and identical with, the other; —namely, the Parabrahm and Jivatman, the Universal (7th principle) and the individualized seventh Principle, —the Passive and the Active, the latter, the Word, Logos, the Verb. Call it by whatever name, only let these unfortunate, deluded Christians but know that the real Christ of every Christian is the Vach, the mystical Voice, while the man—Jeshu was but a mortal like any of us, an adept more by his inherent purity and ignorance of real Evil; Not by what he had learned with his initiated Rabbis and the already (at that period) fast degenerating Egyptian Hierophants and priests.”

This letter clearly gives us the theosophical view on Christ as an abstract Principle, Jesus as an Adept and Resurrection as a symbol of achieving our highest goal of existence.

It is written in the Bible too, that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Work of the TS members

It is in light of above we want to interpret what should be the work of TS members. Mahatma KH said ‘The Chiefs want a “Brotherhood of Humanity,” a real Universal Fraternity started.’

The very first of the three declared Objects of the Theosophical Society relates to what he said:

1. To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.
2. To encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity

Madam Blavatsky mentioned, every TS member, has to help, if he can, in the carrying out of at least one of the objects of the programme. Otherwise, he has no reason for becoming a Fellow. The Theosophical Society is a philanthropic and scientific body for the propagation of the idea of brotherhood on practical lines, not merely theoretical lines.

What specifically she wanted the members to do? She says: The Fellows may be Christians or Mussulmans, Jews or Parsis, Buddhists or Brahmans, Spiritualists or Materialists, it does not matter; but every member must be either a philanthropist, or a scholar, a searcher into Aryan and other old literature, or a psychic student. We thus see, the scope of work of TS members is vast indeed.

Common origin of man

Theosophy demonstrates the common origin of man on logical, philosophical, metaphysical, and even scientific grounds (a) All men have spiritually and physically the same origin (b) Mankind is essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one infinite, uncreate, and eternal, (Principle) whether we call it God or Nature. i.e. Parabrahma or Mulaprakriti.

It follows, that nothing can affect one nation or one man without affecting all other nations and all other men. This is as certain and as obvious as throwing a stone in a pond and sooner or later, it will set in motion every single drop of water therein.

Thus, it is the duty of every TS member to overcome selfishness and individualism by the feeling of solidarity and mutual brotherhood. Individualism is separateness; it naturally gives rise to selfishness. In the present time, it is hardly possible for everyone to reach a state of consciousness where we directly experience unity or oneness of life. In practical life, this feeling of separateness can only be overcome and removed by cultivating a feeling of solidarity and brotherhood.

The principle of the Brotherhood of Humanity is one of the eternal truths. It governs the world's progress. No man can progress alone, no nation can progress alone. This principle distinguishes human nature from brute nature.

The Golden Chain

Entire humanity is bound into one family of solidarity and universal brotherhood by a golden chain. This chain has four links which are the four theosophical principles:

1) Universal Unity and Causation: We all are one in the highest spiritual essence and what affects one, affects all. To understand Causation, understand first that it is the Unity which is the cause of multiplicity of the universe. The rootless root and causeless cause of all that is, was or ever will be. The effects of the root cause, in turn become the causes of the next level of effects and this continues down to the lowest level of atoms of the universe.

2) Human solidarity: It manifests in the support for one another, in brotherhood. No individual progresses alone. It is the progress of the whole humanity, the human race.

3) Law of Karma: There is no isolated or individual separate part of the universe. Each being is inextricably connected to the whole. This is the basis of collective Karma.

4) Law of re-incarnation: It makes us realize that our existence is not about our current life only. It is our journey, journey of the real immortal Man, thru this period of manifestation of the universe, by successively taking on different personalities. What we do today, determines the progress of this cycle in which we will reincarnate tomorrow. So, we are now making our own future.

These four principles are the pillars of social co-operation, they drive social reform to elevate all of humanity. Thus, every effort in the direction of social reform is a service to the entire human race.

Life of Service

Theosophic life must be a life of service. Service is any act which alleviates the misery of people, whether physical or mental. In serving our nearest neighbour, we are serving the human race. If we cannot do great things, let us do small things with great perfection, because importance of service is not in size of act but in perfection of detail.

It is left to individual judgement, what best action he can apply for service. To know whether his action is wise, he can apply a general test: "Will the proposed action tend to generate true brotherhood?"

Serving mankind, by recognizing the same Christ principle in all, puts into practice the ideal of universal brotherhood. This divinity in man, resurrects to become the One in All and All in One. Let this be the message of Easter for all of us.

Thank you.