

The Fundamental Idea of Theosophy

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Introductory Note

The paper that follows, *in a revised and enlarged form*, was read by Bro Bhavavân Dâs, as President of the Kâshi Tattwa Sabhâ Lodge of Benares, in speaking to the following Resolution, on the occasion of the celebration of the Foundation-Day of the T.S., on 17th November 1911.

“Resolved that this joint meeting of the Kâshi Tattwa Sabhâ and the C.H.C. Lodges heartily renews on this auspicious occasion its unalterable loyalty to the great principle of Universal Brotherhood which has carried and will carry the Society safe through stress and storm during the past and during the future; that it renders reverent homage to Col Olcott and Madame H. P. Blavatsky, whose names are ever dear to every Theosophist and whose work is ever present in the position the Society has won in the world; and finally that it sends to the present President of the T.S. its unwavering faith in her leadership under the guiding banner of that great principle, and its profound sense of the inestimable value of her services and of her life”.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters

If you will suffer me gladly, as the Christian scriptures recommend you to do, then I will venture to say something to you of what seems to me to be the significance of the Resolution that we have passed today.

This is the Foundation Day of the Theosophical Society. It was born in New York thirty-six years ago. It came over to India four years later. Kind fortune, *i.e.*, karma and samskâra, led me to enter it twenty-seven years ago. I have some memories, therefore, of its earlier years. And I will, since I have been asked to say something on this occasion, give you my interpretation of the Resolution in the light of that earlier history.

The principle of Universal Brotherhood is referred to in the Resolution both at the beginning and at the end. It is indeed the Alpha and the Omega of Theosophy. It is the soul of the first and foremost object of the T.S. The Masters, who gave to H.P.Blavatsky and H.S.Olcott the three well-known objects of the T.S., and not only one, of course gave them all for a good scientific reason. This I have elsewhere endeavoured to indicate [See *The Religion of Theosophy*. Adyar Pamphlet No 3.] — the reason, namely, that they correspond to the three ultimate factors of all consciousness and therefore of all the many religions which Theosophy seeks to harmonize. Yet at various times in the history of the Society, when this fact was somewhat lost sight of, the validity and usefulness of the second and third objects have been disputed. The third especially was at one time almost discarded. But the first has never been disputed. It has always been recognized as the one and the only true guiding star of the Society. And only by honestly endeavouring to keep it steadily in sight have the helmsmen and the oarsmen of the ship of the T.S. been able so far to steer it comparatively safe, through stress and storm. They have not

always been able to avoid minor mistakes and consequent shocks and hurts and painful losses. These may be said to have been inevitable in the hurry and bustle and excitement of each difficult time. Yet it may also be said justly that each difficult time was itself the result of the temporary veiling of their eyes from that true star and the turning of them towards some lesser light, some pseudo star; some will-o'-the-wisp of the nature of a mere mortal.

It is good and useful to go back to the origins from time to time for fresh inspiration, for laying in a new store of pure and fresh waters from the springs of life. And this, the Foundation Day of the T.S., is naturally particularly appropriate for the purpose. And I, therefore, on this day invite your attention to the fact that this principle of Universal Brotherhood, the recognition of which all the workers of the Society, prominent or unprominent, each in his own way and degree, are seeking to secure from the various peoples of the earth — this principle is an Impersonal Principle, and not a personal fact.

As soon as we ask ourselves what is the source, the basis, the support of Universal Brotherhood, so soon do we find ourselves driven perforce to something which is not a person, to Something which includes all persons, high and low, great and small, brilliant and commonplace.

Each one of us may believe, nay, probably, must believe, in some one or other person or personage, as more helpful to his soul and body than any other. But every one of us cannot but believe *more* in this Impersonal Principle, if he is consciously sincere and consistent member of the Society of which the first object is the spread of the recognition of Universal Brotherhood.

Any one of us may reject, nay, probably, must reject, some particular person or some particular opinion. But this Impersonal Principle, which lies behind Universal Brotherhood and alone justifies recognition of it, he cannot but believe in, however dimly, howbeit sub-consciously. He cannot reject it consciously and yet remain really and deliberately a member of the T.S. Obviously, this is true only of Universal Brotherhood — not of any lesser, any restricted, limited, separatist brotherhoods. The source of such — and the world is full of them — is of course a person, always; the emphasizing of a person and the deriving of life and activity solely from him is the time-old and natural method of separating and establishing a restricted and exclusive family out of Universal Brotherhood, and this method may well be followed by any one to whom such a result seems desirable. Polarization round centres is the recognized method of the *cleavage* of cells. But the source and the support of Universal Brotherhood can only be something which is Universal, not personal. Diffusion and pervasion of the vital fluid of the Universal Religion of Impersonal or All-personal Âtman to the outmost periphery of the human race, is the way of its true growth as an ever-more-completely-united whole.

Because of the Impersonality and therefore all-inclusiveness of this its nourishing and supporting Principle, has it been found possible at all to carry the T.S. without entire destruction through disputes such as have completely wrecked other bodies not guided by the same guide. In this Impersonal Principle, and in it alone, is the seed of all reconciliation and permanent tolerance and harmony and unification.

In personalities, on the other hand, in shibboleths and rallying-cries and the excessive pushing forward of personal names, there has always thriven through all time past, and will continue to flourish through all

time to come, the seed of challenge and counter-challenge, of division and dispute and strife between man and brother-man, the seed of dissensions and suspicions and criminations and recriminations, of charges and counter-charges of adulation and traducement, of blind worship and mad criticism, of disloyalty to truth and disloyalty to person. In the past history of the T.S., whenever there has been a 'shaking' of the very foundations of the T.S. which has been left behind sad cracks and gaps in the superstructure, it has *always* been due to an exaggeration of the person above the Impersonal Principle. Religious wars have ever been wars for personal names. I am not aware of any war for the Impersonal. The followers of the cult of the Impersonal have been plentifully called tiresome bores, imbeciles, talkers of unmeaning words, lifeless dullards — but they have never provoked wars and battles so far as I have heard. But of course I may be mistaken. None can say they have compassed all history, and I can say it least of all. Yet this is undoubted that there has been much bloodshed in the *names* of the Christ, the Prophet, even the Buddha and the Jina, to say nothing of smaller names.

Because of this, I humbly think, the ship of Theosophy — Âtma-vidyâ, Brahma-vidyâ, the Science of the Self, the Science of the Eternal and Infinite, as ever diligently explained by H.P.Blavatsky and H.S.Olcott — was launched upon the troubled waters of modern civilization, when that civilization had grown to be able to supply to that ship the steam-power which alone could enable it to circumnavigate the earth; and it was launched without a proper name, but with only a general and descriptive one, to slowly usher in the epoch of buddhi and humanism and Universal Brotherhood, and bid a gradual farewell to the epoch of manas and individualism and separatist religious names and forms.

Material science, working by steam and rail and wire and the printing press, has over-shot its mark of individualism and linked up the countries and religions of the world — though the linking up is painful and discordant because of the wrong spirit pervading it — and has thus made the world-wide spread of the message of Universal Brotherhood, which is the essence of Theosophy, not only necessary but also possible and almost easy too. Without it such spread would be obviously impossible. It remains for the T.S. by remaining true to that message, to return the unconscious and unwilling kindness of material science consciously, by spiritualizing that science and helping to spread it broadcast in beneficial and not harmful forms; by converting the linking chains — at present of hard iron — that bind together the races of men, into ornaments of soft gold worn eagerly by each to please the eyes of all the others. And the only alchemy that can change the iron of the age into gold is the replacement more and more of the person by the Impersonal. This also is the only alchemy which can solve effectively in each individual case those endless doubts and soul-tortures, 'Am I losing my soul or am I being saved?' 'Am I in the clutches of the Devil, or am I in the embrace of the Christ?' 'Am I being subtly led to Avichi by those of the Left Hand, or gently guided to Nirvâna by those of the Right Hand?' All these disappear finally, when, and only when, we fix our gaze upon the Impersonal.

I would therefore reiterate what I said before, that while every member of the T.S. may very well believe in any given person, he ought to believe more in That which is beyond all persons, And this is indeed the world-old teaching that has been given by all the recognized great Teachers of the past, and presumably will be given by all the Teachers of the future. None has asked his followers to worship him beyond the Âtman. All have asked their followers to seek for the Âtman within each. But the followers have often shamed their leaders and often led those leaders (or their names) and themselves into dissensions, ever unconsciously mistaking the subtle self-displaying wish to *appear devoted* to the teacher for the wish to *devote themselves to the cause* advocated by the teacher. The *Avadâna-kalpa-latâ* of Kshemendra, a Buddhist work, tells of a great fight between a band of Shramanas, followers of the Buddha, and a band

of Kshapanas, followers of the Jina, during the very lifetime of those two great Teachers, each a strenuous preacher of uttermost harmlessness and peace!

One of the precious books of Theosophy, a veritable little scripture in its way, *Light on the Path*, fallen somewhat into neglect, perhaps, latterly, says: "Nothing that is embodied, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the Eternal, can aid you"; and obviously the Eternal is the Impersonal. To multiply quotations from the ancient writings to the same effect would be an endless task.

It is plain that there have been many teachers in the past, indeed countless, so some of the scriptures say, and there will be as many in the future. But the Teaching has ever been and must ever be one and the same: "Seek the Âtman", "Find the Âtman", "Know Thyself". That is the End. These, the teachers, are the means; the means to wipe away the dust of degenerate ages which settles down upon, and hides from time to time, the glory of that eternal self-same Teaching; the means to put more vitality into the dimmed eyes of men that cannot clearly see the Infinite Light; indispensably necessary means to progress, worthy of all honour and reverence, in their respective degrees, — but in no case to supersede that Final Goal, which should never be lost of. To shut it out of sight consciously, after having gained even the faintest and most purely intellectual glimpse of it — this is the only and the greatest possible disloyalty to any genuine teacher of Âtma-Vidyâ. If this disloyalty is avoided, all other minor loyalties are sure to be fulfilled in most due measure. Not to have seen that Final Goal yet, may be quite natural and even proper, for those not yet ready to enter the T.S., the younger brothers, as they have been called. For such there are many preparatory associations, orders, leagues, by working in which, perhaps, they may soon attain the needed majority that is required by the rules of the T.S., literally and metaphorically. But for those that are in the T.S. to forget it, for them to place the person above the Impersonal — were to endanger the well-being of the whole Society, were to throw doubt upon the whole world-wide movement now in progress, under many names and not only one, for unity and federation and co-operation in all departments of human life. On the other hand, to honour the person as below and after the Impersonal — nay, not only one person but many persons, each reverencing his own elder most but ever assiduously bearing in mind that other elders rightly claim the reverence of others — this is a source of much health and strength and inspiration to good work, for the young and the old alike.

The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* (Chapter XII) tells us that the easier preliminary ways, of leaning on another, are to be placed only before those who are not yet capable of taking up the harder tasks; and that more difficult work should be expected from the older and stronger, the work of standing on their own feet.

Indeed, it may well be said that the elder brothers perform their duty loyally to their trust only when, in leading on the younger brothers up the steps of the ladder, they miss no occasion, indeed diligently take every occasion, to bring home to the minds of the youngers, that the ladder is only the means to reaching the top of the tower and not to be made a dwelling-place, that the person is only a means to the Impersonal and any one individual only a guide to the Universal Âtman. Also we have to remember that this present and latest advent of Theosophy is by way of reaction against and correction of the great growth of scientific materialism. And he who would enter into Theosophy through the Theosophical Society, may safely be presumed to have recapitulated in his own individual mind the movement of thought in the racial mind and to have become able to think critically about scientific materialism; and that implies readiness to think About the Impersonal, albeit dimly at first. To believe in a person more than in the Impersonal, *after* this stage, is indeed to stunt the growth of the soul; for that *growth* is undisputedly from other-reliance to Self-reliance.

To every earnest soul there comes, by a psycho-physical law, generally in the third septenate of the years of its bodily envelope, *i.e.*, between the fourteenth and the twenty-first years, a yearning to understand the meaning of life and death, joy and sorrow, virtue and sin, to understand the origin and end of all the infinite movement around.

This is the age of the soul's adolescence, in the body as well as in the spirit. In this difficult time, the soul has to adjust itself anew toward the material envelope as well as towards the Higher Self. It recapitulates in this important septenate, the racial experience of the third Root-Race. Shall it run wholly matter-wards — like the bears and the monkeys of the *Râmâyana*? Shall it run wholly spirit-wards — like the Haryashvas and the Shabalâshvas of the *Bhâgavata*? High exaltations, deep depressions, ecstasies of joy, agonies of despair, wild romance, fairy imagination, chivalry, knight-errantry, gross blunders, noble dreams — all is summed up in the one word: youth! And underneath all runs the current of a deep melancholy, the sadness that is inseparable from spring — is life worth living, is all the trouble worth while? Religious conversions, and alas! even more often, *per*-versions; noble ambitions and resolutions, and, more often, vicious degenerations and sex-crimes, at our present stage of evolution and in the existing conditions of life — are most observable at this period of life. The call of the flesh is one the soul; and, by necessary undercurrent of re-action, the call of the spirit also. The glamour and bloom of youth and of the senses, in one's own body and in the bodies of others, attract irresistibly; the Eternal Consciousness recognizes the inevitable ending in dust and ashes. And the soul rushes frenziedly, now towards the upper pole of the human magnet — renunciation, wisdom, the knowledge and love of the All; now towards the lower pole — selfish pursuit, cleverness, the love of the lower, smaller, self and sex, ahankâra. The elders of our race, the Manus, Rshis and Prajâpatis, have found and prescribed sweet reconciliation (only the best possible in the circumstances) for spirit and matter, for upward striving and downward drag, in holy wedlock and in the joyous pain of daily sacrifice for family and friends and dependents, the daily five yajñas — whereby the wheel of Brahman is kept turning. But in order that the reconciliation be effected in the fullest and most perfect measure possible, it is indispensable that that travail, the war in Hamlet's young soul — typical of all young souls — of to be or not to be — be allayed; that all doubts and questions be solved satisfactorily.

And the very first question that such a soul puts to itself is: "What is the final cause and meaning of all this meaningless, causeless, ruthless turmoil and tyranny that we call the Universe". This is the first question to be asked and also the last to be answered. But it can be answered only if the seed of the yearning is carefully tended and nursed to bud and blossom and fruit. If the counsellor sought by the yearner tells him, on the other hand, thoughtlessly: "Be more modest, try to understand only what is within your reach, you are too young, take a personal guru to worship, obey unreasoningly and follow, etc.", then indeed he does a grievous wrong, although unconsciously; he deprives the earnest soul of its birth-right, he misleads it away to a false contentment with the mess of pottage, makes it lose its chance for this life, gives it only the finite when it might have had the Infinite.

After the third septenate of years, as Manu says, the chances of gaining the inner vision of the Universal are very small.

Small worldly ambitions, the mastering of minor departments of knowledge, the gaining of passing objects — require so much time, concentration and effort. Can the secret of the Universe, the secret of immortality — and immortality is the unshakeable *conviction* of immortality, the *realization* of it as the inalienable right of the Spirit in every living thing—can this be gained by dilettante dawdling, or by playing

with mortal idols, or even by whole-hearted worship of that which is palpably not immortal? The principle of infinity lies hid in every self-reproducing seed and germ of life. The glamour and romance of youth, the fairy moonlight with which all its surroundings are washed and painted — have all come *from within itself*; youth itself has put these upon others and then fallen down in prostrate worship before them. They are the faint reflections and shadows of this principle of infinity — Brahman — beginning to stir within itself, which it credits away to others. At the human stage, more and more, this principle tends to turn upon itself rather than outwards upon the lesser things of name and form. And then appears that supreme and virgin passioning of the soul, called *vairâgya*, which is the necessary condition of the espousal of the small self by the Great Self. As the *Upanishats* say, the *Âtman* unveils itself only to the soul which It Itself espouseth, and none is so espoused which yearns not strongly, whole-heartedly, with undivided power of passion, for that great consummation. The soul, which fritters itself away in smaller interests; which spends the 'infinite' power within it, in the painting with glamour and beauty bloom, and the enveloping with its best love and reverence of lesser objects, personal idols and ideals, however subtly poetized and refined and elevated; the soul which directs not its concentrated longing towards the Infinite, hiding within itself — that soul loses its chance for this life — of course there are other lives.

It is not quite well, yet it is not quite ill, if the glorious romance of youth leads into sanctified marriage of the household life — which is the most important and most honoured of all lives, plane after plane — *without* having first secured the Infinite. It is not ill, because it means only that the soul is not quite ready for the Infinite yet. But it is ill, it is very sad indeed, if that romantic search should lead to neither, but to hollow imitations thereof. Theosophy, more essentially than charity which is only one of its fruits, begins at home. The Theosophy, which leads to no home, which helps no home, which breaks up any home, is not Theosophy, but something masquerading in the stolen garb of Theosophy. Virtues and good qualities should be educed and cultivated for their own sake, or for the sake of the living fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and spouses and natural relations and friends — at least as much as for any comparative outsider. At least such is the teaching of Manu. And in this reference may be considered the dangers of the premature arousing of a highly emotional and *exalté* condition in the young with regard to persons outside of the natural home. It is likely to interfere with their due intellectual growth and to produce other most unfortunate consequences besides — consequences well-known to all students and observers of the past and current history of personal religions and sects. For a high surge of even devotional emotion, if not kept steadily directed upwards, by matured knowledge, experience and wisdom, irresistibly runs downwards to the lower pole of the human magnet and breeds the most unhappy sex-degenerations.

But if the original yearning for the Infinite is carefully fostered and guided and the Impersonal ever kept before the eyes of the aspirant — the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* is a manual of the Impersonal and is studied by so many of our members — then indeed the seed will proceed to its natural blooming and fruiting first, in the intellectual vision of the Infinite and Impersonal, then in Its fuller ethical assimilation, and finally in Its greater and greater practical realization.

And this thought gives us some clue to periodical differences in the *methods* of the Teaching, while its *substance* remains unchanged. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ is reported to have cried: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me". Today, *Âtma-Vidyâ*, which is the Teacher of all teachers has directed them to cry through the Theosophical Society: "Induce the *grown-ups* to gather round Me; and induce them by means of these three objects of the T.S., wherein is the seed of all religions and of Universal Religion, the seed of (1) all Ethics; (2) all Knowledge; (3) all Yoga-powers; by means of the deliberate

cultivation of Universal Brotherhood, the study of the origins and innermost truths common to all religions, the deliberate investigation of the powers latent in the being, the Self, the Âtman of each which is, indeed, the Âtman, of all”.

It has been thought by some members now and then that a more *precise* set of beliefs, in the nature of a person-cult, is likely to be more suitable and effective. It no doubt might be so, for some minds and for any special purposes those members may have in view. But so far as the Theosophical ideal is concerned, I humbly believe that the very amorphousness of the objects of the T.S. is the guarantee of its vital elasticity and growth, and that a precise definition into a cut-and-dry *credo* would mean its ossification and death. For I conceive the mission of the T.S. to be not to usher in a *new* personal religion, but (1) to harmonize, (2) to rationalize, and (3) to broaden the *existing* religions by means of the pursuit of its three objects respectively, and gradually to enable them, of their own free-will and intelligent consent, to merge into the Eternal Universal Religion, in the persons of the most advanced of each religion first, and then of the less advanced by means of those.

If these three obviously impersonal, yet unquestionable and indefeasible objects are steadily pursued in the right spirit (and the General and Sectional councils and office-bearers should make it their duty to carefully think out the ways and means of such steady pursuit), then surely the personal and formal elements — which, and which alone, are the separative and discord-breeding factors in any given religion — will be gradually subordinated into their proper place; then the common Soul portions, the essential principles, of all the living religions will be enabled to coalesce into one Scientific Religion of spirit-matter; and then will all the special religions and families of mankind merge into one great family inspired by Âtma-Vidyâ or Theosophy, the three parts or thirds of which are (a) a Universal Love and Brotherliness and tolerant Helpfulness towards all, (b) a Universal Metaphysic of the Laws of Consciousness, and (c) a Universal Practical Science of the transformations of matter under the stress of that Consciousness, *i.e.*, Yoga-Shâstra proper, superphysical Science, or ‘Occultism’ as it is currently called for want of a better word.

If these views are at all just, it follows that any over-accentuation of a person, within the T.S., is very likely to sin against the first object, even though unwittingly. One of the most important practical benefits of the membership of the T.S. is that it brings a person into contact with the followers of other creeds on terms not only of mutual tolerance but of respect and sympathy for the faiths of each other. And as each member necessarily has relations and friends outside the T.S., this tolerance and respect and sympathy for different faiths gradually spread from him to these others; and so in a small and slow and quiet but sure way is helped on the work of bringing about peace and good-will between the different religions. But the prime condition of success along these lines is that every member should carefully avoid all excess, all vehemence, all emotional violence, in the pushing of his own views, especially as regards the spiritual and religious super-eminence of any persons, and yet more emphatically of persons still in the flesh. Each and every member of the T.S. has, no doubt, a perfect right to his views and, it would seem, to advocate them also, but this should be done in a mild way and only so far as he can do so without hurting the feelings of any other brother within the T.S. As to where reasonable advocacy ends and fanaticism begins, where mutual benefit by exchange of knowledge ends and mutual harm by self-assertion begins — that cannot be laid down in precise words and must be left to the tact, good sense, and observation of the actual effects on each other’s feelings, of the members concerned. But one thing is fairly clear—any very impassioned advocacy of any particular view and especially of any *person-cult* is very likely to tread on the toes of others by the inevitable implication and challenge that other persons

honoured by others are not deserving of the same honour as one's own ideal. Too loud and proof-less assertion of the overwhelming merits of any one individual, unavoidably, by a psychological law, provokes comparisons; and comparisons are ever proverbially 'odious,' 'invidious,' pregnant with evil consequences. And hence all such excessive advocacy is likely to retard the work of establishing peace and goodwill amongst the various living religions.

Holding such views, it seems to me natural to invite your attention repeatedly to the significance of the first object of the T.S. to which we have all subscribed, and which we have referred to in the Resolution passed today. So far, the leaders of the T.S. have whole-heartedly subscribed to this significance. Our present beloved President has ever made it her proud and noble claim that through many mistakes and wanderings she has ever been a follower of the beacon-light of Truth as something irrespective of persons. She has recommended that same attitude to all her hearers and readers, and she has told us that the last and the deepest Truth that she has succeeded in finding is the Truth embodied in Theosophy and the T.S. with their first and foremost object of Universal Brotherhood based on the implied Impersonal Principle of the Universal Âtman. And I feel that we do right to express our loyal adherence to that Principle, in sending our greetings by this Resolution, today, to her as the successor of H.P.Blavatsky and H.S.Olcott. The early history of the T.S., the earlier bands of its workers who bore the brunt of its vicissitudes when times were far harder for it than they are now, even those two principal names of H.P.Blavatsky and H.S.Olcott are now naturally becoming somewhat obscure to the vision of the new generation of members, amidst the rush and pressure of current affairs. But we know from history that a present which forgets the past will itself be short-lived in the memory of the future. And we do right today, therefore, in our Resolution especially to remember H.S.Olcott the story of whose great lecturing tours in India with their accompaniment of magnetic healing of the halt, the maimed, the paralyzed and the blind will read some day like a chapter from the Bible; and to remember H.P.B. whose physical and superphysical siddhis were proved, as none others have been proved since, to the most confirmed, habitual and lifelong scoffers and sceptics, converting them into famous workers for the T.S., and whose stores of occult knowledge, as embodied in *The Secret Doctrine* — many portions of which, we are informed, are the direct work of various Masters themselves — continue to form the inexhaustible pabulum of subsequent workers.

Such are the few thoughts that occur to me on this, the Foundation Day of the T.S. It seems to me that the highest loyalty and devotion we can show to the Founders of the T.S. is devotion and loyalty to the Principle to which they were devoted and loyal, the Impersonal Principle which underlies that Universal Brotherhood for the recognition of which they worked their life long.

And, indeed, is it or is it not true that Âtma-Vidyâ, God-Wisdom, Theosophy, is the *End*; and all possible teachers of it, of the past, the present, and the future, but the *means* to it? And if it is so, then should not all of us, and even more especially the office-bearers of the T.S. take unceasing care that we do not, wittingly or un-wittingly, help to make the End the means, and the means the End?

All the scriptures of all the nations of all times and all climes repeat the one teaching 'Seek and find the God *within*'. 'None else compels', 'Within yourselves deliverance must be found', 'None other than Thou can help Thee', 'Thou art that', 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बंधुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

Uplift the Âtman by the Âtman and degrade it not; the self is the only enemy of the Self, and the Self its only real brother, helper, friend.

Bhagavad-Gîtâ (vi—5)

The lost religions of Assyria, Chaldaeia, Egypt, Mexico, Peru said it. The living religions of the Manu, the Zoroaster, the Buddha, the Jina, the Âchârya Shankara, the Christ, the Prophet say it. The sages and philosophers from Socrates to Fichte, Hegel and Schopenhauer, but ring changes on the same. In India, the latest great teachers of both Hindû and Musalmân have nothing else to say. We may perhaps quote from some of these, not so well-known as the scriptures amongst the learned, yet verily standing for the scriptures to the unlearned in India.

The much studied Sâadi says:

Na gum shud ki rû-yash zi duniyâ bi-tâft,
Ki gum-gashta-é khêsh râ bâz yâft.

He was not lost who turned his face away
From worldliness—he found Him-Self that day.

Kabir sings with his own matchless earnestness and pathos:

मोक्कूं कहां तू खोजै बंदे में तो तेरे पास ।
हाड़ मांस में हों मैं नाहीं मैं आत्म बिस्वास ॥

O my soul! beloved bond-slave!
Where and wherefore seekest thou for Me!
Am I not evermore most near to thee?
Not in or of thine own flesh, bone or blood,
Or any others' flesh or blood am I
But in and of the very Faith of Self, Thy-Self am I !

And Shâh Bullâ, the famous Musalmân faqîr and sage and teacher of the Panjâb, repeats it to the setting of gentle yet most pithy and epigrammatic humour:

ढूडनेहार नू ढूड खां तू
मया परत दे घर दा रस तैं नू ।
कित्थे तू ही न होवे यार सब दा
फिरे ढूडता जंगला विच्च जिन् नू ॥

But do just try to seek the Seeker, Friend!
Too long hast thou sought Him in Other-homes!
It is just possible *Thy-Self* mightst be
The One Beloved Friend of all the world,
Whom thou art chasing madly through the woods !

And Nânak, the first Guru of the Sikks, assures us:

कह् नानक बिनु आपा चीन्है
टिभै न भ्रम की काई ।

Nanâk reiterateth evermore —
Not till the soul shall recognize It-Self,
Shall it the mire of errors wash away !

It seems to me therefore, and I humbly submit it for the careful consideration of the members and all the office-bearers of the T.S., that all other activities and pursuits of special person-cults should be regarded as only secondary outlets for superfluous energy, and that it is our primary duty to push the work of revitalizing within the heart of each living religion the *common truths* of Theosophy by means of the systematic pursuit of the three objects of the T.S., and thereby help on the divine plan of the spontaneous fusing of all those hearts into one.

At least so it seems to me. But this may be a constitutional defect of mine, for ever since I can remember, the Impersonal has ever been to me more than the person. And I have therefore, at the outset begged of you to suffer me gladly for a while. And because you have suffered me gladly thus far, therefore I am emboldened to repeat yet once more:

Believe in the person, some person, many pre-sons, as your inclinations lead, but believe *more* in the Impersonal. Be devoted to, revere, nay worship, a person, some person, many persons — for, without such, life loses its savour and sweetness; but be *more* devoted to, revere *more*, worship *more*, the Impersonal — for, without such, life loses its foundations, loses itself, perishes in a riot of discord. And adapting the words of the English poet to my purpose, I will say in conclusion:

Âtman ! the Universal Soul of all —
To Whom our self-deluded mind, that takes
Full easily all impressions from below,
Will not look up, or half-contemns the height
To which it won't, fancying it cannot, climb,
Thinking it could not breathe in that fine air,
That pure severity of perfect light,
Yearning for warmth and colour which it finds
In lesser selves, reflections of itself —
O ! let us lead this self-deluded mind
Of ours, from this darkness to That Light,
From passing phantom forms unto the Truth,
From mortal clingings unto the Immortal,
And see That Highest and most Human too,
Which is the One Solo Found of Life and Love.
It is our duty e'er to love the Highest,
It surely were our profit did we know,
It were our deepest pleasure did we see,
We needs must love the Highest most when we
Behold It—loving all else lesser, less.