

THEOSOPHY IS FOR EVERYONE

By Radha Burnier

Theosophy is the wisdom that provides a background for right action and right living. It is surely not intended to benefit only those who are capable of intellectual depth and of becoming learned in the lore of the universe. As Annie Besant wrote in *The Ancient Wisdom*, Theosophy comes to the world at once as an adequate philosophy and an all-embracing religion and ethic. To quote her words:

It was once said of the Christian scriptures by a devotee that they contained shallows in which a child could wade and depths in which a giant must swim. A similar statement might be made of Theosophy, for some of its teachings are so simple and so practical that any person of average intelligence can understand and follow them, while others are so lofty, so profound, that the ablest strains his intellect to contain them and sinks exhausted in the effort.

Because Theosophy includes profound and lofty teaching, it does not follow that simple people should be deprived of helpful presentations at their own level which will assist them to take the next step upward on the way to perfection. Nor need it be concluded that, because Theosophical fundamentals may be stated in a way that even the average person can understand and put into practice, it is more profound and mystical aspects are being shunned or shelved. The whole range is needed, and the Theosophical Society must offer or make available, depending on each person's stage of development, temperament, and aptitude, those aspects of Theosophical knowledge that provide the greatest inspiration, guidance, and instruction for each person.

Spiritual teachers have referred to the ancient wisdom as an inexhaustible well with life-giving waters. All who are interested will draw from it a thimbleful or a large tankful, according to their capacity. Those who are yet at the stage where they can make use of only a little are entitled to the water as much as those who take more. All will find refreshment and strength to take a further step, it matters not how slowly or rapidly.

Personal experiences through several decades of Theosophical work offer some insightful examples. An illiterate professional thief, hearing by chance an exposition of Theosophy during a conference, was so impressed that he changed his mode of living, became a devoted member, and a regular participant in the work in the measure of his capacities. *The Secret Doctrine* would not have helped him, but he was ready to respond to a simple explanation and take the next step from where he was.

An unhappy widow, with little education, oppressed by prevalent social conditions and suffering the ill-treatment that was then the lot of widows, found new light through

contact with Theosophy and became free of her bitterness. Ordinary people, born into rigidly orthodox families of one kind or another, found new meaning in life after the Theosophical view of religion was brought to their attention. In all such cases, some aspect of the wisdom teaching enabled people to move forward, and Theosophy in a simple form came to them as a boon.

Each of us can receive only the light our eyes can see. Perhaps from the lofty positions of enlightened Beings, even those who consider themselves to be experts in Theosophy are only like people who go to the well with a small bucket, if not a thimble. H. P. Blavatsky wrote that the Theosophical Society was formed to assist in showing to human beings that such a thing as Theosophy exists. This implies that people should be helped to realize that there is a philosophy of life that throws light on all problems, and they must be encouraged to absorb enough of that wisdom to take the next step on their journey. The learned and bright minds may (when interested) assimilate more to travel onwards; simple people will receive what they can and will also proceed. That is the nature of evolution: each one moves on from where he or she is.

The Theosophical Society's duty is to ensure that what people receive, regardless of their level, is indeed the light of Wisdom, which is the understanding that makes for progress towards greater righteousness, inner freedom, and the sense of non-separateness.