



ANNIE BESANT

SUPERHUMAN MEN
IN HISTORY AND
IN RELIGION

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**BY
ANNIE BESANT**

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and the vilest of mankind, from the standpoint of the world. For the Self is within him as much as the Self is within you; and to deny the presence of God in the basest is to blaspheme Him in His highest manifestation, in His divinest light. There lies your way of progress; no separation. To feel the sin of the sinner to be your sin, and to be willing to suffer with him; to feel his disgrace to be your disgrace, and to be willing to bear it with him. There is a supreme spiritual truth, not of the Intellect but of the Christ, that He *became* sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Not bearing sin as from without, but sharing sin as from within, and yet keeping a purity which naught can soil, for it is only while you are sinful that sin can soil you. When you are absolutely pure in the Christ-nature, no contact with sin can sully you, for it falls away from you as the water falls from the shining surface of the lotus leaf. It falls off, it cannot remain on, and purity remains to purify the sinner, while the saint bears the sin but is untouched by its foulness. That is the Mystery of the Christ - the great secret of the Saviour of men.

Then comes the unfolding of the first aspect - though these numbers are very misleading; when we speak of the second aspect and the third, of the lower and the higher, we speak of things that do not exist in the unity of the Spirit; for in this trinity of aspects, as the Church declares, none is before or after other, none is less or greater than another. Will is not greater than Wisdom or Creative Activity, nor are they less than Will. Will is that inner Self-determination which becomes possible only as Self is realised, and then you come to the paradox: "His service is perfect freedom". There is only one way in which service and freedom can exist side by side, identical in the same Spirit, and that is when you have found that there is only one Will, and that Will divine; that your Will is part of the divine Will, and that therefore what God says you say, when the Self is speaking in the plenitude of knowledge, in perfection of Self-realisation. There is no Will save His, and that Will is ours. We obey, but it is Self-obedience, for we have realised that we have no Will which is not one with Him, and that in carrying out His Will for the world, we are carrying out our own. And that inner determination to work with the *Logos* for the perfecting of His plan, that is, as it were, the final triumph of the Spirit over matter; for then matter has ceased to divide; then separation no longer exists; the Intellect individualises, and then there

is Self-realisation of unity within the individual; the Will gathers up all the divine forces in the Spirit, and makes them one-pointed with the Will that guides the worlds.

And to develop that, you must strengthen in yourself the Will of the higher as against the changing desires of the lower. Your determination must come from the Spirit within, and not from the outer objects that surround you. You must choose your path, not because this attracts, not because that repels; but only because along that path lies God's realisation for His world, and you have given yourself in perfect service, knowing that that is the last and greatest word-knowing that in surrender of the lower self to the higher, man fulfils the purpose of his being, and finds that Will, Wisdom, and Action are but one.

6. THE POLICY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

From the President's Opening Speech at the Stockholm Congress

Now with regard to our policy. You have in Sweden a good deal to face because, for some reason (probably to make you strong for your work in the future) all the difficulties of the Society have here found a battleground, so that the differences of views are very clearly enunciated, and you have to realise that in your own country the various parties (if I may so call them) connected with this great movement have each found a footing.

That is not, I think, a thing to be regretted. Our policy in regard to these dissident parts of the Theosophical movement is an important thing, and I would venture to suggest what seems to me the wisest policy. With regard, for instance, to that part of the movement which left the Theosophical Society, under Mr Judge and is now headed by Mrs Tingley, I would earnestly ask you to let all the attack come from that side and not from ours. It is far better that you should not quarrel with them, even if they desire to quarrel with you. If you leave to them the whole of the attack and receive it with generosity, with magnanimity, and with kindly feeling, then and then alone can you hope that peace will ultimately be secured. It is yours to remember the great words of the Lord Buddha: "Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love". So if for the moment our brethren of the Universal Brotherhood find in hatred their weapon against us, let us use rather the shield of love and not the sword of hatred, and answer with kindness, with generosity and good feeling, any of the attacks that they may think right to make upon us.

Realise that with the great majority of assailants, they are working for what they believe to be the truth; and if they make the mistake of thinking that truth is best defended by attacks upon others, then let us give them credit for their good intentions, and hope that wisdom may ultimately lead them to choose a better way. So I would ask you not to answer hatred with hatred. Let them do their work and let us do ours. Remember that hatred

disintegrates, while love unites; and let us carry out our name of Brotherhood and know no exclusion, but remember it is universal.

With regard to our Brethren of the German Section who have left the Theosophical Society and enrolled themselves under a new name, surely we can show to them also the same policy of respect. They will probably reach a certain number of people whom as yet we cannot reach. There is the advantage that they are using another name, so that there is not even outwardly any conflict between us. It is true that their language is a little harsh, but, after all, the harsh language is directed against me personally rather than the Theosophical Society, and the last thing in the world that I wish is that I should be made a bone of contention between two Societies whose aim on both sides is to find the way of truth.

And so I would say with regard to them also, if they attack me, do not respond by attack against their leaders. It was necessary that they should leave us, for we cannot in the Society permit any to be excluded, and the very moment that our German National Society excluded from its membership those who held a particular belief, the belief in the near coming of a World-Teacher, it was impossible that that National Society should continue to represent the Theosophical Society in Germany. Rightly, then, they went out on a policy less broad than our own, for it is our duty to keep the breadth of the Society and to make no matter of belief reason for exclusion from our ranks. But the fact that they prefer that principle need not prevent our respect, nay, I will say our admiration; for while Dr Steiner's does not care to recommend the works of our branch of the Movement, I have always advised people to read Dr Steiner's works, not because I agree with everything in them, but because I believe that we should read every view which is put forward by the seekers after truth, and that we are the wiser and the stronger when we see the truth at different angles and from other standpoints, and do not confine ourselves alone to the study of a single line of thought.

Profoundly do I believe it to be true that the great Lords of Wisdom meet a man on any path whereon the man is treading in the search for Them, ever echoing those words of the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "Mankind comes to me along many roads, and on whatever road a man approaches me, on that road do I

welcome him, for all roads are mine". Let us then act in the spirit of that teaching and see in the roads of our brethren roads to the same truth, and when we meet in the centre we shall know that all roads are one.

That, then, friends, it seems to me, should be our policy, complete tolerance, inclusion of every opinion. Remember that each opinion adds something to our knowledge, and that we should try in the struggle of opinions to learn from our opponent more than from our friends, for the opponent "sees the truth at a different angle, while those who agree with us see it from our own. Such then is the policy that I would venture to lay before you as the one that appears to me to be the wisest for the Theosophical Society. Let us do our own work, let us walk along our own road, let us give out the truth to the world as we see it, but let our note, so far as may be, be the note that harmonises the discords, rather than a note which adds to the discords of the world.

THE END
