

## Brotherhood and Freedom—Radha Burnier

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Brotherhood means something profound and lasting. It is a truth which each has to understand and realize for himself. The great teachers of the world did not speak about the numerous problems with which men concern themselves in the world. They went to the fundamental questions, the knowledge by which “all else is known”. The realization of the basic, essential things in life brings about that state of mind which is able to solve all problems. To go to the depth of understanding of what brotherhood is, is the task of a lifetime or more. It is a vast field, as vast as life itself. If the world is full of maladies, of illnesses from the spiritual point of view, surely we do not want merely to alleviate the suffering. Every disease has to be treated at its source; the cause has to be known. It is the real cause of man’s ailments that we should primarily deal with. ...

Brotherhood has a much greater meaning than, let us say, being affectionate to one’s immediate family and friends. We all love our children, husbands, wives, particular individuals, but not other people. We love our country, our fellow nationals. But to realize universal brotherhood may be different from the worldly affections so commonly experienced. Universal brotherhood has a quality into which the feeling of “my” does not enter at all. To have a brotherly feeling towards all people irrespective of the external relationship which they have to us is a way of exploring brotherhood. ...

The Theosophical Society has a place for everyone, whatever may be his approach, or the methods he wants to apply for himself. Although the Society states its Objects, it does not say how the Objects shall be carried out, or delineate the way to engage in the search for truth. Nobody in the Theosophical Society is given the authority to say: This is the way, and you shall follow (or not follow) this particular path; not even H. P. Blavatsky is to be considered as someone whose words have to be followed implicitly. There is room for every type of thought and every approach. No one person or group of people can set themselves up as teachers or instructors and tell the others: This is what you should do in the Theosophical Society; you should confine yourself to such and such activities in order to promote the three Objects, or otherwise you are not really suitable to be in the Theosophical Society. ...

In the Society it is very important, I feel, to have openness, not only of mind but of heart. It is easy sometimes to have an open mind but it is not so easy to have an open heart. There are people who are clever and who will accept theoretically that freedom must exist, but they do not open themselves inwardly to respond to another’s ways, to appreciate him from a heart which is free of reaction. What we need is an understanding heart and if we have that, which means having the right attitude, we can do a great deal.

The Lord Buddha said that a little love is worth very much more than a great deal of good works which are done without love. It is worth a great deal more than talking, which we all do. To have love which is the same as realizing the deepest meaning of Brotherhood is not easy. Theosophists have often been described as pioneers. Can we be pioneers in the sincerity we show in practicing Brotherhood, which implies helping others and yet allowing them to grow in their own way? If we can be pioneers in the quality of our living, in the depth of our thinking, in the sincerity of our being, then we shall surely make progress. ↑