

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: 18th century wall hanging textile from Mughal Dynasty

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

President: Mr Tim Boyd

Vice-President: Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy

Secretary: Ms Marja Artamaa

Treasurer: Mr K. Narasimha Rao

Headquarters: ADYAR, CHENNAI (MADRAS) 600 020, INDIA

Vice-President: ivp.hq@ts-adyar.org

Secretary: secy.hq@ts-adyar.org

Treasurer: treasury.hq@ts-adyar.org

Adyar Library and Research Centre: alrc.hq@ts-adyar.org

Theosophical Publishing House: tphindia@gmail.com & tphindia@adyarbooks.com

Editorial Office: editorialoffice@gmail.com, Website: <http://www.ts-adyar.org>

The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

The Accumulated Wisdom

TIM BOYD

ONE of the definitions H. P. Blavatsky gave for Theosophy was ‘the accumulated wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of seers’. All of us who find value in Theosophy and the wisdom tradition from which it arises should from time to time give some thought to this lineage that has accumulated, tested, verified, and passed on the wisdom. A great deal of what we encounter in the teachings of Theosophy lies beyond our current capacity for direct experience. Such basic matters as the nature of the human aura, thought forms, the astral or mental ‘body’, even the Masters of the Wisdom are subjects which few of us can speak of from personal experience.

The research of one theosophical historian has concluded that in the Theosophical Society’s 140-year history a total of 24 to 25 people have had a physical encounter with one of the Masters. Yet some appreciation of the organized body of those who have passed beyond the stage of normal humanity, and the overshadowing influence of the Masters in the formation of the TS and its teachings, is almost required for an acceptance of Theosophy’s deeper teachings. It seems that we honour and accept these teachings for

three reasons: 1) because they appeal to our logic — they make sense; 2) because they conform to our intuitive awareness — at some deeper level of our being, we perceive their rightness; and 3) because of the high esteem in which we hold the sources of these teachings and the people who have passed them on who have demonstrated their reliability. There is a further process that we necessarily engage in, a process of experimentation. The things that we can experience we test, and ultimately, we verify for ourselves.

All that we regard as the Theosophical tradition is an inheritance from previous generations. One of the interesting features of any inheritance is that the people who later benefit from the wealth, generally did nothing to create it. For no other reason than the fact of being born in a particular place and time we find ourselves as beneficiaries to an easy access to Theosophy, this most recent expression of the wisdom tradition. Certainly karma plays a role, but even in our time there have been and still are places where people can only study these teachings at great risk to themselves and their families. In Tsongkhapa’s Lam Rim teachings of Tibetan Buddhism there is a concept about the ‘precious human life’.

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According to this way of thinking not all lives are equally precious. The presence of several factors are necessary in order for a particular life to be considered capable of attaining its fullest expression. One of those factors is that a person must be born in a time and place where genuine teachings that have the potential to lead to enlightenment are available. In the *Vivekachudāmani*, Shankaracharya echoes this way of thinking when he says that the person who ‘has obtained a human birth . . . and is foolish enough not to exert himself for self-liberation, verily commits suicide, he kills himself by clinging to things unreal’.

It is the nature of the ‘self-liberation’ process that the guidance and example of others are vital. Lineage and the importance of connection to a line of people who have experimented in the laboratory of their own consciousness and realized the fruits of this wisdom are often unappreciated. These ones who have realized in some measure are capable of effectively sharing the ageless wisdom.

I remember on one occasion being in a social setting. An accomplished stage actor got up and read a particular prayer from the Bible, the 23rd Psalm. It was beautiful. His diction was flawless and his tone and expression were impressive. At the same meeting there was an old man. He was neither famous nor unusually accomplished, but he had weathered many storms in his life. He was a deeply religious man who over the course of his life had experienced profound moments of inspiration in

prayer. He stood up and read the same prayer. Every word was the same, but the effect on everyone present was electrifying. The feeling of being transported to the presence of something powerful was palpable.

In *Light on the Path* the statement is made that ‘Speech comes only with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech.’ This knowledge is, of course, more than the result of conventional study. It is the soul knowledge that empowers one’s speaking with genuine authority.

Just like those who have inherited great fortunes of money and land, the test for us with our inheritance of the potential for wisdom will be what we do with it. It is a sad, but common story about people who have inherited a fortune and recklessly squandered it. There are also stories of people who have taken the inheritance they received, appreciated it, and magnified their wealth far beyond what originally was given. Hopefully we will find ourselves in this camp.

The month of October should be considered special among members of the Theosophical Society. Two bookends mark the beginning and the end of the month. On 1 October 1847 Mrs Annie Besant was born. On 31 October 2013 Mrs Radha Burnier died. As is the case with all beginnings and all endings, it is difficult to say with any exactness where they will lead.

Certainly nothing about Annie Besant’s beginnings gave any indication of the heights of consciousness and global

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influence that she would assume later in life. Born into a solidly middle class family, the death of her father when she was five changed the family's financial status dramatically. At eighteen years old she was married to an abusive clergyman. The relationship was so toxic to her spirit that at one point she contemplated suicide, actually going so far as placing the poison in her hand and preparing to take it. In that moment of weakness, just before she was going to drink the poison, she heard a voice that changed her direction, and ultimately ours. The voice said: 'O coward, coward, who used to dream of martyrdom and cannot stand a few years of woe.' On hearing it she immediately threw the poison away.

The rest is history, but her life was a strange, meandering, unpredictable route to greatness. The imprint of her life and personality on the Theosophical movement was probably greater than any TS president except Col Olcott. The

Theosophical Order of Service, Co-Masonry, J. Krishnamurti, the Order of the Star, political and social activism, clairvoyant investigation, all found a place in her activities.

Two years ago, on the last day of October, Mrs Radha Burnier died. At the time of her passing Radhaji had spent thirty-three years guiding the TS as international President, longer than any of her six predecessors. In conversations over time she spoke about the winding, unplanned nature of her Theosophical life. Although she was born into a Theosophical family and raised on the Adyar campus, her life took a number of turns before settling fully into the service of the TS.

Step by step, year by year we have the potential to deepen our connection with Theosophy. We are fortunate to have examples in those who have preceded us and those who walk alongside of us today. Appreciation is a simple thing, but powerful. ✧

Much of what Annie Besant said many decades ago is of striking relevance even today, not only for India, but for other countries also. Particular mention might be made of her insistence that a nation's prosperity cannot be built solely through economic development or other efforts at restructuring society. It must be founded on the character of the people.

Radha Burnier
Presidential Address, 26 December 1993

H. P. Blavatsky and the Evolution of Consciousness

OLGA S. OMLIN

FOR some, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was an incredible being, a messenger who brought the light of Divine Wisdom to the world, driven by deep compassion for suffering humanity. To others she was a destroyer of religion and a woman with a fiery temper.

In the eyes of the aristocracy H. P. Blavatsky was a challenge with all her personality rebelling against social rules and conventions. She described herself: ‘I hated “society” and the so-called “world” as I hated hypocrisy in whatever form it showed itself.’¹

She was as human as each of us. Her niece Nadezhda Zhelihovsky wrote that her aunt liked to invent stories for fun. In Russian culture family is highly valued, and I believe it was the same or similar for Helena Petrovna. She wrote in one of her letters to A. P. Sinnett, ‘My aunt Mme Witte swore before the image of some St Flapdoodle that she would *curse me* on her deathbed if I permitted any memoirs to be published, so long as all my relatives are yet living. . . . It is

impossible to say the truth without incriminating the people that I would not accuse for the world, now that they are dead and gone. Rest it all on my back.’²

Even though HPB was the first Russian woman who became an American citizen, she remained devoted to her home country. In a letter to her sister Vera, she wrote about her experience during the naturalization ceremony, ‘A nice scrape to get into, but how am I to manage to no longer love Russia or respect the emperor? It is easier to say a thing than to act accordingly.’³

It is said that HPB had an amazing power to attract people and that she was patient and persevering in her service to her Master and Theosophy. She was very sincere and easily trusted others, giving most the benefit of the doubt. The sincerity of her soul can be seen in her indifference to public opinion about her.

And perhaps this courageous and confident spirit gave her strength to carry on the mission to reveal the sacred teachings underlying all religions, to help

Ms Olga S. Omlin resides and volunteers at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California. Talk delivered at the International Theosophy Conference in August 2015 in the Netherlands.

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awaken the spiritual consciousness of humanity, and to attempt to give a synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy which can be found in many of her writings, mainly in *The Secret Doctrine*.

Yet HPB was extraordinary even as a child, perceptive, sensitive and surrounded by unusual phenomena. It is not easy to even vaguely perceive how challenging it must have been for her to grow up being such an unusual child, and later become a centre of attention, curiosity, and attacks from all corners of the world.

Her first attempt to establish the Theosophical Society was closely connected with various phenomena. On the one hand, it was done to show that matter was not what the science of that time thought of it, and on the other, to counter the belief of the spiritualists solely in the spirits of the dead. She challenged the world to realize that 'the unseen' was not a criterion for spirituality. Nevertheless, later she regretted her approach, as it generated in some a misunderstanding that Theosophy has primarily to do with psychic development. She was unafraid to admit her mistake in judgment and move on.

From her letters to her sister Vera, one can see HPB's hope to be understood in the deepest sense:

Do not be afraid that I am off my head. All that I can say is that someone positively inspires me — . . . more than this: someone enters me. It is not I who talk and write: it is something within me, my higher and

luminous Self, that thinks and writes for me. Do not ask me, my friend, what I experience, because I could not explain it to you clearly. I do not know myself! The one thing I know is that now, when I am about to reach old age, I have become a sort of storehouse of somebody else's knowledge. . . . Someone comes and envelops me as a misty cloud and all at once pushes me out of myself, and then I am not 'I' any more — Helena Petrovna Blavatsky — but someone else.⁴

That Inner Being was a driving power in HPB's theosophical work and the constant influence on the unfoldment of her life. As she expressed it:

For the Divine Spiritual 'I' is alone eternal, and the same throughout all births; whereas the 'personalities' it informs in succession are evanescent, changing like the shadows of a kaleidoscopic series of forms in a magic lantern.⁵

HPB was absolutely devoted to her Master and to the cause of Theosophy. Often ill, and in many ways flawed, she was still the best instrument the Adept Hierarchy could find. She went through all sorts of discomforts and never really knew what was ahead of her. Through all her works she emphasized that it is by our own merit, and not with the help of a guru that we can work our way to unity with our inner divine essence. On that ground, near the end of her life she established Blavatsky Lodge in London, which became the headquarters of the TS in Europe and the Esoteric Section that was inspired by the Masters.

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As she wrote in her letter to the Indian members of the Theosophical Society,

Thenceforth let it be clearly understood that the rest of my life is devoted only to those who believe in the Masters, and are willing to work for Theosophy as they understand it, and for the TS on the lines upon which they originally established it.⁶

We may wonder if the teachings of Theosophy given in *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and *Isis Unveiled*, are still relevant to the present world? Now thanks to the selfless efforts of pioneer-theosophists we are all familiar with the ideas of karma and reincarnation. Nevertheless, we are facing many of the same temptations. Some are drawn to psychic phenomena ‘which are but another form of materialism’⁷, wrote HPB. Or we may desire to accumulate more and more information even in the form of theosophical knowledge. But knowledge can only be transformed into wisdom through a daily practice, through contemplation, meditation, and selfless service rooted in kindness and compassion.

As HPB emphasized in her address to The American Convention in 1889, ‘Therefore it is that the Ethics of Theosophy are even more necessary to mankind than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of Nature and man.’⁸

The world inherited from this Russian woman a huge resource of practical, spiritual and intellectual teachings. She pointed out the direction of the study of science, comparative religion and philo-

sophy. She inspired her motherland Russia to explore its spiritual roots in the East. All of this humanity is yet destined to rediscover.

A while ago an inquirer on Facebook asked in regard to a posting on Founders’ Day, if we worshipped the founders of the Theosophical Society? It is sad to see such a misinterpretation of our gratitude for the Founders’ great effort to forward the work of the Elder Brothers on behalf of all humanity. And who are these Elder Brothers, the Mahatmas or the Masters as HPB referred to them, and whose willing instrument she chose to become?

H. P. Blavatsky puzzled the Western scientific world with the information about the Brotherhood of the Masters of the Wisdom possessing knowledge of contemporary scientific discoveries and also of those that had yet to be made, their ability to ‘precipitate’ letters, and inspire ideas via thoughts. For some Westerners the concept of the Mahatmas revealing to the ‘developed’ world some ancient truths was curious, others called it a fraud.

Nevertheless, Initiates can be traced throughout the history of humanity. They inspired and encouraged new religious views or insights and founded various philosophical schools. No matter how we name and understand them, They are spiritually evolved individuals who chose the Bodhisattva Path — the path of self-sacrifice, altruism, divine kindness, and compassion — incarnating perhaps for many lifetimes to help suffering humanity. From them Theosophical truths have

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been given through HPB. They were the inspirational force behind the founding of the Theosophical Society. In 'Mahatmas and Chelas' HPB writes,

And whoever therefore wants to see the real MAHATMA, must use his *intellectual* sight. He must so elevate his Manas that its perception will be clear and all mists created by Māya must be dispelled. . . . This perception of the Manas may be called 'faith' which should not be confounded with *blind belief*. 'Blind faith' is an expression sometimes used to indicate belief without perception or understanding; while the true perception of the Manas is that enlightened belief, which is the real meaning of the word 'faith'. This belief should at the same time be accompanied by *knowledge*, i.e., experience, for 'true knowledge brings with it faith'.⁹

This idea is implied in the third object of The Theosophical Society, Adyar: 'To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.' In my perception, the word 'man' used here means Manu or Manas, which is the thinking principle and the human soul.

Studying *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* gives a glimpse of their characters, views and vision. They are beyond the personal Karma and do not express any favours. To quote HPB:

Although the whole of humanity is within the mental vision of the MAHATMAS, they cannot be expected to take special note of every human being, unless that being by his special acts draws their particular attention to himself. The highest interest

of humanity, as a whole, is their special concern, for they have identified themselves with that Universal Soul which runs through Humanity, and he, who would draw their attention, must do so through that Soul which pervades everywhere.¹⁰

The Masters are interested in the present but their main concern is the future, ' . . . and every mistake is so much more accumulated wisdom for days to come.'¹¹ They are the embodiment of Love and Holiness. But their real holiness may be completely different from what our preconceived idea of holiness is. They see things as they are and speak in very clear terms. They do not tell anyone how to act but give only a direction of progress, of possibilities. They understand our strengths and weaknesses and never give up on us. Their aim is Universal Brotherhood, for which the TS is a testing ground. In Letter No. 4 Master KH writes, 'The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. . . . It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*.'¹²

Reading *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* and *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom* compiled by C. Jinarājadāsa one cannot help feeling devotion and reverence for them. However, it has nothing to do with worship. The Masters need co-workers to help them in their tremendous work to guide the spiritual development of humanity, and not a single effort for the sake of the TS is ever in vain.

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The Masters can influence human evolution only so far. We ourselves must be moving more away from the realm of materialism to the realm of spirituality. ‘The Masters do not guide the Society, not even the Founders; and no one has ever asserted that they did: they only watch over, and protect it’,¹³ wrote H. P. Blavatsky.

Realizing how challenging a path spiritual transformation may be, the Masters suggested the necessity of a gradual dissemination and assimilation of Theosophical teachings. Because of our egoistic, self-defensive, animal-human nature resisting any change, a radical interference could do more harm than help.

As HPB wrote in her ‘Letter to the 1888 American Convention’:

According as people are prepared to receive it, so will new Theosophical teaching be given. But no more will be given than the world, on its present level of spirituality, can profit by. It depends on the spread of Theosophy — the assimilation of what has been already given — how much more will be revealed, and how soon.¹⁴

The Masters want us to realize for ourselves the Plan of Manifestation emanating from the Divine Mind by exercising the faculties of our own Higher Principles.

In their letters the Mahatmas wrote about the Path of Discipleship, which is open to anyone willing to serve the spiritual needs of humanity as a whole. It is the Path that allows one to become an instrument of Light, a path that brings

confidence and trust in the Laws of the Higher Life that all is well, and a deeper understanding of our true nature. The Master K.H. wrote:

To accept any man as a chela does not depend on my personal will. It can only be the result of one’s personal merit and exertions in that direction. Force any one of the ‘Masters’ you may happen to choose; do good works in his name and for the love of mankind; be pure and resolute in the path of righteousness (as laid out in our rules); be honest and unselfish; forget your Self but to remember the good of other people — and you will have forced that ‘Master’ to accept you.¹⁵

The idea of progressive appearance of the Adepts during the long history of humanity does not belong to a particular esoteric teaching or religion. HPB explained in *The Secret Doctrine* that human beings will be guided towards ‘a correct comprehension of ancient Wisdom’¹⁶ until they are spiritual enough to continue on their own.

In ‘The Cycle Moveth’ H. P. Blavatsky stated that in the last quarter of every century messengers were sent westward. They were people ‘endowed with correct psychic intuition . . . [who] had the key to the secrets of Nature.’¹⁷ It seems that their appearance is triggered by spiritual crises of humanity. What is their mission according to HPB? To remind humanity of its Divine Nature and spiritual evolution.

According to HPB the appearance of such messengers as Saint-Germain and

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Cagliostro was not much appreciated in the 18th century, which was characterized by the prevailing *mere scientific learning* and the lack of *soul perception*. But spiritual stagnation itself produced a wave of longing and dissatisfaction with pure materialism which, in its turn, inspired mediumistic manifestations and culminated with the spread of Spiritualism in the 19th century. This historical evidence is a wonderful example of the power of thought! However, this wave towards psychic phenomena was clouding the minds of Western people. The Masters chose HPB to become a messenger in order to reveal the true meaning of the latent powers and Divine Wisdom within us.

Spiritual evolution of Consciousness which is the realization of the Unity of Life, that everything around and within us is endowed with power that is the Light of the Spirit, will eventually manifest itself in the world in the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity that has been the vision of the Masters and is the main Object of the Theosophical Society.

On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most

important mission — namely, to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on pure altruistic work, not on labour with selfish motives — on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. This will be a wonder and a miracle truly, for the realization of which humanity is vainly waiting for the last eighteen centuries, and which every association has hitherto failed to accomplish.¹⁸

How can we assist in this process? Perhaps, if each one of us is more vigilant and assertive in choosing thoughts of Unity, and becoming an example of true Brotherhood in our own lives, we will be able to attract more attention and interest to Theosophy. It is not the intellectual side of it that is missing in the life of humanity because now like never before, we have access to almost any information. Deep within we are longing for that Love, Compassion, and Wisdom that goes beyond any physical form, time, and space. Theosophy teaches self-reliance because the only True Teacher is within us. The light of our Spiritual Intuition is the best guide on the path of self-knowledge and unity.

Endnotes

1. *Personal Memories of H. P. Blavatsky*, compiled by Mary K. Neff, Quest Books, Wheaton, IL, 1967, p. 32

2. *Ibid.*, p. 33

3. *Ibid.*, p. 282

4. *Ibid.*, p. 244

5. *Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky*, Vol. XII, 'The Dual Aspect of Wisdom', The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL, 1980, p. 313

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6. Ibid., Vol. XII, 'Why I Do Not Return to India', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1980, p. 166
7. Ibid., Vol. IX, 'Letter from H. P. Blavatsky to the Second American Convention', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1974, p. 244
8. Ibid., Vol. XI, 'Second Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Convention', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1980, p. 162
9. Ibid., Vol. VI, 'Mahatmas and Chelas', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1966, pp. 240-241
10. Ibid., Vol. VI, 'Mahatmas and Chelas', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1966, p. 240
11. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA, 2002, p. 299
12. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, TPH, Adyar, 1962, p. 17
13. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA, 2002, p. 299
14. *Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky*, Vol. IX, 'Letter from H.P. Blavatsky to the Second American Convention', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1974, p. 244
15. *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom 1881-1888*, transcribed and compiled by C. Jinarājādāsa, TPH, Adyar, 1919, p. 33
16. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA, 1999, p. 358
17. *Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky*, Vol. XII, 'The Cycle Moveth', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1980, p. 120
18. Ibid., Vol. IX, 'Letter from H.P. Blavatsky to the Second American Convention', TPH, Wheaton, IL, 1974, pp. 243

The article 'The Two Helenas: An Unknown Portrait' by Elena Alivansteva, published in the August 2015 issue of *The Theosophist*, should have included a note indicating that a photo of the portrait depicting HPB with her mother was published in the May 2012 issue of *The Theosophist*, p. 26. We regret the oversight.

The One Life

TETYANA GOLOVCHENKO

‘FROM the ONE LIFE formless and Uncreate, proceeds the Universe of lives’, said H. P. Blavatsky (1, St.7(5)). She begins *The Secret Doctrine* from this important and infinite notion. The Proem offers the first symbols of cosmogenesis: a white disc on the black background, and then a dot centred in a circle. Thereafter the process of cosmic creation starts to unfold before our eyes, through which the One Life manifests itself. HPB says:

It is the ONE LIFE, eternal, invisible, yet Omnipresent, without beginning or end, yet periodical in its regular manifestations, between which periods reigns the dark mystery of non-Being; unconscious, yet absolute Consciousness; . . . truly, ‘a chaos to the sense, a Kosmos to the reason’. . . . Only the face of the disc being white and the ground all around black, shows clearly that its plane is the only knowledge, dim and hazy though it still is, that is attainable by man. (1, Proem)

This knowledge people have called Divine Wisdom — Theosophy. The word ‘theosophy’ is derived from the Greek, meaning ‘Divine Wisdom’. It was used

for the first time in the third century of our era by philosopher Ammonius Saccas. The light bearer of this ancient knowledge known also to people as Gupta Vidya and Secret Doctrine was H. P. Blavatsky. In *The Secret Doctrine* HPB reveals ‘all accessible knowledge that may be given to humanity in the contemporary century’ (1, v.1, p. 25). She continues saying that ‘this knowledge will be understood by people in 100 years’, inasmuch as she was aware of the Cosmic Laws pertaining to the evolution of humanity and the Universe, the expanding consciousness of human beings, the ability to comprehend global truths, to realize the cosmogony system in its divine origin, and so on. Blavatsky anticipated that as far as the origin of this wisdom is divine, its depth cannot be conceived of with the logical intellect or defined with dogmatic words, because the Absolute Oneness should always remain unattainable for the limited intellect. However, she pointed out that *The Secret Doctrine* is called for ‘to show to man the lawful place in the divine scheme of the Universe’. (1, *Preamble*). Therefore, universal Theosophical ideas can be

Ms Tetyana Golovchenko is the President of the HPB Lodge in Dhipropetrovsk, Ukraine, where HPB was born.

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inquired into, and that is why theosophists are ‘not the experts’, they are the ‘explorers’ aspiring to comprehend theosophical knowledge and, above all, to live in accordance with this understanding.

In our quest for Theosophy, i.e., Divine Wisdom, we (theosophists) follow some fundamental principles — some code of teachings that one is not expected to have an implicit faith in, but which are regarded as basic because they serve as foundation for the Archaic Doctrine.

The most fundamental principle is that of Oneness. *The Secret Doctrine* states, ‘The one circle is divine Unity, from which all proceeds, whither all returns’ (1, Proem). The principle of Oneness manifests itself through the operation of the fundamental law — Oneness of all beings in Nature. This law is applied to all worlds as well as to all beings dwelling in these worlds — in their home. This oneness is not evident if taken as outward appearance or seen from the physical plane. Our universe apparently contains an endless diversity that is maintained owing to a great number of Cosmic Laws. But the background or inner side of this diversity is the Oneness which is the source and centre of all things that they will once return to.

The Secret Doctrine depicts this idea in beautiful words:

In the *Catechism*, the Master is made to ask the pupil:

‘Lift thy head, O Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?’

‘I sense one Flame, O Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it.’

‘Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brothermen?’

‘It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, “Thy Soul and My Soul.”’ (1, St. 5 (4))

The light of the Soul is the precise divinity that abides in all creation. Realizing one’s own divinity, everyone comes to another significant theosophical principle of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity whose hidden essence is the oneness embracing all that is manifested through a relative diversity of individualities and personalities. On the one hand, it is the oneness of all life, and on the other, it is brotherhood.

‘We are all brothers, inasmuch as the whole of life is one and the divine sparkle is one and the same in all people on earth, notwithstanding all the visible differences in their evolution. We are all members of one spiritual family’, said our sister Mercedes Villa Robuste once, in a talk (2).

Why is it so important to be aware of being a member of one spiritual family? According to the teaching, this opens the way for the free descent of vital forces from the mental plane of the Higher Ego, or our individuality, helping to transform and purify our bodies and, what is most

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important, to realize one's own responsibility for the whole spiritual family, for the planet, for all those living in this world.

This responsibility and understanding of the divine principle dwelling in all of us is reflected in human relations through the fraternal spirit of cooperation that imparts an inestimable value to mutual relations between all human beings, and creates harmonious and fruitful synergy on the social level.

When the relations become MATURE, one is aware and accepts that despite all people being different, they 'can be united as friends in order to find a proper solution to world problems, which implies the understanding of the divergence of opinions, and furthering cooperation', (3) and trying to make every action selfless, for the good of all human beings, revealing an 'eternal quest for Good and Oneness' (4).

According to the theosophical teaching, there is a definite necessity for the incarnation of separate groups of people in order to realize mutual karmic relations and study to take part in the one cause. We understand it as follows: to be here and now, to live consciously, to act responsibly in order that 'our everyday choice avers future' (5), the future which we wish our children and the world to have!

These words by Master KH are addressed to all of us:

So, try to be the messengers of love and mercy; while helping others you will at the same time gain your own salvation . . . You have countless pages of the diary of your life, which are pure and new, ready for recording your deeds. O, the child of this race and time, equip with a diamond pen and fill in these pages with noble deeds, days well run through, with years of holy aspirations, and thereby, earn a ceaseless path upwards, to the highest planes of spiritual consciousness.

This path upwards that the Master mentions as well as the expanding of our consciousness to reach higher planes will allow our approach to harmonious Oneness of Life in the Universe.

To emphasize this Oneness and attempt to attain harmony, the theosophists utter Annie Besant's universal appeal or prayer:

O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;
O Hidden Light, shining in every creature;
O Hidden Love embracing all in Oneness;
May all who feel themselves as one with
Thee
Know they are therefore one with every
other.

Endnotes

1. H. P. Blavatsky. *The Secret Doctrine*. The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, India, 1991.
2. Mercedes Villa Robuste. 'Why am I?'. Talk given at the International Convention in Adyar, 1998.
3. Radha Burnier. Address given at the 135th International Convention in Adyar, 2010.
4. Patrizia M. Calvi. 'Heresy of Separateness'. Lecture given at the 10th World Congress in Rome, 2010.
5. Joy Mills. 'Ethics of an Understanding Heart'. Lecture given in London, 13 June 1985.

Insights into the Holy Grail

DIANNE K. KYNASTON

What is the Holy Grail?

Throughout various traditions and literature the Holy Grail has been presented as the object of a spiritual quest and its shape has varied, such as a cup, a shallow dish, a stone and a jewel. The most well-known stories emerged in the early Middle Ages. In his book, 'The Grail — Quest for the Eternal', John Matthews makes the following statement concerning the 'Object of the Quest':

It was this quest that dominated the stories of the Grail throughout the Middle Ages, and no matter what form the quest took, the objective remained the same: a spiritual goal representing inner wholeness, union with the divine, and self-fulfilment. The scene is usually set in a far-off country of Paradisal status, where the Grail is housed in a temple on top of a mountain, surrounded by water and protected by obstacles which only the chosen few can overcome. Its guardian is both a priest and a king, at once alive and dead; and the rewards of the hero successful in the quest are good fortune, blessings, and (sometimes) the hand of the king's daughter.

Cup of the Last Supper

The primary story is that the Grail is the 'cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper'. His uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, collects the cup and other sacred items, and while washing his body he catches the blood of Jesus in the cup. After the disappearance of the body from the tomb, Joseph is accused of stealing it and is thrown into prison, where Jesus appears to him and entrusts the cup to his care and instructs him in the mystery of the Mass. He is kept alive by a dove who deposits daily a wafer into the cup. He eventually leaves prison in 70 AD and together with his sister and her husband, Bron, he goes into exile overseas.

In some versions it is stated he then goes to Britain, where he sets up a table at Glastonbury. The First Table is created with 12 seats and a 13th which becomes the Siege Perilous.¹ In other versions he goes to France, becoming the first of the Fisher Kings.² A temple is built on Muntsalvach, the Mountain of Salvation, and here the Grail is kept, guarded by the Grail Knights.

The Grail becomes then part of the

Ms Dianne K. Kynaston is a member of the Australian Section of the TS.

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Arthurian Cycle. It makes its appearance at Camelot during Pentecost — floating veiled before the knights, and disappearing. The knights pledge themselves to go on the quest to find it. Their adventures are of the initiatory kind — testing their skills and weaknesses. Only three knights succeed: Galahad (son of Lancelot) whose purity allows him to sit on the Siege Perilous; Perceval, the holy fool; and Bors, the humble ordinary man.

Perceval answers the question ‘Whom does the Grail serve?’ of the Fisher King, who is then healed and the wasted land flows with water and becomes fruitful. The three then continue their journey, reaching the Heavenly City in the East — Sarras. Here the final mysteries of the Grail are revealed and the Mass celebrated. Galahad dies here and is taken up into heaven with the Grail. Perceval goes back to the Castle to rule as the new Fisher King, and Bors returns to Camelot to tell the tale.

Pre-Christian Stories of the Grail

The Cup or Krater is found in Greek mythology, and stood for the matrix of creation — the divine mixing bowl from which all Life sprang. Plato refers to three different cups, one being the Vulcan Krater — a fiery cup which mixed the light of the sun. In the Orphic Mysteries there is the cup of Dionysos, from which inspiration came — and in one story one action of Orpheus is described as ‘ranges many other such cups around the Solar Table.’ In Celtic lore there are a number of cups/cauldrons — usually vessels

of rebirth, of inspiration or of plenty. Annwn, the Celtic hell, contained such a cup, and in one story Arthur descends into Annwn to find it. The Irish god Dagda (father of the gods) possessed a cauldron which would only cook food for a hero. The Welsh gods, Bran the Blessed and Matholwch, possessed similar cups.

However the most potent Celtic story is of the goddess, Cerridwen and the Bard, Taliesin. Cerridwen wants to elevate her deformed son by providing him with great wisdom. She sets about to make a special brew in her cauldron, the result of which would be three drops of Divine Wisdom. However it takes a whole year to create the divine drops. She sets a young lad, Gwion Bach (or the Little) to tend the flames.

At the end of the twelve months Cerridwen is distracted when the drops fly out of the cauldron — Gwion catches them on his finger, but they burn, so he puts his fingers to his mouth and thus swallows the drops. The first piece of wisdom is that Cerridwen will be mad with him so he flees and goes through a process of form changing (a common process in Celtic myths). He becomes a hare, she a hound, he becomes a fish, she an otter, he becomes a sparrow, she a hawk, and finally he falls to the ground as a seed of wheat, and she becomes a chicken and swallows him. Gwion then spends nine months in the womb of the goddess and emerges as a baby. Cerridwen places him in a coracle (a small Celtic boat) to float on a local weir. A young prince who is fishing with his

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servant finds the coracle and on opening it the servant declares, 'behold Taliesin, the radiant brow'.

The young baby utters the following:

Thrice have I been born. I know how to meditate. It is a pity that men do not seek to find out all the wisdom that is hidden in my bosom — for I know all that has been, all that will be hereafter.

He then becomes like a Merlin character, residing in the palace for many years and instructing the prince in wise leadership and ethical behaviour.

Taliesin is a true historical person, who lived about the 4th-5th century. He appears in some Arthurian stories. There is some conjecture that Geoffrey of Monmouth based his character of Merlin on Taliesin. In her book, *The Mists of Avalon*, Marion Zimmer Bradley presents Taliesin as the Merlin, and on his death Kevin the Harper becomes the Merlin.

Emergence into the Middle Ages

In the 8th-9th century a Welsh monk, Geoffrey of Monmouth, wrote a book entitled *History of the Kings of Britain*, which was a very ambitious outline of the history of Britain, a certain amount of which is historically inaccurate. However the main emphasis in the book was the presentation of King Arthur as a culmination of the Celtic culture, creating an ideal courtly life.

The book presented concepts of chivalry and high ideals, and went on to inspire the creation of the 'Courts of Love' of Europe, particularly in France,

where many variations of the story were popularized by the travelling poets/musicians known as the troubadours. The stories of Arthur and his knights flowered during this period, with the stories given a particularly Christian bent. Some of the key writers are below.

Chretien de Troyes — *Conte del Graal* composed towards the late 12th century. The story is of a quest which leads to the castle of the Wounded King, where a procession of youths and maidens carry an object called a grail (dish) through the hall — it is not a holy relic. Chretien died before he finished it. Note: he had written an earlier poem, 'The Knight of the Cart' which introduced the character of Lancelot into Arthurian stories. Robert de Borons added to the story, bringing in the character of Joseph of Arimathea and the grail being identified as the cup of the Last Supper.

The third major writing was a book *Queste del Saint Graal (the Vulgate Cycle)* completed in 1210, possibly by Cistercian Monks, who fully developed the idea of the 'Quest' into strong Christian symbology. The character of Galahad — the pure knight (son of Lancelot) is brought in and also the concept of 'Courtly Love'.

The fourth major contributor was the German mystic, Wolfram von Eschenbach — who wrote *Parzival* (1207). His story is of a more personal mystic nature and though outwardly Christian with the Grail associated with Good Friday and the Knights Templar, there are strong Eastern symbols in the storyline

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which were later taken up by Wagner.

The only other two major books were *Perlesvaus*, anonymously written about 1225 and with a Christian mystical theme, and *Morte d'Arthur* written by Sir Thomas Malory and printed in 1485 — this was more the story of Arthur and the downfall of Camelot.

Many stories, poems, songs, music, and so on, have been written down through the centuries, based on the themes of the Arthurian tales and the Grail legends. In the Romantic period of the 19th century the Arthurian symbology was reflected in many such creative works as the poems, *Idylls of the King* and *The Lady of Shalott* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and in art works by Sir Joseph Noel Paton and others.

One painting of special note is that of John Duncan's 'Riders of the Sidhe'. Duncan was a Scottish artist and theosophist and is credited with the revival of Celtic symbology in Scotland. A description of his painting is given thus:

The Sidhe are the fairy folk whose dwelling place is thought to be the great tumulus of New Grange on the northern bank of the Boyne in Ireland. Each year on the Eve of St. John the Sidhe ride forth from their dwellings to the sacred circle to initiate mortals into the mysteries of their faith. Each rider carries a symbol of age-long Celtic tradition: the first rider in the procession carries the symbol of wisdom (the tree of life); the second, the symbol of love (the Grail cup of the heart of abundance and healing); the third, the symbol of the will in action (the sword of

power); and the fourth rider, the symbol of the will in its passive form (the crystal that reveals the past and future).

Each rider by his pose and facial expression reflects the symbol he carries; the first appears wise, the second, loving, the third, eager and hopeful, and the fourth, patient and strong. It was by filling the faces of the riders with their virtues that Duncan felt he was able to raise his 'picture from being merely an ingenious allegory into a symbol of the better kind'.

Modern Times

In the past century the Arthurian stories have dominated much of the art world, literature, movies, and television series. Examples are:

Movies: *Camelot*, *Excalibur*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*

Television: *Ivanhoe*, *Merlin*

Books: There are a long list of books but two that have made people re-evaluate this theme are *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by Lincoln, Baignent and Leigh and *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. These two books bring in a totally different line to the British-Arthurian tales — that of Southern France.

According to the Traditions of Southern France it is Mary Magdaleine who brings the Cup by boat to Europe, landing at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and living in the area of St Baume near Aix. In some versions she comes with Joseph of Arimathea and other Christians, whilst

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in the main story she comes with two other women, one also named Mary and the other Sarah the Egyptian. She spends part of her life preaching Christianity and converting the locals, but spends the last part of her life living in a cave which had previously been dedicated to the goddess Diana. The cathedral of St Baume claims to have her skull which is kept in a silver box and is paraded through the streets on July 17th each year.

This area later became the centre for the community of Gnostic Christians known as the Cathars, whose last stand against the murdering Crusaders was at the small mountain of Montsegur. Tradition claims that the Cup was kept at Montsegur and secretly spirited away when the Crusaders attacked, and in later writings Montsegur became synonymous with Muntsulvach.

Southern France is also home to many of the statues of a mother and child known as the Black Madonnas, due to their black colouring. Some researchers connect the companion of Mary, Sarah the Egyptian, to the emergence of the cult of the Black Madonna — linking her with the Egyptian goddess, Isis. Mary Magdaleine is also connected symbolically with this goddess.

Symbology

The use of the symbol of the Holy Grail has many variations and meanings throughout all the stories, from being the matrix of Life, the vessel of Healing and the goal of the Spiritual Quest.

One interesting aspect is that in the Easter story Jesus is crucified on the hill

known as Golgotha. In Hebrew this word means 'skull'. It is therefore suggested that in the initiatory process the opening of the chakra known as the 'third eye' takes place inside the skull, and that obtaining the Holy Grail refers to this process. This is reflected in the Celtic story related above, that of Gwion the Little becoming 'Taliesin — the Radiant Brow'.

Another way of looking at this symbol is in one of the stories of the Knight Perceval. He has a glimpse of the Grail and goes on the Quest to find it, but it eludes him. Finally he comes to a realization — that he has to do the 'work of the Grail'. He states:

Why has this matter become so important to me that I cannot live without finding the Grail-castle? Why am I looking for the Grail, since I can do the work of the Grail wherever I am? I will mix again with people, help the innocent and suffering, fight for truth and work to establish justice.

On turning around his horse he suddenly finds the Grail castle before him, enters and goes before the dying king Amfortas, who welcomes him and declares him the new Grail King. Thus the story of Perceval can be seen as the journey of the soul through the outer material worlds, ending finally with spiritual liberation.

This theme is echoed in Wolfram von Eshenbach's story of *Parsifal*, which Richard Wagner turned into his great opera. His Parsifal begins as a poor fool, but through the trials of life he learns

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compassion and becomes one with the Grail. It is interesting to note that in the later part of his life Wagner was influenced by Buddhist ideals, and though the Parsifal story is placed in a Christian knightly setting, it is the story of the journey of the soul to attain Enlightenment. In its 2013 production of *Parsifal* the New York Metropolitan Opera Company focused on this Buddhist aspect.

This idea is summed up by K. O. Schmidt in her book, *The Message of the Grail*:

Such is the call of the Grail to you, to me,
to each of us:

Know thyself! Recognize your Self, be-
come one with the Christ within you, until
he has become entirely yourself. Live by

the Inner Light, in the Light of the All-Self
of the Godhead, until it radiates from you,
illuminating all.

Accomplish your eternal task of becoming
perfect as God is perfect.

Realize that you yourself are everything:
the Grail Seeker, the yet unawakened outer
man; the Grail Knight, the man about to
awaken; the Grail King, the awakened
inner man who knows himself as one with
the innermost; and the Grail Herald, the
innermost divine nucleus of Light, the
spirit and power of eternal life.

Realize that the Grail is not an ideal
created by men but the divine ideal of man,
first in his unconscious original form and
later in his future conscious perfection. ✧

Endnotes

1. In Arthurian legend, the Siege Perilous (also known as The Perilous Seat) is a vacant seat at the Round Table reserved by Merlin for the knight who would one day be successful in the quest for the Holy Grail.
2. In Arthurian legend the Fisher King, or the Wounded King, is the last in a long line charged with keeping the Holy Grail. Versions of his story vary widely, but he is always wounded in the legs or groin and incapable of moving on his own.

Men of the three Vedas, the soma-drinkers, purified from sin, worshipping Me by sacrifices, pray for the goal of heaven; they reach the holy world of the Lord of the Gods and enjoy in heaven the heavenly pleasures of the Gods. They, having enjoyed that spacious world of Svarga, their merit (punya) exhausted, enter the world of the mortals; thus following the Dharma of the Triad, desiring (objects of) desires, they attain to the state of going and returning. Those men who, meditating on Me as non-separate, worship Me all around — to them who are ever devout, I secure gain and safety.

Bhagavadgītā 9:20-22

Theosophical Link Officers and Peace Meditation: An Introduction

AREND HEIJBROEK

THE work of the Link Officers is a unique and authentic activity of the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden, embedded in its statutes:

The object of the 'Link Officers' is to promote the objects of the Centre in the world. They foster Peace and Unity between nations and peoples, with special regard to Europe. In order to achieve this object, they organize meetings and maintain contacts with 'links' in the different countries in the world.

This particular work was started in 1938 by the President of the TS, Dr George S. Arundale, who was much concerned with the increased tensions between nations in Europe. Probably he foresaw the great need of more cooperation and regard between the different nations in Europe in order to prevent the recurrence of catastrophes in the future. This concern for peace is much in line with the aims of the ITC since its foundation in 1925: '... to foster the principle of Universal Brotherhood and Peace.' In those days

the activities of the ITC also included political discussions, with younger members in particular. Arundale then selected a group of Centre Members — Link Officers — and instructed them in this work.

The work of the Link Officers: correspondence and meditation

In the original structure each Link Officer was assigned to a number of countries in Europe. Through correspondence with the national Links they established a close connection with the countries they represented. This connection becomes deeper through understanding of the political, economic, cultural, and theosophical aspects of these countries. Thus they tried to identify with the inner soul of the nation. The soul of a nation is quite different from its outside projections. This brings the Link Officers closer in contact with the *inner side of the work*.

In the Angelic Kingdom there are many different kinds of angels. Each group has its own task. One of these

Mr Arend Heijbroek is Chairman of the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, the Netherlands.

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groups is that of the National Deva-s, who stand for the welfare of the nations. The work of the National Deva is said to make a blueprint of the qualities and ideals expected from the people entrusted to him and to stimulate positive qualities, and to promote harmony and cooperation. A very important factor is to stimulate the development of the unique qualities of his specific people, as the soul of each people is quite unique.

In the **daily meditations** at home and once a month at the ITC, the Link Officers seek contact with the Angels of the different countries. The Link Officers meet during the larger monthly meditation at the ITC, generally on Saturday, the fourth weekend of the month at 11.00 am. The Angels are saluted respectfully. Thus the channels between the various nations, continents, and Theosophical Centres are strengthened, helping to transmit the living powers of Unity and Peace which are constantly outpoured. The daily and monthly meditations end with the following words:

There is One Life, One Will and One Brotherhood of Nations. May the spirit of Unity and the power of Love, which knows no barriers, make Brotherhood in the world a living Reality.

While the work of the Link Officers was originally established to support Unity and Peace among the European countries, in the course of time members in several countries all over the world have asked to join in this work, since the work of the ITC is not restricted to

Europe alone. With this broadening of the scope of the meditation, the work of the Link Officers has grown into a global network of Unity and Peace among all people and nations of the world.

Still relevant today?

Today communication among TS members, and information about different countries is much easier to realize than in the past. Moreover the creation of the European Union has made it more unlikely that European countries will enter into war again. So, from a superficial point of view, it seems that the aims of the work have largely been realized. Today, however, we see the re-emergence of regional wars, nationalism, distrust, and ill treatment of minorities all over the world. There is still work to be done!

It is remarkable that this line of work was never broken. There has always been a small group of dedicated workers, both at the ITC and abroad, who saw the need for this special and deep work in an increasingly complex world, which is not a 'melting pot', but a beautiful diamond with all its shining colours, representing all the unique qualities of the individual countries.

Peace meditation

The meditation has recently been modified — no longer being Europe-centric, using modern language — while maintaining its core and strength. It has thus become available for all serious TS groups and members interested in being

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involved in this line of work. It is now called **Peace Meditation**. Meditations for group work as well as individual meditations are available. Since the environment — and therefore Angelic Kingdom — is quite different in the countries and regions of the world, some local adjustments may be required. In those countries without, or with a weak, national identity the angels may not yet be functional.

We know the reality of creative imagination and thought power. By seeing

this as a living reality, the participants cooperate in the building of a united world. A network acting on different levels of existence and supporting cooperation, unity, and peace among countries continues to be crucial for the future of humanity.

For further information

Those seriously interested in becoming involved with this work may obtain practical and background information by writing to <info@itc-naarden.org>. ✧

A group of like-minded thinkers, such as a group of Theosophists, may do much to spread theosophical ideas in their own neighbourhood by agreeing to give a fixed ten minutes a day to thinking on a theosophical teaching. It is not necessary that their bodies should be gathered in one place provided that their minds are together . . . progress, out of all proportion to the physical agencies employed, is made where earnest men and women combine in this mental propaganda.

Annie Besant
Thought Power

Truth Alone Conquers

RADHA BURNIER

WE are living in a world of intense strife and turmoil. Perhaps the world has never been really peaceful. The story of mankind has been one of war, conquest, conflict, seizing other people's possessions, enslaving populations, oppressing the weak, and so on. There is of course the other side, the culture, philosophy, and the arts: nonetheless one cannot ignore the continual strife and unending misery in human society.

The root cause of this situation is not really political, economic or structural; it lies in the corrupt mind of man. We do not always realize what corruption implies. It is not merely a question of being dishonest, or of acquiring what rightfully belongs to another. Corruption has several different forms. Destructiveness, which has affected the human mind in all ages and peoples, is an aspect of corruption. Man wantonly destroys his fellow men, being uniquely aggressive in respect of his own species. He is also rapidly destroying plants, animals, the purity of the sky, thus putting an end to Nature's beauty, and the wonder and variety of the earth.

Every form of self-interest is a symp-

tom of the decay of the mind. Why does man do this? Why does he create conflict rather than bring about cooperation? Why is he so prone to destroy, and so reluctant to be constructive? Perhaps because he has so little knowledge of the nature of the universe of which he is an intrinsic part. This amounts to saying that he has no faith in the power of truth, because truth is the nature of things as they are, the universe as it is, each thing in its essential nature, and ourselves as we really are.

This is truth, but we do not know what the essential nature of ourselves or of anything else is. Therefore we are divorced from truth, we do not believe in it, or trust truth somehow to bring about the good. We are afraid of being true to ourselves, for we think we cannot attain material success that way. We doubt if we can better ourselves through benevolence, and because of this lack of faith, we have to suffer.

Human society cannot exist without a certain amount of order in it. If there is total anarchy and indiscipline, it would be impossible to live together as a community or a nation. Therefore,

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everywhere people have tried to regulate relationships and bring about some kind of order through such well-known means as legislation, the police, the army, methods of rewards and punishment, and deterrents of various kinds. That kind of order is the lowest kind that one can establish in a society, because it is chronically at the breaking point. Every civilization collapses sooner or later because order is sought to be established from outside. There is a tension between the authority of the establishment and the self-interest of individual citizens. There may also be a conspiracy of self-interest between a certain section of the population and the authorities.

We must note on the other hand that most of the religions have made affirmations about the supreme power of truth. Truth is said to be above all things, above the will of man, his desires, his ideas and plans. The Christian scripture declares, 'Great is truth and mighty above all things.' Very similar is the sentence from the Upanishad, *satyam eva jayate*, 'Truth alone conquers', which India has adopted for its motto. But although the motto may be honoured in principle and although the Upanishads, the Bible, and other revered scriptures declare that truth is above all things, most people prefer the advice of the humourist Mark Twain who said, 'Truth is the most valuable thing we have, so let us economize it!'

This is the principle on which most people base their lives, not realizing that living in falsehood is an extremely complicated affair, whether it is at the

collective level or at the individual level. It has often been pointed out that if you tell a lie you have to go on covering it up with more lies. Deceit is a slippery path, and it is difficult to recover from it once a person starts that way. Falsity generates mental stress, which is why lie-detectors are commonly used these days for testing. Apparently, when someone indulges in lies, agitation and stress make themselves evident. Conflict also creates stress. Knowing this, it would seem sensible to adopt a saner course!

Think of a world in which everyone can be trusted; life would be so much simpler for everybody. But in a world where almost nobody can be trusted, there is need for complicated procedures, checks and regulations. In many countries, there are innumerable rules and laws because corruption is pervasive. The more falsehood there is, the more complicated life must be. Life is much simpler when people are straightforward, cooperative and affectionate. This simple fact which even a child should be able to understand is what the large majority of people do not want to grasp.

If you quarrel at home or anywhere else, think of all the tension it creates, the thoughts and reactions it generates, the indigestion it causes and so forth; while when there is harmonious relationship, when you feel affectionate, there is no problem. We can all live serenely, without whirlpools within our heads. A violation of truth is a violation of one's self-nature, which is why there is agitation and stress; and when there is

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contradiction inside the psyche it breeds chaos outside. A person who is at odds with himself creates problems for others. He misinterprets, he is very demanding; the frustrated individual is always a source of disharmony. Therefore, unless there is harmony and integrity within, there cannot be social order outside or happiness and well-being for mankind as a whole. Shakespeare wrote:

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

We can now look at the other side. There is a spark of truth in everyone and everything, perhaps hidden under layers of self-interested thoughts and emotions. That spark is alive, ready to burst into flame. To use a different metaphor, it is an impetus, pushing like a tiny seed which grows into a mighty banyan tree. This concealed force has sometimes been called the Christ nature. Some say that the Buddha nature is in all things; the flower, the plant, and every atom contains it. It is so strong, so mighty that one cannot wish it away, or run away from it, however hard one might strive, because it is the very depth of ourselves. From where to where can one run away? This is the theme of the beautiful poem of Francis Thompson, 'The Hound of Heaven':

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind.

Unfortunately for ourselves, we seek to run away, to lose ourselves in pleasure, in petty satisfactions, attaching ourselves to families, relationships, becoming maniacs for work, occupied all the time, so that we need not face what is within. Yet it cannot be escaped:

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy.

There can be no peace, no happiness, no realization of the significance of life when we are trying to escape what is within, the heart of ourselves. Because we do not realize this, we do what we consider to be realistic or pragmatic. This is the bane of the human mind that it wants to be pragmatic, for pragmatism so-called is most unpractical. Obviously all the 'practical' policies and actions so far have not brought about human happiness or a good society. Each one is seeking to get the best out of life through wealth and pleasure, in duties performed, and all kinds of other things. Indian tradition has classified the human aims as *artha* (possessions, property), *kāma* (pleasure, sensation, excitement), *dharma* (religious duties) and *moksha* (inward freedom). The last is rarely sought. People prefer immediate gain, which the first three aims promise. This seems more practical, yet it is nothing but short-sightedness — a fragmented, opportunistic attitude.

In recent years, expediency has dictated the cutting down of vast forests at an alarming rate. Thereby man is destroying his own beautiful habitat, the

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earth. By possibly altering its climate irreversibly, he is committing suicide. This is a speciality of mankind: trying to put an end to itself through pollution, through the armament race, and destructiveness in general. It may be immediately profitable to cut trees, but it is disastrous in the long run. From the short-term point of view it is also advantageous for people to arm themselves more and more, but it makes for a cruel, violent world of terrorism, child-battering, etc.

It is essential to know what the true goal of man is in order to act wisely. This also involves knowing oneself, as explained earlier. What are we? Are we the body, with its aches and pains, its sensations and desires, the body which decays so quickly, and which can become a source of misery? Are we our inconstant emotions — disappointment one day, hope another day, liking somebody and then disliking him? Being tossed around in the current of opposites, are we our disjointed, restless thoughts? There are all these contradictions within, and we pursue ends which cater to those contradictions — an impossible task. We produce turmoil inside and outside, because we do not know ourselves and do not want to know ourselves. Self-deception has become second nature.

Madame Blavatsky said, 'It is not the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom but the knowledge of Self which is wisdom itself.' One of the greatest of human gifts is the power to comprehend values. A mind which is incapable of realizing values is not human. Even when

it is unevolved, the human mind senses that there is some such thing as truth; it knows the difference between harmony and disharmony. It can consciously rise out of its finite interests to universal perceptions. The loftier and the more universal the outlook of the mind, the more clearly does it see that many of the facts which at one time seemed to be important and which it mistook for truth are not truth at all. Facts are not truth. There is an infinity of facts about the universe, and science is gathering such information. There is no limit to this search or to information connected with subtler fields relating to fairies, devas, astral bodies, auras and other things normally invisible to others. But life is not merely a collection of facts, of things, or of functions. It is far more significant and profound.

Why are people ready to think that what they know now and the facts which may become available in the future are truth? They do so only because this kind of knowledge has produced comforts, novelties, excitement and ego satisfaction. Journeying to the moon or possessing electronic houses which bake the food while the owner is in his office or open the door of the garage before he arrives offer great satisfaction to the ego. Therefore material achievements have taken precedence over everything else. They have overshadowed concern for values.

When success is disconnected from relationship, which is what is happening now, there is tragedy. Relationship does

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not thrive in the mad race for achievement. Kindness, tenderness and affection which are intrinsic to relationship and therefore to life have become irrelevant to a lot of people. Alienation, imbalances of the mind, and violence abound in the present day because we do not care for relationship. Life is relationship, as Krishnamurti pointed out. There is a loving intelligence, an ordered purpose behind all the processes of life, the phenomena which we see outside. To have a glimpse of that purposeful order, that intelligence and love at work, the creative energy of this universe, may be to know truth. A fragmentary, distorted perception cannot see this. The mind must shed its finite interests to reach a wholeness of understanding and sympathy, the dimension of universality. Virtue is in that. Hence, truth is not so much knowledge; it has to do with relationship, with the wider vision, wholeness of perception, and therefore with love.

We do not know the meaning of the word 'love', but love may be a deep knowledge of relationship. Dr Annie Besant said:

That which can never come by argument, by controversy, by intellectual reasoning, will come when the heart of love within us has awakened the spiritual nature. For love is deeper than intellect, love is greater than intelligence, and the love nature and the divine nature are so closely blended that it will not be long ere the man who loves his brother loves God.

What love can discover mind and thought cannot because love penetrates to the very heart of things. It discovers the song, the fragrance within, not merely the details on the surface. Discovering the truth of relationship, and coming to that profound understanding when love becomes part of our nature may be essential for the future of humanity.

The word 'love' like the word 'God' is more known through misuse than anything else. It is confused with attachment. When a person clings to another and never allows that person out of sight, it is lauded as great love. So is a sense of possession in relation to a child, husband or wife. But love is not any of these things. It cannot co-exist with jealousy, anger or suspicion. It does not breed dependence, break up integrity or impose fear. As all great teachers have pointed out, love is the absence of self.

As mentioned earlier, love is a form of knowing. In one of the great mystic works of the West, it is said: 'Of God himself no man can think; He may well be loved, but not thought.' This echoes the famous declaration of the Upanishad that thought and word retreat from Reality (Brahman) without reaching it. Thinking a great deal about somebody, missing him, feeling unhappy because he is not there, and so forth are thought to be a form of love. Many are the false notions about love. The Buddha pointed out that one is tainted by love thought, but made free by love. Thinking in terms of 'love' is merely the desire of the self to have and to hold.

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How is one to know love in the real sense, love which may be another word for truth? The Lord Buddha's instructions were simple and clear. He indicated that daily life itself provides the training. It is there that we have to test ourselves, not by resorting to philosophers, magicians, gurus of various kinds. We cannot know whether what they speak is true or not. One can be easily deceived, as long as there is self-interest. Everyone finds the teacher he wants. People flock to gurus who tell them to indulge in drugs, sex, and what not, and to pursue the gratification of their own appetites. So each one finds the 'teacher' he merits and wants. The teacher may be self-deceived, a fraud, or an ignorant man. One cannot find a teacher unless there is some light within, the light of discrimination.

Therefore it is necessary to begin by testing oneself. Following the Buddha we can reject as untruth

that which conduces to passion and not to dispassion, to attachment and not to detachment, to increase of gain and not to decrease, to greed and not to austerity, to discontent and not to serenity, to gregariousness and not to solitude, to indolence and not to energy, to delight in evil and not in good.

The religious fanatic, the dogmatist, or the believer thinks that he knows the truth. He quotes the Bible, the Koran or the Veda and goes to battle, slaughters heretics, and does cruel things. He hates those who do not agree with him. In pursuit of political ideology, millions have

been liquidated. So, that which stirs up hatred, envy or other selfish passion is not truth. Each one of the phrases in the teaching of the Buddha tells us how daily life can change.

There is no truth without love and compassion. By the daily testing of one's thoughts, actions and reactions when the mind is led into a state of serenity and goodness, there grows within the heart a new flower. It is the absence of self. Truth is grounded in silence; not the silence of the tongue, nor the silence of suppression, but the deep silence of a self which is abolishing itself. There is no striving then to sustain this puny, fragmentary, transitory and illusory entity we call the self.

Again the Lord Buddha said:

As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her son, her only son, so let the disciple cultivate love without measure towards all beings. Let him cultivate towards the whole world above, below, around, a heart of love, unstinted, unmixed with differing or opposing interests. And let a man maintain this mindful love whether he stands, walks, sits or lies, for in all the world this state of heart is best.

This state of heart is truth. The secret is in the word 'mindful'. Unless one lives a mindful life there can be no discovery of the truth of love, which is the most important thing for humanity. It is not the accumulation of facts which will save the world, but love, which must increase until the wide universe is suffused with its radiance:

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Tender, compassionate will we abide, void of malice, loving, and with rays of love shall we suffuse all that is, even with love grown great and measureless.

When there is increase of love in the heart of man it will solve all problems. The great king Asoka said that the con-

quest of dharma is greater than any other conquest. Dharma here means true teaching. Nothing can shatter or destroy what is true. It must conquer. The Latin saying *Omnia vincit amor*, 'Love conquers all', is the same as the Sanskrit saying *satyam eva jayate*, 'Truth alone conquers'. ✧

Truth is Truth, one, alone; it has no sides, no paths; all paths do not lead to Truth. There is no path to Truth, it must come to you.

Truth can come to you only when your mind and heart are simple, clear, and there is love in your heart; not if your heart is filled with the things of the mind. When there is love in your heart, you do not talk about *organizing* for brotherhood; you do not talk about belief, you do not talk about division or the powers that create division, you need not seek reconciliation. Then you are a simple human being without a label, without a country. This means that you must strip yourself of all those things and allow Truth to come into being; and it can come only when the mind is empty, when the mind ceases to create. Then it will come without your invitation. Then it will come as swiftly as the wind and unbeknown. It comes obscurely, not when you are watching, wanting. It is there as sudden as sunlight, as pure as the night; but to receive it, the heart must be full and the mind empty. Now you have the mind full and your heart empty.

Sayings of J. Krishnamurti

Books of Interest

BEYOND THE PATHLESS, *Anecdotes from the Life of J. Krishnamurti*, by Nandini Patnaik, SET Publications, Cuttack, India, pp. 462, Rs. 250.

This is the second book of the author on J. Krishnamurti. Her earlier book, *J. Krishnamurti — The Making of a World Teacher*, in a question-and-answer format, has been welcomed by readers throughout the world. The book under review is a serious attempt by the author on the life of JK and on his teachings in the form of interviews, questions and answers, public talks, audio and video tapes, and so on. All these give direct access to readers to the core of his message.

The modern world has the fortune of listening to 'K' directly without any interpreters. The author rightly states: 'Writing this book has been a spiritual journey for me.' Readers may have the same experience going through this book.

It is noteworthy that at the end of each chapter in this work, there is an excerpt, 'A Grain of Sand', mostly collected from Krishnamurti's lectures, talks, discussions, commentaries, and notes. This helps readers to acquaint themselves with the original message of JK. This handsome volume also contains rare pictures of Krishnaji's parents with his brother Nitya, in his twenties. The transformation

of a shy, dark, lean, vacant-looking boy into a world teacher has been pictorially depicted. K's pictures with his 'guardians' Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater are very fascinating and arouse nostalgic memories in all who have listened to him.

The book is divided into two parts. The first twenty nine chapters contain the childhood and school days of JK, his discovery by C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant, the 'process' which he underwent during his initiations, and his declaration that Truth is a pathless land. Part II has eighteen chapters, mostly in the form of an enquiry into 'Who was Krishnamurti?' and 'How to read Krishnamurti?'

In the chapter 'The Ladder of Human Progress' the author has taken pains to familiarize readers with Theosophy and its concept of the Scheme of Evolution. She has also mentioned about the White Brotherhood, Arhans, initiations, and so on, hitherto unknown to the public till the advent of the Theosophical Society. The author has also devoted some chapters for the Theosophical Society, its three declared objects, its emblem, and its real work, unlike in many books on Krishnamurti.

In the chapter 'Theosophy: A Towering Culture' she says that there was also another purpose behind the Theosophical Society — to welcome the World Teacher.

Books of Interest

In *The Key to Theosophy*, H. P. Blavatsky states:

Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the *new torchbearer of Truth*. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles from his path.

In this context Krishnamurti's role in the world scenario has great relevance.

The chapter 'Fall and Rise in Love' contains a very interesting statement of JK:

Desire is the most precious possession of men . . . if you kill your desire, you are like the withered branch of a lovely tree . . . each must discover his own way of attainment. . . . In everyone there are three different beings — the mind, the emotions and the body. And if you observe you will find that each of these beings has a separate existence of its own and tries to create and act independently of the other, thus causing disharmony. Absolute happiness comes from the establishment of harmony between these three. If you are driving three horses — each trying to run independently of the other two — unless you are able to control them and drive them all together, you will not reach your destination.

In the chapter 'From Awakening to

Enlightenment', the author raises a very pertinent question:

A question comes to mind: is such a state of consciousness (enlightened) for all or only a chosen few? If it is for the few, it is not worth inquiring further, for 'those few' may only be freaks of Nature. But if not, everyone has a right to it, and it is worth inquiring into the possibilities.

In the Chapter 'The First Glimpse of Decline', the author narrates Krishnamurti's visit to the Adyar campus on 3 November 1980 as requested by Mrs Radha Burnier, President of the Theosophical Society. Krishnaji's visit to the TS was after a gap of forty five years. The author describes:

His visiting the Theosophical Society was like two mighty waves meeting one another on the vast expanse of the ocean, no regrets, no hurts. To many Theosophists, it was a great healing on the face of time.

He also visited the Indian Section Headquarters in Varanasi and Dr Annie Besant's room in 'Shanti Kunj'.

Krishnamurti made a landmark speech in 1927, 'Who Brings the Truth', in which he unambiguously talked about the Great Ones as his Beloved:

I have been asked what I mean by 'the Beloved'. I will give a meaning, an explanation, which you will interpret as you please. To me it is all — it is Sri Krishna, it is Master KH, it is the Lord Maitreya, it is the Buddha, and yet it is beyond all these forms. What does it matter what

Books of Interest

name you give? . . . My beloved is the open skies, the flower, every human being. . . . Till I was able to say with certainty, without any undue excitement, or exaggeration in order to convince others, that I was one with My Beloved. . . . It is no good asking me who is the Beloved. Of what use is explanation? For you will not understand the Beloved until you are able to see him in every animal, in every blade of grass, in every person that is suffering, in every individual.

Krishnaji was reiterating the message of Theosophy — the Oneness of Life, clothed in a new language. For many, name and form are important, and 'Master' is a two-dimensional picture or a three-dimensional idol. Many TS members took iconoclastic statements as anti-Theosophical. But Krishnamurti was only emphasizing the Universal Brotherhood of humanity in a world worshipping 'icons' and so-called gurus and god-men.

On one occasion Krishnamurti said:

One of the best things that can happen to this country (India) is to burn all the books and start again. Then you are forced to think for yourself, you have to work for

yourself, to find out — not quote everlastingly from some book. I do not know why one particular book should have much more significance than any other book.

Krishnaji was emphasizing self-enquiry without depending on any authority of scriptures, gurus, and ideology. In the future also many books may come out on Krishnaji and 'K's teachings. But the reader should make every attempt to read beyond the words, as another great sage said:

The scriptures consisting of many words are a dense forest which merely cause the mind to ramble. Hence Men of Wisdom should earnestly set about knowing the true nature of the Self.

Some typographical errors in the book may be corrected in the next edition. On page 77, the year in which Dr Besant became President of the TS should be 1907 instead of 1906. Ernest Wood is misspelt as Earnest Wood. Nevertheless, the book is worth reading and should be made available to a large number of readers world over.

K. DINAKARAN

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Theosophical Work around the World

New TS Adyar Website Launched

We are pleased to announce the launching of the new TS Adyar website. It is compatible with mobile devices and will continue to be developed. The new site has been completely redesigned to make its wealth of information more accessible and user-friendly. Let us know your thoughts via the 'Connect' Menu. The new website address remains the same (www.ts-adyar.org).

Russia

Mr Pavel Malakhov, Presidential Representative of the TS in Russia, reports that they organized three meetings for their Summer School (see <https://vk.com/teomakaryevka>) in the second half of August in different parts of the country. The first two focused on deeper study of theosophical teachings, e.g., *The Secret Doctrine*, meditation, moral and ethical principles from different traditions, and psychology. The third was intended for those recently introduced to Theosophy, who studied *Through the Golden Gate* among other materials.

Two joyful events at ITC Naarden

On 23 August the staff of the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) at Naarden, the Netherlands, happily received the international President, Mr Tim Boyd, his wife Lily, and daughter Angelique into their small community. A programme called 'Another Dutch Day' attracted some 75 participants from

seven different countries. The aim was to share together in the progress of the work of the TS. Mr Ingmar de Boer spoke first on sociological changes in the West concerning spirituality. Mr Boyd followed, stressing the need for interpersonal communication: 'We are irresponsible when we are content with just talking to ourselves.' His second lecture dealt mainly with Adyar, which needs the support of all TS members. At the concluding session, Mrs Patrizia Calvi gave an introductory talk on the amazing work of Theosophical Order of Service in Italy. All lectures can be accessed at: www.itc-naarden.org.

Two weeks later the ITC organized an Open Day for the twelve most active spiritual organizations at the Centre. Some of these were already present just after gifting of the Centre to the TS ninety years ago, a fact celebrated during Dutch Day. These include the Dutch Section of the TS, the Round Table, the Liberal Catholic Church, and Co-

Theosophical Work around the World

Masonry. J. Krishnamurti had visited the Centre several times. With the Centre's improved facilities, in the last fifteen years, we have been able to welcome new activities, e.g., Buddhist retreats and Raja Yoga programmes. These were like different facets of a shining diamond, contributing to an active Centre.

Open Day was very well received. The organizations had a fresh opportunity to present themselves. Also, by working together it appeared that they could learn a lot from each other. The day attracted over 150 visitors, with many new faces and positive responses.

India

A study camp for two days was conducted by the international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, on 4-5 September 2015 in the **Delhi TS Federation** premises at the invitation of the Indian Section. The first day was devoted to studying two small books: Mr S. S. Varma's *Yama and Niyama* and Muriel Daw's book on the Pāramitas. On the second day, various ways of studying *The Secret Doctrine* and Krishnamurti's teachings were explored, emphasizing the need for an intuitional approach.

The **Himalayan Study Centre in Bhowali** was the venue of the newly envisaged School of the Wisdom in northern India. Participants came from the US, Brazil, Spain, Australia and India on 7 September 2015 to attend the first course based on *Ancient Wisdom – Modern Insight* by Shirley Nicholson.

Dr Satapathy inaugurated the course.

Twelve days of deep study and reflection followed in salubrious weather. The juxtaposition of the basic truths of Ancient Wisdom and modern thoughts provided deep understanding of Theosophical principles. Prof. R. C. Tampi, Director of the School of the Wisdom, guided the studies.

Theosophy in Esperanto

In July the 100th International Congress of Esperanto was held in northern France with more than 2,600 participants from eighty countries and over 100 associations and groups. Mr and Mrs Herbert and Margaret Welker, members of Lodge Fênix in Brasília, represented the TS and the group 'Theosophy in Esperanto'. They displayed informative pamphlets about the TS and a few writings in Esperanto, English, and French.

The TS in America has placed on their website a link to a site called 'Theosophy in Esperanto' (www.teozofioesperante.org) created by Mr and Mrs Welker. There is also an article by Piermichele Giordano on the TS and the Esperanto language (<https://www.theosophical.org/ts-network/theosophical-links>).

Recent Changes

The TS in France has a new General Secretary, Mrs Jeannine (Nano) Leguay, succeeding Ms Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu; and Mr Widyatmoko is the new General Secretary of the Indonesian Section, after the passing of Mr Herry Ispornomo. ✧

Theosophical Work around the World



French members at Monet's Giverny garden in Paris, France, in mid-August, with the international President, Mr Tim Boyd, his wife Lily, and daughter Angelique (to his right), where they toured and the President conducted a meeting



From left to right: Mr Tim Boyd, Mr Buphendra R. Vora, Mr Arend Heijbroek, and Mrs Jenny Baker, General Secretary of the TS in England, under Annie Besant's portrait at the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden, the Netherlands

Theosophical Work around the World



ITC Naarden Centre council members having a lunch meeting



ITC council members on the steps of St Michael's House in Naarden

Theosophical Work around the World



Participants at the School of the Wisdom held at the Himalayan Study Centre in Bhowali, northern India



Mrs Margaret and Mr Herbert Welker, representing the TS and their website, 'Theosophy in Esperanto', at the 100th International Congress of Esperanto held in France in July

Theosophical Work around the World



To Annie Besant

Seeking to frame this day a verse for thee,
I mused in what fit image I might cast
The fashion of thy pow'r. The strong-wing'd blast,
The surging flood, the salt resistless sea,
All things whose soul is sovereign energy —
Throng'd thro' my shaping brain, and as they pass'd
Each, for a flash seem'd thou; and then, as fast,
Seem'd not. For ever there would rise in me,
Thoughts of a rarer, gentler strength; the pow'r
Of little tasks accomplish'd perfectly;
Of little fragrant deeds of kindness shed,
Ev'n at a touch, like blossoms, silently;
The simple grandeur of that snowy head
Bent o'er its patient toil from hour to hour.

E. A. Wodehouse

From the Besant Theosophical College Magazine, Besant Centenary Number, Madanapalle, March 1948.

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY

Date	Section	General Secretary, etc.	Address	Magazine	Email address
1947	Africa, East and Central	... Mr Narendra M. Shah	... PO Box 14525. 00800, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya	... <i>The Theosophical Light</i>	narendrashahi999@gmail.com
1909	Africa, South	... Mr Jack Hartmann	... 9 Ronean, 38 Princesses Ave., Windsor E. 2194	... <i>The South African Theosophist</i>	hartmann.jack.c@gmail.com
1956	Africa, West	... Mr John Osmond Boakye	... PO Box 720, Accra, Ghana	... <i>The West African Theosophist</i>	tswafrica@gmail.com
1929	America, Central *	... Mrs Beatriz Martínéz Pozas	... Colonia Universitaria Norte, Calle Julio Mejía, Polígono E-7, Mejicanos. San Salvador, El Salvador C. A.		bemapo@hotmail.com
1920	Argentina	... Mr Jorge Garcia	... Santiago 257 — 2000, Rosario	... <i>Teosofía en Argentina</i>	stargentina@sociedad-teosofica.com.ar
1990	Asia, East and Southeast †	... Mr Chong Sanne	... 540 Sims Avenue, No. 03-04 Sims Avenue Centre, Singapore 387 603	... <i>Newsletter</i>	sanne@theosophyasia.net
1895	Australia	... Mrs Linda Oliveira	... Level 2, 162 Goulburn St., Surry Hills, NSW 2010	... <i>Theosophy in Australia</i>	tshq@austheos.org.au
1912	Austria *	... Mr Albert Schichl	... Oberbaumgarten 25, 4204 Haibach im Mühlkreis	... <i>Theosofie Adyar</i>	theosophie.austria@aon.at
2013	Bangladesh †	... Mr B. L. Bhattacharya	... B/4-3, Iswarchandra Nibas, 68/1, Bagmari Road, Kolkata 700 054		blbtos_2005@yahoo.com
1911	Belgium	... Mrs Sabine Van Osta	... Place des Gueux 8, B1000 Brussels, Belgium	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	sabine_van_osta@hotmail.com
1965	Bolivia †	... Mrs Guillermina Rios de Sandoval	... Pasaje Jauregui No. 2255, La Paz		guilleriossandoval@yahoo.com
1920	Brazil	... Mr Marcos L. B. de Resende	... SGAS Quadra 603, N. 20, CEP 70200-630 Brasilia (DF)	... <i>Sophia</i>	marcos.resende@riedel.com.br
1924	Canada *	... Mrs Maryze DeCoste	... 3162 Rue de la Bastille Boisbriand QC., J7H 1K7	... <i>The Light Bearer</i>	modecoste@hotmail.com
1920	Chile *	... Mr Cesar Ortega Ortiz	... Casilla 11 Sucursal Paseo Estacion, Estacion Central, Santiago	... <i>Revista Teosófica Chilena</i>	sociedadteosoficachile2010@gmail.com
1937	Colombia †	... Mrs Nelly Medina de Galvis	... Carr 22, # 45B-38 (Cons. 404), Barrio Palermo, Bogotá	... <i>Selección Teosófica</i>	nmedinaga@yahoo.es
1997	Costa Rica †	... Ms Maria Orlich	... Apartado 8-6710-1000, San José		orlichsm@gmail.com
2007	Croatia ▲	... Mrs Nada Tepeš	... Krajiška ulica 24, 10000 Zagreb	... <i>Teozofija</i>	z.zemlja@gmail.com
1905	Cuba	... Ms Barbara A. Fariñas Piña	... Apartado de Correos 6365, La Habana 10600		teocuba.sociedad@gmail.com
1987	Dominican Rep. †	... Mrs Magaly Polanco	... Calle Santa Agueda 1652 Les Chalet Col San Juan Puerto Rico Apartado 23 00926		polancomagaly@yahoo.com
1888	England	... Mrs Jenny Baker	... 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA		president@theosoc.org.uk
1907	Finland	... Mrs Mirva Jaatinen	... Teosofinen Seura, Vironkatu 7 C 2, Fin 00170, Helsinki	... <i>Teosofi</i>	info@teosofinenseura.fi ylisihteeri@teosofinenseura.fi
1899	France	... Mrs Jeannine (Nano) Leguay	... 4 Square Rapp, 75007 Paris	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	editionsadyar@wanadoo.fr
1902	Germany	... Mrs Manuela Kaulich	... Hauptstr. 39, 93138 Lappersdorf	... <i>Adyar</i>	theosophie-adyar@gmx.de
1928	Greece	... Mr Antonios Papandreou	... 25 Voukourestiou St., 106 71-Athens	... <i>Ilisos</i>	info@theosophicalsociety.gr
1907	Hungary †	... Mr Thomas Martinovich	... Hunyadi Janos ut 17. II. 8, H-1011 Budapest	... <i>Teozófia</i>	tshutau7@hu.inter.net
1921	Iceland	... Mr Halldor Haraldsson	... PO Box 1257 Ingolfsstraeti 22, 121 Reykjavik	... <i>Gangleri</i>	iceland.ts@gmail.com
1891	India	... Mr S. Sundaram	... The Theosophical Society, Varanasi 221 010	... <i>The Indian Theosophist</i>	theosophyvn@gmail.com
1912	Indonesia	... Mr Widyatmoko	... Jalan Anggrek Nelimurni A-104, Jakarta 11410, Timur	... <i>Theosofi</i>	teosofi.indonesia@gmail.com

1919	Ireland *	...	Mrs Marie Harkness	...	97 Mountsandel Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, UK BT52 ITA	...	marieharkness@yahoo.co.uk
1954	Israel ▲	...	Mr Abraham Oron	...	PO Box 9114, Ramat-Gan, Israel 5219002	...	ornet@theosophia.co.il
1902	Italy	...	Mr Antonio Girardi	...	Viale Quintino Sella, 83/E, 36100 Vicenza	...	sti@teosofica.org <i>Rivista Italiana di Teosofia</i>
1997	Ivory Coast *	...	Mr Pierre-Magloire Kouahoh	...	Yopougon, 23 Rue Princesse B. P. 3924, Abidjan 23	...	pm_kouahoh@hotmail.com <i>Sophia</i>
1919	Mexico	...	Mr Enrique Sanchez	...	Ignacio Mariscal 126, Col. Tabacalera Mexicana, Mexico, D.F. 06030	...	sede@sociedadteosofica.mx info@sociedadteosofica.mx info@theosofie.nl
1897	Netherlands, The	...	Mr Wim Leys	...	Tolsraat 154, 1074 VM Amsterdam	...	np@theosophy.org.nz <i>Theosophia</i>
1896	New Zealand	...	Mr John Vorstermans	...	18, Belvedere Street, Epsom, Auckland 1022	...	saleh.noshie@bedriftshelse1.no <i>TheoSophia</i>
1913	Norway *	...	Dr Saleh Noshie	...	N-6873-Marifjora	...	Theosophical SocietyCF@gmail.com
1935	Orlando ▲	...	Mr Carl Metzger	...	1606 New York Ave. Orlando, Florida, 32803-1838, USA	...	
1948	Pakistan †	Jamshed Memorial Hall, M. A. Jinnah Road, opp. Radio Pakistan, Karachi	...	bhagwanbharvani@hotmail.com <i>The Karachi Theosophist</i>
1924	Peru †	...	Mr Julio Pomar Calderón	...	Av Republica de Portugal 152, Breña, Lima 5	...	sede-central@sociedadteosoficaenperu.pe <i>Búsqueda</i>
1933	Philippines, The	...	Mr Rosel Doval-Santos	...	Corner P. Florentino and Iba Streets, Quezon City, Manila	...	philtheos@gmail.com <i>The Philippine Theosophist</i>
1921	Portugal	...	Mr Carlos Guerra	...	Sociedade Teosófica de Portugal, Rua José Estevão, 10 B, 1150-202 Lisboa	...	carlos.a.g.guerra@gmail.com <i>Osiris</i>
1925	Puerto Rico †	...	Mrs Magaly Polanco	...	Apartado 36-1766 Correo General. San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936-1766.	...	polancomagaly@yahoo.com <i>Heraldo Teosófico</i>
2012	Qatar ▲	...	Mr Dom Escobido	...	Teyseer security services Doha, Qatar	...	qatarblavatskylodge@yahoo.com
2013	Russia †	...	Mr Pavel Malakhov	...	Molodyozhny pr., 10-221, 650070, Kemerovo, Russia	...	pr@ts-russia.org
1910	Scotland *	...	Mr Stuart Trotter	...	28 Great King Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6QH	...	albion.trotter@gmail.com <i>Circles</i>
1992	Slovenia *	...	Mrs Breda Zagar	...	Kunaverjeva 1 SLO-1000 Ljubljana	...	zagarbreda@gmail.com <i>Teozofska Misel</i>
1921	Spain	...	Mrs Angels Torra Buron	...	Av. Vall d'or, 85-87 08197 - Valldoreix(Spain)	...	presidencia@sociedadteosofica.es <i>Sophia</i>
1926	Sri Lanka †	...	Mr M. B. Dassanayake	...	2-C/60, Maththegoda Housing Scheme, Maththegoda	...	mbdassa@gmail.com <i>The Sri Lanka Theosophist</i>
1895	Sweden	...	Mrs Ing-Britt Wiklund	...	Kalle Posts väg 48, S-702 29 Örebro, Sweden	...	ing-britt@wiklund-orebro.se <i>Tidlös Visdom</i>
1910	Switzerland †	...	Mrs Eliane Gaillard	...	17 Chemin de la Côte, CH -1282 Dardagny, Genève	...	egaillard@bluewin.ch <i>The Lotus</i>
1997	Togo *	...	Mr Kouma Dakey	...	S.O., A.R.T.T., BP76, Adeta	...	
2013	Ukraine *	...	Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko	...	Office 3, 7-A Zhylianska St., Kiev 01033	...	org@theosophy.in.ua <i>Svitoch</i>
1886	USA	...	Mr Tim Boyd	...	PO Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60187-0270	...	admin@theosophical.org <i>The Quest</i>
1925	Uruguay *	...	Mr Ramon Garcia	...	Javier Barrios Amorin 1085, Casilla de Correos 1553, Montevideo	...	st.uruguay@gmail.com
1922	Wales *	...	Mrs Julie Cunningham	...	Bryn Adda, Brynisiencyn, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey, LL61 6NX UK	...	theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk

Date refers to the date of formation

* Regional Association

† Presidential Agency

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The Council of the European Federation of National Societies: *Chairman:* Miss Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, 67 Rue des Pommiers, F-45000 Orleans, France. Email: **trankimdieu@msn.com**Inter-American Theosophical Federation: *President:* Mrs Isis M. B. Resende, SGAS 603 conj. E s/n. Brasilia-DF, CEP 70200-630 – Brazil. Email: **imbresende@gmail.com**Indo-Pacific Theosophical Federation: *President:* Mr John Vorstermans, 60B Riro Street, Point Chevalier, Auckland 1022, New Zealand. Email: **john@theosophy.org.nz**Pan-African Theosophical Federation: *Chairman:* Mr Jack Hartmann, 9 Ronean, 38 Princess Avenue, Windsor E 2194, South Africa. Email: **hartmann.jack.c@gmail.com**

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