

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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Editor: *Mr Tim Boyd*

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

President: Mr Tim Boyd

Vice-President: Dr Deepa Padhi

Secretary: Ms Marja Artamaa

Treasurer: Ms Nancy Secrest

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 // www.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.

Presidential Address

To the 143rd Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society (TS)
Adyar, 31 December 2018

I AM very happy to warmly welcome all of you to this 143rd International Convention at our Adyar international headquarters, and I wish you a very pleasant and inspiring time while you are here. Let us rise to invoke the blessing of our elder Brethren, who are ever ready to guide and help those who are unselfishly dedicated to the good of other living beings:

**May those who are the embodiments of Love Immortal
bless with their help and guidance this Society,
founded to be a channel for their work.
May They inspire it with their Wisdom, strengthen it
with their Power, and energize it with their activity.**

I am now pleased to open this 143rd Annual Convention of the TS.

Since the original founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) 143 years ago this movement has spread to more than 70 countries in the world. More importantly, it has affected thought and values globally. The core ideas of Unity, multi-dimensionality, omnipresent intelligence, self-responsibility, and spiritual evolution have become part of the fabric of global thought in ways both subtle and obvious. Although much of current affairs would suggest a heightened sense of separateness and denial of the fact of Oneness, the principles have become firmly rooted in human consciousness and will necessarily unfold. Our role as members of the TS in this unfoldment is to determine whether they are realized

gracefully, or accompanied by the turbulence that much of current behavior would indicate.

As an organization, the TS came into being to serve humanity in the deepest possible manner. Many organizations in the world are here to help in a variety of ways — to provide food, medical care, shelter, religious optimism, financial aid. While every level of compassionate response is needed, ultimately none of the causes of suffering can be addressed on their own level. Food, money, shelter, and so on, do not affect the root cause of social, and even physical imbalance. Although the TS's work has been described as a "forlorn hope", it is the *only* hope. Until as a human family we loosen

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the inherited conviction of our separateness, we will continue the cycle of aggression, competition, and dissatisfaction that is currently engulfing us.

Throughout the TS's history we have been blessed with insightful members and dynamic leaders. As if speaking with one voice they have continually emphasized the requirement that we assume responsibility for our own unfoldment. In the absence of some grounding in the experience of Oneness, we have little to give. While this self-unfoldment is a must, the deeper direction is toward a nucleus of awakened individuals capable of expressing unity in action. It is only "through the soothing influence of brotherhood" as contemplated by the TS's inner founders that the instinctual expression of human nature can be prevented from ever increasing levels of harm. In a practical sense this means that we as members of the TS have to continue to learn how to work together, regardless of personal likes and dislikes.

When the TS was founded one had to be a visionary to have a genuine sense of global interconnection. Today the fact of interconnection is continually, often painfully, present. Anyone with a mobile phone is in touch from moment to moment with currents in the world. The relative ease of communication and travel has made aspects of our work more possible. Whereas in the recent past our

groups and Sections had to work in relative isolation, today new levels of cooperation are possible. At the international level, for the last three years, we have been meeting to develop a working nucleus to plan and implement a spectrum of projects.

The work we are attempting is global, but requires the focused efforts of local members and groups. Outwardly, circumstances and conditions are continually changing, but the collective tendencies of humanity move much more slowly. In this time of ever-increasing urban concentration, where the stabilizing influence of Nature's rhythms is becoming less available to most, we are faced with a challenge. How do we create islands of peace and stability in the midst of the swirling, irregular currents of modern life? How do we expose those who are searching, perhaps without even knowing it, to these alternative possibilities?

There is no set answer to these questions, but there are examples. In India for 136 years the center at Adyar has been a source of spiritual focus and quiet; in the United States the Olcott National Headquarters has been a similar example; in Finland, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Cuba, Israel, Brazil, and numerous other places around the world their centers have demonstrated the magnetic quality of cooperative effort toward deepening awareness.

* * *

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The highlight of this year was the **11th World Congress** of the Theosophical Society (TS) held in **Singapore** from 4 to 8 August, with the theme “Consciousness, Contemplation, Commitment: The Future Is Now”. This historic event was organized for the first time in Asia with 173 delegates from 24 countries. It was held in the Conference Hall of Ramada Singapore at Zhongshan Park, I gave the opening address and Marcos de Resende gave the keynote speech on the theme. That evening I gave a lecture on “A Theosophy for Tomorrow”, and also gave a lecture on “The Intuitive Mind” in a public auditorium on 5 August, with more than 300 attending. Other Congress lectures and workshops were given by several General Secretaries, officers of the TS worldwide, and the President of Singapore Lodge, Mr Chong Sanne, who led a team of members from the Lodge who worked hard and efficiently to organize this Congress. The 4th Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) International Conference was also organized in Singapore following the World Congress from 9 to 10 August, with 67 members from 18 countries attending. Nancy Secrest, TOS International Secretary, chaired the session and I gave the opening speech.

Continuing with the **Indo-Pacific** region, I inaugurated the 126th **Indian Section** Convention at the Adyar Theatre on 1 January, chaired by the international Vice-President, Dr Deepa Padhi. The “State of the Indian Section Address” followed, along with a slide presentation by the General Secretary,

Mr Pradeep Gohil. The Indian Section Council elected Mr V. Narayanan, uncontested, as Treasurer for 2018-2019. There was a decrease of 250 members in the Indian Section as of 30 September.

I attended the North India Study Camp held from 6 to 8 October at the Indian Section Headquarters in Varanasi on “The Process of Unfoldment: An Education of the Soul” and gave a public lecture on “The Importance of the Centre” held in the evening of the first day. I spoke to the TOS group members in the Workers’ Training Programme on 9 October. The 95th South India Theosophical Conference was organized in Adyar from 30 March to 1 April on “Illumination Must Come from Within”. From six Federations 118 delegates attended the Conference, which started with the welcome address by the international Secretary Ms Marja Artamaa. A study camp was organized at the Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali, from April 13 to 19 by the Indian Section on the topic “Glimpses into *The Secret Doctrine*”, which was directed by Mr U. S. Pandey. A National Youth Study Camp was also held in Bhowali from 25 to 27 May by the Indian Section with 44 participants from various parts of India, which was directed by Mr Shikhar Agnihotri and Ms Varsha Patel.

A TOS camp was organized in the Bhowali Centre from 29 to 31 May on the theme “Working Towards the Future” with 36 active members of TOS from different Indian regions, including Mrs Deepa Padhi, international Vice-President,

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Nancy Secrest, TOS international Secretary, and Marja Artamaa, international Secretary.

I addressed the **New Zealand** Convention held this year in Palmerston North in late January. The focus was on “Seeing through the Illusion: A Journey of the Heart”. Other guest speakers included Ms Dorothy Bell from Australia and Mrs Lily Boyd. Two schools of Theosophy were held this year, one in October on “The Spiritual Path in Daily Life: Exploring the Mahatma Letters”, with Mr John Vostermans as the course facilitator. The second one was held in April with international speaker Mrs Elena Dovalsantos as course director exploring the theme “Our Origins and Destiny”, based on *The Secret Doctrine*. The Immersion Weekends were inspiring, with a focus on a deeper awareness of “Theosophy — Practical Spirituality”. They celebrated the opening of a new building for the Hawkers Bay Branch in April with seminars which were attended by members from all around the world.

The **Australian Section** has reported another highly active year of events and performances, including a successful Annual Convention held in Brisbane with long-time member and featured speaker Professor Emeritus Richard Silberstein; a survey of all TS Lodges/Branches to obtain information on their training requirements and their suggestions for the planned introductory training video; and starting of an annual TS prize at the University of Western Australia. The presentations made by the National Lecturers and the National President, and the

Educational Coordinator were well received. A short list of top-priority and high-priority items have been prepared in a business plan workshop, which is a commendable initiative.

Mr B. L. Bhattacharya, the Presidential Representative of **Bangladesh**, delivered a lecture in Dhaka University on “The Works of Vidyasagar and Theosophy”. Two meetings were organized by Mr Prahlad Debnath, in Maynamaty and another at Comilla, with Mr Bhattacharya as the guest speaker. A dedicated senior member, Mr Subodh Chandra, was felicitated, and copies of the book in Bengali *Gignasha* written by Mr Bhattacharya were distributed among the members. The TS in **Sri Lanka** had a useful and interesting year of theosophical study and meditation classes, generating motivation and enthusiasm among the members.

The TS in **East and South East Asia** comprises Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, and Myanmar. The **Singapore** Lodge formed in 1889 is the largest in this Presidential Agency, with 340 members and Mr Chong Sanne is the President. The Chinese Project Team that develops the Chinese website and carries out the translation of theosophical literature for Chinese-speaking people, is based in the Singapore Lodge. I visited the Lodge on 21 October and gave a talk on “The Importance of the Centre”. The Selangor Lodge, formed in 1929, is currently the sole Lodge in **Malaysia** and the President is Ng Ay Na. There is an increase in the membership from 89 to 95. **Japan** has only one Lodge at present, called Nippon, in Tokyo, with

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38 members. It was formed in 1972. The current President is Naoto Okamoto. The TS in **Myanmar** has one Lodge, the Olcott Lodge in Yangon, with 34 members. The current President is Pyi Thane.

The General Secretary of **the Philippines Section (TSP)**, Dr Rosel Doval Santos, reports that for the last two years, there has been a high proportion of serious theosophical workers and inquirers below age 35. In most meetings, young members outnumber the older ones. Of the 2,000 new inquirers, over 50% are young. They have also increased the usage of social media. Being an archipelago, the internet (particularly Facebook) has proven to be a valuable tool, with virtual chat groups, including a vibrant youth forum, "Theosofriends". They also elected a youth representative to their TSP Board. They intend to explore giving a scholarship to the School of the Wisdom for their youth representatives or leaders to deepen their understanding of Theosophy. The Hao Chin family donated a large parcel of land in Metropolitan Manila to develop a theosophical retreat center. A young architect and their youth group are leading this project to have a future home of Theosophy in Manila (a wide parcel of empty land full of trees and vegetation in the middle of the city) much like a small Adyar.

The **Qatar** TS Lodge, which is directly attached to TS Headquarters in Adyar, celebrated the Foundation and White Lotus Days. They are continuing with their regular study classes on *Theosophy Explained* by P. Pavri.

I am happy to report that thanks to the 3-year efforts of the **English Section** members and its National President, Mrs Jenny Baker, the Unincorporated Association has officially become a Charity. They are continuing with their programmes of holding public talks and members' studies. Two other important events during the year were the North-Western Federation Conference in June on the theme "The Quest for the Holy Grail" and a Summer School in August on "The Pillars of Wisdom". It is encouraging to note that the English Section has continued with their online Diploma in Theosophy course for members worldwide. During the year, 108 students have taken the course.

The 13th **All-Ireland** Convention held in Dublin in June witnessed a historic event when the Northern and Southern Lodges joined forces as a Regional Association. The Guest Speaker, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, spoke on "Theosophy in Action: Transform Ourselves, Transform the Planet" was inspiring and well received. It is also good that the membership has been increasing. The Organizing Secretary keeps in touch with each member with a newsletter and study notes every 2 to 3 months. An appreciable donation was collected by the TS to support TOS work on education.

Austria stands steady at 58 members. Some of them attended the annual session of the European School of Theosophy held at Salzburg in Austria. The annual meeting of the Austrian Association was held in March, where Albert

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Schichl was re-elected as the Organizing Secretary and Dr Helmuth Ecker as his Deputy and Speaker for the Association.

Lotus Lodge in Zagreb, **Croatia**, has 20 members and meetings are held twice a month. This year they introduced a new activity in their meetings by discussing one virtue in every meeting. While a couple of members are devoted to the translation of articles and books, some others are dedicated to working on the website.

The TS in **Finland** has 22 Lodges of which two are in Estonia. The Section has lectures each Sunday in Helsinki and monthly around the country. It organized the mid-summer Festival and a Self-transformation seminar at Kreivila, the Summer-Estate. The Lodges in Estonia organized a successful Summer School in June. Three seminars were arranged with Finnish sister organizations in Helsinki, Kreivila, and Kalevala on "Keys to Happiness and Self-Knowledge". Their TOS continued supporting the Olcott Memorial High School, Social Welfare Centre, and the Boys' Hostel in Adyar.

The **French** Section achieved their targets by making operational a new website, adapting activities based on past participation, and publishing new books for the public. Their other activities included regular meditation courses. Special events like "Celebration of Lights" were organized, and there was a special sale of various objects, the proceeds of which were earmarked for Adyar renovation works.

"Open-Door Day" for the public for the propagation of Theosophy was very successful. Lodges were also active in the provinces. In Marseille, on the eve of the Executive Meeting of the EFT held on 31 March, a workshop was conducted on "The Role of the Human Being in the Universe", which was well attended.

The TS in **Greece**, with headquarters in Athens, has been active with regular meetings of the study groups and Lodges. Their magazine, *Ilisos*, has also been published every three months, a dependable source of information and study materials.

The **German** Section had an active year. The traditional Summer School in July was held near Kassel on the topic "To Develop Our Latent Power". Attendance from the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, and USA made the meeting an international one. A new Lodge, Brahmapura, was founded in Halstenbek, near Hamburg. Membership increased from 126 to 128. Two healing groups met twice a month as part of TOS activities.

The TS in **Hungary** has three Lodges, one in the country and two in Budapest. In November a young couple, members of Siddharth Lodge, organized a new lecture series on healing which they learned about in Nepal. Translation of important theosophical texts has been continued as well as regular activities. They have an active TOS group.

The **Italian** Section, with 25 groups and 19 centers, continued their "members only" meetings and public conferences, which were very well received. The 104th Italian TS (ITS) National Congress was

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held in Cattolica from 31 May to 3 June, on “From Knowledge to Service: The Challenges of the TS”. The ITS YouTube channel is remarkable for its interesting videos and lectures. Their website is visited by around 4,000 viewers every month. The Italian TOS has extended its cooperation to Syria, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Burma, and the Philippines.

There are two Lodges in **Marseille**, France, directly attached to Adyar: (1) Arc en Ciel Lodge organized a lecture by Jean Iozia on “Adyar and the Founders” on 17 November. The Lodge meets monthly and discusses important theosophical publications like *Man and his Bodies* by Annie Besant. (2) Ananda Lodge of the Theosophical Centre for Studies and Research. They have been rendering an active platform for members to have discussions and meetings. The Ananda Lodge re-elected Mrs Brigitte Iozia as their President in January.

The members of the TS in **Portugal** were quite happy in their new premises and activities conducted on the basis of an annual calendar available via their website. They have a public meeting every fortnight, which is always well attended. The Hermes study group was formed in Lisbon.

The TS in **Russia** has 8 branches and one research centre with 125 members. Study meetings are held in almost every branch weekly or once in two weeks. The International Theosophical Congress dedicated to the 142nd Anniversary of the TS took place in St Petersburg from 17 to 19 November. The focus was on

“Scientific Value, Relevance, and Importance of *The Secret Doctrine*”. It was attended by 50 participants. The annual 7th All-Russian Theosophical Conference was held in Kemerovo on 25 March with more than 50 participants. The annual Winter and Summer Theosophical Readings were held in Makaryevka, Altai Region, on the study of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The TS in **Slovenia**, with four Lodges, continues with their weekly meetings on different days. They had their Winter School in February and Summer School in June. The motto of this study year was “Love”.

In December, the 11th edition of the Silent Retreat was held in the **Spanish** Section, conducted by the President of the European Federation of the TS, Ms Trâm-Thi-Kim-Diêu. Another retreat took place in Montserrat on the theme “The Spiritual Instructions According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*”, with 50 participants. They had the 40th edition of the Iberian Days function, organized jointly by the Portuguese and Spanish Sections. “Living with Intelligence” was the topic. They had a seminar in May on “Symbolism”, and in August they had their Summer School with a focus on Pablo Sender’s talks on the “Yogasutras of Patañjali” via the Internet.

The TS in **Sweden** has five Lodges with 147 members. They have their regular activities, including lectures, study groups, and workshops on various theosophical themes. They had arranged two mini-schools at the headquarters in Stockholm with around 20 participants in each. The one in autumn was on “Self-

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Transformation According to Vic Hao Chin”, with Ms Mirva Jaatinen, and the other in the spring on “Theosophy in the Beginning, Now, and in the Future”, with Ing-Britt Wiklund, Pertti Spets, Birgitta Skarbo, and Monica Ostetius. Summer school was held on “The Path of Life”, with 23 participants. The TOS in Sweden is supporting children at an orphanage in Goa, India.

In an Extraordinary Assembly on 14 November, the **Swiss** TS held the election of their new Presidential Agent, Mr Andrea Biasca-Caroni. The Swiss and European Theosophical Seminar was held from 23 to 24 March in Ascona by the Swiss TS in collaboration with the European Federation and the Italian Section. The theme was “Theosophy: Tradition and Revolution”. The Presidential Agent and his wife made a donation of Euros 10,000 for the construction of a new Archives space at the Adyar Library building in order to protect the Archives from the Adyar River flooding.

The Theosophical Society in **Ukraine** set up Lodge Perfect Way in Kyiv in April. The 13th Annual Convention was held in November, with a huge attendance from almost all Lodges. On 8 May an annual Scientific Interdisciplinary Conference was held in Dnipro on “H. P. Blavatsky and Contemporaneity: Spiritual Aspects of Modern Outlook”. Jacques Mahnich delivered two talks, one exclusively on HPB’s heritage, and the second on “Science and Theosophy: A Search for Bridges”, attended by 80 participants. Summer school was held on “In the Stream

of Divine Love”. The first bilingual magazine *Theosophy and Science* was published. The study centers in many places continued with their annual activities. The TOS in Ukraine has also been very active in helping the TS by gathering volunteers.

Julie Cunningham, the Organizing Secretary of the **Welsh** Regional Association reports that they have 3 Lodges and one Study Centre, with 74 members. Regular study meetings are held throughout the year. Mr Vic Hao Chin, Jr, from the Philippines, Fiona Odgren from Vancouver, and Jenny Baker, National President of the English Section, visited them and gave illuminating talks.

The **American Section (TSA)** reports that they have included Daya Kujansuu from Michigan in their National Board of Directors for the Central District. The Theosophy Wiki website has approximately 25,000 viewers per month and the videos on the TSA YouTube channels are having over a million visitors. In fact, this makes the theosophical teachings, the Ageless Wisdom, easily accessible to those who are sincerely searching. People across the country and the world can now join and participate in eight weekly online groups which would help human society to understand the TS Mission. They also offer many online classes such as Pablo Sender’s course on “The Birth of Humanity” and Ravi Ravindra’s course on “Nourishing the Pilgrim Soul”. The public programs department provided high-quality programs for study, meditation, service, and the community that are of

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interest to new members. The AV department completed a combined effort with the famous author of *Proof of Heaven*, neurosurgeon Eben Alexander and his partner, Karen Newell, to produce a multimedia program on “Traversing the Depths of Consciousness”.

The General Secretary of the **Argentinian** Section, Mr Esteban Langlois, reports that in October, together with the San Lorenzo Lodge, their National Days were organized with the theme “Challenging Together the Power of Illusion”. The program was held in two parts: the first following the text of J. J. Van der Leeuw’s *Gods in Exile*, and the other based on the *Yoga-sutras of Patañjali*. In the concluding session Eduardo Gramaglia was the guest speaker. National Days were held from 30 March to 1 April with the focus on “Human Regeneration: There Is No Other Path to Go.”

The **Brazilian** Section, with 603 members, 33 Lodges and 20 study groups has a presence in most parts of Brazil. The National Section departments continued their work, including a program to avoid depression and suicide in collaboration with UNB, Brasilia University, with lectures on “Happiness and the Meaning of Life”. They had two National Meetings: one was the 37th Summer School in January focusing on “Meditation and the Occult Side of Things”; the other was the International Theosophical School on “Dharma: The Call from Within”.

The **Bolivian** Section celebrated the centenary of the TS in that country from 23 to 27 August with workshops and con-

ferences. Learned theosophists led the discussions and contributed to the deliberations. All the branches were active, holding meetings and discussions as well as participating in national events.

Maryse DeCoste was reelected in May as the President of the **Canadian** Theosophical Association for a second term. It is good to know that their membership is increasing. Their National Convention was in Calgary, Alberta, on “Those Who Came Before Us”, with four speakers: Michael Gomes spoke on Mabel Collins; Fiona Odgren selected Helena Roerich as her subject; Naftaly Ramrajkar led a workshop on “The Mystic Poetry of Rumi, Saint Kabir, and Others”; and Reid Pollock chose the Count of St Germain. For the 2019 Convention, Vancouver was selected as the venue. David Sztain was appointed as their new National Treasurer.

In August Mrs Ligia Montiel was elected as Presidential Representative for the TS in **Costa Rica**, replacing her predecessor of many years, Mrs María Orlich Soto. They worked in harmony during the year with the collaboration of all 5 Lodges. In early June they received me and Mrs Isis Resende, President of the Inter-American Federation. We both spoke to members and also gave public lectures. Their Summer School was attended by members of the 5 Lodges and also those coming from the rest of Central America and the Caribbean. They appreciated the presentation of visiting lecturer Mr Martin Leiderman, from the USA, who discussed the “Cosmogogenesis” portion of HPB’s *The Secret Doctrine*.

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As reported by the General Secretary of the **Cuban Section**, they had their Annual Convention on 14–15 January on “A Testament of HPB for Us”. In late May I visited the Cuban Section with my wife, Lily, and gave two talks: “Overcoming Fear” and “The Four Minds” followed by question-answer sessions. It is good to know that this year members are showing increased interest in studying *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*.

The **Dominican Republic** Presidential Agency has Lodges Atma and Nueva Aurora, and HPB study group. On 22 November Lodge Atma celebrated the Anniversary of the TS with the participation of Eriberto Rosado as speaker. It also sponsored a three-session course on “What is Karma”, which was open to the public free of cost. HPB Study group continues with the book *The Seven Jewels of Wisdom*. The Nueva Aurora Lodge celebrated the White Lotus Day. They have started Hatha Yoga and meditation sessions twice a week.

During the year, the **Orlando Lodge** in the USA, attached to Adyar, continued their regular monthly programs of Meditation, Healing Circles, and School of Theosophy. They also celebrated Adyar and White Lotus Days.

The Fraternity Lodge in Asunción, **Paraguay**, has 16 members. Discussions on theosophical studies is a regular feature, and it has an established digital network with the TS in Argentina, Spain, and Brazil, and the Presidential Agent of the STI apart from some branches of TS in USA and Europe. The Presidential Representative

in **Peru** reports that they held 15 public meetings during the year, and that their membership grew to 38. They celebrated the 94th anniversary of the foundation of the TS in Peru on 1 June, which coincided with the date that HPB Lodge was founded.

After the visit of Hurricane Maria on 21 September to **Puerto Rico** and the Caribbean, the Presidential Agency could not hold regular Lodge meetings until February. I visited Puerto Rico in March with my wife, Lily, and gave two public talks, which were also attended by a group of members from the Dominican Republic. I went to the most affected community and visited Gabriela Mistral High School, which follows Montessori-like teaching methods. I interacted with teachers, students, and their parents. It was quite interesting. In December the TOS made the shelter, “La Casa de Todos” (Everyone’s Home) for their wonderful project “Return a Smile to a Child after Hurricane Maria”. This is a shelter for battered children and their mothers. TS members took emergency articles, canned food, cleaning detergents, coloring books and crayons, and educational toys for the younger children.

In **Uruguay** every Lodge meets weekly to study important theosophical books. They encourage lending books to members and are open twice a week for the public to read theosophical materials free of cost. The Presidential Representative of the TS in **Venezuela** reports that the members of their two Lodges meet to study together every Sunday for two hours. In these meetings, half an hour is

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dedicated to meditation for peace. Sister Mayira Alonzo, plastic artist, made a presentation of her works with the theme: “The Complexities of the Ephemeral in the Whole of Existence”.

The **Pan-African Theosophical Federation** (PATF) is composed of three Sections: (1) East and Central Africa, (2) West Africa, and (3) South Africa. The General Secretaries of these Sections are ex officio members of PATF. The **East and Central African** Section is active though adversely affected by loss of members. It consists of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. The TOS activities are praiseworthy.

The centenary celebration of Nairobi Lodge in **Kenya** Region was the highlight of this year which started with the planting of 250 Moi trees at “Moi Forces Academy” in May. Ananya Sri Ram Rajan visited Nairobi in September and conducted a weekend seminar on “Towards a Just World” and a public lecture on “Human Behaviour in Today’s World”.

Dar es Salaam Lodge in **Tanzania** Region had 12 ladies’ meetings and 4 Lodge meetings in the whole year. Studies on theosophical literature are continued on 3rd Saturday of each month. Members are active in TOS distributing food to orphanages, food and blankets to the needy and helping deserving students with school and college fees. Nile Lodge, Kampala in **Uganda** Region undertook a study from *At the Feet of the Master* and *Reincarnation*.

Kitwe Lodge, **Zambia** Region meets every Saturday with good attendance. The

members continue their study on *Death and After*. Mufulira Lodge in Zambia Region meets every Sunday. All important theosophical days are celebrated by the members though the membership is only 7. The total membership of the East and Central African section has increased slightly. This year it is 138.

The **West African Section** has a problem of the Internet being unreliable and hence communication is reportedly difficult. Nonetheless, all efforts are made to be in touch. The **South African Section** has been plagued with vandalism and theft of property. Efforts are being made to overcome these local issues. The Lodges in Johannesburg and Pretoria are active. The Maputo Lodge in Mozambique is in good health. It is commendable that a new South African TS Section national website will be in position soon. All the Sections, however, are in financial stress due to the dampened international trade of the countries.

Togo Regional Association has two Lodges with 20 active members and 13 sympathizers. Study meetings take place twice a month in all the Lodges and at Kara. *The Key to Theosophy* and *Light on the Path* are studied in two lodges.

At the **International Headquarters** in Adyar the renovation work of Blavatsky Bungalow and the Headquarters Building area continued at a steady pace. In the **Archives and Museum** department, 30 research scholars used the facilities, coming in person or requesting scanned materials by email. The Convention archival exhibition on “Dr Annie Besant

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— A Hundred Years Ago”, inaugurated by international Vice-President Dr Deepa Padhi, was well received. The Archives team consists of Mrs V. Vedavathi, Mr Mohan Mani and Ms Jaishree Kannan. Mr Bernd Jesse’s contribution as a volunteer was very much appreciated.

In 1886 President-Founder Col H. S. Olcott established the now world-reputed **Adyar Library and Research Centre**. Dr T. Narayanan Kutty is the current Director and Prof. C. A. Shinde the Chief Librarian, with 14 supporting staff. The automation and digitalization of Hinduism and Theosophy books was completed. A total of 38,000 books were checked for automation work and those in bad condition were scanned. They were rearranged in the shelves and listed on a printout available in the reading room. In addition to the regular Library display we had a year-long special exhibition of photographs on “Flora and Fauna of Adyar”, taken by Prof. A. Chandrasekharan. Over 1,050 visitors, including many from Chennai schools, came to see it. The Library was used by 1,200 registered reader members and 280 borrowers (out of 760) used the Library this year. About 3,500 books were read in the reading room, 400 books were borrowed, and 1,000 manuscripts consulted.

The **School of the Wisdom** began their courses in Adyar in November, with Mr Jon Knebel, from the TS in America, covering much material on the meaning of the Theosophical Movement. In December, the Ven. Olande Ananda, from Sri Lanka, discussed the difference

between concept and reality, an ongoing, endless process on the spiritual path. In January, Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr, went deeply into the process of self-awareness, leading to self-transformation, the responsibility of every human being. Dr José Foglia introduced the anatomical background of our spiritual journey, pointing out directions for investigation if we are to be true to our real selves.

The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) is present in 35 of the 55 countries where the TS is active. It is headed by me as ex-officio President, and an International Secretary (IS), currently Ms Nancy Secrest, who is appointed by the President. The IS administers and coordinates the TOS from wherever she is located, currently in Adyar, India.

The TOS has several outreach avenues. David Sztain of TOS Canada edits our *TOS: Intouch* online e-newsletter, which is published quarterly and includes articles on issues relating to service written by TOS members and others. Our webmaster, Rozi Ulics, of TOS USA, is creating a new website, but its address currently remains: <international.theoservice.org>. We continue to increase the activity on our TOS International Facebook Page, <facebook.com/tosinternational/>, and our following is growing.

This year the 4th TOS International Conference was held in Singapore from 9 to 10 August. Nearly 70 delegates from 17 countries attended. The dedication to service of TOS groups and individuals around the world benefited thousands of poor students, needy persons, ailing

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patients, the aged, the blind, the handicapped, orphans, animals, and the environment. This year funds were collected and aid is being given for flood relief efforts in Kerala, India.

As to **travels and activities by International Headquarters' officers**, in January I participated in the New Zealand Section's annual Convention held in Palmerston, and also spoke to members in Auckland and Hamilton. The following month I gave a meditation workshop for non-TS members in New York City at The Open Center. In late May and early June it was a Caribbean Basin tour, giving talks for the Florida Federation in Miami (USA) and on a round-trip cruiser from Miami to the Bahamas, after which I flew to San Juan, Puerto Rico (USA), and to Havana, Cuba, in both of which I gave several talks to members and the public. Then I visited the TS in El Salvador and spoke to members and non-members of the TS in Costa Rica, both in Central America. In late June and early July a General Council meeting and Strategic Planning sessions were held in the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden, the Netherlands, also attended by the other three international officers whose reports are below. The 11th World Congress was held in Singapore in early August, followed by the 4th International TOS Conference, in both of which I gave a total of four talks. While in India from mid-August to late October, I travelled to Dombivali, speaking for the Bombay Federation members, near Mumbai. In Bhowali I participated in an Indian Section goal-setting meeting at the

Himalayan Theosophical Centre, and spoke at the Karnataka Federation annual conference in Bangalore.

The Vice-President, Dr Deepa Padhi, attended the Foundation Day commemoration on 17 November as the Chief Guest of the Utkal Theosophical Federation, Odisha, speaking on "The Relevance of Theosophy in the Present Day". She inaugurated the "1917: Dr Besant's Impact on Indian Society" exhibition at the Adyar Museum on 31 December, and chaired the inaugural session of the 126th Indian Section Convention on 1 January at the Adyar Theatre. She gave the inaugural address on "Working Towards the Future" at the TOS Summer camp held at the Bhowali Himalayan Centre from 29 to 31 May. Dr Padhi also attended the General Council meeting and Strategic Planning sessions in Naarden, and participated in the 11th World Congress in Singapore, delivering a talk on "Consciousness, Compassion, and Contemplation". She was a participant in the 4th TOS International Conference which followed the World Congress and made a presentation on "Women's Empowerment" — a project of TOS, Odisha.

In March and April, the Secretary of the TS, Ms Marja Artamaa, gave a total of three talks in Adyar: At the TOS South Zone Conference, on "Service through Will, Wisdom, and Love"; at the South India Conference, the welcome address; and at the Gandhinagar Lodge, another talk on "Advantages of Lodge Meetings". In May she went to the Bhowali Centre

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with three others to inaugurate the TOS Indian Camp. She also attended the General Council meeting and planning sessions at the ITC, Naarden, in early July and the World Congress in Singapore in early August. As Chief Guest in the Nalbari District of the Assam Federation, she gave the Usha Deka Memorial Lecture, "All Is One in the Light of Theosophy" on 23 September, and the next day she visited the Lodges of the same Federation in Guwahati.

The Treasurer of the TS, Ms Nancy Secrest, gave the inaugural address in celebration of Annie Besant's birthday on 1 October at Adyar, where, at the end of March, she was also Chief Guest at the TOS South Zonal Conference this year, speaking about the importance of service in our lives. She also spoke on Yoga Day at the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School (OMHSS), Adyar. At the end of May she traveled to the TS Centre in Bhowali, where a TOS Camp was being

held. As the Chief Guest, she spoke about theosophical education. In early July she also attended the General Council meeting and Strategic Planning sessions in Naarden. At the World Congress in Singapore, this time as International Secretary of the TOS, she gave an overview of TOS activities worldwide and led the 4th International TOS Conference immediately following the World Congress. In late August she went to Pumpkin Hollow, a theosophical center north of New York City, where she participated in a joint session with Mr Michael Gomes, Theosophical historian, on "Western Esotericism". A joint TS/TOS event in Jaipur, India, immediately followed, where she again spoke on theosophical education.

This is the end of my report and I wish you all here present and around the world my very best wishes for a fruitful and harmonious Convention experience.

TIM BOYD

Thus the truth or unreality, the loveliness or banality of what an individual sees depends on what he is within himself, and out of what he sees, the false or the profound, the superficial or the essential, arise his actions.

Radha Burnier
Inaugural Address, 1980

A Legacy of Wisdom

JOY MILLS

THOSE whose lives have been touched in whatever manner by the theosophical philosophy have become heirs of a great tradition of an immortal wisdom. Knowledge of that tradition can be gained by study, contemplation, even discussion of the principles of the wisdom with others. But wisdom itself derives from a total knowing in which understanding is constantly expressed in all the modes of living. The legacy of wisdom to which we are heirs today is of such a nature that unless we are transformed by its vital quality, it can remain a sterile possession, locked in books and inaccessible to experience. A fundamental premise, presented in *The Secret Doctrine*, suggests the existence of an accumulated wisdom of the ages, today verifiable by experience, and capable of being tested by scientific premises. This knowledge, attested to by generations of seers and sages, can be said to constitute a pentagram of law, which finds its ultimate summation in man.

In the hands of its Guardians, who are the Adepts of the Wisdom, this knowledge is much more than a mere collection of doctrines; it is an evolving, living whole,

as alive as the Universe which is its visible expression. To assemble facts is not to encounter wisdom; to lay on a table all the component parts of a clock is not to experience the action of a watch nor to understand time. The legacy of wisdom to which we today are heirs is a total wisdom, each principle of which is but an aspect of the whole, and the whole is the expression of the all-embracing Consciousness that is the Universe. As transmitted to us by that remarkable messenger, H. P. Blavatsky, the wisdom unfolds in a natural sequence of understanding, forming, as has just been suggested, a pentagram of law.

Primary among the principles is the fundamental premise that there is a Universal Reality, in which all is grounded, whose essence is Absolute Unconditioned Consciousness. The real is wholly non-material, as science today is discovering and demonstrating; Reality *is*, no matter what happens in the universal force field of infinite potentiality. We are embedded in that one Reality, and all transient “realities” obey the laws of the universal, impartible Reality. Its primal quality is

Ms Joy Mills was international Vice-President of the Theosophical Society. Reprinted from *Theosophia*, Spring 1969. Boris de Zirkoff was the founder/editor-in-chief of this periodical.

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awareness, consciousness (*chit*), and so the Universe is through and through conscious and alive; in and of itself, that Reality is timeless being (*sat*), and its essential nature is harmonic in quality (*ānanda*), permitting by its very nature the beauty and bliss of order to arise in natural sequence.

So the second premise arises from the first: the universe and all phenomenal forms are the periodical manifestation of the primal Reality. Matter is an excrescence, an ejection of Reality, a device of Reality, operative from within outwards. Matter is then the precipitation of energy, never divorced from its source, but appearing externally as the transient demonstration of the One Reality; the universe of being projects the universe of process. That projection is periodic, in accord with the inherent rhythm of consciousness. Everywhere occurs the pulse-beat of Reality, sometimes quickened to self-awareness as in man, sometimes slowed down to nearly immeasurable cycles as in the geologic ages.

(Not very long ago, a scientist reported: “The pulse-beat of planet Earth has not yet been counted. But a pulse is there . . . A rhythmic throbbing in the magnetic shell enclosing the planet arises from the solar wind . . . Within the magnetic sheath, Earth’s atmosphere expands and contracts . . .”) The throbbing pulse-beat of Reality unfolds upon itself to reveal its own privations, to define itself in boundaries, for there is within the primal Reality the dynamism of its own nature. The word Fohat has been assigned

to that dynamism which is yet undiscovered by science, except in its effects.

The universal field is non-operational existence. The activation within the universal field of Reality of that which is known to the occultist as Fohat results in operational universes, which are transient and temporal, and constitute shadows across the Real.

So the third premise: the universe is called *māyā* because all is temporary therein, although it is real enough to the conscious beings who move within it. That which was infolded in simultaneity within the universal Real is now unfolded sequentially, in the processes of time and evolution; hence, it is termed *māyā*, for it is subject to measurement. Man, as a self-conscious being, learns to utilize time, to work through it and with it, to achieve the processes of evolution. Man is, in consequence, the measure of all things, as well as the measurer of all processes, manipulating both time and process.

The fourth point of the pentagram is the basic premise that everything in the universe, throughout all the kingdoms of Nature, is conscious, endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception. Since the fundamental Reality, non-partable and non-material, is through and through conscious, even though the phenomenal constitutes a shadow upon that Reality, it is still rooted in primordial consciousness and must therefore participate in consciousness. All is embedded in the Real, revealing itself in the sequences of time, and consequently, in accordance with the fifth

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premise, the universe is worked and guided from within outwards. Design, pattern, form, are emergent.

So we may visualize the five essential points of a timeless wisdom, a pentagram of law to which all Nature conforms and which finds its ultimate expression in man, who is the localization of all that is present everywhere in the universe. Traditionally, the symbol of man has been the five-pointed star; each point may represent a universal law which man, by his very nature, embodies. His task, then, is to become the law he represents.

Man, however wide his reach, however tall he grows, must still stand upon the earth; his feet must be planted somewhere, for there must always be some base upon which he stands, and his vision proceeds from where he is. So standing here, with vision what it is — limited and defined by our present state — we may still grow upwards, until consciousness expands to the fivefold points of wisdom, and we realize what has been true from the beginning, that we are deathlessly rooted in the Self-Existent.

The attainment of that realization is a scientific process, to which may be given the name “the Path”. For doctrine, however noble, is not enough. Principles, however lofty, do not suffice. As Pseudo-Dionysius put it: “Man must not only learn the truth; he must suffer it.” There is a Way to be found and trodden, though there are a thousand approaches to the entrance of that Way. The Way itself is one and the pupil is self-chosen. The legacy of Wisdom which is ours reveals

the nature of the Way; one finds the ultimate reality by living it out. By our own efforts we develop the tremendous potential of consciousness, by meditation and “right mindfulness” we “recollect”, as Plato described it, that which we truly are. Learning to forget the claims and desires of the transient self in a purpose of living which is now rediscovered, we learn to apply, with deep compassion, all that we are and have to the service of mankind. For man is self-committed to further, in a self-conscious manner, the entire process of which he is a part.

But this commitment demands a radical departure from the normal evolutionary pattern; it calls for a new mode of growth — no longer growth in the linear sense of sequence, but a self-transformation that takes place from within. The most useful analogy is the process of metamorphosis. A caterpillar does not become a butterfly through any process of linear growth, becoming merely a larger and larger caterpillar; the process is achieved only when the caterpillar winds itself in its own cocoon, isolates itself from the outer environment on which it has fed and depends solely upon its own resources for an amazing transformation. There inside the cocoon occurs a nearly miraculous process: all the larval organs disappear, reduced to an amorphous, formless, viscous emulsion, having no discernible structure. By some miracle of reorganization, which biology cannot explain, directed by a mysterious dynamism which science has not yet named, energized by a force unknown to physics, this

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formless and apparently dead emulsion transforms itself into the butterfly. That which was once the caterpillar is now a thing of wings and beauty, adapted to a wholly different environment, the air, and fitted for a totally different mode of life.

So man, self-consciously and by self-devised effort, may achieve a transformation comparable in scope, equally magnificent at another level of realization, emerging from his caterpillar existence as a thing of earth, experiencing linear growth through successive incarnations to the freer life of spiritual regeneration.

Here, then, is our legacy of wisdom: we are heirs of the ages, holding in trust a sacred pledge. But it is more than knowledge that has been given to us, and more than knowledge that we must pursue if

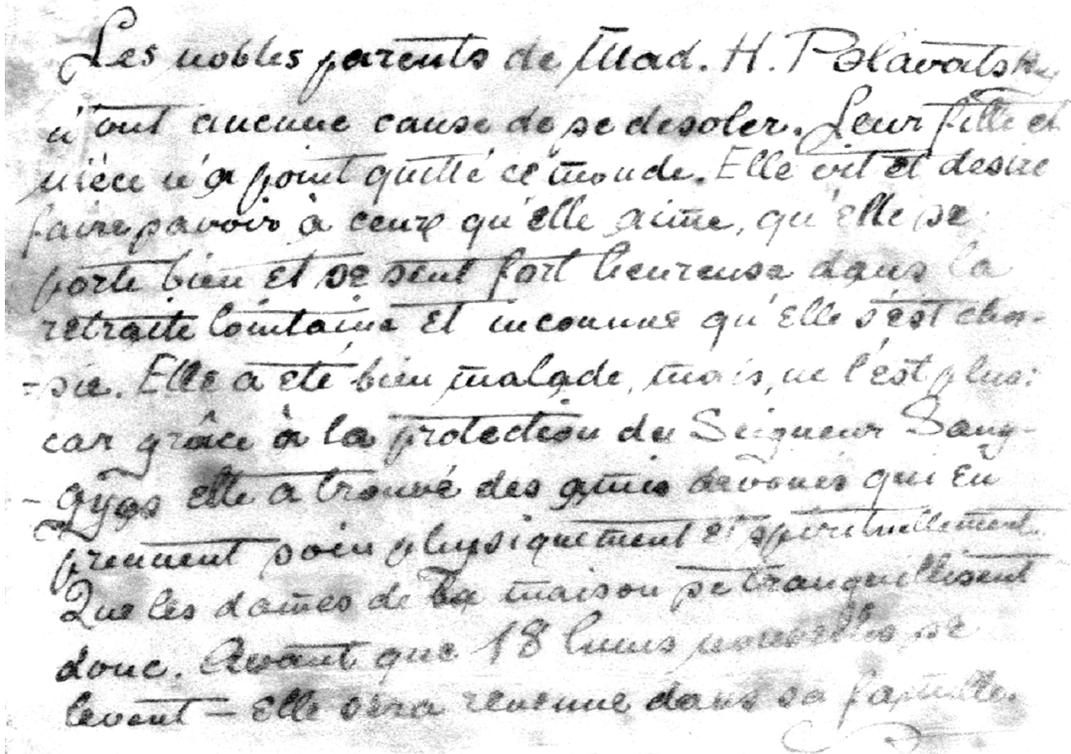
the legacy which has been bequeathed to us is to be transmitted in its magnificence to those who come after us. We must encounter truth in so intimate a manner that it takes hold of us and possesses us; we must transmute the universal principles in the fiery furnace of life's experience into the gold of wisdom, becoming the self-transformed and the self-transforming. The eternal principles of the Wisdom are not without us, external to us, acting upon us; they are the essence of our very nature: we are the pentagram of law. To know this is to see life whole, to perceive the uncompounded vision of Reality, and so to live and act [so] that the legacy of wisdom to which we today are heir can never be lost to mankind. ✧

The spiritual evolution calls for giving up of our self-importance and other cherished illusions which hinder our seeing reality. "Liberation is accomplished by wisdom," says Shankara, "but wisdom does not arise without the purification of the heart." Many teachers have indicated some habits and properties which strengthen our bond of ignorance, which keep us knotted and afflicted. These are sins in the sense that "to sin is to do an injury to yourself" (Ecclesiasticus 19:4).

Ravi Ravindra
Whispers from the Other Shore
"From the Alone to the Alone"

The Earliest Letter Written by the Masters

COMPILED BY PEDRO OLIVEIRA



Les nobles parents de Mad. H. T. Slavatska
n'ont aucune cause de se desoler. Leur fille et
nièce n'a point quitté ce monde. Elle vit et desire
faire pavois à ceux qu'elle aime, qu'elle se
porte bien et se sent fort heureuse dans la
retraite certaine et inconnue qu'elle s'est choi-
sie. Elle a été bien malade, mais, ne l'est plus:
car grâce à la protection du Seigneur Sang-
-gyes elle a trouvé des gens dévoués qui lui
prennent soin physiquement et spirituellement.
Que les dames de sa maison se tranquillisent
donc. Avant que 18 jours nouveaux se
levent - elle sera revenue dans sa famille.

IN the book *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Series I, edited by C. Jinarājādāsa (Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1973, pp. 84–85) we find the original text of the French Letter of 1870, which was written by Master KH.

The original letter, whose facsimile is printed above, was part of a display at the Archives of the TS at Adyar, during the 2018 International Convention, of a number of original letters which are also included in Mr Jinarājādāsa's book. The original text

Mr Pedro Oliveira is Education Coordinator for the TS in Australia, former International Secretary, and later Head of the Editorial Office at Adyar.

The Earliest Letter Written by the Masters

in French and the English translation are given below.

A l'Honorable,
Très Honorable Dame,
Nadyéjda Andréewna Fadeew,
Odessa.

Les nobles parents de Mad. H. Blavatsky n'ont aucune cause de se désoler. Leur fille et nièce n'a point quitté ce monde. Elle vit et désire faire savoir à ceux qu'elle aime, qu'elle se porte bien et se sent fort heureuse dans la retraite lointaine et inconnue qu'elle s'est choisie. Elle a été bien malade, mais, ne l'est plus: car grâce à la protection du Seigneur Sangyas elle a trouvé des amis dévoués qui en prennent soin physiquement et spirituellement. Que les dames de sa maison se tranquillisent donc. Avant que 18 lunes nouvelles se lèvent — elle sera revenue dans sa famille.

Translation

To the Honourable,
Most Honourable Lady,
Nadyéjda Andréewna Fadeew,
Odessa.

The noble relations of Mad. H. Blavatsky have no cause whatsoever for grief. Their daughter and niece has not left this world at all. She is living, and desires to make known to those whom she loves that she is well and quite happy in the distant and unknown retreat which she has selected for herself. She has been very ill, but is no longer; for under the protection of the Lord Sangyas [The Lord Buddha] she has found devoted friends who guard her physically and spiritually. The ladies of

her house should therefore remain tranquil. Before 18 new moons shall have risen, she will return to her family.

The “distant and unknown retreat” was her Masters’ home in Tibet where she was at that time as part of her training for future work under them, which included the formation of the Theosophical Society.

Mr Jinarājadāsa added the following notes about this historical letter (pp. 132–133):

This is the earliest letter written by any of the Masters, written in 1870, *five years before the TS was founded*. The original, which is in French, is at Adyar. It is in the now well-known handwriting of the Master KH to HPB’s aunt, Madame Nadéjda Fadéeff. She wrote on 26 June 1884, from Paris to Colonel Olcott about this letter and, describing the anxiety of HPB’s relations, who had had no news of her for some years, says as follows:

“All our researches had ended in nothing. We were ready to believe her dead, when — I think it was about the year 1870, or possibly later — I received a letter from him whom I believe you call ‘KH’, which was brought to me in the most incomprehensible and mysterious manner, by a messenger of Asiatic appearance, *who then disappeared before my very eyes*. This letter, which begged me not to fear anything, and which announced that she was in safety — I have still at Odessa. Immediately upon my return I shall send it to you, and I shall be very pleased if it can be of any use to you.” (*Report of the Result of an Investigation into the Charges against Madame Blavatsky*, 1885, p. 94.)

The Earliest Letter Written by the Masters

Madame Fadéeff wrote ten days later from Odessa to Colonel Olcott enclosing the original letter. In the lower left-hand corner of the envelope there is written in Russian, in pencil, in the handwriting of Madame Fadeeff, the following: “Received at Odessa, November 7, about Lelinka, probably from Tibet — November 11, 1870. Nadejda F.” *Lelinka* was HPB’s pet name. The letter of the Master is signed, not

with his initials, KH, but with a letter in some language not known to me. It seems certain from remarks of the Master M. in one of his letters, that He was the “messenger of Asiatic appearance” who delivered the letter (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter XXXIX). I have given a reproduction of this letter in the second series of *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*. ✧

A few days before leaving us, Koot Hoomi speaking of you said to me [Mahatma M.] as follows: “I feel tired and weary of these never ending disputations. The more I try to explain to both of them [A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume] the circumstances that control us and that interpose between us so many obstacles to free intercourse, the less they understand me! Under the most favourable aspects this correspondence must always be unsatisfactory, even exasperatingly so, at times; for nothing short of personal interviews, at which there could be discussion and the instant solution of intellectual difficulties as they arise, would satisfy them fully. It is as though we were hallooming to each other across an impassable ravine and only one of us seeing his interlocutor. In point of fact, there is nowhere in physical nature a mountain abyss so hopelessly impassable and obstructive to the traveller as that spiritual one, which keeps them back from me.”

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett
(Letter No. 29)

Grow as the Flower Grows — I

NANCY SECREST

HAVE you ever watched a flower grow? We can see that it *has* grown. We can see the differences in it as it turns its face to the sun throughout the day, and closes up at night, but we cannot actually see it doing so. We can see the change in its height or the length of a vine in a day or a week or a season, but we cannot actually see the stem growing or the vine moving.

I have often marvelled about this process and our inability to watch it. Sometimes photographers have used film that is speeded up to show us the action of the flower or the vine. Many of us have probably seen this on TV or in a documentary. Then we can see the flower bursting into bloom and the strength and aggressiveness with which the vine works its way out of the soil or pushes its way even through concrete to reach the sunlight. It is amazing!

A seed is planted, watered, and placed in the sunlight. Somehow it knows to split open under the ground, from which a little stem is formed that reaches down to form roots, up forming leaves, and continues to grow to a full-sized plant,

or even a hundred-foot tall tree. All of this is happening all around us all of the time, but we cannot see it as it happens, not with our physical eyes, because our brains cannot comprehend this extremely slow movement. Does this mean it is not happening? Of course not, we see the results so we know that the plant is growing. We just cannot see the process while it is taking place.

Conversely, I remember going to a seminar where we were to “get in touch with” trees. Several of the participants reported that they had the impression that the trees were aware of us only as extremely fast-moving objects that were perhaps a little bothersome, like gnats might be to us. Otherwise our worlds did not interact from their point of view.

How does a plant know to grow? How does it know the process by which it will come to maturity? Is there a school for seeds? Is there some form of education they go through, a K–12 for sprouting, making leaves, flowers, fruits, decaying and using stored up nutrients for next year’s flowers? No, all of this knowledge is inherent in each and every seed. Some-

Ms Nancy Secrest is international Treasurer of the TS, Adyar, and International Secretary of the Theosophical Order of Service. Based on a lecture given at the European Congress in August 2017.

Grow as the Flower Grows — I

how there is a form of consciousness that connects them all and of which they are entirely unaware.

I am not a botanist, but I am sure there is no botanist who knows the impetus that makes a flower grow and bloom. They know the components of the plant, its life cycle, what we can do to help it to grow, how to clone it or hybridize it, but no one knows exactly why or how it knows to grow, what causes the process, or what ties all of the many kinds of plants together in their knowledge of how to mature and continue their life cycle year after year.

This simple example gives a good argument for the existence of a universal consciousness that oversees all, not just plants but minerals, animals, and human beings. Now, as you undoubtedly realize, the processes I have spoken about takes place on the physical level of our existence. Therefore, it is just the start of a discussion of consciousness. Human beings, as our theosophical studies tell us, have a seven-fold constitution: physical, etheric, astral, lower and higher mental, buddhic, and *ātmic*. Therefore, human beings who exist on emotional, mental, and spiritual levels as well as the physical, share a Universal Consciousness, often called Unity or Oneness, that is at once our source of being and our ultimate goal as we progress through life and our various incarnations.

Is the flower conscious of the physical process it goes through? No; no more than we are conscious of our hearts beating, our lungs inhaling and exhaling the air we breathe, the blood coursing through our

veins, or the foetus developing in its mother's womb. These processes go on without our conscious direction or intervention. Of course, medical science has learned much about these processes and has found ways to alter them — often to our benefit — but that is not the topic of our conversation. For our purposes suffice it to say that we are unconscious of these processes as they are happening.

As we mature and grow we *can* become conscious of our emotional and mental processes. We can learn to control our emotions, to raise them to a level that is more acceptable to whatever society we live in than the base instincts that we share with other animals. We can learn to control our desires and our ways of reacting to stressful circumstances, and are encouraged to do so by civilized society. We can replace base desires with higher aspects of emotions, replacing lust with love, for example, and we can learn to understand certain situations without becoming angered by them or by finding more acceptable outlets for our anger than acting on it.

Of course it is at the mental level that human beings are really separated from lower animals. And it is here that we really hit our stride. From childhood we are taught many facts about how *this* works and how *that* came to be. We learn reading, writing, mathematics, and science, all the basics of the physical universe, how it began, and how it operates. This is the realm of the lower mental that helps us to reason and think logically. All the while many of us are striving to know more.

Our intellect, our higher mind, looks for concepts beyond mere logic and reason. We see our lives and ourselves from a physical perspective, but somehow we know there is more. This very fact is what drew many of us to Theosophy in the first place. We begin to question what we have been taught, to see its limitations. We begin to explore more abstract concepts, including religions and philosophies. We question everything. Why are we here? Where are we going? What is the purpose and meaning of life? What lies beyond? Does anything lie beyond this life? What form might it take? What is love? Justice? Freedom? Are we each unique, or are we interconnected? How? Why? Does something or someone direct us? Is there a God?

For theosophists many of these questions are answered through patient and detailed study. In *Isis Unveiled, The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Key to Theosophy*, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) delves into cosmogenesis, explaining in great detail the origin of all from an occult (or esoteric) perspective, based on Ancient Wisdom she gathered during her lifetime. Because Blavatsky herself yearned to know more, to have her questions answered, she traveled extensively in search of that which pointed to the true meanings behind what we have learned through physical science. In *Madame Blavatsky as Occultist* by Josephine Ransom, (pp. 4–5) she says of Blavatsky:

She desired vehemently to understand, and went both openly and secretly after any clue that would lead her to the knowledge she longed for. Gradually, as her insight

became clearer, her classification of the occult became more definite. She discovered that one must go through almost unbearably patient discipline, supported by unwavering aspiration, to gain the exalted goal of Self-realization, to that freedom of the Self which is the crown of all human existence.

Through HPB's discourses on anthropogenesis and the three fundamental propositions, we learn of the oneness of all life, periodicity, cyclicity, and the pilgrim's path that all of us tread, carrying us from life to life as we gain insight and understanding. The study of Theosophy can be a lifelong endeavour, many lifetimes, actually, and it touches all aspects of life, death, and what lies beyond.

Like Blavatsky herself, at some point, the true student of Theosophy, of the Ancient Wisdom, realizes that its study leads to more than just intellectual learning. Our study must touch every facet of our lives. It must touch the very essence of our being. We must sink our roots deep into the study outlined by Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, W. Q. Judge, Annie Besant, and others as we strive toward Universal Consciousness, "to gain the exalted goal of Self-realization" and "freedom of the Self". In the little book, *The Doctrine of the Heart: Extracts of Letters from Indian Friends*, by Annie Besant (pp. 48–49), it is said:

For the disciple little is gained from teaching on the intellectual plane. The knowledge that infiltrates from the Soul down into the intellect is the only knowledge worth having, and surely as the days roll by,

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the disciple's store of such knowledge increases. And with the increase of such knowledge comes about the elimination of all that hinders him on the Path.

And what of that Path? In her famous quote HPB tells us:

There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe: I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards there is reward past all telling — the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.

And *The Voice of the Silence* tells us:

Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" Doctrine. (Stanza 111)

But even ignorance is better than head-learning with no Soul-Wisdom to illuminate and guide it. (Stanza 113)

This path is not for everyone. It is a strenuous journey to undertake. It requires dauntless courage, spotless purity,

a strong intellect, a clean heart, the ability to discern the real from the false and the ability to separate head-learning from Soul-wisdom. This is a tall order that requires much preparation and a complete and total commitment to our goal, Self-realization, freedom of the Self, Universal Consciousness.

We can begin consciously on the emotional and mental levels of our being to gain the Soul-wisdom of which *The Voice of the Silence* speaks. As to head-learning, study is the first of the three pillars of Theosophy which are: study, meditation, and service. We *do* need head learning. We *do* need our intellect, a strong intellect, but it is just a beginning, a base for what lies beyond. Our hearts must be clean and our aspirations pure before we begin. To get to that point takes courage and hard work. We must develop these qualities by working on them every day through our interactions with others.

I once heard Radha Burnier say that the purpose of theosophical lodges is for us to rub the rough edges off of each other. In our Lodges we organize, plan, sometimes disagree. We should expect to disagree and even argue at times. Our job is to learn from all that. To take a step back, ideally every day, and look at what has transpired and our part in it. We must examine our thoughts, our words, and our actions, paying attention to *our* part in the daily interactions of life. Then try again the next day to act and react in ways that reflect the highest within us.

We must learn to be patient with others and with ourselves, allowing them

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and us to make mistakes. We must see these mistakes as just that, mistakes or missteps, and not assign any greater significance to them. We must not point fingers. We must learn to forgive others, and ourselves as well, for any mistakes we might make, and to move on to a new day. It does no good to dwell on such things. All of this is true with the rest of our lives as well, not just within theosophical lodges, or the Theosophical Society, but at home and at work and in each and every situation we find our-

selves, even interactions with strangers.

We learn the lessons of a clean heart from everyone and everything. If we are diligent, we will have gained some semblance of understanding. We will progress with courage. We will have gained love for each other. *The Voice of the Silence* implies that from here we can enter the Path with our eyes open. That we are ready to learn to discern the real from the unreal, the everlasting from the ever-fleeting.

(To be continued)

The way to live the spiritual life with the greatest possible ease, as success, is to be as little concern with ourselves as possible. We can arrive at this attitude when we attain the conviction that there is absolutely no need to be worried about anything. Things will take their course; we shall be what we are, for there is something into which each of us must develop in the very nature of things. Why be concerned with this miserable self, with the desire to be this or that, wondering whether we are making progress, worrying about what will happen to us after death? Let the whole thing alone.

N. Sri Ram
The Way of Wisdom

Theosophy-Science: Quest for Bridges

JACQUES MAHNICH

THE scientific landscape of 2018 is offering more and more opportunities to build bridges between Theosophy, traditions, and new discoveries. Let us review some recent scientific findings, as far as they may open some passages towards a wider understanding of Nature, and a closer view of the Ancient Wisdom.

Recent scientific discoveries

On 4 July 2012, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) announced the discovery of the Higgs boson, the famous “God” particle, and the Higgs field gives mass to particles responsible for the electroweak interaction (W & Z gauge bosons), and other particles like the electron and the quarks. Its discovery took more than 40 years since it was hypothesized in the 1960s. It is, for physicists, a crowning victory which validates the Standard Model of physics — which explains properties and forces between elementary particles — and it also validates one of the most important mechanisms in the physical universe, the creation of mass through

the breaking of symmetry. This Higgs field is therefore supposed to pervade the entire universe. It is supposed to contain “pure” energy which is transferred to particles in the form of mass. Speculative theories are also proposing the Higgs field as the energy of the vacuum, therefore the source of the physical manifestation throughout the Big Bang scenario.

An energy field which participated in the creation of the universe, which pervades all space, and which enables the “materialization” of energy into massive physical matter may ring a bell in our theosophical models of the manifestation of the worlds — cosmogenesis. The mechanism of breaking symmetry reminds us also, in the old Indian tradition, of the gunas, which are in perfect equilibrium, as prakriti before the manifestation, and the balance of which is broken after the third differentiation during the world reawakening process.

Another important discovery was announced on April 2016: the first-ever detection from the Earth of gravitational waves induced by the merger of two large

Mr Jacques Mahnich is a member of the French Section of the Theosophical Society and a scientist actively working to bring about a synthesis of modern science and Theosophy.

black holes in space, weighing 25 times the mass of our sun. This physical phenomenon was predicted by the general relativity theory published by Albert Einstein in 1916. Just one hundred years between prediction and measurement. Physics may need reincarnation for the sake of continuity!

Like the discovery of the Higgs boson, technology evolution was the enabler of these findings: in one case, one has to be able to spot a particle whose mean lifetime is around 10^{-22} seconds, and in another, the relative strain variations induced by gravitational waves in a Michelson interferometer is of the magnitude of 10^{-21} . This latest discovery validates another aspect of the general relativity model, and delivers the first assessment of the existence of the graviton, the hypothetical quantum particle supposed to cause the gravitation interaction. But it still does not tell us what gravitation is, nor what energy, or space, or time are.

Gravitation

Gravitation is probably one of the most fundamental forces in the universe. Apart from the fact that it allows us to stay on our chair, it is the active agent which assembles the physical particles of the universe to build galaxies, solar systems, stars, planets, moons, comets, and so on. It is also the mechanism which initiates the lighting up of stars like our sun, and therefore the production of light and heat which nurture life on Earth.

We just do not have a satisfactory scientific model to describe this fundamental

force. It is one of the major challenges for modern science that there are, as of today, no models which can accommodate all the movements of celestial bodies in the visible universe. Observations have spotted two departures from the mainstream general relativity model: the movement of stars at the periphery of galaxies, which is faster than expected, and the apparent accelerated expansion of the visible universe. To avoid discarding the current model, scientists have come up with the concepts of black matter and black energy.

What has Madame Blavatsky told us about it, apart from the statement that Science has no idea what it is? She wrote two chapters in *The Secret Doctrine*: “Is Gravitation a Law?” and “Life, Force, or Gravity?”. She said:

It is the Sun-fluids or Emanations that impart all motion and awaken all into life, in the Solar System. It is attraction and repulsion, but not as understood by modern physics and according to the law of gravity; but in harmony with *the laws of Manvantaric motion*.

She affirmed that all motions are related to the ether pervading all space. She also said that gravitation is but an electrical force. So, where can we go from here? Is there any obvious correlation with modern Science?

Not having direct access to the laws of Manvantaric motion, we may want to consider the aspect of the ether, because there is a similar description in the general relativity model: according to

Albert Einstein, and it has been experimentally verified for the last one hundred years, that the universe can be represented by a matrix of space-time, a virtual geometry, where if any mass (or energy) modifies the geometry, all celestial bodies must move along the path defined by those geometrical lines without regard for attraction, centrifugal, and centripetal forces. It becomes pure interaction between space and matter-energy. Matter-energy curves the inner geometry of space-time, and space-time tells the celestial bodies to move along the “lines” of the universe.

The general relativity theory deserves some attention because from it two major theories were born: The first is the creation of our visible universe, the Big Bang, and its constituents, the nucleosynthesis or how matter and forces were born from pure energy. We have a lot of material in our theosophical texts on this subject. The second one is the black holes theory, which bears some similarities with our “*laya centers*”.

Back to gravitation, we may also want to take a look at the hypothesis of an electrical phenomenon. Such an idea was elaborated and put in equations in 2006 by two Swedish scientists, J. X. Zheng-Johansson and P. I. Johansson. Their starting point is a redefinition of the structure of the vacuum as uniformly filled with electrically neutral particles called vacuons, which are at rest in the absence of external disturbance. These vacuons are composed of an n-vacuon and a p-vacuon, both being endowed

with electrical charge. From this hypothesis, and using known laws of physics, classical, quantum, and relativistic mechanics are redefined, providing a model for the unification of the four fundamental physical forces. Obviously, such an approach was rejected by the mainstream scientific community, and the authors could not even publish their thesis in *Nature* or *Physics* reviews.

This example is given to illustrate an important point: creativity is key when current models are trapped in dead ends and cannot describe adequately what is observed and measured. We will need an approach where it is possible to propose brand new models capable to translate the wisdom tradition knowledge with an understandable vocabulary, for the sake of opening a dialogue with scientists. This is what Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater did when they wrote *Occult Chemistry*. They also started with a redefinition of elementary components of the universe: the ether of space (the *koilon*), the ultimate physical atom (UPA), and the micro-psi atom (MPA), which describes the spatial organization of physical atoms.

Energy

Another key element of the physical universe is energy. Honest scientists like Richard Feynman said “we know that we don’t know” what energy is. It is a scalar quantity which can manifest in many different forms of energy, such as potential gravitational energy, kinetic, mass, electromagnetic, chemical, and so

forth. So it is eternal and unchanging quantitatively, even if it manifests itself under various forms. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) gave us this clue: “The Theosophists, old and modern, the Alchemists and Rosicrucians, have ever maintained that there were no such things per se as ‘light’, ‘heat’, ‘sound’, ‘electricity’ . . . *There is nothing but radiant energy . . .*” (H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. 4, p. 221) It is interesting to note that at the time of the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB was already affirming the equivalence between energy and matter.

Now let us have a look at a practical application of this concept of energy: our physical body. It is our companion since our birth until our last moment on this Earth in this life. It has some consistency, or at least we sense some consistency in it, like with most physical forms. When we look at it with the current scientific knowledge, we see an incredibly complex machine, an assembly of multiple systems. Like in a modern aircraft, we find a structural basis (bones and joints), sensors (the five senses), actuation systems (the muscles), a respiratory system, an irrigation and cleaning system, a protection system (immune system), and a big computer — the brain and all the nerves.

Going inside each of these systems reveals incredible capabilities like self-adaptation, auto-repair, auto-reproduction — it is a magical system. As long as Science does not know or recognize what is behind the scenes of the material kingdom, they cannot understand how it really works. But let us go into it for a

while. In each part of the material body, there exists as basic components, what we call individual cells. They are almost independent organisms with their own systems, and they are all interconnected.

We have roughly speaking 100,000 billion cells in our body, which, laid side by side would be equivalent to a 15,000-kilometre rope. They work all together, fortunately for us, on their own, to maintain the integrity of the physical body during life. Everyday, 20 billion cells will die and be replaced by new ones. Replacement cycles can last from a few hours to 15 years, which means that most of our cells are less than ten years of age.

Now, let us dig a little bit more deeply. In each cell we find microsystems made of macromolecules, which are made of molecules, which are made of atoms. There are almost 100 different types of atoms in our solar system and in our body; and if we look further inside the atom, we see more and more elementary components. We know that the atom is made of a central nucleus and surrounding electrons. And we know that almost all the mass of the atom is concentrated inside the nucleus. So, let us explore the nucleus to understand where the mass is coming from.

Inside the nucleus, we find protons and neutrons, and we know that each neutron is made up of three quarks. This is what the Standard Model tells us, even if we cannot directly observe them because they obey a physical law called confinement, which forbids them to escape from their shell. We finally reach the

maybe elementary state of matter, which is endowed with mass, the quarks. We could say that we know where mass is hiding, but there is a trick here: the mass of the three quarks in each proton or neutron accounts for less than 2% of the mass of the proton or neutron! Where is the mass? Where is what we call matter? It is coming from the binding energy called the sea of gluons, which binds the quarks together inside a particle. In fact, the mass we can measure is coming not from particles, but from energy.

If we now go from this elementary level back to the scale of our body, we realize that our physical body is 98% pure, moving energy, the rest being point-like particles, and it is this motion, this eternal motion of energy, which creates what we call mass. At this smallest level of physical matter, there are no more differences between the units we are contemplating. Our physical world, including our body, is but a whirl of pure energy. If we were able to contemplate this level of atomicity we would see and therefore be completely convinced, like St Thomas, that we are made of pure energy, and that *what we call matter does not exist per se*.

This is how far modern science can have a glimpse into Reality. But because it misses the holistic vision of it, it cannot go further. It is now time to go back to the Wisdom Tradition. We remember

what was said about the Oneness or “Be-ness”, symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion representing unconditioned consciousness. In an article published in *Lucifer* in 1890, Blavatsky said, quoting Rama Prasad: “It is that wavy motion which is the cause of the evolution of cosmic undifferentiated matter into the differentiated universe. . . . From whence does this motion come? This motion is the spirit itself.”

Spirit is the cause of the motion of pure energy, leading to the manifestation of the world. That brings us to the description of the nature of matter in *Occult Chemistry*: a substratum, the ether of space — the *koilon* — present everywhere, into which the out-breathing Spirit makes “bubbles”, creating the fundamental particles of the etheric world, and then the physical world.

Conclusion

Here we have an example of the foundations of two pillars for a bridge between Science and the Wisdom Tradition. And there are many other ones. Being able to develop and complement the scientific models with perennial knowledge has a lot of potential benefits to overcome the current materialistic trends. As heritage holders of this Wisdom Tradition, we have the responsibility to engage in this quest. Let us do it! ✧

Foundation Day 2018

CLEMICE PETTER

IN 1875 a small group of blessed people came together and founded our Theosophical Society (TS). When we say “our”, we do not mean mine and yours, or even the members of this Society. We are referring to the whole of humanity. This is because the TS is a gift from the heavens to the entire human race, and it so happens that we are those who are responsible to keep the gift alive; to keep the door open, the door that takes us from darkness to Light, from death to immortality. In fact we are doorkeepers and it depends on us to see that this door remains open.

We have been entrusted with the most sanctified of all duties, which is to hold the flame of Light into the years to come. As everything that purifies, it also asks for sacrifice, and those entrusted with the holy flame are asked to sacrifice nothing less than their own life, in holding the flame they become the flame, and there is nothing left other than the flame itself. They live not for themselves, but for the sake of Love that lights up the way for humanity to come out of the valley of tears and sorrow.

Today we are gathered in this holy hall, which saw the procession of sacrifices made

by innumerable known and unknown brothers and sisters who lived by the flame of this Light. Seven Presidents of the TS have lived and died for the sake of the light of the world. Today is the day that we come together with a heart overflowing with Silence and deep gratitude for all the beautiful Souls who have kept the door open for the past 143 years. We also gather with a humble prayer in our heart for those who found us worthy of trust. We ask for strength to perform our duty with dignity, and courage to allow Love to burn.

Every great Soul whose feet ever touched the soil of this planet taught about the Unity of Life. But this Unity cannot be conceived by a divisive mind; a mind that feels separated, which has the “me and mine” beating hard. Unity is Truth, and to come upon it, that which creates the illusion of separation has to be understood, and it was to give us tools for understanding that the Theosophical Society was born.

We request all to observe a moment of silence in memory of the great Souls who worked hard and passed this great task over to us. May their blessings always find a way into the human heart. ✧

Ms Clemice Petter is Head of the Editorial Department at Adyar. Welcome address given on 17 November 2018 at the Headquarters Hall, TS, Adyar, India.

HPB and the Founding of the TS

ENEIDA E. CARBONELL

HELENA Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB), as a luminous star crossing the firmament, was amongst us from 1831 to 1891, leaving a profound imprint not just among those of her time, but for generations to come. She came into the world with psychic abilities which she worked with for the benefit of humanity. Her life unfolded within all social strata, starting with a childhood among her aristocratic family, up to living in extreme poverty, suffering from cold and hunger when traveling while preparing herself to carry out her great work.

At the age of 19, after having abandoned her country, family, and husband (Nikifor Blavatsky), HPB declared: “I have 40 years to build a monument more perennial than the Great Pyramids of Egypt.” Her work would be: “TO BLESS HUMANITY, LIBERATING IT FROM ITS NARROW-MINDEDNESS”, this being the purpose of all her teachings. With this in mind she presented ideas, not philosophical or metaphysical theses, no matter how interesting they might be; and if she did, it was only with those which would lead to widen the mental horizons of the human race.

Blavatsky’s intentions were not political, as regarding political reforms she said that “they are like putting new wine into old bottles”, because we may change government systems from despotic to democratic, economic systems from communist to capitalist or vice-versa, but no matter what change we may make, old habits will rise up again and again until and unless it is the people themselves who change: “No political reform can come about with the same selfish men placed at the helm as leaders.”

We cannot guarantee human happiness dictating laws or controlling production. We can create human happiness only by liberating people from their narrow minds. This liberation, said HPB, can come about by applying theosophical principles to promote social cooperation and advancement. Its essence is found in the Golden Chain whose links are: Universal Unity and Causation, Human Solidarity, the Law of Karma and Reincarnation. These four links will make it possible to unite humanity within a family, a real Universal Brotherhood.

If we accept our unity with the cosmos,

Mrs Eneida E. Carbonell, originally from Cuba, is a long-standing member of the TS in America. Based on a talk given on Foundation Day, 17 November 2018, at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, Ojai, California.

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we will stop unnecessarily hurting the kingdoms that coexist with us, beginning with the human, then the animal, and so on. Blavatsky's teachings are basically simple, although with extensive possibilities for elaboration. She explained that she had studied the Ageless Wisdom, which is the fruit of countless generations of researchers and clairvoyants until the present time.

She started by presenting her esoteric teachings based firstly on the Only Ultimate Reality of the Universe, and she declared that this underlying unity is found in the heart of all things. Consequently, matter and consciousness are not two different things, but two aspects of the one reality, thus all that exists is alive and conscious.

HPB espoused the law of periodicity by saying that the Universe in which we live is only a periodic manifestation, that there is no beginning or ending, and that our Universe is an illusion compared with the Ultimate Reality. She spoke of evolution, letting us know that she responds to the efforts and merits that each being, apparently separate, may contribute to the true Self, which is in the realm of perfect equilibrium.

Evolution responds to the guide within, more than to external forces. In presenting the law of analogy she says that the whole Universe follows the same patterns, so that if we know how the Universe functions, we will know how everything else functions, and vice versa. HPB takes care of presenting these and many other ideas in diverse ways in all her works, mainly *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*,

Practical Occultism, and *The Voice of the Silence*.

In order to make these ideas known, Blavatsky started by founding the Theosophical Society (TS) in New York City in 1875, along with Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge, and others. But her preparation for this event was a lengthy one; it took her 25 years, or from 1848 to 1873, when she was sent to New York by her Masters. The preparation made her travel around the world, reaching Initiation Centers, mainly Tibet. In these travels, and also since her childhood, her life was saved on various occasions, such as when she was seriously wounded while supporting Garibaldi's cause in Italy. When on a trip from Alexandria to Greece the ship she was on exploded, only 17 passengers survived out of the 400 who were on board. When she was baptized, the priest and a few others were burned, but she was not. When in Constantinople, earning a living by riding horses in obstacle races, she fell accidentally from one of the horses, suffering the consequences for the rest of her life.

We know, from the many stories that have been shared about HPB's life, that, in addition to the places already mentioned, she visited many others such as Egypt, Paris, London, Canada, South America, and India, among others, where she suffered many times due to economic difficulties; but she would overcome them because she was filled with an altruistic spirit toward her dear orphan humanity. We owe an immense gratitude to this marvelous entity who exhibited a complex

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character, from the most rebellious to the most exquisitely compassionate, resulting many times in her being misunderstood and slandered, and on other instances

praised and appreciated. Nevertheless, her work and her inner development placed her at the feet of the Masters, and perhaps much more than that. ✧

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It is not a question of numbers how great an effect this Society will have upon religious thought — I will go further and say, upon the science and philosophy — of the age: great events sometimes come from far more modest beginnings. . . . In my soul I feel that behind our feeble, new-born organization, there gathers a Mighty Power that nothing can withstand — the power of Truth. I feel that we are only the advance guard, holding the pass until the main body shall come up. I feel that we are enlisted in a holy cause, and that truth, now as always, is mighty and will prevail. . . . I feel as a sincere Theosophist, that we shall be able to give to science such evidences of the truth of the ancient philosophy and the comprehensiveness of ancient science, that her drift toward atheism will be arrested, and our chemists will, as Madame Blavatsky expresses it, “set to work to learn a new alphabet of Science on the lap of Mother Nature”.

H. S. Olcott,
Applied Theosophy and Other Essays
“Inaugural Address”

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 Desmond Chapman	... 31 Streatley Ave, cnr.Lothbury Ave, Auckland Park, Johannesburg PO Box 91523	... <i>The South African Theosophist</i>	tsinsa.depensec@telkomsa.net
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 Elisena Martinez Pozas	... Colonia Universitaria Norte, Calle Julio Mejia, Poligono, E-7 Mejicanos, San Salvador, EL SALVADOR		bemapo03@hotmail.com
1920	Argentina	... Mr Esteban Langlois	... Pje. Florencio Balcarce 71, Buenos Aires (1405)	... <i>Teosofia en Argentina</i>	secretaria@sociedadteosofica.org.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>	theosofie.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	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	info@ts-belgium.be
1965	Bolivia	... Mrs Sonia Montecinos Rojas	... Pasaje Jauregui No. 2255, La Paz		bolivia.ts7@gmail.com
1920	Brazil	... Mr Sergio Carvalho de Moraes, Jr	... SGAS Quadra 603, N. 20, CEP 70200-630 Brasilia (DF)	... <i>Sophia</i>	secretaria@sociedadeteosofica.org.br
1924	Canada *	... Mrs Maryse DeCoste	... # 12-1475 Deep Cove Rd. North Vancouver, BC	... <i>The Light Bearer</i>	modecoste@hotmail.com
1920	Chile *	... Mr Victor Aguayo	... Casilla 11 Sucursal Paseo Estacion, Estacion Central, Santiago	... <i>Revista Teosofica Chilena</i>	sociedadteosoficachile@gmail.com
1937	Colombia †	... Mr Antonio Martinez	... Carrera 6, # 56-40, Bogotá (Chapinero Alto)	... <i>Selección Teosofica</i>	antoniomartinezsgura1@gmail.com
1997	Costa Rica †	... Mrs Ligia Montiel	... Calle 38, Aves. 12-14, S.E. San José		limolo08@gmail.com
2007	Croatia ▲	... Mr Darko Majstorovic	... Siget 11, 10000 Zagreb, Republic of Croatia	... <i>Teozofija</i>	teozofija@teozofija.net
1905	Cuba	... Ms Barbara A. Fariñas Piña	... Apartado de Correos 6365, La Habana 10600		teosocuba.1@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	... Mr Janne Vuononvirta	... Teosofinen Seura, Vironkatu 7 C 2, Fin 00170, Helsinki	... <i>Teosofi</i>	Indonesia.teosofi@gmail.com
1899	France	... Mrs Jeannine (Nano) Leguay	... 4 Square Rapp, 75007 Paris	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	ylisihteeri@teosofinenseura.fi
1902	Germany	... Mrs Manuela Kaulich	... Hauptstr. 39, 93138 Lappersdorf	... <i>Adyar</i>	editionsadyar@wanadoo.fr
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1912	Indonesia	... Mr Widyatmoko	... Dsn. Parelegi no. 21, RT 02/ RW 09, Desa Purwodadi, Kecamatan Purwodadi, 67163 Pasuruan, Jawa Timur	... <i>Teosofi</i>	theosophyvns@gmail.com
1919	Ireland *	... Mrs Marie Harkness	... 97 Mountsandel Road, Coleraine, UK BT52 1TA		indotheosofi@gmail.com

1954	Israel ▲	... Mr Abraham Oron	... PO Box 9114, Ramat-Gan, Israel 5219002	... <i>Or</i>	ornet@theosophia.co.il
1902	Italy	... Mr Antonio Girardi	... Viale Quintino Sella, 83/E, 36100 Vicenza	... <i>Rivista Italiana di Teosofia</i>	sti@teosofica.org
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2012	Qatar ▲	... Mr Lijo Joseph	... Crewing Officer, Teyseer Services Company P.O. Box 2431, Doha		qatarblavatskyldodge@yahoo.com
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1992	Slovenia *	... Mrs Irena Primc	... Kajuhova Ul 9, 3000 Celje	... <i>Teozofska Misel</i>	irenaprinc3@gmail.com
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1926	Sri Lanka †	... Mr M. B. Dassanayake	... 2-C/60, Maththegoda Housing Scheme, Maththegoda	... <i>The Sri Lanka Theosophist</i>	mbdassa@gmail.com
1895	Sweden	... Mrs Birgitta Skarbo	... Kalle Posts väg 48, S-702 29 Örebro	... <i>Tidlös Visdom</i>	birgitta.skarbo@sl.se
1910	Switzerland †	... Mr Andrea Biasca-Caroni	... Via Collina 19, 6612 Ascona	... <i>The Lotus</i>	ancaroni@me.com
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1886	USA	... Dr Barbara B. Hebert	... PO Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60187-0270	... <i>The Quest</i>	admin@theosophical.org
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1922	Wales *	... Mrs Julie Cunningham	... Bryn Adda, Brynsiencyn, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey, LL61 6NX UK		theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk

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