



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: A delicate partaker of the Adyar Gardens – Richard Dvorak

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

The Ever-Present Future

TIM BOYD

A COUPLE of years ago my daughter, who is now twenty-two years old, as she was approaching her twenty-first birthday, was musing about all of the things she would soon be able to do. She would vote for the president, go out with friends to any place she wanted, and just generally feel wiser and more expanded. In her eyes the future was shining brightly. Listening to her envisaging her future reminded me of a similar, but different future vision that my father engaged in. He was ninety-two years old when he died, but when he was ninety-one he was busily engaged in planting fruit trees at his farm. Anyone familiar with pear and apple trees knows that it takes three years before picking the first piece of fruit. There is a sense that the future holds something special, and is regarded in an almost sacred way.

In the past there were very few professions that were involved in the anticipation and prediction of the future. Probably astrologers had some part in talking about the future. In more recent days weather forecasters talk about what is coming ahead. Often they are wrong, but these are professions in which someone can earn a living in thinking about the future. In our time, that has changed greatly. Now we have economists, financial planners,

ecologists, social scientists, all of whose professions are to try to look ahead and think of what the future holds for us as individuals, or as a human family.

One of the things that all these approaches to envisioning the future hold in common is that the futures that they envision are essentially mere rearrangements of the present — different circumstances and details, but nothing far removed from what is the ordinary experience. This is the norm for this type of approach to envisioning the future. Great people have had many things to say about it. Albert Einstein has been often quoted because he was a great scientist and profound spiritual thinker. He said: ‘No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.’ It is an impossibility.

H. P. Blavatsky, one of the Founders of the Theosophical Society, expressed the same thought in a different way. She said: ‘Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, the only realities.’ The scope of our vision determines not only what we see, but also the world in which we find ourselves from moment to moment.

An example of the effect of our limited vision can be found in our approach to

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violent conflict in the world. Given the way that we view the world, where you see wars or terrorism on the rise, what is the 'solution' that we currently apply? At our current level of consciousness the solution is to apply a greater level of violence, a greater level of force. Does it do anything to minimize the eruptions of wars and discords on the planet? The record of our current times says: 'No, it does not.' If we think back in our relatively recent history to World War I, there was a slogan that came into being when this great war was embroiling much of the world. It became a sort of banner for war: 'This is the war to end *all* wars.' That is, this extreme level of violence and destruction would somehow result in peace, or at least in a cessation of future war. That was 1914. No comment is needed on the correctness of that approach to violence, but given the current level of thought at which we are functioning we are unable to see any other way.

Our approach to countless other issues is the same. For example, there are always conditions of starvation arising in different parts of the world. What has been our approach to addressing the issue? Our preferred solution is to pour food into the situation. If people are hungry, give them food! The result is that those people are fed for a while until the same condition arises in another place. Our way of dealing with such things is by habitual, knee-jerk reactions. Our level of vision is somehow clouded.

Probably our most basic concern is a fundamental ignorance, which is the

condition of the human mind. This is ignorance not in the sense that we do not know something, but in the sense that what we see, what we claim to know, is in every case mistaken. So we go through life, we view the world, through eyes that are clouded by this fundamentally wrong view of reality. To those who feel that they would like to break from this cycle, the normal approach results in a search for more knowledge, and so we begin to intensely study some materials — basically the same knowledge and studies that have been productive of the same state of ignorance. Our sense is that if we study it more intensely, then maybe we will find the answer!

At its own level, no problem that exists in the world today can be solved. So there must be something more. When we think in terms of the future, one of the expressions that we encounter, particularly among those who have been somewhat inclined to a spiritual way of living, are phrases such as 'Live in the moment', 'Be here now'. Probably the experience of many of us is that it seems as if there is something profound within us that appears to be continually reaching through this moment that we find ourselves in, *towards* something else that is perceived as greater, more expanded, a natural state.

Often there are people who have been successful in worldly endeavours who at times have found themselves deeply dissatisfied with their condition. From all outward appearances, everything is correct — wealth, fame, power. All of the things that are generally sought after by

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human beings are there, and yet they find themselves unfulfilled. The experience has sometimes been described as a 'divine discontent', that there is a deep yearning within us that has a way of making itself known. It is possible for us to cover it over by becoming sufficiently busy in our day-to-day lives. But in our quieter moments, it seems to surface and demand from us a recognition of this as yet unrealized potential and state of being. It necessarily speaks of the future because, although it is completely present at this moment, the fact that our perception is veiled robs us of its power. Yet it continues to plague us with its whisperings.

At a certain point in our lives we start to say: 'I must do something about this. It *has* to be within my power.' So what is described as 'the spiritual search' begins. We look for answers, and, because of the way we see generally, we search in our immediate surroundings. There are numerous quotes, or ideas, that have been passed down to us from people who have been recognized as 'enlightened' — those who have pursued the same kind of search and realized the state of coming out from under this veiled perception. They have been able to pass on their experience — to the extent that it *can* be passed on in words.

In *The Idyll of the White Lotus* 'the three truths' are given. The first of those truths is that 'the soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit' — a comment on the future. We tend to think in terms of future because it seems to operate through a progression of time,

but all the great sages speak about this presence as being here and now. In the *Bhagavadgītā* Krishna describes himself as 'the inner ruler immortal that is present in the heart of *all* beings.'

In Buddhism there is the Buddha nature, which, no matter how badly we behave, or how ignorant or unenlightened we seem to be at any given moment, our inner nature is essentially Buddha nature — perfect, open, subject to complete awareness. The prophet Muhammad said: 'He who knows himself, knows God.' It is a similar idea, that right here, right now, is the presence that we describe as God, then look outside ourselves to try to find! Christianity approached it in other ways. St Paul spoke about 'the Christ in you, the hope of the glory'. Not the Christ on the crucifix, not somebody from 2,000 years ago in ancient history, but the Christ who is in *you*, who *is* you. This is the hope of the glory to which we aspire, of the peace of which we feel ourselves worthy. Then we have: 'Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.'

All of these ideas have something in common. What they share is the idea of *being*, which we then, as a process, transmute into a process of *becoming*. Everyone who seems to have had some taste of this consciousness capable of seeing things as they *are* speaks in terms of *being*. We do not have to go to a shrine for this experience, or seek out a guru, or pay for a seminar or a workshop, *if* we can, for one moment, actually experience the nature of our mind, which is the same as the nature of reality.

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This is what the great teachers describe, and they talk about it in many ways. We find that they cut across spiritual traditions with their various holy books and scriptures. If we really look at them, every one of them contains stories, whether it is the Bible telling the story of Abraham or the life of Jesus; or the Mahabharata telling the story of Arjuna and Krishna — all of these books in essence provide us with stories. This is not to minimize them at all, in fact, it elevates them. The people who passed these scriptural writings on to us were all great beings, and part of their greatness was that they were well aware of the audience to whom they were speaking. In their effort to pass on their wisdom they had to devise many ways to be able to express it to us.

In the life of the Buddha, it is said that when he had his enlightenment the experience was so profound that he was completely convinced there would be no possible way he could communicate this to others. His initial decision was ‘I won’t even try.’ Of course, he changed his mind and proceeded to teach for the remaining fifty years of his life, often using stories as a teaching device. One of the ways that all of these great teachers tend to speak to us is in stories, much like we do with our own children when they go to sleep at night. We sit by their bedside and we read them a story. We tell them about things that fuel their imagination, that uplift them and make them think of possibilities that perhaps are just beyond their reach. In the same way these very wise people have given us stories.

The basis for the most profound work by H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, is drawn from a small text called the *Stanzas of Dzyan*. The very first stanza begins: ‘The eternal Parent, wrapped in her ever invisible robes, had slumbered once again for seven eternities.’ Even though I had never heard the *Stanzas of Dzyan* as a child, it begins just like the other stories that I heard began: ‘Once upon a time . . .’. In this case, it provides us with very familiar symbols: the parent wrapped in robes (we understand what a parent is, what robes are), had slumbered (we understand sleep). All of these terms are given as a story. However, that particular verse speaks about a period prior to the manifestation of a Universe. Nothing existed. How do we describe it, except with a story? These stories are much like a ladder, where it leads us step by step, by step, by step. If you follow it, just like a normal ladder, at a certain point the ladder ends. When that ladder ends is the point where realization is possible, because then you have to take your *own* step. In certain traditions they describe this as ‘stepping out on faith’.

Every tradition has its stories. When you find some of the great ones, the ones capable of transforming us if we understand them deeply, they often describe a journey — there is an outgoing, and then ultimately a return. The *Ramayana*: Rama leaves his kingdom and travels in the wilderness, fights a battle, wins Sita back, and returns. In the *Mahabharata* there is a similar outward journey, struggle, and return. In the stories of the Christian

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tradition, the Prodigal Son is one that is quite well known: he leaves his father's house, and goes to the far land. These are the stories with which we are familiar.

In the Theosophical tradition, when J. Krishnamurti was thirteen years old he wrote his first book, a very short one, *At the Feet of the Master*. There are a number of profound teachings in it. One of them is that 'in all the world there are two kinds of people.' They are not Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Indians, Americans, and so on. There are two kinds of people no matter where we are from: the first is those who know, and the second is those who do not. That is the real dividing line in terms of humanity. Of course, those who know are few, those who do not are many, and there is a middle ground which is probably composed of us — those who want to know, and kind of know, but do not know — the ones who are engaged in the search.

What Krishnamurti says is known by those who 'know', is the truth of evolution. This is not Darwinian evolution, the progressive change in forms through the survival of the fittest. It is a much more profound approach to evolution. In the theosophical view there is the sense that evolution is not just the physical process, but it is something that involves three streams. There is an interrelationship during a period in a cycle, of a spiritual stream, an intellectual or mental stream, and a physical one.

The same idea is expressed in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patañjali, where he talks about the coming together of Purusha (spirit) and

Prakriti (matter). The purpose of their coming together is to bring about an awareness in Purusha, the spiritual component, of its own nature and power, which is clouded by its interaction with the two other streams; and to unfold those powers which are inherent in Prakriti, or matter. The image that has been used to describe this process is a lame man (Purusha) riding on the shoulders of a blind man (Prakriti). The man who cannot walk guides the one who cannot see. This is a description of the evolutionary process, which is not only a physical evolution. It is the setting where we find ourselves. And this process of unfoldment, which is another way of describing evolution, is the future orientation. Within this moment these processes are ongoing, but they move towards something beyond this point in time, and at *any* moment we are able to see it, we experience it.

There is a beautiful story called The Hymn of the Pearl from the Gospel of Thomas, one of the Gospels that did not become part of the Bible, but which is similar to the Prodigal Son. It describes in beautiful imagery this process of unfoldment that we find ourselves in. In this story there is a young prince who is the heir to a throne, his father is the great ruler of a kingdom, and his mother is the queen. His parents one day tell him that there is a mission he has to undertake. They celebrate him, prepare him for his journey, and send him off. The mission he is going on is to bring back from a far land a precious pearl that is protected by a serpent. So there is an ordeal that he has to pass

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through. He is taken on his journey to the borderland, where he steps out of his parents' kingdom and moves into another kingdom. At this point they take off a beautiful robe that the prince was wearing and he proceeds on his journey.

In many of these stories, when you hear about a prince or someone from a royal family, it can be seen like a children's story, and it is good at that level, where it has a moral. But in its more profound aspect, it is a spiritual story. Essentially, any spiritual story is the story of ourselves and of the life we have yet to live, and of the road we find ourselves walking upon. The prince is always the one of royal lineage, but who has yet to develop into their full kingship, into their full majesty, which always requires some type of ordeal. So he goes into the far land, and while he is there he begins his mission. In order to not be perceived as someone dangerous from afar, he starts to dress like the local people. He meets someone from his land who warns him: 'Whatever you do, try not to eat the food here, because it will change you.' Of course, he forgets about the warning and eats their food.

The soul takes its journey and goes to the far land, which in this case is its incarnation into a physical body — the situation we are all in. This divine nature, this openness that we are aware of, that keeps calling to us, is struggling to make itself known through the very heavy garments that we wear of body, mind, emotion, that cover it. So the prince eats the food and forgets everything — why he came, the pearl, his family, and just wanders.

Far back at home his royal parents become aware that their child has lost his way, almost in the way that any mother becomes aware at a distance that something is wrong with her child. So the king and queen and all of the people of this heavenly abode send a message reminding the prince of the reason for his journey, of the mission that he came to accomplish. In the story the message takes the form of an eagle who comes and speaks to him, and then transforms into a letter. The moment when he receives this message, and is in a state conducive to actually hear and see, is the all-important moment in this story, and is also the all-important moment that occurs in our own lives, if we are so fortunate as to allow for it. What happens is that he awakens and remembers that he is the son of a King, and 'my rank did long for its nature'. From that point on, he proudly continues the mission, takes the pearl back to his parents' kingdom, and is reunited with his family.

This is a beautiful story, and its beauty is not just that it is well told, but that it is the story of the journey we all have taken. Stories such as this, if rightly heard, are in fact the eagle that brings the message — that which can awaken us. Sometimes these stories are embodied as great people. 'The living word' is how some of them are described who cross our paths. In the Theosophical tradition we have such people as Krishnamurti, Annie Besant, Col. Olcott, Sri Ram, I. K. Taimni, Radha Burnier, and others that we have known, in whose presence, as much as from their words, we find ourselves able

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to awaken, people who stimulate in us a *remembrance*.

Nobody adds anything to us. It is one of the big mistakes in the way we approach our spiritual lives to believe that in some way we are incomplete; that fundamentally we are incomplete and what we need is some new idea, some teacher, or movement that can give us that one little piece in the puzzle of our lives that we feel is missing, and that when we find it, then everything will be fine. We will see, will understand, and will be all right — this belief is wrong; there are no missing pieces. This is what these stories are here to tell us, and this is the opportunity available to each of us. This is the nature of the future for us. We have come here to bring this future into being.

The problems that we find around us in the world today, from many perspectives appear to be insurmountable. So we find people hoping for some new technology that will make it possible to clean the air, to rid the seas of the pollution continually being poured into them, to turn men's hearts so that they start to see that war is not profitable, a new idea, a new technology. As long as we function at that level, it is not a rosy picture, because every single problem that we encounter, every single issue that cries out for attention is created by, or springs from, us and from the collective union of the misguided minds that we have managed to improperly cultivate.

This view of the world sees it as something which can be manipulated, causing problems now and in the future. So what

do we do? What is the future that we would promise to ourselves? For any one who has paid attention to scientific thinking, or even has read a newspaper, it has been fairly clear for twenty or thirty years that we are moving towards a crisis point in terms of the environment. I used to feel so sorry for my daughter that she will inherit this world which has been so badly mistreated, resulting in profound consequences that my poor daughter will have to suffer through.

Over the years, science became more exact. They started to change the projections for when this crisis was supposed to occur. Then I began to worry a little bit more, because now it was not going to be after I was dead and gone; all of a sudden it became clear that all of these consequences being anticipated will occur in *my* lifetime unless something is done to prevent them. I got away from the position of 'my poor daughter'; then one has to start thinking very differently. It is never an accident that we are born in a particular place and time. We have been born in a time when there are great demands for a new approach to living — not just to economies, but to living. We are here with the potential to bring this about. So how do we do it? If we just wait enough lifetimes, enough cycles, this elevated consciousness will eventually unfold within us. We can just wait it out ten, fifteen, one hundred lives from now, when we may find ourselves in that elevated state.

Another approach is based on an expression that we often hear, 'Think on these things'. Let us immerse our mind

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in those things that are productive of realization. The realization that comes in thinking on these things that are of such a profound and elevated nature is that at a certain point thought can no longer grasp them. When that point arises, then 'no thought' is the experience, and when we stop the process of projecting our minds and thoughts on to the world and on to others, then there is hope. That is a possibility for each and every one of us.

There is an expression that comes from *The Voice of the Silence*: 'Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.' Openness,

awareness, profound realization of this ever-present future within us is born out of those acts done out of the fullness of the experience of love. Love being that which unites us, which joins, and moves beyond boundaries. 'Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.' This requires no technique, no method, no investment of capital, it requires just beginning where we find ourselves, with whatever our understanding of what love is, and trying to deepen it, to understand it, magnify it, and then allow it to have its way with us. This is the more difficult part. ✧

Can the mind be in a state of experiencing God? That is meditation — the meditation which is not of pursuit, not of a particular idea, the meditation which is not the mere concentration which is exclusion. In that meditation, there is experiencing without the experiencer. And I assure you it is very arduous. It is not just sitting down and closing the eyes and getting some kind of fancy visions and ecstasy.

If I know how to listen rightly, if I know how to listen to thought, then thought will inevitably bring about this state — the state in which there is no experiencer, therefore no accumulator, the person that gathers, holds. Therefore experiencing is a state of constant unknowingness; therefore it is Timeless, it is not a thing of the mind.

J. Krishnamurti

The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti, Vol. VII

Radhaji in Tanzania

DEEPA KAPUR

IN the June 1998 issue of *The Theosophist*, Mrs Radha Burnier stated in her article, ‘*Theosophy Is For Everyone*’:

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

Radhaji brought her light to Africa. Not once, not twice but four times! Over four decades, the torchbearer for Theosophy came to East Africa in 1972, 1993, 2000 and 2005.

Every visit attracted not merely Theosophists, but scholars, thinkers, heads of communities, officials, and even students from within the Tanzanian community who came to drink from the fountain of wisdom. She ignited our vision, illumined our minds, touched our hearts, and lit up our souls!

Even as international President, her bearing was never one that came from her position, but one that stemmed from her being’s innermost longing to shed the light of Theosophy wherever she went. And she

did! With passion, commitment, sincerity, devotion, courage, and conviction, she stayed undaunted in her relentless efforts to shed light on the wisdom of the ages.

In Tanzania, she connected with people from all walks and stages of life. With adults, she was the learned one, whose profound lectures urged us to look within. With the ladies group, she was a source of inspiration, whose visits to our homes for a dinner in her honour was never complete without a humble thank you to the lady of the house. With children, she was a ‘playful teacher’ who happily indulged their chatter, speaking to them in a way that would reveal life’s truths in simple, understandable ways.

‘Firm, yet gentle; truthful yet kind; just yet loving!’ is probably the most apt way to describe this noble woman who lived the truth that she stood for. Radhaji caught the attention of the media in Tanzania. An entire centerspread of the nation’s newspaper was dedicated to her. She was even invited for an interview on television.

Our Dar es Salaam Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Tanzania has espoused the need to give back into the community through humanitarian work. Projects for the welfare of street children,

Ms Deepa Kapur is Vice-President of Dar es Salaam Lodge, Tanzania.

Radhaji in Tanzania

contributions to the school for the visually impaired, fund-raising for open-heart surgeries for children born with congenital heart defects, adoption of an orphanage, distribution of blankets to watchmen in winter, assistance to old people, have been some of the many commitments that we have undertaken towards uplifting the underprivileged.

Radhaji was always energetic and ready for a visit to any of our projects in a bid to encourage our efforts and support our goals of service to humankind. This was truly an expression of brotherhood of the highest kind! In her own words, creating a 'sense of non-separateness'!

The Theosophical Society in Tanzania has evolved over the years with fresh

energy, new membership, and a vibrant ladies group. Today Sis. Lili Chohan stands at the helm as Lodge President, Sis. Deepa Kapur as Vice-President, and TOS National coordinator, and Bro. H. Dubal as our Assistant General Secretary. Our TOS section includes a youth wing (including Malaika Kapur and Khyati Dubal) that holds great promise as baton holders for the future of the TS in Tanzania.

We, in Tanzania, are convinced that as long as we live the ideals of Theosophy that Radhaji embraced, as long as we work with conviction like Radhaji did, and as long as we dare to take bold strides into uncharted territory like Radhaji did in Africa, so long she will live amidst us forever and ever! ✧



(left to right): Mr H. Dubal, Jr, Mr P. S. Patel, Mrs Manjula Kanabar, Ms Vanita Nathwani, Mrs Jasu Devani, with other members of the Dar es Salaam Lodge

Mrs Radha Burnier

CRISTIAN CONEN

IN July 1993, the 8th World Congress was held in Brasilia, and the Argentinian national magazine, *Cambios (Changes)*, published Mrs Radha Burnier's opening lecture, 'Towards a Wise Mind and a Noble Society', an example of clarity, synthesis, and strength. She spoke about 'non-acceptance' to the common standards which are part of society; about the social values which are mechanically accepted by everyone; the contradictions as part of the so-called 'progress' when it is exempt of true values. She pointed out that the Theosophical Society encourages 'nonconformity', that is, to question established values in the internal as well as external world, in ourselves and in established society.

In reading her *Human Regeneration*, there is brevity and clarity in every line, and with I. K. Taimni's *Principles of Theosophical Work*, both cover the whole spectrum of Theosophical work. When connecting the two books a question arises: Why do they emphasize that we must have a clear idea about the institutional work? Is it not enough to study Theosophy and to attend meetings? Both authors knew Sanskrit, they were deep thinkers, had clear thoughts, and both were

interested in institutional organization and direction. For them branch work was the nucleus, for it depends directly on its members; the work in the TS is only possible if there is a real theosophical interest in self-transformation. Radha did not speak about technical matters, but how to work with them; she did not talk much about Theosophy, but about how we understand it and how much it is present in our daily life.

Her message

Delving in old magazines, I found an article dealing with the letter that Radha sent to the General Council, on 15 November 1980 (her birthday), where she says:

It is necessary to have a strong and well-organized structure. The time has come for the General Council to pay serious attention not only to the means and the basis, but to the work itself. In many places where the Society exists, there is a large number of Branches which are becoming inactive and ineffective.

Radha was starting to outline a huge challenge, a sort of 'members of the TS, let us be clear, it is not about studying

Mr Cristian Conen is a long-standing member of the Argentinian Section of the Theosophical Society.

Mrs Radha Burnier

Theosophy, it is about the work of Branches and Sections which must be well understood and directed/oriented, otherwise it is not effective'. In 1983, in Argentina during a Summer School she had been asked: Is the Branch a channel for the higher forces? She answered:

There cannot be an automatic channel for the higher forces. If something is to become a channel for higher influences, some conditions must be present. In many parts of their letters, the Elder Brothers point out that They cannot approach a place where there is no harmony. It is also known that They help those who are really looking for truth and who have a sincere aspiration for the spiritual, which means that we must live according to our own and best understanding. In other words, members must try sincerely to live a theosophical, pure life. None of us is perfect. Naturally, a Branch is made up by imperfect people. We are not talking about people who are in a perfect state of purity and in perfect harmony, but people who are trying sincerely to do their best, to be brotherly, who are ready to forget trivial things and who do not have any resentments; we are also speaking about people who are really looking for truth and wisdom. This means to inquire, to look for, to live an attentive/watchful life. The simple fact that a group of people signs the membership form and has a Charter, this only does not constitute a Branch. In order to have a really theosophical Branch, first there has to be a truly theosophical spirit; there are certain important aspects or elements of the theosophical spirit. One of them is the spirit of true

understanding, affection, brotherhood, not merely talking about it but trying to live it.

TS members accept its Objects, and this shows they are aware of the need for creating a new human society, where cooperation and brotherhood prevail. But if they continue to have a mind conditioned by tradition and conventional ideas coming from the environment, perhaps they may perpetuate differences instead of encouraging brotherhood. Therefore we must examine our way of thinking. Radha made this last idea her basis and starting point which, as we will see, the Mahatmas also envisaged. She also pointed out the need for considering the TS as a world body:

Wherever there is a Branch or a group of members, it is essential to inculcate and strengthen the realization that we are a world body closely united, and we share a plan of the world, an ethic, and a way of living which are very useful to achieve our common object: universal love . . .

. . . Our members should belong to a category of those who are conscious of the absolute importance universality has, and not to the people who adopt a mundane viewpoint when they say 'I am this and you are that'. The whole TS, made up by members from different places, is one: we all have the common object of achieving the transformation of the world, and of replacing the warlike spirit by one of collaboration.

. . . If there is an altruistic spirit, there is also universality of purpose. All the differences, which previously seemed

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important, as my nationality, my family, my religious community, etc., vanish. A deeper awakening of the consciousness of equality and of sacredness in everything which is alive fills consciousness.

... To secure universality and altruism makes of the TS a real instrument for regeneration. The new members may not realize that the wisdom we call Theosophy blooms when consciousness is imbued by universal kindness.

In a talk she gave in USA she said: 'I wonder how many of you know what is happening in other Sections of the world.' For Radha, it was necessary to be committed to the work. We must feel as a world body in order to change.

The Three Objects

In one of the issues of the Argentinian magazine *Cambios*, I found that she talked about 'brotherhood', but in a completely different way to what I was used to; she said, 'brotherhood means to remove gradually self-interest'.

In the 126th Annual Convention she spoke about the three Objects:

The theme of this Convention is the **spiritual Path** by which the human being may transcend himself and enter a higher, superhuman dimension. The three Objects, we must note, have this as their undertone:

Universal brotherhood, with emphasis on the word 'universal', implies unconditioning the mind;

The **second Object** urges us to love truth and live it; and,

The **third Object** teaches us not to be satisfied with appearances, but to discover the unknown in the universe as well as in ourselves.

Some issues appeared in my mind. The first of them was: what a different meaning she gave to the Objects! Since I had become a member of the TS I had listened to and accepted that the meetings of the TS were or should be brotherly. But now Radha was speaking about something completely different. She spoke about 'brotherhood', connecting it with a condition which was only possible through a work of self-regeneration or self-transformation, not just wishing it, though this wish could be good. Up to this moment I had understood the second and third Objects in a different way, I do not know if in a wrong way, but in a common and conventional way.

The second issue was that changes are in behaviour; it does not matter how much I can learn or understand some theosophical teachings, but the true value of understanding those teachings will be tested 'in' and 'through' daily life. It does not matter what I can repeat as eternal truths, life will, in due time, test me '*in vivo*' to let me check the reality of what I have learnt.

The third issue was that in order to have theosophical work rightly done, it must be accomplished in a group. Radha states that:

The TS is meant to bring people together — people who earnestly try to realize on this physical plane the supreme truth of

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unity, which is forever a reality at the spiritual level. (*Human Regeneration*, p. 38)

. . . The TS is a means for bringing together people who are aware that there are serious problems, and are earnest about solving them. (*Human Regeneration*, p. 69)

Some part of the work is individual, and another part is within a group; they are symbiotic. HPB suggests the same as regards working in groups.

So the real work does not consist in ‘knowing how to answer questions with theosophical content’, but in a change of behaviour. Only to know Theosophy is not the key of the TS as an institution, as was said by the Mahatmas in their ‘*Letters*’:

. . . you [Sinnett] have always discussed but to put down the idea of a universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the TS on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. This, my respected and

esteemed friend and Brother — will never do! (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, chronological sequence, Letter no. 2, p. 8)

She takes up again this banner and sets it in front of the work to be done; in order to get to the object of the work there is a need for a change, and this change goes from the ‘I’ to the ‘non-I’, from egotism to altruism.

Finally, in her opening address as President, 3 August 1980, she says:

The Theosophical Society was not meant merely to preach brotherhood to the world. The statement of its first Object makes it clear that the Society is intended to be an *actual* nucleus of brotherhood. This implies that those who compose its membership must be clearly aware that there is a shared destiny for all. . . . The impact of the Society should not be that of one more creed, organization, institution, like many others. It is intended to shed the sweet influence and power of a spiritually inspired Sangha or Brotherhood. ✧

Spheres of influence can be found everywhere. The first object of the TS is philanthropy. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist — ‘not for himself but for the world he lives’. This, and philosophy, the right comprehension of life and its mysteries, will give the ‘necessary basis’ and show the right path to pursue. Yet the best ‘sphere of influence’ for the applicant is now in (his own land).

KH

Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, No. 45

Bridging Science and Spirituality — Signs of our Time

SABINE VAN OSTA

OVER the last century mainstream materialistic science has developed at an explosive pace in the numerous disciplines it covers. Despite the fact it considers itself as purely materialistic and remains faithful to its careful methodology based on observations by external instruments only, while avoiding to take any phenomenon for granted, the question could be raised whether it is as purely materialistic as it thinks itself to be. Is it not so that its advancement often has depended and still depends upon one or other idea or insight, call it intuition? Such intuitive insight or idea regularly decides on the direction a project takes or indicates the way to unblock a research which at first glance leads nowhere. Even more so, the correctness of a project or theory is regularly first experienced through feeling and intuition rather than through collected data and scientifically acceptable evidence. Even today, many scientists and scientific pioneers whose names are most of the time unknown by a greater audience for being condemned by the scientific establishment, bear witness to that fact.

So, the number of illustrating examples

on the intuitional element in science is without number but let us take a quote from Edward Witten, an authority in the field of physics who, when talking about the M-theory, expresses it as follows:

I just think too many nice things have happened in string theory for it to be all wrong. Humans do not understand it very well, but I just don't believe there is a big cosmic conspiracy that created this incredible thing that has nothing to do with the real world.

There are not many measurements done in this statement in which also transpires the special relationship science always has towards reality and its organized structures, a relationship based not only on objectivity but also on admiration and awe in front of realities which, at this stage, it can still only explore and describe rather than create. At the same time, one of man's most powerful drives is creation, especially for scientists. In fact, scientists can get so caught up into their research and creative drive, that it makes them lose sight altogether of other essential aspects of life such as ethics.

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A few of the more widely discussed examples of this losing-sight-of-ethics are the various fields of genetic engineering which go as far as the controversial and widely debated scientific research on stem cells and therapeutic cloning and the many subsequent attempts of cloning life-forms such as plants and animals, all kinds of experiments aiming at growing living tissue, etc. . . . Needless to say, man is struggling in each of these cases with more than one ethical question. And while the so-called transparent debate in the media goes on, God knows what kind of research is carried out at this very moment in the greatest secrecy in laboratories around the world. As is the case with so many discoveries and inventions, some will one day, wholly or partially, become part of our lives in the decades to follow, as techniques, treatments, products, or medications (not necessarily the most efficient or natural ones), as shown by the many examples of condemned scientists and researchers. At first will be developed those methods and substances that are preferably produced or offered to the public by big industries. It sounds like science fiction, but we know that in course of time it will become a reality. Who would have guessed at the end of the nineteenth century, when the telephone was invented, that many of us would be hooked up to mobiles and smart phones from morning till night as at present. And what about computer science, internet, and the worldwide web revolution? What once started as a scientific project at a limited number of research institutes, has become the tool

which makes the world look like a village and boosts development in many domains at a dazzling pace.

The earlier-mentioned genetic engineering is very likely to go in the same direction of exponential development. A hint for the distant future of this avenue of research can be found in the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, as indicated by Master KH:

I may have the pleasure of demonstrating to you on your own writing table that life as *life* is not only transformable into other aspects or phases of the all-pervading Force, but that it can be actually infused into an artificial man. Frankenstein is a myth only so far as he is the hero of a mystic tale; in Nature — he is a possibility; and the physicists and physicians of the last sub-race of the sixth Race will inoculate life and revive corpses, as they now inoculate small-pox, and often less comely diseases. Spirit, life, and matter, are not natural principles existing independently of each other, but the effects of combinations produced by eternal motion in Space; and they [scientists] better learn it.

Mahatma Letters, No. 23b, II, 6

In all this, the development of the moral dimension, so it seems, is not following too closely that of material science, and before we have reached the stage indicated in the Mahatma Letter, the earth will have seen more than one humanitarian or other debacle for sure. Why so? The question is answered in the quote: ‘It makes all the difference to consider principles independently from one another or to see them as

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“effects of combinations””. But whether or not humanity sees the ‘effects of combinations’, in reality these effects will be there and by ignoring them, we force ourselves into the position of followers rather than being conscious and wise agents of the elements. As long as we do not get the picture of the combinations right, or even accept that there is more to reality than just the outer, measurable layer, we will always be doomed to run behind the consequences of our actions or, as Philip Harris has stated in his article ‘An Ethics Nightmare’ published in *Quest* magazine:

There is an urgent need for a well-informed global debate on artificial intelligence and artificially cultivated life-forms. We must not justify embargoes on inquiry just because we are afraid. Neither must we forbid biological research when it has already yielded vast medical breakthroughs and social goods. No, freedom must be preserved from both atrophy and careless license. We must ratify ethical guidelines, formulated and enforced by an international body such as the United Nations. Then we must live by those guidelines, lest we become gods whose very creations destroy us.

Let us briefly consider another aspect of the technological advancement which currently gives such a boost to development of all kinds of equipment applied in all domains of daily life thanks to a variety of personal electronic devices. We have not even begun to imagine the actual and overall result of our exposure to our own inventions in this field, and it will take

many generations to get a clear view on the whole question. However great the advantages may seem, even in everyday life, we will only know much later how this intensive exposure works out on the mental and emotional health of individuals as well as on the collective mental and emotional health of the globe.

The myriad of inventions turned into consumer products — each and every one the outcome and application of scientific research — combined with the power of a gargantuan industrial apparatus have made available gadgets to a greater number of individuals allowing those who can afford them to live — what we are made to believe — better lives. Undoubtedly, for a certain number of people in some parts of the globe the degree of life comfort will be enhanced to some extent. The experience of living of an average human being on earth has been forcefully reshaped by technology and cannot be compared to that of an average human being of, let us say, even 20 years ago. But at the same time the needs of man for outer devices seem to have increased also, and with that his vulnerability, and the question is how good is all of this. Many information sources wish to make us believe that life has become easier or more comfortable, flashier or more interesting than before, thanks to a multitude of personal devices and domotics, which make us all bathe, even drown, not only in emotional and mental impulses on the subtle level, but at the same time in a considerable number of electro-magnetic fields in the gross physical matter.

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What is the impact of all this interaction on our physical, emotional, and mental lives? How will future generations, who grow up with all these possibilities and will not know any better, deal with information, and how will their relationship with the surrounding reality be influenced? What will be the impact on our brains, and what will be the impact on purely mental processes such as thinking, memory, concentration, or even the higher faculties such as imagination, discernment, compassion, moral insight and so on.

At the same time, and via other domains of research, the same materialistic science is discovering the way towards the inner side of Man in its own way and by its own means and methodology, especially when it studies, for example, forms of energy healing or all types and forms of energy and its interaction on man for therapeutic purposes. Thus, materialistic science is, intentionally or not, coming closer to the esoteric sciences and to the vast body of knowledge of the Timeless Wisdom. A breakthrough into embracing the subtle domains of existence is likely to be found in these fields of research. To advanced meditation masters and yogis it probably may appear as some fine demonstrations of kicking doors open, but the bringing together of the Eastern and Western approaches towards matter, energy, and reality, is fundamental.

Thanks to Dr Rupert Sheldrake most people know about morphogenetic fields throwing light on part of the energy/information continuum we are living in without being aware of it. But many other steps

are being taken to bridge the Eastern and Western approaches and science and spirituality. In a government-funded five-year study at the Benson Henry Institute for Mind and Body Medicine of Massachusetts General Hospital on the benefits of meditation, researcher and psychiatrist John Denninger found that mind-body techniques can actually switch on and off some genes related to stress and immunity. For this study, 210 participants with high levels of chronic stress were split into three groups, with one group practising kundalini yoga (chosen for its emphasis on meditation), the second just meditating, and the third listening to stress education audiobooks for twenty minutes daily for two months. Researchers measured the impact on their genes and studied their neuroimaging for changes throughout the study interventions and in three follow-up sessions. In this research the biological effects of yoga and meditation were further unraveled. From earlier study it already appeared that the biological effects do not limit themselves to the brain but actually impact the whole body.

Luckily, this research is only one of many of its kind conducted in many parts of the world. More and more funding is being released by governments and academic institutions for these types of investigations. It is hoped that the advancements and results of this kind of research, and the further insights into the inner individual it will entail, will be quick enough to counter the devastating consequences for the inner constitution of man caused, among others, by the epidemical

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abuse of all sorts of substances, legal or illegal, for so called medical or entertainment purposes. Moreover, it is to be hoped that conclusions of these types of research convince more and more traditional medical practitioners to consider meditation and yoga at least as complementary treatment in case of mental ailments, severe stress, and depression. Imagine where we will be fifty years from now?

These efforts of bridging science and spirituality, even if unintentional, will be on more than one occasion helped by intuitive flashes experienced by the individual researchers themselves. These flashes will not be found in the articles,

study papers, and other official scientific publications as such, but rather in interviews, popularizing documentaries, diaries, blogs and so on. Notwithstanding the opinion of the scientific world, or even the opinion of the public at large, it will be the outcome of these researches, the responsible implementation of the solutions that they offer, and its balanced progress towards the core of Life itself, that will eventually count. It may be that the bridge between science and spirituality will reveal its true value, only when we find the answers, maybe even the gradual solutions, to the big questions and challenges of life on earth today. ✧

The great benefit of science is that it can contribute tremendously to the alleviation of suffering at the physical level, but it is only through the cultivation of the qualities of the human heart and the transformation of our attitudes that we can begin to address and overcome our mental suffering . . . We need both, since the alleviation of suffering must take place at the physical as well as the psychological levels.

H. H. the Dalai Lama
*The Universe in a Single Atom:
The Convergence of Science and Spirituality*

Behind the Masks

WAYNE GATFIELD

ONE of the major changes in the way a student of Theosophy regards life is the fact that all thoughts and actions gradually become based on premises unknown to the vast majority of humanity. The general trend of the ordinary man or woman in the street is to base their lives on ideas placed in their minds by a materially based society. The governments and education systems of the world unaware of, or opposed to, spiritual ethics come to conclusions based upon the concept of there being just one life, and then either an eternal blankness or an endless sojourn in some kind of heaven or hell.

In the West most people have dismissed the idea of heaven and hell and have little thought on what happens after we die, preferring to shut all such ideas out of their minds. So they go on day after day believing that they are immortal in their physical form and not considering the fact that this material life is transient and lasts only a few short decades. We are all to a greater and lesser extent children of our age, and even seasoned theosophists tend to react to certain situations in the same way as the general run of humanity, whereas our world view should in many ways be wider and at times opposite to the status quo.

There would never be the slightest inclination towards violence or wars if spiritual teaching were understood in the light of what it is to be truly human as shown to us by all the great world teachers, including H. P. Blavatsky. It is a matter of understanding the deeper levels of the human constitution that are invisible to the leading lights in science and politics and their followers, who look up to them as leaders and guides. We wear many masks in our lifetimes, but there is a central being above and behind these masks who is eternal and unchanging. Who do we become when we are quiet in our rooms or out in nature alone, when all these disguises have fallen away? It is then, when we have quietened our thoughts, that we may sense who or what is real and permanent in us. People are afraid to do this, they fill their lives with constant chatter, face-to-face or on mobile phones or the Internet. They watch TV, listen to music, watch films and read books. All these things have their place, but there must be time for silence and inner reflection.

This is why through the ages meditation has been recommended by wise souls. However the *Ashtavakra Gītā* warns us that we are bound only by the

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habit of meditation. Whenever something becomes habitual it loses its potency. Meditation has to be a part of our daily lives, an attitude of mind and a desire to keep centred in what is unchanging 'in' us. It is described in theosophical terms as the 'inexpressible yearning of the inner man to go out towards the infinite'. The fact that it is inexpressible points that what we experience is beyond the world's mental conceptions. If it is not able to be expressed in conditioned language, it is comprehensible experientially and is cathartic in its effects. This is the alchemy of the heart, the consecrating of one's being to the spiritual and, in time, a leaving of mental grooves of routine and restrictions that material society inflicts upon us. Meditation then has to be kept fresh and alive and spontaneous. How is this done? By seeing each moment of our lives as new and by realizing that all potentiality is in the present moment, which will always remain the only reality in a changing world.

The Zen Master Bankei instructed us to always remain focussed in the 'unborn Buddha mind' and not exchange it for conditioned minds of anger, greed, jealousy, and lust. These are not states of mind that we are born with, we develop them by a sort of atavism as we grow. As they are transitory and constantly changing they cannot be our real Self. We are taught to follow the middle way, which can be said to be like the upper point of a triangle, not just in the centre of two extremes but above and 'beyond' as well. Our personalities are transforming all the time. We

show a different mask under a variety of circumstances. In many ways we become like actors on a stage, becoming what is needed to achieve our ends. The aim of true spiritual teaching of all kinds is to find out what we are in reality. To become calm in the centre of the storm, to realize that there are gateways in our consciousness to higher states of being, and that if we cultivate the right state of mind we can undo our mind-forged manacles and fly into the clear skies of spiritual awareness.

Some Zen schools recommend developing what they call the 'great doubt'. In one way the great doubt is the time when we doubt the validity of all the intellectual learning we have done, realizing that it cannot be of any value and at the same time our awareness of ourselves as material beings begins to fade; we become what we are rather than what we imagine ourselves to be. This cannot be encompassed by words or images. This is not to undervalue the stages of our journey when intellectual learning is essential, but to understand that we must not stagnate.

There is a point in our evolution when we have to sacrifice all our intellectually gained knowledge in order to move onwards, because we enter a phase where this knowledge becomes a burden and we have to understand on a higher level without the lower-mind images and concepts. It is a stage of direct knowing rather than reasoning and speculating. This is when we start to comprehend what we are in reality and another of our masks is removed. It is a kind of sacrifice, because

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we have built up an intellectual understanding of the Path over many lives, and it is hard to let go of all that knowledge. However, it is not really a letting go, but another form of alchemy in which the essence of all that we have learned is transformed into experiential awareness. That is the purpose of true spiritual teaching; it refines the mind and prepares it to be able to receive more of the light of the Divine.

The Ashtavakra Gita states that until we forget everything we cannot live in the heart. The heart is said to be the centre of spiritual activity. In *The Voice of the Silence* we learn about the ‘Doctrine of the Heart’, which is the practical living of the life; and ‘Head’ learning, the intellectual understanding that often degenerates into dead letter. Many of our organized religions regard some book as the ‘word of God’ and follow it slavishly and literally, without intelligently looking into the meanings behind the words. This causes division and fanaticism that may result in intolerance of other religions and in some cases violence.

Our outer self is said to be our personality. This is developed from the Latin word ‘persona’, which was originally given to the role of an actor on stage and referred to a theatrical mask worn on stage in ancient times. In the psychology of C. G. Jung the persona is the mask or façade presented to satisfy the demands

of the situation or the environment, not representing the inner self. We are like actors playing many parts on life’s stage; none of which are our True Self, but similar to the masks worn by the cast of a play. At the end of the performance we go home as our real selves for a while before karma places us back on the stage to learn more lessons until we are ready to move on to higher levels of experience. As we progress onwards, more and more of our masks are removed until we become what we are in reality, which is beyond all our earthly conceptions.

We then can begin to truly live under the aegis of our Higher Nature and not as if we are looking through a ‘glass darkly’. This may place us at odds with our fellow human beings who have a different view of life — mostly second-hand knowledge. We begin to see clearly and act in sensible and rational ways that seem irrational in this topsy-turvy world. We are aware of the ‘bigger picture’ and have shaken off what was described earlier as our ‘mind-forged manacles’, to use an expression of the poet William Blake. Yet we begin to have a deeper relationship with those around us, mostly unknown to the vast majority, but exercising a benign influence upon them that will bear fruit in time. It will also assist them on the journey to find out exactly what it means to be truly human amidst all the distractions of a materialistic society. ✧

Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind.

The Voice of the Silence, Fragment III, v. 218

To the Memory of Helena Hahn

(1814 – 6.07.1842)

NATALIA BEREZANSKA

EVOLVED Beings can be incarnated only in a very pure and spiritually rich mother. This year, the 200th birthday of Helena Blavatsky's mother, Helena Andreyevna von Hahn (maiden name Fadeyeva), is celebrated.

In the 19th century, H. A. Hahn was known as a writer, a regular author writing for the magazine *Library for Reading* of Osip Senkovsky and the magazine *Domestic Notes*.

Helena was born in a large noble family in a small town of Rzhishev, Ukraine. So, it was probably not by chance that she took on the pen name of Zeneida R-va, although her family left Rzhishev when she was only one year old. Helena spent her childhood and youth in Yekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk since 1926). On her mother's side, she was a descendant of the Dolgoruky princely family. Her parents were Andrey Fadeyev (1789 – 1867), privy counsellor and a governor of Saratov, and princess Helena Dolgorukaya (maiden name). Helena's sister Ekaterina was married to Julius Vitte (1814 – 1867); their son Sergey Vitte (1849 – 1915) was a famous statesman, and became Minister of Finance of Russia.



Helena Hahn was a cousin of a poetess, Evdokiya Rostopchina, and a memoirs writer, Ekaterina Sushkova, a friend of M. Lermontov, with whom Helena met

at E. Sushkova's house. 'I met him personally. Bright mind! Poet, with great talent for eloquence' — Helena wrote to her family. One of Helena's relatives on her mother's side was a famous poet of that time, Ivan Dolgorukov, a grandchild of Natalia Dolgorukaya and the first publisher of her book *'Autograph Notes'*, and also a poet F. I. Tyutchev [7].

Helena married captain Peter von Hahn (1798 – 1873) when she was sixteen years old. He was a military man, a descendant of the von Hahn German noble family which moved to Russia in the middle of the 18th century. Helena had a romantic nature. Before marriage, she dreamed about an ideal spouse with deep spiritual interests. However, a tall stately captain of equestrian artillery shattered her dreams quickly. Peter was a descendant of the German knights family, Hahn von Rotternstern-Hahn. He was very well

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educated, but all his interests were focussed on horses, guns, dogs, and formal dinner parties. He was a man of rare wit and inveterate scepticism. Besides, he was twelve years older than his wife.

Helena Andreyevna wrote: 'Everything I was striving for from my childhood, all the things that were dear and sacred to my heart were ridiculed by him or presented to me in a pitiless and cynical light of his cold and cruel mind' [1, p. 38]. She found refuge in writing novels about the unhappy life of married women in Russia.

Their first daughter Helena (Helena Blavatsky), was born in 1831. Their son Sasha was born in 1833 and died when he was two years old (in 1835, in Romankov). After that, together with her daughter, Helena Andreyevna joined her parents in Odessa who had been living there since the spring of 1835. The second daughter, Vera (future writer Zhelikhovsky), was born on 29 April 1835, in Odessa, which is recorded in the metrical books of Preobrazhensky Cathedral. During this period of time, Helena Andreyevna and her small children and husband travelled throughout Ukraine; they visited Poltava, Uman, Romankov, Oposhna, Kamensky, Gadyach, and Odessa. In the spring of 1836, they arrived at St Petersburg where they lived until May 1837. Here in St Petersburg, at the exhibition, Helena Hahn saw A. S. Pushkin. She wrote about it to her parents: 'I recognized him — Pushkin! I imagined him with black dark hair, but his hair is not darker than mine, long, disheveled . . . Of small stature, with a bearded face, he would have

not been handsome, if he did not have such eyes. His eyes are sparkling like live coals, and are in continuous motion. Of course, I forgot about paintings. Instead, I was looking at him. He seemed to notice it — a few times he darted a glance at me and smiled. It is evident, that my unrestrained overflowing feelings were reflected on my face' [4, p. 744]. Such an unexpected meeting with Pushkin in St Petersburg in 1836 made her feel inspired for the rest of her life. It is known that during his exile in the south, Pushkin visited Fadeyev's houses in Chisinau and Odessa. In addition, Helena corresponded with Decembrist S. I. Krivtsov, and when in Odessa, also met with Vl. Benediktov who highly praised her books.

It was not easy for Helena Andreyevna to live the nomadic life of an artillery officer's wife. In her stories 'Ideal' and 'Vain Gift' she wrote about the unhappy lot of a woman: 'In the country, the life of a man of the brightest mind is intolerable; however, the life of a woman whose very nature made her feel beyond the crowd is truly awful' [2, p. 43]. For the longest period of time, the family lived in Poltava. Vera, Helena Blavatsky's sister, in her book *When I was little*, remembers these days: 'Mother was often ill, and when she felt well, she was sitting for hours behind her green buckram screen and was writing something all the time.' This place was called mother's study room. Worries about her children tormented Helena Andreyevna during the last years of her life. When she was advised to give up her writing in order to preserve her health,

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she answered: ‘Whatever sacrifices it takes, I want my children to be well, indeed, *fundamentally* well educated. For this, I do not have any resources, except my writing!’ [2, p. 42].

In 1836, Helena von Hahn published a compilation from the novel *Godolphin* by Bulwer-Lytton in Senkovsky’s *Library for Reading*. In 1839, in the same *Library* her first story *Ideal* was published under her pen name of Zeneida R-va. In 1837, when in the Caucasus, she met Decembrists in exile. The impressions she had of this acquaintance served her as the basis for several new written works, namely ‘Zheleznovodsk Memories’, ‘Utballa’ and ‘Dzhellaleddin’ stories published in 1838 in the *Library for Reading*. Later, in 1839 – 1841, new stories followed, one by one (also published in the same *Library for Reading*): ‘Medallion’, ‘Judgment of The Light’, ‘Teofaniya Abbiadzhio’. A story ‘Vain Gift’ was written in 1842, and the first part of it was published in the *Domestic Messages* the same year; the second part was included in the collected works published after her death (1843); ‘Lyubonka’ (written in 1842, and the same year published in the *Domestic Messages*), ‘Lodge in Odessa Opera’ (published in an almanac *Daguerreotype*). Two editions (1843 and 1905) of the collected works of Helena Andreyevna von Hahn were published in St Petersburg [7].

In June 1840, in Saratov, Helena Hahn gave birth to a son whose name was Leonid.

The literary efforts of H. Hahn (Zeneida R-va) did not escape notice. Belinsky

called her ‘The Russian George Sand’. Several famous people of that time responded to the publication of her works. Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev wrote the following: ‘This woman had . . . both a warm Russian heart and life experience of a woman, and passionate beliefs, — and Nature did not deprive her of those “simple and sweet” sounds which happily reflect her inner life’ [5, p. 370]. The prominent Russian critic V. G. Belinsky wrote about her: ‘There was no woman [like her] in Russia, yet, who would be so gifted, and not only sensible, but also intelligent. . . . Such lines of stories can gush only from the pen of writers of great spirit and great talent’ [2, p. 41 - 43].

In the spring of 1842, the family again moved down to their estate near Odessa to have some rest and to meet with Helena Andreyevna von Hahn who was very sick. She was only twenty-eight years old, by that time she wrote nine novels, but her serious illness was merciless. On 24 June 1842, Helena Andreyevna was buried in Odessa Municipal Cemetery that was later renamed as Old Cemetery. On her grave, there is an inscription carved on a white marble column with a marble rose twined around it which says: ‘The power of the spirit killed life’ [3, p. 30].

To the memory of Helena von Hahn, Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky wrote the following ‘There are writers who live their life separately from their creations; there are writers whose personality is closely connected to their works. When reading the first, you feel charmed by the divine art, not thinking about an artist;

To the Memory of Helena Hahn (1814 – 6.07.1842)

when reading the second, you feel charmed by the contemplation of a wonderful human personality, you are thinking about her, love her and wish to know her very essence, and details of her life. Our gifted Zeneida R-va (Helena von Hahn) belongs to the second category (of writers). . . . “May you rest in peace, a noble heart, prematurely torn to pieces by the power of your own feelings. May you rest in peace, an extraordinary woman, a victim of the rich gifts of your spiritual nature! We thank you for your short life: it was not wasted and it was not in vain that it blossomed with magnificent, fragrant flowers of deep feelings and spiritual reflections. This blossom belongs to your soul, and your soul will never die, it will live for everyone who will want to enjoy its aroma” [6, p. 659].

On 17 April 2014, the members of the Kiev branch of the TS in Ukraine made a pilgrimage to the birthplace of Helena Andreyevna in Rzhishev, which is about 76 km from Kiev, and is the site of numerous archaeological findings of the Trypillian Culture. An estate in Rzhishev belonged to Helena Pavlovna Dolgorukaya,

who was Helena Andreyevna’s mother.



Unfortunately, the estate where Helena was born has been lost. However, the memories about the site of the Fadeyev family house were passed down to later generations of

Rzhishev residents. A tour guide of a local history museum showed us a few old linden-trees remaining from an alley which 200 years ago led to the Fadeyev family house. It is a picturesque corner of Ukraine, with the small river of Legchich running nearby, and the Rapid brook, probably, boarding the estate. Future Decembrists Bestuzhev-Ryumin, brothers Sergey and Ippolit Muravyov-Apostol, prince Troubetskoy stayed at the Dolgoruky estate after the war of 1812. Here, in the estate gardens, they had worked on the Constitution of the Southern Society of Decembrists. ✧

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**ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

Adyar

Theme: 'Theosophy in a Changing World'

26 to 31 December 2014

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Thursday, 25 December

8.00 am General Council Meeting
2.00 pm General Council Meeting

Friday, 26 December

8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
OPENING OF THE CONVENTION
3.30 pm Reception
5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'The Wheels of Change: Transitioning
from Worldliness to Sacredness'
Mrs Linda Oliveira, General Secretary, *Australian Section*
7.30 pm Ritual of the Mystic Star

Saturday, 27 December

8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
SHORT LECTURES
'The Cycle of Life'
Mr Colin Price, General Secretary, *English Section*
'The Challenge of the Modern Theosophical Movement'
Mr Marcos de Resende, General Secretary, *Brazilian Section*
9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I
5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
'Upon the Foundation is Wisdom Established'
Mr Michael Gomes, *American Section*
7.30 pm Cultural Programme

Convention Programme

Sunday, 28 December

- 8.00 am Devotional Meeting
Mrs Manju Sundaram, *Indian Section*
- 10.00 am SHORT LECTURES
'Tuning in to Our World'
Mrs Diana Dunningham Chapotin,
Former International Secretary,
Theosophical Order of Service
'I Have Promises to Keep'
Mr R. C. Tampi, Director,
The School of the Wisdom, Adyar
- 3.00 pm SYMPOSIUM
'Theosophy in Daily Life'
- 5.00 pm THEOSOPHY–SCIENCE LECTURE
'Transcending Science — A New Dawn'
Mr Jacques Mahnich,
President, St Jean Lodge, *French Section*
- 7.30 pm Cultural Programme

Monday, 29 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer
SYMPOSIUM
'Principles of the Higher Life'
- 9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II
'Knowing and Being'
- 3.00 pm THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE
'Service in a Changing World'
- 5.00 pm BESANT LECTURE
'Love and Death in the Myths of India —
Their Message for Today and Tomorrow'
Mr Manoj Das, Renowned Author,
Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry
- 7.30 pm Cultural Programme

Convention Programme

Tuesday, 30 December

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
- SHORT LECTURES
- ‘The Challenge of Wisdom’
Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, General Secretary, *French Section*
- ‘A Vision to Go Mainstream’
Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.,
Former General Secretary, *Philippine Section*
- 9.30 am QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- 3.00 pm SHORT LECTURES
- ‘Beacons for a World in Motion: A Clear Mind, a Pure Heart’
Mrs Sabine Van Osta, General Secretary, *Belgian Section*
- ‘Brotherhood, a Fact and a Challenge’
Ms Els Rijncker, General Secretary, *Dutch Section*
- ‘Theosophy and a Need for Ideals in the Contemporary World’
Ms Svitlana Gavrylenko, Organizing Secretary, *TS in Ukraine*
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
- ‘The Present Need’
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, Theosophical Society*

Wednesday, 31 December

- 8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
- CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION
- 9.30 am Admission of New Members
- 3.00 pm Youth Forum

**Let us live Theosophy more than speak it. Speech
will come by itself out of a heart overflowing, but
the important thing is to live Theosophy.**

N. Sri Ram

Theosophical Work around the World

Slovenia

A Summer School was held from 20 to 22 June 2014 in Kranjska Gora, conducted by brother Bhupendra Vora and was attended by thirty-two participants. The inspiring theme was 'The Wisdom of The Upanishads'. The other guest speaker was sister Femmie Liezenga from Naarden, who gave the closing lecture, 'Regenerating Wisdom'. On Saturday afternoon a short trip to the mountains filled all with joy and serenity, and the evening programmes with three young musicians — Ms Aleksandra Pavli, Ms Mojca Turk, and Prof. Janja Brlec created an uplifting atmosphere.

An Autumn school was held from 26 to 28 September 2014 in Gaberje, near Lendava, conducted by Breda Zagar and organized by Understanding Lodge in Celje. The theme was 'At The Feet of The Master', the second part from the *Talks on The Path of Occultism*. For the first time the school was held in the easternmost part of Slovenia, near Hungary. A short trip to a special house of culture was organized for all participants. The evening programme was a talk given by Mrs Melis Pangerc, 'On the Unity of the Universe'. The school was attended by twenty-one participants.

A true spirit of brotherliness and harmony prevailed during both schools.

The Netherlands

On Sunday, 10 August 2014, the inter-

national President Tim Boyd was in the Netherlands for a meeting with around 100 members from Belgium and the Netherlands, the 'Dutch Day', in the Besant Hall of the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden. Even before the meeting many informal and animated conversations with Mr Boyd had taken place. The President addressed the members and spoke about the need for helping hands from all nations for our international Society. His frank and open approach was highly appreciated. After the group photograph and lunch there was a session with questions and answers, and members attended a meditative meeting that was organized by the Link Officers of the ITC. Participants were invited to form a channel for higher energies to transmit the powers of Peace and Unity to the whole world:

There is One Life, One Will, and One Brotherhood of Nations. May the Spirit of Unity and Love, that knows no barriers, make Brotherhood in the world a living reality.

USA

Far Horizons Camp was founded in 1954 by Theosophist G. V. Hull. With its pristine and serene atmosphere, the camp at an altitude of 7,200 feet in Kings Canyon National Park, up in the rugged mountains of central California. It is surrounded on all sides by majestic and stately pine trees. On the weekend of

Theosophical Work around the World



International President, Mr Tim Boyd, with his wife, Lily (seated, center), and TS members from Belgium and The Netherlands on 'Dutch Day', 10 August 2014, gathered at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden



Mr and Mrs Boyd (center) with Mrs Deepa Padhi (first from left), organizer of their visit in late October 2014 to Bhubaneswar, Odisha, in northeast India, along with an international dance troupe from a local orphanage

Theosophical Work around the World



The President with Buddhist monks at a meeting of the Siddharth United Social Welfare Mission in Kolkata



Bharata Samaj Puja
at Parsi Quarters

Theosophical Work around the World



Release of the special issue of *The Theosophist* being presented to the Acting Manager of the Theosophical Publishing House, Mr Umakanth Rao

Floral tributes offered on 31 October 2014 at the plaque marking the place where part of the late President's ashes are interred in the Garden of Remembrance



Participants of the International Theosophical Conference held in mid-August 2014 at the International Theosophical Centre Naarden

Theosophical Work around the World



Members of the Summer School held in late June 2014 in Slovenia conducted by Mr Bhupendra Vora (seated fourth from left)



Participants of Far Horizons Camp gather in Kings Canyon National Park, California, with keynote speaker Mr David Bruce, National Secretary of the TS in America

Theosophical Work around the World

16 August 2014, David P. Bruce, National Secretary of the American Section, was the keynote speaker. He delivered two talks: ‘The History of Quest Books’ and ‘The Theosophical View of World Religions’. Other events included a group dance and singing, along with an archival slide show detailing the early history and building of the camp. It was a wonderful gathering that is full of love, laughter, and friendship.

International Theosophical Conference

The 16th Annual ITC gathering was held from 15–18 August 2014 at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, the Netherlands, with the theme, ‘Theosophy, Unity, and Helping the World . . . where do we go from here?’ There were 143 participants from the USA, Europe, Africa, South and Central America, and New Zealand. Several theosophical traditions were represented: TS Point Loma-Blavatsky House, the United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT), and the TS Adyar. Further, there were ‘independent’ theosophists as well.

The main goal of this Conference was to create a dialogue among participants that would result in the ‘Naarden 2014 Declaration’, a statement of intentions as to how theosophists from different backgrounds and nationalities, can work together to promote brotherhood in the world using theosophical teachings as a framework. Both the objectives and the format focused on communication and building relationships — Communication from the Heart.

This was a real working Conference, hosted and co-organized by Jan Nicolaas Kind from Brazil/Netherlands. The two main facilitators were Marijn Gijsbers and April Hejka-Ekins. There were sixteen facilitators as twelve groups worked intensely on the subjects of Religion, Philosophy, and Science, keeping in mind the future of Theosophy.

The Conference started with orientation, greetings, and statements by representatives of the three mainstream theosophical organizations: the ULT by Vicky Prinz and Nandini Iyer, the TS Adyar by Tim Boyd, and the TS Point Loma-Blavatsky House by Herman C. Vermeulen. The keynote was given by Mr Boyd. Then there was a panel discussion based on the ‘Maha Chohan’s Letter — our shared responsibility’.

The final wording of the Declaration was carefully compiled by the ITC Board, however it remained a declaration solely drawn up by the participants of this Conference as a whole, and not of ITC, Inc. It is available on the website of the International Theosophy Conferences, Inc.: <www.theosconf.org>. Videos of all introduction lectures and plenary harvests are on the ITC website: <www.theosconf.org/video>. It was a heartwarming, and at times breathtaking, conference.

So, forward with Theosophy!

Some Observations from the Naarden Centre

We are living in a confusing, often challenging world. The question is: how do we deal with it? Do we withdraw safely

Theosophical Work around the World

behind the boundaries of tradition, or move ahead with an inquisitive mind? The International Theosophical Conference was held at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, the Netherlands, in mid-August. A few days before the Conference, we met already with a new experience. Around dinner time the new international President, Mr Tim Boyd, and his wife Lily were taken to the Centre by Herman C. Vermeulen, the Leader of the TS Point Loma-Blavatsky House, with whom we had an open discussion before dinner. During the welcome dinner for the new President we had two leaders of theosophical organizations at the table. We felt as if it was the dawn of a new era.

The next program at the IT Centre was the IT Conference, with over 140 participants from all over the world, from various theosophical organizations. This very dynamic and well-organized conference touched the maximum of our facilities, both in the capacity of Besant Hall, as well as catering facilities. The very efficient organization, mainly by members of TS Point Loma-Blavatsky House, made it all come together.

During 'Dutch Day', Mr Boyd mentioned that one of the reasons why we are not always as successful as we could be, is fear of working together with other organizations. At the Centre we feel that fear of losing one's identity or losing control is often a sign of weakness. We made our identity and connection with Adyar strong enough to be able to cooperate without getting off-track. The IT Conference can also be seen in that light.

Given the nature of the conference, we were involved in many of the practical aspects and joined the conference as active participants. It was an inspiring experience indeed.

India

The international President, Mr Tim Boyd, and his wife Lily went on a tour of northeast India from 21 to 30 October to visit Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, and Varanasi. On their first stop they were received by Mrs Deepa Padhi, who hosted the various programmes in Bhubaneswar. On the first day the President spoke to the Utkal Federation at a public meeting which included TS and TOS members, followed by interaction with the audience. In the morning of the next day he spoke on 'Transformation through Service' at the First Theosophical Regional Conference in the Utkal University Auditorium, where about half of the audience were students. Later that day he spoke at the annual meeting of the Mahabharat TOS Group on 'TOS — Future Vision'. Mr and Mrs Boyd were also taken to visit a day-care centre, a mission, and Buddhist centres.

The Kolkata visit included a speech on 'Principles of Theosophy' given by the President as chief guest at the 38th Anniversary of the Bharadwaja Theosophical Lodge, which was inaugurated by Mrs Boyd, and where Mr B. L. Bhattacharyya, Founder President of BTL and National Director of TOS, gave the welcome address.

At the national headquarters of the Indian Section of the TS in Varanasi, Mr

Theosophical Work around the World

Boyd inaugurated a study camp on the morning of 28 October, with an address on the theme of the camp, 'Radha Burnier's Contribution and Approach to Theosophy', directed by Mr P. K. Jayaswal. Next morning Mr and Mrs Boyd were taken to visit some local educational institutions, and that evening the President gave a public lecture on 'The Ever-Present Future', which was well attended and received.

Back at the international Headquarters, Adyar commemorated the first anniversary of the passing of Mrs Radha Burnier, the former President, on 31 October 2014. In the morning, residents and special invitees of the TS Adyar, led by the President, congregated at Parsi Quarters, the former home of Mrs Burnier, situated by the seaside within the Adyar estate. A Bharat Samaj puja was performed and was followed by floral tributes offered by all present at the portrait of Radhaji.

Afterwards the group proceeded to the Garden of Remembrance, the last resting place of many TS past Presidents, to offer a silent homage at the spot where Mrs Burnier's ashes were interred. Around noon, about three hundred workers and residents of the TS campus, including the Olcott Memorial High School, animal dispensary, and vocational training centre, along with a few special invitees, gathered at the Bhojanasala (Indian dining hall) for a special lunch in Radhaji's honour.

In the evening, the international President released the special issue of *The Theosophist* in the Headquarters Hall. He briefly summed up Radhaji's life as the journey of an 'exceptional soul who lived and breathed Theosophy from the cradle to the grave'. Those who wished to say a few words about their association with Radhaji were then asked to speak. The evening concluded with Vedic chanting and floral tributes were offered at her portrait.

Digitizing *The Theosophist*

The oldest issues of *The Theosophist* are about 125 years old and rapidly decaying due to age. A few devoted members in the US are initiating a plan to preserve them electronically. Their goal is to digitize the first fifty years of *The Theosophist* (except for the first year, which has already been done). The process has several steps: (1) to scan each issue, page by page; (2) to convert them to text using an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) program; (3) to correct and format the text pages. The first two steps take only about a minute for each scan. The third can require as much as fifteen minutes per scan, and we are calling for volunteers to assist with this step. Anyone who would like to participate in this effort is encouraged to contact Mr Morry Secrest at <trying2on@gmail.com>. ✧

Nature is destitute of goodness or malice; she follows only immutable laws when she either gives life and joy, or sends suffering and death, and destroys what she has created. Nature has an antidote for every poison, and her laws a reward for every suffering.

KH

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