

PASSED TO PEACE

Mrs Radha Burnier

(15.11.1923 – 31.10.2013)

The International President of the Theosophical Society Mrs Radha Burnier, passed away peacefully at her home at Adyar on 31.10.2013 at 9 p.m. We express our deepest gratitude for her noble life and selfless service in guiding the Theosophical Society since 1980. May her example be a beacon light to our work as TS members.

We may ask ourselves whether it is possible to live an alert daily life with a mind which is recollected and focussed, not scattered. Wanting to know when, how or why instant enlightenment can happen is a distraction, one form of bondage to time. All desires, hopes and ambitions in regard to the lofty goal of transformation are illusory attempts to reach in the field of time what is outside that field. By being more mindful, and inwardly free from preoccupations, and by living, speaking, and acting vigilantly, we might just transform ourselves unknowingly.

— Radha Burnier

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To the 138th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society

Adyar, 26 December 2013, delivered by

Mr M. P. Singhal, *International Vice-President*

Dear Brothers, Sisters, friends and fellow members,

Let us move on and pay homage to Mrs Radha Burnier, who passed away on 31 October 2013. She addressed International Conventions for 33 consecutive years, 1980-2012. She has left a rich tradition of working with dignity, quiet dedication and simplicity.

Every Convention is an occasion for standing back as witness of the path so far treaded and the direction we are heading. There is an opportunity for course correction, and also to think what the Society must do now. The Society exists to transform humanity that would live to benefit mankind.

We have also the opportunity to allow

the blessings from the Great Ones to fill us, and the whole of Nature to bring teachings of the source of life and love.

May those who are the embodiment 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 happy to open this 138th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society.

HPB gave the philosophical and conceptual frame work which would guide the Theosophical Society to promote universal brotherhood. The leaders who came later, took upon themselves the responsibility of amplifying and clarifying what HPB stood for. She stressed that practical brotherhood must continue to influence the mental climate of the world, so all members will not only know themselves as brothers, but act as such.

We are members of the TS. It is a great privilege for us. Its Objects are beautiful; its purpose is noble; and its literature is inspiring. Do we feel gratitude in our hearts for these things that we are enjoying? The human psychology is to ignore the obvious. Every TS journal has notes on Theosophy, the Theosophical Society, Freedom of Thought and the Objects. Do we carefully review and remind ourselves when we see them?

The Theosophical Society is an institution. The institution and its work is far more important than any individual working in it. This is seldom realized

for people work for individuals not the institution. We use a mirror to see our physical appearance. Similarly we should reflect our thoughts daily in the mirror of our conscience to see who we really are.

Our Society's Uniqueness:

The Theosophical Society has many unique features. It emphasizes the comparative study of religion, philosophy and science. Religion tells us our duty. Philosophy moulds our minds and science tells us about the outer world that we perceive with our senses.

The Theosophical Society has no specified religious text, but has innumerable books on religious thought. It has no priest as such, but many wise people to teach. It has no defined tenets like other religions, but has three beautiful Objects which take us from particular to universal. It has no specified place of worship, but builds shrines of all faiths in its International Headquarters. The only religion that the Society proclaims is the quest for Truth, with its motto: 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth'. It respects all religious faiths, different cultures, values, view points and other diversities, without discrimination.

The Society has a rich and inspiring literature whether in small booklets or large volumes. Some texts like *The Secret Doctrine* are so profound and complex that the beginner may be bewildered and finisher may feel frustrated. However small other books are, they are simple and instructive.

When any President or Head of a

country dies, people of that country alone mourn the death. But when a President of the Theosophical Society passes away, practically the whole world mourns the death.

Some simple concepts from the book *Practical Occultism* of HPB are:

Reflect on the defects of your character. Spirit of Love and Truth, Justice and Wisdom, Goodness and Power should be our only true and permanent Love. To act and act wisely when the time for action comes; to wait and wait patiently when it is time for repose. Have patience, Candidate, as one who fears no failure, covets no success.

Another unique feature of the Society is its three great truths, defining the basis of life's evolution. Its universal invocation is a pointer to the forces of hidden life, hidden light and hidden love uniting all in oneness. In spite of so many unique features built in the frame of TS, why are we unable to impact people. Why people shy away from us I fail to understand. But there must be a reason, perhaps several, which we need to find out.

Declining Membership

The membership peaked at 45,000 in 1928. It dropped to 31,000 in 1933. It rose slightly to 32,500 in 1980 and since then there has been a continuous drop in membership. It is about 25,000 in 2013. Should we allow this downward trend to continue? Some members feel that numbers are not important. It is the quality that we should worry about. While quality is certainly important, dropping trend cannot be ignored in a

scenario where world population is rapidly growing. From 2 billion in 1930 it grew to 7.5 billion in 2012.

We also need a critical mass of minimum members for the Society's stability like sea faring vessels need a minimum ballast weight. Without a critical mass, there can be no critical momentum. The declining trend in membership may not be taken lightly. Perhaps, we must nurture and enthuse our members with energy and example of our life.

The Paradoxical World

This is beautifully captured in the words of American humorist, George Carlin:

We have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways but narrower viewpoints. We spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgement; more experts, yet more problems; more medicine, but less wellness. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, drive too fast, stay up too late, get up too tired, watch TV too much, love and pray too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned to make a living, but not a life. We've added years of life, not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a neighbour. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've conquered the atom,

but not our prejudices. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. These are the times of fast foods, and slow digestion; big men and small character; steep profits and shallow relationships; two incomes, but more divorce; fancier

houses, but broken homes; more entertainments, but less happiness.

How are we going to harmonize these paradoxes? Perhaps we have to blend, synthesize or integrate Religion, Philosophy and Science.

(To be continued)

SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE

The SWC runs a day care centre cum nursery school for small children of working parents from low income families. This year the centre took care of seventy children who were provided with nutritious food, milk and fruits. The children were taught colouring, numbers, alphabets, rhymes, songs and dance. The children were also taken for visits to parks and zoos outside. Dr R. Revathy visited the Centre regularly for conducting health check-ups and also

provided guidance to parents on health care for the children.

On the Adyar Day, donations of clothes for the children were received from TOS India. Members from Slovenia and Finland also visited the SWC and donated mats, playthings and clothes for the children and teachers.

Visit: Delegates are invited to a cultural programme and exhibition at the SWC on Friday, 27 December 2013, 1.30 – 3.00p.m.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

The Vocational Training Centre (VTC) was begun in the year 2000 and has been providing free vocational training to young women and girls. In the newly constructed VTC building in the Damodar Gardens, short courses and workshops were held almost every month from January to September 2013. These included courses on First Aid and Road Safety, Healthy Way of Living, Spoken English and Effective Communication. In addition, workshop on art and mural, flower making, music and organic farming were also held. Two screening camps were also held for detection of cancer.

The VTC has a tailoring and weaving

unit where courses in hand embroidery, machine embroidery, tailoring and weaving are taught. During the year, twenty women students were taught weaving and tailoring. Certificates were given to the successful candidates. The students were taken to visit Dakshin Chitra, Poompuhar, textile shops, Victoria Technical Institute, Central Cottage Industries Emporium, Khadi Gramyodhyog Bhavan and Co-optex. The Centre prepared towels, napkins, jute carpets, cotton carpets, meditation mats, a variety of ladies' handbags, travelling bags and purses which will be displayed and sold during the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society.

OLCOTT MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

The Olcott Memorial High School has been upgraded to a Higher Secondary School this year beginning with 35 boys and girls being admitted to Class XI. This year, the School had 456 students — 265 girls and 191 boys. The School continues to provide free education for children from low income families. The students were provided free text books, breakfast of *kanji* (porridge), protein supplement with the noon meal, two sets of uniforms for each child, stationery and notebooks. Dr R. Revathy conducted regular health check-ups. Guidance and counseling continued for the children and parents, and they were provided advice and support in dealing with problems — both academic and emotional. Extra classes for children needing support were regularly conducted.

Dream Runners, a neighbourhood organization which conducts marathons in the city, gave donations to enable electrification of 14 classrooms (Classes I–VII) and the funds for the fans were provided by three local branches of the State Bank. The lights and fans provided in these 14 classrooms were switched on by Mr R. Natarajan, Retd, Director General of Police in a function held to commemorate Col. H. S. Olcott's Birth Anniversary which was presided by Mrs Radha Burnier, President, Theosophical Society earlier this year.

During the Independence Day function held on 15 August 2013, the first three students who topped in

Class X school final examinations were awarded cash prizes of Rs 5000 each. Two Endowment Funds were created through the initiative of two donors for giving awards of Rs 5000 each for two students among the boys and girls who score the highest marks in the Class X examination each year. This year 51 students cleared Class X exam held in March 2013 and the remaining one cleared re-exam in June 2013.

The School was visited by officials and volunteers from three major donor agencies located in the USA to interact with the students and specially to see progress of the upgrading of the school to a Higher Secondary School. The visitors were very impressed with the school environment and the facilities offered for the children coming from less privileged homes. Their visit resulted in significant donations to support the upgrading of the School, enhancement of salaries to the teachers and staff, and the creation of a computer centre in the School.

Students from different classes have won prizes in drawing, poetry, essay and inter-school cultural competitions. The Junior and Senior boys' hand-ball team and the Junior and Senior girls' Kho-kho and Kabadi teams have qualified at the District and Zonal levels.

Visit: Delegates are invited to attended cultural activities and exhibition at the Olcott School on, Sunday, 29 December 2013, between 1.30 – 3.00 p.m.



ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Col. H. S. Olcott established the Adyar Library and Research Centre in 1886. As Radha Burnier writes in her 2010-2011 article in Adyar Library Bulletin:

[The Library is] a perpetual testimony to the pioneering role the Theosophical Society has played in promoting Indological and Oriental Studies. . . .

The history of the Library . . . has been one of service to learning, especially the wisdom of the East . . . Although the nucleus that was then the Library was small, the founder of the Library, Colonel Olcott, foresaw a great future for it and spared no pains to establish it on firm foundations and organize its work in a systematic way. . . .

The Library was started with a special purpose: ultimately it should benefit the ideals of the Theosophical Society. It was not meant as a competitor in the field along with other popular libraries.

This year 122 books were purchased and 1000 books were accessed, 150 books were catalogued and added to the Library collections. Donations of 1237 books were received from various sources especially from the international President's Office, TPH, Secretary's Office and TPH, Wheaton, USA, Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan and individuals.

The Adyar Library continues to serve the needs of scholars and registered members who make use of the various facilities available such as photocopying of transcripts and rare books and consulting of rare manuscripts.

Conservation and preservation, the cataloguing of books, and typesetting of new publications and reprints are part of the regular work of the Library.

Recent Publications:

- *Brahmavidya* — Adyar Library Bulletin Volume, 74-75/2010-11
- Studies in Indology — Collected papers of K. N. Neelakantan, (1st edition), 2012
- Index to *Brahmavidya*, The Adyar Library Bulletin.

Recent Reprints:

- *The Hathayogapradipika of Svātmanāma* with the Commentary Jyotsna of Brahmananda and English Translation (Second Reprint), (ALS. 4), 2012
- *Saiva Upanishad-s* English translation based on the Commentary of Upanishad Brahmayogin by T. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, 2013
- *Visnusahasranama* English translation by Ananthakrishna Sastry, 2013

Display Room is open to delegates during Convention. There are books autographed by Annie Besant, H.G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, Sarojini Naidu and Henri Bergson. There is a beautifully illustrated Javanese manuscript *Serat Devarutji*, a mystic philosophical tale. There is an only known manuscript of a work on *Dharmasastra* (civil and criminal law codes) called *Markandeya Smriti*. Another interesting exhibit is the sacred scriptures of the Tibetan Buddhists called *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*.



BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

The Chennai Centre of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) and the Animal Welfare Centre of the Theosophical Society have again organized a stall during the Convention this year. On display are easy-to-read posters that give extensive details about the suffering and death inflicted upon innocent animals at factory farms, in the cosmetic industry, and so on. BWC is an international educational trust dedicated to the total abolition of abuse to animals. It is a way of life which causes no creature of land, sea or air, terror, torture or death. It opposes the commercial exploitation of all animals, believing that they too have the right to live and enjoy the same care and consideration as humans.

The Animal Welfare Centre of the TS cares for the welfare of the animals on the campus, both domesticated and wild creatures. The core value of 'the one life' in all creatures, big and small, human and non-human, is central to its work and operations.

Anyone may become a member. Life membership of the BWC costs Rs 300/- (Rs 600/- outside India). All are welcome to visit the stall from 26 to 30 December. The Poster Exhibition is open for 24 hours during this period. The timing for information, sales and membership subscription is 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Calendars, non-leather wallets and information pamphlets will be on sale. The Stall was inaugurated by the General Secretary of the Australian Section of the Theosophical Society, Mrs Linda Oliveira after the Opening of the Convention.



The Adyar Library and Research Centre has published a special supplement to *Brahmavidya*, the Adyar Library Bulletin commemorating the 125th year of the Publication of *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. This special issue contains articles by researchers, professors and well-known Theosophists on *The Secret Doctrine* exploring many new aspects of the book. It contains over 200 pages, is specially priced at Rs 160/- but will be available for purchase during the Convention at Rs 120/- at 25% discount. Arrangements are being made to make it available from TPH, the Bookshop, Adyar Library and the Secretary's office for the convenience of the delegates.

The subject of human regeneration is very important because a truly momentous change in the history of humanity will occur only when there is a revolutionary change in the human being. — Radha Burnier

Number of delegates registered Thursday, 26 December: 1,037.

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

MISSION

Our mission is to disseminate Theosophical literature by increasing the number, availability and readership of the publications of the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH) and the Adyar Library and Research Centre.

We will work towards this mission by distributing more extensively both in-house publications as well as selected compatible publications of other reputable publishers and ensuring customer satisfaction, in conformity with the best international publishing practices and the ideals of — the Theosophical Society.

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The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), Adyar, welcomes you to the 138th International Convention and to the sacred and serene 'ashrama' of Adyar.

TPH appeals to you to contribute your best to the cause of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society by buying its books, and subscribing to the journals published by TPH and the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC). Theosophical publications and journals make a precious gift to your friends and relatives, spreading awareness about our great organization, that attempts to mould world thought towards universal brotherhood, harmony and peaceful coexistence.

OUR PRESTIGIOUS JOURNALS

***The Theosophist* (Monthly)**

A journal for all serious students of Theosophy

Started in 1879, with HPB as Editor, *The Theosophist* has continued without a break, linking each succeeding President and readers throughout the world. Articles in the journal represent the views and insights of leading Theosophists worldwide. The President's column 'On the Watch-Tower' draws attention to recent and important trends in the world from a Theosophical point of view.

***Adyar Newsletter* (Quarterly)**

Adyar Newsletter brings up-to-date news to members about the International Headquarters. You can keep in touch, wherever you are, with events, publications, programmes of the School of the Wisdom, the work of the departments, information about Adyar's wonderful trees and other aspects of Nature, personalities who visit or stay, educational activities and brotherhood in action through welfare work.

***Wake Up India* (Quarterly)**

The journal of the New Life for India Movement, a movement for Right Citizenship, Right Values and Right Means, focuses attention on current issues of social, environmental and ethical relevance and sensitizes the public on these matters.

***Theosophical Digest* (Quarterly)**

This magazine, published by the Theosophical Society in the Philippines, contains very interesting and illuminating articles with insights into the higher life, practical wisdom, and Eastern and Western philosophies. It is of interest to students of Theosophy as well as to the general public.

Subscribe to Our Prestigious Journals

Either for yourself or as gift subscriptions to your friends and relatives. Subscriptions to our journals will be accepted at the TPH and at the Adyar Bookshop, and are much appreciated.

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