



# THE THEOSOPHIST

---

---

VOL. 136 NO. 4 JANUARY 2015

---

---

## CONTENTS

Presidential Address <i>Tim Boyd</i>	3
My Recollections of Radha Burnier <i>Bhupendra R. Vora</i>	18
The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred <i>Linda Oliveira</i>	21
Modern Science and the Evolution of Humanity: A Theosophical View <i>Wim Leys</i>	30
The Theosophical Attitude <i>Shirley Macpherson</i>	34
International Directory	38

Editor: *Mr Tim Boyd*

NOTE: Articles for publication in *The Theosophist* should be sent to the Editorial Office.

Cover: A 10th century Chola dynasty bronze sculpture of Shiva, the Lord of the Dance, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

---

Official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky, 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this magazine.

# THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

*Founded 17 November 1875*

*President: Mr Tim Boyd*

*Vice-President: Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy*

*Secretary: Ms Marja Artamaa*

*Treasurer: Mr K. Narasimha Rao*

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

Vice-President: [ivp.hq@ts-adyar.org](mailto:ivp.hq@ts-adyar.org)

Secretary: [secy.hq@ts-adyar.org](mailto:secy.hq@ts-adyar.org)

Treasurer: [treasury.hq@ts-adyar.org](mailto:treasury.hq@ts-adyar.org)

Adyar Library and Research Centre: [alrc.hq@ts-adyar.org](mailto:alrc.hq@ts-adyar.org)

Theosophical Publishing House: [tphindia@gmail.com](mailto:tphindia@gmail.com) & [tphindia@adyarbooks.com](mailto:tphindia@adyarbooks.com)

Editorial Office: [editorialoffice@gmail.com](mailto:editorialoffice@gmail.com), Website: <http://www.ts-adyar.org>

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

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

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

# Presidential Address

To the 139th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society  
Adyar, 26 December 2014

I would like to welcome you all to this 139th Convention of the Theosophical Society. This is my first time presiding over an International Convention. It is a sincere honour, pleasure, and joy for me to participate with you in this important work, and to take time together to open ourselves to those Forces that seek to find an opening to bless this world. Please rise for the invocation that has been the source of inspiration for each of these Conventions:

**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 very glad to open this 139th Annual Convention of the TS.

Part of my function now is to present the Presidential Address, most of which will recap the work around the world from the various Theosophical Societies. Let us recall that the theme of this Convention is about Theosophy in changing times.

A year ago there was a sense of uncertainty within our Convention. Radha had passed. The process leading to a new president was under way. Change was in the air, but its nature was unclear. One year later the election process has ended and we are moving in a yet uncharted direction. One of the most basic recognitions for any conscious person is the fact of change. Whether the effects of change are welcomed or not, the fact that it is part of the fabric of existence is universally recognized. I know people who openly declare that they are opposed

to change. Although this is an unreasoned reaction, it is understandable. Change can be challenging.

When the use of computers was becoming widespread and the Internet was becoming widely available, I used to help my father with the business of his farm. He was then approaching 80. He would tell me the projects he was focusing on and I would show him ways that we could use technology to help accomplish it. I remember once showing him something on the computer. He asked, 'You can do all of that with this machine?' When I answered yes, his response was, 'I think I have lived too long'. Although it was typical of my father's humour, he meant that he felt overwhelmed by the rapid process of change. Unlike many, he did not oppose it. It was simply that having

## Presidential Address

spent a lifetime viewing the world from a particular angle, shifting that point of view was too demanding for him. In part as a result of the aggressive nature of the changes currently upon us, my father's response is now being echoed in a global sense of unease with the pace and direction of technology-driven change. Outer change requires some inner response. Given the relentless nature of change, for the mind that demands some sense of security, it can be disconcerting.

Helen Keller was born in the late 1800's without sight, hearing, or the ability to speak. During her life she overcame these substantial obstacles and went on to become a famous author, speaker, and one of the greatest humanitarian activists of the twentieth century. On the subject of change she said that 'Security is an illusion. It does not exist in Nature'. The idea that there is the possibility of some static condition in life is the product of superficial thinking and the source of needless suffering.

For us students of the Ageless Wisdom and members of the Theosophical Society, it is not uncommon to fall into a similar trap. Too many sincere spiritual seekers find themselves searching for peace, enlightenment, and liberation on their own terms. These words are familiar to all of us, but the reality behind them goes beyond terminology. What is peace? What is enlightenment? Too often the conventional view of these states of consciousness is negative in the sense that peace, for example, is regarded as a void,

an absence of strife, conflict, worry, personal difficulties, and so on. In essence the imagined fruit of the state of being at peace is static and unchanging. This is more of an expression of a personal desire for comfort than a description of reality. So many things in the spiritual life can become coloured by the projection of our personal wants. Until we become grounded in the experience of a higher life, we are necessarily subject to such projections.

In her *Inner Group Teachings* H. P. Blavatsky made the poignant statement that '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'. In a certain sense, we are stuck. We cannot see what we cannot see. One of the beauties of a genuine embrace of the Theosophical worldview and its teachings is that it holds the potential for transformation for an utterly new way of seeing. There is no formula or roadmap for this type of profound change, but within us there is a certainty of two things, 1) transformation is possible, and, 2) at the deepest levels of our being, it is our need. Whenever we reach a point in our unfoldment where we find meaning in something like Theosophy, it is because we are approaching a more expansive plane of consciousness.

Facing the pressing needs in the world today, we must ask ourselves what we can do to hasten this unfoldment, and turn our faces towards a world in need.

\* \* \*

## Presidential Address

Based on the reports that have been received to date, the overall TS membership has dropped slightly from 26,744 last year to 26,351. This is less than a 1% drop, and not a cause for concern. The highlight of the activities during the year was the 37th **European Congress** held in Paris from 30 July to 30 August at the **French Section's** headquarters and the 'Adyar' Theatre. The Congress theme was 'Bridging Science and Spirituality', and it was coordinated with the European Federation, while the Section handled the logistics. Around 190 participants attended from 24 countries, mostly from European Sections, but also the USA, South America, Australia, and Asia. I was the guest of honour, and gave two lectures, led a meeting with members, and agreed to be interviewed. The General Secretary and President of the European Federation, Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, reports that the Section added two Lodges during the year: Alcyone in Paris and Jenne d'Arc in Orléans, the latter having been revived. As part of my European summer tour, I visited the **Italian Section**, the largest on the continent, to attend their 100th National Congress, taking place in Vicenza in early June. The attendees were an enthusiastic audience and my talks were well organized and received. In addition to speaking during the Congress, I delivered other lectures for the Vicenza and Venice Lodges. Mr Ricardo Lindemann also spoke during the Congress and gave lectures for the Florence and Rome groups. The General Secretary, Mr Antonio Girardi, writes that their website is con-

stantly updated, tracking an average of more than 3,000 visitors every month and presenting videos of theosophical conferences. Their monthly magazine has a run of 1,300 copies, with over 1,000 subscribers, and their monthly newsletter is emailed to over 2,400 people interested in theosophical activities in Italy. The Section's activities in cooperation with the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) were intensive. While visiting **the Netherlands**, I met with the Dutch Section in Amsterdam for the whole of 10 August, their 'Dutch Day', during which members had an opportunity to interact with me. The General Secretary, Ms Els Rijneker, tells us that their Section held seven other programmes during the year, including a five-day silent retreat, a large symposium involving sister organizations, two Krishnamurti study days, and an ongoing six-day program on meditation.

In northern Europe the **Finnish Section**, with 23 lodges and 2 study groups, is the largest in the Nordic countries. Their General Secretary (and also our International Secretary), Ms Marja Artamaa, states that 17 members attended the European Congress in Paris, where they had the pleasure of having an opportunity to meet with the international President. Both Ms Artamaa and Mr Tim Boyd attended the International Theosophical Conference held in the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, the Netherlands, held in July, which congenially brought together members from several theosophical organizations in

## Presidential Address

addition to the TS. The Section has upgraded their technical facilities and are now webcasting, beginning with three lectures and practices on 'Mindfulness'. Their theosophical library in Helsinki now has a computerized catalogue and an updated reference library. The Lodges hold regular public lectures in 17 towns, 14 of which run their own library. The TOS in Finland supports the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School, the Social Welfare Centre, and the Boys' Hostel in Adyar. The **Icelandic Section** held their regular summer school and Friday and Saturday meetings during the year. During January and February a group of members viewed seven DVDs of dialogues between J. Krishnamurti and Drs David Bohm and David Shainberg, *The Transformation of Man*, followed by very fruitful discussions. The Section's biannual journal, *Gangleri*, has been published since 1926. It is sold to over 700 subscribers. Their website has a new name and is in Icelandic and English. It is frequently visited by enquirers and they have often had applications for membership through this page. Unfortunately, the General Secretary, Mr Halldor Haraldsson, says the Section is still going through financial difficulties due to the economic crisis in 2008. The **Swedish Section's** General Secretary, Mr Pertti Spets, reports the formation of a new study centre in Stockholm. A series of regular gatherings, lectures, and autumn and spring courses were held, including the study of *The Secret Doctrine*, Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras*, Advaita Vedanta, and John Algeo's

*Theosophy — An Introductory Study Course*. The Organizing Secretary of the TS in **Norway**, Dr Saleh Noshie, writes that due partly to lack of funds their activities for the year have been only on Facebook, and that the international President's blog, which is always posted on their website, is much appreciated by all.

Membership of the **English Section** (TSE), the largest in Europe, has remained mostly stable over the past year. After Mr Eric McGough retired due to ill health, Mr Colin Price was re-elected in April. We are told that much of the year has been focused on cutting financial losses and ensure resources for future growth. The sale of Tekels Park Estate, steered by Treasurer Piero Soteriou, was concluded in September; the proceeds were donated to a new account, set up and controlled by us at the Charities Aid Foundation to benefit the TSE via charitable giving, and the money ethically invested to provide an income which will sustain the Section once full charitable status is achieved. The English Summer School continued to be well supported, with over 100 people attending for a week of lectures and study groups. The Headquarters building continued to be used extensively for lectures and study groups throughout the week in term time. The Dhyana Centre, our meditation Lodge, is particularly popular, with around 100 members and sessions at least three days a week and some weekends. In **Ireland**, Mrs Marie Harkness reports that they have had a successful year. Their All-Ireland Convention took place in Dublin held in June with an international

## Presidential Address

lecturer as guest speaker, Mr Bhupendra Vora, who addressed the appreciative audience on 'The Mystical Journey'. Over half of the members of the TS in **Scotland** have studied the Diploma Course in Theosophy introduced by the English Section. Additional funding has again been made available to assist members in traveling to summer schools in England and Europe. In **Wales**, the Organizing Secretary, Ms Julie Cunningham, states that visiting speakers sponsored by the Foundation for Theosophical Studies included the Organizing Secretary from Scotland, Mr Gary Kidgell, who gave two talks at different Lodges. The General Secretary of the English Section, Mr Colin Price, Mr David Harvey, from South Wales, and three other speakers from the English Section, including Mr Wayne Gatfield, were also visiting speakers. Eleven new members are taking the English Section's Diploma Course in Theosophy and 34 others have been awarded the diploma over the past three years.

In early December the **Spanish Section** held their sixth Silent Retreat directed by Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, with 50 people attending. The study was based on *At the Feet of the Master* by Krishnamurti and *Viveka-Chudamani* by Shankara, and the activities were always combined with meditation. At Easter, the Section had its 36th 'Jornadas Ibéricas' (Spanish Days) over a four-day period, held in San Lorenzo del Escorial, near Madrid, with 50 people attending. Most of the Spanish Lodges were represented. As in the last few years, Hesperia Lodge (in Madrid)

and the General Secretary, Mrs Angels Torra, organized the event, with the theme 'The Hermetic Thought'. The Section's summer school had 132 participants doing a comparative study of *The Voice of the Silence* and *The Path of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva, led by Mr Fernando de Torrijos. During the year the Section gained 2 new study centres. The **Portuguese Section's** General Secretary, Mr Carlos Guerra, says that a set of public functions were held in Lisbon consisting of talks and discussion sessions that would encourage spontaneous contributions from the participants and panels. These were coordinated by different members and occasionally by invitees, always trying to attract members. As in previous years, 3 out of the 11 Lodges were active in a decentralized manner: in Lisbon, Porto, and Évora; and one study group is actively working in the Azores. The **Greek Section** says that a new study group of 9 members has been formed in the island of Crete, named *Radamanthis*. Although their annual membership remains at 40 Euros, their quarterly magazine, *Ilisos*, is given free to all 215 members, and the current magazine subscribers stand at about 500.

In **Germany**, Mrs Manuela Kaulich was reelected as General Secretary during their General Assembly held in June. Ms Mary Anderson, former international Vice-President and Secretary, was again the guest of honour at their summer school, this time studying Clara Codd's *Theosophy as the Masters See It*. The summer school was held in mid-June,

## Presidential Address

earlier in the year, to facilitate members' attendance at the European Congress in Paris. All 3 **Austrian Lodges** offer weekly lectures throughout the study year, with subjects based on classical theosophical teachings and related subjects. Lecture topics are regularly placed on the TS in Austria website. In October the European School of Theosophy took place near the city of Graz, with the focus being on the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky and the *Mahatma Letters*. A precarious financial situation continues to be voiced by the representatives of the 3 Lodges, yet they hope to overcome this situation and are confident that the future of the Austrian TS is secured. The General Secretary of the **Belgian Section**, Mrs Sabine Van Osta, states that they have been developing an action plan since early September to modernize the Section's programmes and presentation. They are putting special emphasis on Wallonia, the French-speaking southern part of the country, by seeking inspiration mainly from sister Sections and their Lodges, and reconnecting with them more actively. In the Brussels headquarters they have regular sessions around J. Krishnamurti's teachings in addition to a basic programme of Introduction to Theosophy.

From the TS in **Slovenia**, Mrs Breda Zagar writes that all four Lodges had regular weekly meetings, with public lectures being held in three of them. Two new members joined in Ljubljana. Four seminars were organized during the year in a spirit of harmony, brotherly feelings, and joy. Their annual meeting had 74%

attendance of the membership and the Presidents of all four Lodges. They are glad that Adyar Lodge in Ljubljana has finally moved to new premises, which has increased their enthusiasm and will facilitate their work. Mr Thomas Martinovich informs us that the work of the TS in **Hungary** continued in all of their 3 Lodges, two of them in Budapest. They organized ten monthly public lectures from September through June, with attendance ranging from 25 to 50. The main subjects dealt with practical application of theosophical principles. A few days after each lecture 'open meetings' were organized to meet with enquirers and answer any questions arising out of the lectures, which are recorded and uploaded unto the website of the particular Lodge, complemented with slides. The Presidential Representative in **Russia**, Mr Pavel Malakhov, reports that 5 out of the 7 Lodges had their weekly meetings during the year, where they studied mainly *The Secret Doctrine* and other teachings in the light of the *SD*. Every month the Moscow Lodge has two public theosophical lectures followed by discussion of the topic, and a members-only meeting to plan the activities of the Lodges. They have three publishing vehicles: a bimonthly e-newsletter with 350 subscribers, an e-magazine with a hard-copy run of 100 dedicated to the classical literature of theosophy, and a yearly magazine with articles of modern Russian theosophists. They also have a list (and growing) of Internet activities of Russian members on the TS in Russia website. Mr Malakhov



## Presidential Address

visited all 7 Lodges and some theosophical groups, confirming their work. He ends his report by stating that the theosophical movement in Russia is undoubtedly gaining strength. In **Ukraine** Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko tells us that in the fall of last year they added a new Lodge and became a Regional Association. In June of this year, the first General Meeting of the TS in Ukraine took place, resulting in her election as the new Organizing Secretary. They held their Ninth All-Ukrainian Convention in November of last year with over 70 participants. All 5 TS Lodges and 2 study centres conducted regular meetings and studied classic theosophical literature during the year. A new cell of the TOS was started in Ukraine, and additional cells were also created in six different cities. A Scientific Group was formed during the year. They now have their own website and every Lodge and study centre has their own page on it. A delegation of 10 members attended the European Congress in Paris, and 3 members gave talks at the 3rd All-Russian Conference in Moscow in March. A total of 6 seminars, 1 round table, and 43 public lectures took place in different cities of Ukraine.

Mr Abraham Oron, President of the **Tel Aviv Lodge**, attached to Adyar, says that their Lodge is quite active, with 3 public meetings each month, held in two locations; 3 members' meetings on a weekly basis each month on different theosophical subjects, including round-table reading, discussion, and meditation on chosen sections of *The Secret Doctrine*;

3 one-day excursions per year, with hiking, meditation, and discussion of various spiritual aspects of Nature; 2 weekend seminars per year in different sacred places, such as the Dead Sea and a Jerusalem monastery; monthly advanced study meetings for facilitators; one yearly convention in May; 2 introductory courses in Theosophy per year of about 15 meetings each; and 2 courses during the year dealing with harmful emotions using Theosophical and Buddhist perspectives. Monthly meetings are held by 6 active study groups focusing on Theosophical subjects. Issue number 100 of their bi-annual magazine, *Or (Light)*, just turned from hard-copy to an internet edition, with a mailing list of 3,500 sympathizers. From the **West African Section**, General Secretary John Boakye reports that they managed to go ahead with planned activities in spite of tremendous difficulties and challenges faced during the year. These have affected their membership, which has not been growing as expected, but they are not losing hope for improvement. A public lecture and two schools of the Wisdom were held at the headquarters building, known as 'Theosophy House', which they have established with individual members' contributions. The plot of land is in a prime area and was donated by a now-deceased member, offering the Section an opportunity to have a place of their own. The **East and Central African Section** is comprised of four countries (referred by them as Regions): they are Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia. The Section has 5 Lodges, two of them

## Presidential Address

in Zambia. The largest Lodge is in Nairobi, Kenya, which held 31 meetings in Gujarati, 19 in English, and 9 joint meetings. This Lodge is also involved in various TOS activities, including donations of lamps, water tanks, medical assistance to the needy, and tree-planting. Mufulira Lodge in Zambia and Dar-es-Salaam Lodge in Tanzania have also been involved in various TOS activities during the year. All the Lodges meet regularly, mostly weekly. The General Secretary, Mr Ebrony Peteli, reaffirms their commitment to strengthen the Section's work.

In the Indo-Pacific region, the **Indian Section**, with 16 Federations and 459 Lodges, remains the largest in the TS Adyar. Mr S. Sundaram was re-elected unopposed as the General Secretary for another term of 3 years. Their annual convention was held in Adyar in December 2013, chaired by the former International Secretary, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, and addressed by the former Vice-President, Mr M. P. Singhal. Annual conferences were held by most Federations. The former Vice President and former Secretary were chief guests in one such annual conference each, and the General Secretary was the chief guest in three of these annual conferences. The 91st South India Conference was held in Adyar during the Easter holidays with 145 participants. The theme was *The Key to Theosophy* by HPB. There were 12 speakers and it was inaugurated by the former international Secretary. The concluding address was given by Dr A. Kannan. The North Indian Study camp

was held in Varanasi during October 2013 with 65 delegates Federations. Prof. R. C. Tampi and Mr P. K. Jayaswal directed the study camp on the theme of *The Secret Doctrine*. Another study camp was organized jointly by Bihar and UP Federations on *The Key to Theosophy* in March 2014. MP, Rajasthan, and UP Federations jointly organized a study camp on *The Voice of the Silence* by HPB in July 2014 with about 70 participants. The Section Headquarters conducted the Presidential Election in accordance with the Rules of the Society and the procedures laid down. Dr Annie Besant's 166th Birth Anniversary and other TS holidays were duly celebrated by the Indian Section.

The General Secretary attended the Indo-Pacific conference held at Bali, Indonesia, in November 2013 and spoke at the Conference. He visited different Federations and Lodges in India during the year and spoke at many places. The Assistant General Secretary, Mr Pradeep Mahapatra, was the Chief Guest at the annual conference of the Bihar Theosophical Federation and visited several Lodges in AP, Odisha, and the Lodge at Bhowali. National Lecturers Mr P. K. Jayaswal, Mr C. A. Shinde, Mr N. C. Krishna, Mr B. D. Tendulkar, Mr S. S. Gautam, Mr A. P. Lokhande and Mr S. K. Pande gave talks at various places during the year. Mr Pedro Oliveira, former International Secretary, delivered a talk on 'The Future of Humanity' at Bengaluru City Lodge. The Bhowali Centre, with excellent conference facilities, food, and accommodation, has been set

## Presidential Address

up in the Himalayas, which is being increasingly used for study camps and retreats. *The Indian Theosophist* monthly journal was published with a circulation of 3,500 copies. A special number was published to commemorate 125 years of publication of *The Key to Theosophy* and *The Voice of the Silence* by HPB. In addition to the Section journal, 13 Federations published their own journals at regular intervals.

The **Australian Section** held its annual convention in Sydney last January. It now has a new home for their National Headquarters on the Sydney city fringe. The Section is working on a new website that is almost complete and has established a social media presence with a Facebook Page. Contact with members is established through newly established e-bulletins sent out from the National Headquarters. In addition to the four printed editions of the national magazine *The General Secretary*, Mrs Linda Oliveira, visited nearly all the centres around the Section during the year. The **New Zealand** Section held its annual convention in Auckland with the theme 'Our Potential for Change.' It has put together a strategic plan for the next 3 years. The focus will be on creating a greater public awareness of Theosophy in New Zealand and making greater use of the Internet and Social Media to engage members and the public in an exploration of theosophical principles and ideas, with the aim of bringing people together in workshops and helping at branches throughout the country. This also includes the use of webinars and the live broadcasting of

future events. The Section has also been reviewing its board structure over the last couple of years, moving to a smaller elected board, bringing it into line with current best practices. A vote was held by National Referendum of the members on the proposal, resulting in an overwhelming majority of respondents voting in favour.

**Indonesia** hosted the Indo-Pacific Federation Conference in Bali in November 2013. This was a very successful gathering with almost 100 representatives from the Indo-Pacific region. Activities take place in Jakarta, Bundung, Solo, and Surabaya. The General Secretary, Mr Herry Ispoernomo, passed away early this year, so there is an election process underway for a replacement. Mr Vic Hao Chin Jr. facilitated a 'Process of Self-Transformation' seminar in Bundung in January 2014. Mr B. L. Bhattacharya has been appointed as Presidential Representative for **Bangladesh** and reports that they have 5 lodges. He was able to visit 4 of them during the year. At the **Philippine** National Convention, members decided on the major thrust of the Section, which includes the promotion of individual spiritual growth of members through Self-Transformation Seminars, retreats, study courses towards transformational education, youth programmes, and to spread a knowledge of theosophy through the use of the Internet. The TS and TOS undertook intensive relief services to the victims of the devastating Haiyan typhoon with five containers of construction materials, clothes and food shipped to affected areas with the support of the

## Presidential Address

international theosophical community. The TS continues to run five theosophical schools with a total of 793 enrolled students. The Theosophical Publishing House in Manila released *Sharing the Light Vol. 3* by Geoffrey Hodson, funded by the Geoffrey Hodson Book Fund.

Mr Chong Sanne, the former President of Singapore Lodge, was appointed as the Presidential Representative for the **East and Southeast Asia** area in November 2013. This includes Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Myanmar, and China. **Singapore** Lodge has a membership of around 400 and hosts the Chinese Project Team, which develops the Chinese website for promoting Theosophy to Chinese-speaking people, including, of course, China. It also carries out translations of theosophical literature into Chinese. This year the Lodge ran the 37th Edition of *A Course in Theosophy & Meditation*, continuing to attract new members and giving a good broad grounding in the Theosophical teachings. They also held 15 sessions on *The Voice of the Silence*, attracting an average of 40 members per session. The Nippon Lodge in Tokyo, **Japan**, has 50 members. They have their own website and hold monthly study classes, attracting an average of 10 members. Recent works include Japanese translations of *The Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled*, and *The Voice of the Silence*. The Lodge also publishes a bimonthly magazine, *The Japanese Theosophist*, which includes translations of articles from popular TS literature. The Selangor Lodge, the only one in **Malaysia**, has 83 members,

holding regular talks, study groups and discussions. This year the Lodge inaugurated a meditation room for the use of members. Study classes were also held on the *Bhagavadgita*. **Myanmar** (Burma), at its peak in 1936, had twelve Lodges with 167 members. Today the resurrected Yangon TS has only one Lodge, the Olcott Lodge with 34 members. The Lodge has kept a low profile for a long period, attracting few members, but it has now initiated a 7-step roadmap to attract new membership. The Lodge currently has a Conscious Force Meditation every week and a Life Force Meditation every full moon with the occasional meditation trip to the ancient sacred places around Myanmar. They study theosophical literature and view theosophical videos and webcasts.

The work of the **TS in America (TSA)** is necessarily collaborative. In recent years, the role of **Internet and information technology** has come to be a vital component in almost everything that is done, with the aim to make the Theosophical teachings and worldview more available to both members and the public. Every day we present public programs at the Olcott national centre, with more of that programming being made available online, both in live streaming and as archival video and audio available on our Website. Our classes and lectures are normally viewed and participated in, live, in countries around the world. We hosted two **international events**. The first was the Inter-American Theosophical Federation

## Presidential Address

Congress. It was held in May at the Olcott headquarters, drawing members from fourteen countries in North, South, and Central America for meetings, programs, and the triennial election of officers. In July, we hosted the 'Education for a New Humanity' conference. For four days it brought together educators from several educational models with links to Theosophy: Krishnamurti, Waldorf, Montessori, Raja Yoga, Golden Link schools; The Prairie School of Dupage; and Education for Life.

To support our local groups, the **National Secretary**, Mr David Bruce, schedules national speakers to visit the various lodges, study centres, camps, and federations. During the last fiscal year, 20 national speakers gave 71 presentations at 41 locations. The **prison program** continues to reach out to inmates across the country, with very good results. The **Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library** has improved its online presence through a redesigned Web page and catalogue. Marina Maestas was welcomed back into her previous role as Library Director in December. About 50 new titles are added to the collection each month. Library acquisition funding is directly tied to the sales of our Amazon store. The **Public Programs Department** strives to provide a wide range of programmes for study, meditation, service, and community participation. The Thursday night lectures are intended for the general public and cover an eclectic range of topics from different traditions. By webcasting many of these programs, we reach a larger

national and international audience. We continue the effort to develop and offer more online programs in the interactive **webinar** format. These include a number of classes such as 'The Process of Self-Transformation' with Vic Hao Chin Jr and 'At Home with Theosophy' with Pablo Sender. The **Theosophical Publishing House (TPH)**, in addition to printing the usual around ten books per year, and the production of e-books is continuing at an accelerated pace. We have added an additional 30 titles since January 2014. Our Foreign Rights and Permissions Manager has brought over 20 new contracts from publishers in Spain, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Germany, and Italy. We hope to facilitate a greater flow of resources from the American section to Adyar. Particularly in the areas of technology and archive management, we can expect high levels of cooperation between our two campuses.

The largest and most active Section in Latin America is the TS in **Brazil**, headed by Mr Marcos L. B. de Resende. Although Lodge 'Amizade' had to close during the year, they have added the 'Sobral' study group in Ceara state. They currently have 33 Lodges and 18 study groups. In addition to their numerous Lodge and study group regular meetings and seminars, the national gatherings included the 33rd summer school, with an attendance of 170 who studied Clara Codd's *The Technique of the Spiritual Life*. There were 8 other national gatherings with several lecturers each on theosophical themes. Their 19th International School of Theosophy was

## Presidential Address

held over 5 days in July with the theme 'Ancient Wisdom — A Way to Self-Awareness' and was attended by 120 people. The main speakers were Mr Antonio Girardi, General Secretary of the Italian Section and Mrs Patrizia Calvi, Under Secretary of the same, giving 6 and 3 lectures respectively. The Section has many departments, including Bookshop, Editing House, Training, Internet, and TOS. They also have three institutes: one in Brasilia and the Raja Theosophical Centre and Pythagoras Institute, both in Sao Paulo. Their quarterly magazine has a run of 1,500 copies and is sent to every member in the country, with the remaining copies sent to the Lodges and study groups. The **Cuban Section** is the second largest in Latin America. Their General Secretary, Mrs Bárbara Fariñas Piña, reports that the Section obtained official permission from the government authorities for the publication of their Theosophical e-magazine, *Revista Teosófica Cubana*, which started its publication in January of this year as a quarterly in electronic form. Their Annual Convention was celebrated in January, with the theme 'Important Theosophical Criteria in Our Work'. The studies in the Lodges have continued as in previous years with themes based on theosophical books, lectures, and articles. The Havana Lodges organized a summer school workshop with the theme 'Diagram of Meditation', attended by 30 active members. The closing conference was open to the public, with constructive participation in the form of suggestions and questions. Some

members from Havana, including Ms Fariñas, visited three out of the four Lodges outside the capital, in the cities of Matanzas, Santa Clara, and Cienfuegos. The TS in **Mexico** had a very active year, with three electoral processes. The General Secretary, Mrs Lissette Arroyo, writes that Mr Enrique Sánchez (the only candidate) was elected as National President for 2015-2017, taking office on 17 February. Mexico participated in the Inter-American Theosophical Federation (IATF) Congress held at the TSA headquarters in Wheaton from 28 May to 1 June. The theme was 'Theosophy as Action', and Mrs Arroyo lectured about 'Inner Life and Daily Life'. During the Congress, Mrs Arroyo participated in the IATF meeting, where Mrs Isis Resende (the only candidate) was elected as President of the IATF and Mrs Arroyo as Vice President. Mexico has 12 Lodges and 4 study centres, two of which are awaiting their Charters.

The **Argentinian Section** has a Centre in San Rafael, Mendoza, that holds study and reflection activities for members and sympathizers, where they held the Section's 50th Summer School in January with Juan Viñas as coordinator and 70 participants in attendance. The topics were: 'Theosophy: A knowledge applied to everyday life' and 'The Theosophical Society: A critical analysis of its objectives'. TS members from Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Cuba participated in the activities, making suggestions with innovative ideas. The Section organized successful book fairs in San Lorenzo and

## Presidential Address

Río Cuarto, where they distributed many information flyers about the work of the TS and sold quite a number of books. The contents of their web page continues to grow. They completed the painting of their building at a high cost with the contribution and efforts of all the members. From the TS in **Bolivia**, Teresa Weyer de Núñez reports that they celebrated all commemorative dates and held numerous regular meetings and study courses in their 11 Lodges and 2 study groups, with joint meetings on the last Sunday of every month. During their national gatherings they had speakers visiting from Argentina (Maria Rosa Martinez and Ernesto Garcia), who spoke in the Cochabamba Headquarters and in the city of Santa Cruz; and Isaac Jauli, from Spain, and former General Secretary of the Mexican Section, who also spoke in Cochabamba and in La Paz. Bolivia had their national gathering in Cochabamba in April and in San Benito in August. Their Headquarters also held 6 workshops and 5 conferences during the year. **Chile** writes that their Convention had as its theme 'Inner Knowledge, Spiritual Key'. They distribute pamphlets about Theosophy on subways and electronic pages. In addition to the printed magazine, they have an electronic Theosophical Brochure, a blog, and a Facebook and Twitter presence, all of which have been well received. In addition to regular Lodge meetings and study groups, their public meetings offer Theosophy courses and programmes such as 'Krishnamurthi in our lives'. The Presidential Represent-

tative in **Peru** tells us that their main concern revolves around the danger of their losing their property to trespassers. Despite the struggles of trying to recover their land, their 2 Lodges offered 12 public meetings. In addition, they offered free an internet course on Theosophy for the public. The Lodges carry on with their studies as well. On 1 June they also celebrated the 90th anniversary of the founding of the TS in Peru. The Director of the TOS in Peru has established a Facebook page spreading news about protection of animals and the environment. The TS in **Uruguay's** library is very active in lending books to members and opens three days a week for public use. Their 5 Lodges meet once a week and study theosophical and related teachings. The TOS in Uruguay is very active, providing a variety of free services, from recycling bottle taps to offering free classes in English, Portuguese, and Chi-kung. They also offer psychology workshops.

**Puerto Rico** and the Dominican Republic are both headed by Presidential Representative Magaly Polanco, who says that in Puerto Rico they have had very fruitful meetings, offering public lectures focusing on theosophical subjects every Sunday from 10 am to Noon. Mr Gaspar Torres, from the Krotona Institute of Theosophy and former General Secretary of the TS in Cuba, gave 3 lectures, and also led a workshop, with over 50 participants. Puerto Rico completed the painting of their building at a high cost with the contribution and efforts of all the members. In the **Dominican Republic**

## Presidential Address

they received the visit of Mr Jesus López from Puerto Rico, who gave 3 lectures over a month's time. Mr Torres also visited this Presidential Agency, holding a series of presentations and a day-long seminar, in addition to being the keynote speaker at the White Lotus Day celebration on 8 May. He also gave a public lecture, a seminar in Santo Domingo, a meeting for members only, and a lecture to over 100 high school students in San Cristóbal.

**Costa Rica** has gained 2 members during the year, with 5 Lodges and one informal Centre for Theosophical Studies. Presidential Representative Maria de los Angeles Orlich informs us that they have a study group in Cartago City that meets weekly. The Regional Association in **Central America** has a new Organizing Secretary in Beatriz E. Martínez who was elected during the year with a two-year term. They also made changes to their Constitution. A directed study on *The Voice of the Silence* was conducted and also a series of public lectures and video conferences. Finally, after a period of silence, the TS in **Venezuela** writes that they have three coordinators: Ms Nelly Nouel, Oscar J. Hernández and Omar González, who are trying to revive and strengthen the activities in the country.

At the **International Headquarters** in Adyar, there have been some changes apart from the new President. Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy has been elected as the international Vice-President and Ms Marja Artamaa has been appointed as the international Secretary. Other appointments include Mr S. M. Umakanth

Rao as Acting Manager, Theosophical Publishing House, and Dr Cyril Samuels as Veterinary Doctor in the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary. The Estate Administration Committee and the Election Committee steered the affairs of the TS well particularly in the absence of the late President. Two main roads were repaired and two others were newly laid, the lift in the Leadbeater Chambers was replaced, several wells were desilted, and repair and painting work was undertaken in many buildings. Mr S. Ramkumar chipped in whenever necessary.

The turnover of the **Theosophical Publishing House** was Rs. 2.1 million this year, a little less than the previous year's turnover of Rs. 2.3 million. Subscription to journals has increased. Only 8 reprints were brought out during the year but several more have been authorized by the newly constituted TPH Council. The accounts of the TPH, which were neglected between October 2013 and March 2014 have been brought up to date. The **Adyar Library and Research Centre's** work was strengthened by the appointment of Prof. T. Narayanan Kutty as Director, Dr S. Bhubaneswari as Research Officer, and Mrs Padma Padmanabhan as Research Assistant. The Library's bulletin, *Brahmavidyā*, 2012-13, was published along with a supplement containing articles on *The Secret Doctrine* by HPB on completion of its 125th year of publication. A special commemorative issue of *Brahmavidyā* for 2014-15 in honour of Dr Radha Burnier, former Director of the Adyar Library for



## Presidential Address

20 years, is under preparation. Four sessions of the **School of the Wisdom** were conducted by Mr Pedro Oliveira, Prof R. C. Tampi (Director of the School), Venerable Olande Ananda and Dr Ravi Ravindra. The **Olcott Education Society** continued its work through its five units. One of its former units, the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary, was transferred to the Management of the TS as approved by the OES Board and the Executive Committee of the TS. Formal approval of the Government was received this year for upgradation of the Olcott Memorial High School to a Higher Secondary School. OES was able to get adequate financial help from Indian and other donors to support the upgradation of the School, to the Higher Secondary level and for higher wages now being given to the teachers and other staff of OES. The school students are doing well overall. A computer centre was set up in the school with help received from a Corporate donor. The **Social Welfare Centre** continues to run a day-care centre cum nursery school for about 60 children of working parents from low income groups. The Vocational Training Centre has 22 women students undergoing one year course in weaving, tailoring, and embroidery. Recently the Vocational Training Centre has been collaborating with the Unnati Foundation of Bengaluru to conduct short-term vocational training in various trades for unemployed youth aged 18-30, to help them find employment. The first batch of 8 students, including 2 former students of the Olcott

School, completed their training and have found employment earning from Rs.7,000 to Rs.12,000. The HPB hostel is running well. It accommodates 12 boys from class 5 – 12. The Visitors Centre is operated by the OES, which has many Theosophical books, magazines, information booklets, beautiful photographs of flowers, trees, birds, and buildings from the TS campus. The **Besant Scout Camping Centre** was used by 22 institutions/scout groups, benefiting about 1,200 children through camping activities. **The Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary** continued its work taking care of animals, with 3,226 cases treated during the year. The Centre is helped by the Animal Welfare Committee, now chaired by Mr Anoop Jaiswal. The **TOS International** continued its work with Mrs Diana Dunningham Chapotin as its international Secretary. It had a year characterized by increased collaboration with the TS. It emphasized projects to protect women against discrimination and violence, and assistance for education of children in Karachi and to families displaced by war in Syria. Work was intensified in Ukraine, France, Italy, India, Spain, Australia, Congo, and Pakistan. A special effort was made in November 2013 to support the TOS in the Philippines following the super-cyclone that hit parts of Southeast Asia. Donations flowed in from all over the world. There was greater coverage of TOS work in TS magazines and Lodges. I hope you enjoy the grounds, each other, and these programmes.

This Convention is officially open.

TIM BOYD

# My Recollections of Radha Burnier

BHUPENDRA R. VORA

IT was November 1982 and the place was the Sahar International Airport in Mumbai. I was returning to Nairobi after visiting my father, who was ill in a Mumbai hospital. I was in the departure lounge, waiting to board the flight to Nairobi, when Mrs Radha Burnier arrived with Mr Surendra Narayan. They were on their way to attend the 7th World Congress of the Theosophical Society, being hosted by the East and Central African Section in Nairobi, Kenya. This was my first meeting with them, and, as I was on the World Congress Committee, I went to greet them and to introduce myself. She enquired about the weather in Nairobi at that time and also about the preparations for the World Congress. They were given a VIP reception at the Nairobi International Airport by the members of The East African Section.

Since then she visited Kenya many times, and during some of her trips it was our privilege to host her and to come to know her more personally. During our several visits to Adyar, attending the annual Conventions my wife and I were privileged to see her and discuss the work

in the East African Section, of which I was then the General Secretary. There was a dignified reserve about her that many misunderstood as unapproachability. But in more than three decades of knowing her I never experienced anything but a warmth of nature and a keen interest in the work of the Society everywhere around the world.

During the seventh World Congress held at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre, she would sit with the Vice-President unobtrusively at the back of the Conference Hall, except when her presence was required during the official opening of the Congress. Even during the annual Conventions at Adyar one could see her sitting cross-legged in front of the Adyar Theatre rather than in the front row of seats. She was unassuming and never sought attention.

On the many occasions that she visited Kenya, I had the opportunity to connect with her and to discuss Theosophical work in our Section as well as aspects of Theosophical teachings and literature. These occasions were very rewarding in that we could perceive the depth and

---

**Mr Bhupendra R. Vora** is a former General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in East and Central Africa, now living in England.

## My Recollections of Radha Burnier

clarity of her thought. I do remember writing to her when I was the Chairman of the Nairobi Lodge, seeking her advice on the kind of studies that should be conducted in a Lodge and receiving a very detailed letter from her in this regard, elaborating on what was appropriate.

In her extensive travels all around the theosophical world, Radhaji's focus was always on the work and nothing else. She made a light-hearted comment to me once in respect of her travels and the enquiries from people on returning home as to what the countries were like that she visited. She would inevitably reply that she was going there to further the work of the Society and not visit places. On one of her visits to Kenya I suggested taking her around to see the sights, but she declined.

Only once when my wife Sudha and I took her for a very early morning drive to the Nairobi National Park, did she agree to come, because she loved Nature. It was a delight for her to see the wildlife in its natural surroundings. She observed Nature and all life with interest, asking questions about how the birds navigated without a compass, or what enabled them to identify their own flocks from amongst many, as in the case of penguins who nest in their thousands and so on. She would refer to the underlying intelligence that guided all life.

This keen observation of Nature and the deep insights that she had could be seen in her 'Watch-Tower Notes', which never ceased to amaze many who read them. Each issue of *The Theosophist* carried a unique piece from her that discussed issues of concern to the world. It is a great

service to members that her 'Watch-Tower' notes have been published in the book, *The World Around Us*.

Radhaji had a unique understanding of the Theosophical work around the world and of the personalities that were involved in this work. She would often talk about the issues that existed in one place or the other and the people involved. This amazing grasp of the goings-on in the Theosophical world made it possible for her to solve issues wherever possible by her guidance and assignment of people to resolve them.

She encouraged upcoming Theosophists during her visits. During one of her visits to the East African Section, a TV interview was organized for her on the Kenya Broadcasting Station to publicize The Theosophical Society. I accompanied her to the KBC Studio for the recording of the programme. When the time came for recording, she persuaded me to join her and answer some of the questions relating to the work of the Society locally, thereby encouraging me to assume greater responsibilities for the TS work. She assigned talks at the international Conventions to many young Theosophists who matured to their full capacity over the years. She would also request articles from time to time for *The Theosophist* and hence provide the experience and the confidence for writing.

During her last overseas trip she visited the TS Centres at Krotona and Wheaton before stopping in London at Tekels Park. She rested for a week here before travelling to Naarden and then onwards

## My Recollections of Radha Burnier

to Chennai. During the time she spent here she advised me that this was going to be her last overseas trip. Although she was exhausted from her travel, she discussed the TS work around the world.

It is not possible to mention the multi-faceted personality of our great President,

who served the Theosophical Society for more than three decades and set standards of service that are difficult to emulate, with single-minded devotion. We pay a humble tribute to our late International President, dear Radhaji, and invoke the blessings of the Masters always. ✧

**These are the few ways we can practice humility:**

**To speak as little as possible of one's self.**

**To mind one's own business.**

**Not to want to manage other people's affairs.**

**To avoid curiosity.**

**To accept contradictions and corrections cheerfully.**

**To pass over the mistakes of others.**

**To accept insults and injuries.**

**To accept being slighted, forgotten, and disliked.**

**To be kind and gentle even under provocation.**

**Never to stand on one's dignity.**

**To choose always the hardest.**

Mother Teresa  
*The Joy in Loving: A Guide to Daily Living*

# The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

LINDA OLIVEIRA

SOME words about change were penned in 1878 by the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Turn, turn, my wheel! All things must  
change  
To something new, to something strange;  
Nothing that is can pause or stay;  
The moon will wax, the moon will wane,  
The mist and cloud will turn to rain,  
The rain to mist and cloud again,  
To-morrow be to-day.  
(*Keramos*)

How true were those words! ‘All things must change to something new, to something strange.’ Nothing that we can apprehend with the physical senses in this world stays the same. We may wholeheartedly welcome the changing of the seasons, which we have known from childhood. Happily, the seasons are still fairly predictable in these days of climate change. Then again, we may be fascinated by the changes in the growth of the small plants in our garden, or of our children or grandchildren. We may take special delight in the almost imperceptible change in the quality of darkness as

night gradually becomes day, until the sun emerges on the horizon in all its splendour. We are used to these; they are comfortable, familiar types of change. A walk through the streets of Varanasi to witness dawn at the Ganga, is indeed a sight to behold. I once started this journey while it was still dark. There was no activity and one could see very little. Eventually one person came into sight, then another, just as figures emerge onto the stage during the commencement of a play. More and more people came into focus, until finally there was a teeming crowd present once the Holy river was reached and daylight was emerging. The whole experience became a fantastic spectacle of vibrant colour and movement. In each of these cases of change, to use Longfellow’s wording, something ‘new’ emerges.

In the Wisdom Tradition, one of the great Propositions put forward regarding our universe is that of periodicity. The magnum opus of Madame Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, speaks of numberless Universes ‘incessantly manifesting and disappearing’, the ‘appearance and disappearance of worlds’. Today these

---

**Mrs Linda Oliveira** is National President of the Australian Section and former international Vice-President of the TS. Talk delivered at the International Convention, Adyar, December 2014.

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

numberless universes are designated by scientists as the multiverse or meta-universe, being the hypothetical set of possible universes. The appearance and disappearance of worlds taught by Blavatsky is a macrocosmic form of change on a scale which is difficult for the everyday mind to fathom. The Proposition referred to also mentions the absolute universality of the law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, in all departments of Nature. We see this daily in all sorts of ways. Night follows day, periods of sleep are followed by waking periods, and so forth. Change is one of the 'givens' in life.

Returning to the line of Longfellow's poem, though, all things must change not only to something new, but *to something strange*. Some types of change are fairly predictable, within certain parameters. But now we come to the harder aspect of change which is less comfortable — change into something which is not so predictable. Why is this harder? Because so many of us are afraid of the unknown. We *know* that the moon will wax and wane; we know that mist and cloud can turn to rain, to use the bard's poetic terms. But the Wisdom Tradition suggests that a different kind of change is possible for the human being. This goes way beyond the ubiquitous personal development courses prevalent today; it involves a radical transformation away from self-centred pursuits and wanting to grow the personal self, to the emergence of a new consciousness. This is the ultimate renewal of the human being, a consciousness which must be immensely strange

compared with that familiar 'me' which has existed since our birth in this life. We do not really know what might happen to 'me' if we were to transform significantly. We can guess, we can read what sages have said, but we do not actually *know* until the experience comes about.

It is the sphere of human change that is the focus of this presentation on transitioning from the worldly to the Sacred. Therefore, what is the worldly? What is the Sacred? And what does transitioning from the worldly to the Sacred involve? We will consider these three questions with some reference to Eastern and Western thought, and to writings both ancient and modern.

### The Worldly

We are embedded in the worldly, which is time-bound or earthly, 'engrossed in temporal affairs, especially the pursuit of wealth and pleasure'; also 'experienced in life, sophisticated, practical'. The general feeling conveyed by these dictionary renderings is that worldliness consists of our engrossment in time-bound activities with all their pain and pleasure; of the so-called 'worldly wisdom' which derives from experience; of a façade of ever-increasing sophistication, and many other things besides. The worldly is the environment in which we live from day to day, with all of our hopes, fears, and longings — as well as our response to that environment, both collectively and individually.

There are many ways of viewing the human world. One author, Hugh Mackay, has written a number of books in the field of social analysis, social psychology, and

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

ethics. He writes of what he calls ‘the Utopia complex’. The word ‘utopia’ comes from the title of Thomas More’s sixteenth century book of the same name. It refers to an imagined perfect place or state of things. Mackay asserts that, to many people in the West,

this feels like a Golden Age. And why not? Extraordinary advances in medical science; the explosion of information and communication technology that stimulates, informs, and entertains us like never before; swift and cheap international travel; efficient, reliable, affordable cars; promising talk of a clean-energy revolution; online shopping; . . . [and so on]. (p. 3)

One could question whether this Utopia complex — that is, this sense that with materialism we have reached a perfect state — is limited to the West, though, given how rapidly similar changes are impacting many countries around the world. The author also remarks that it may be more difficult to have a continuing impression of a Golden Age if we were to peep into ‘the world’s refugee camps, the ravages of continuing wars (driven, as usual, by religious rivalries or territorial greed, or both), the eternal tensions of the Middle East . . .’ and so forth. (p. 3)

Mackay goes on to say that we are busy establishing centres of excellence everywhere and that we have become hooked on the idea of happiness as a natural entitlement. According to him, towering self-esteem has been enshrined as a cardinal virtue (e.g., Twitter, overuse of Facebook). And Utopians are conditioned ‘to assume that perfection in anything

should be within their grasp’. He observes that many people have adopted materialism as their driving philosophy.

Turning now to Eastern philosophy, we read in that poetic classic of Advaita Vedanta, the *Viveka-Chūdāmani*, or ‘Crest-Jewel of Wisdom’:

In the forest land of objects wanders the great tiger named *manas*; pure men desirous of liberation, do not go there.

The *manas*, having clouded over the absolute consciousness which is without attachment, acquires notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, and through attachment to the body, organs, and life, wanders ceaselessly in the enjoyment of the fruit of his actions. (180)

With the agency of our minds we are wanderers through this world. There is a remarkably common obsession with the pursuit of all that the material world has to offer — driven, as the text says, by that great tiger named *manas*, which refers to our vast field of thought and reasoning which is twinned with desire.

This pursuit of the material is well exemplified in the following story:

The Master once told of a neighbour in the countryside who had an obsession with acquiring land.

‘I wish I had more land’, he said one day. ‘But why?’ asked the Master. ‘Don’t you have enough already?’

‘If I had, I could raise more cows.’

‘And what would you do with them?’

‘Sell them and make money.’

‘For what?’

‘To buy more land and raise a lot of cows . . .’

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

In addition to acquisitiveness, Hugh Mackay mentioned that materialism is sometimes married with religious or political faith. One could add that both of these are very likely used by *many* people today to support strongly materialistic lifestyles. He describes the Utopia complex as a ‘neurosis’, a disorder which is indissolubly linked to getting what we want. Brands were once limited to corporations but these days, individuals ‘brand’ themselves too, vying for attention in that crowded marketplace which we also call society. Furthermore, narcissism has re-emerged in the twenty-first century in a repackaged form: as self-absorption along with a commonplace sense of entitlement.

One social analyst, Richard Eckersley, talks about how we tend to fashion identity and meaning ‘increasingly from personal achievements and possessions and less from shared cultural traditions and beliefs’. He observed that this distracts people from what is most important to wellbeing, ‘the quality of their relationships . . . which, ideally, contribute to a deep and enduring sense of intrinsic worth and existential certainty’. In the meantime, the Utopia complex fills a certain vacuum.

### Transitioning

But the Utopia complex inevitably starts to run its course. When this happens, the force of all that is worldly starts to lose its magnetic grip. Something different is needed in order to fill the vacuum. So commences what may be initially a slow transition to a new way of living, to a whole new Life. Transitions are periods of change which are not so predictable;

they are not entirely comfortable. The transitional process may start, then stop, then start again. To revert to Longfellow’s words, we are starting to enter that something new, which is also ‘something strange’ — strange compared with how we are positioned now with the enormous weight of worldly conditioning to contend with, which is reinforced daily, hourly, by global media of all types.

The human spiritual journey is fundamentally the same, regardless of differences in culture, ethnicity, religion and so forth. For we are all one race; it is just that we happen to look different from each other. This journey invariably moves us from the worldly towards the universal, towards an ‘otherworldly’ wholeness, which has been described by sages throughout history in different ways. The Theosophical tradition includes the teaching of reincarnation, which presupposes a series of many lives. It also presupposes a continuity in consciousness between lives. If we assume that the soul evolves, then it seems odd to imagine that we are given just one body, that we live just one physical life and then simply cease to exist.

The transition from worldliness to the Sacred is not likely to start with our governments. Others may set examples and inspire us. But no-one else can do this for us; we cannot appoint a proxy to help us consciously reconnect to our roots! One of the *Bhagavadgītā* Discourses mentions the *Aśvattha* tree:

#### The Blessed Lord said:

With roots above, branches below, the *Aśvattha* is said to be indestructible; the



## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

leaves of it are hymns; he who knoweth it is a Veda-knower.

Downwards and upwards spread the branches of it, nourished by the qualities; the objects of the senses its buds; and its roots grow downwards, the bonds of action in the world of men . . . (15:1-2)

The Aśvattha tree is also described as the banyan tree of samsāra, or worldly life. When we are enmeshed in the world the roots grow downwards like those of the banyan tree; we lose our connection with our heavenly roots. We cannot know its form in *this* world. Its real roots may only be known through the ‘unswerving weapon of non-attachment’. For as long as the material world is our primary attachment, we have lost that North, that compass which may otherwise help bring stability, perspective and the Sacred into our lives. If we do not adopt an attitude of mindfulness we become, unthinkingly, full participants in the Utopia Complex.

In a similar vein a Western scholar, Dr David Tacey, author of *The Spirituality Revolution*, mentions that ‘what exhausts us is the lack of connection to our invisible, life-sustaining roots’ (p. 226). Describing today’s society as addictive, he maintains that we are obsessed with ‘playing it again’, doing what we already know and what brings sentimental comfort or nostalgia. It is easier to reproduce something than to make something new. Why? Because making anything new takes effort. Going further, though, making *ourselves* into something new, calls for a profound connection with what he describes as the

‘deep roots of creativity’. We are far more comfortable with the known, treading the familiar path of our routine lives. Humanity’s grip on the known brings us back again to Longfellow’s ‘something strange’. This looms large when the nature of the change is not so predictable. It also may be regarded with trepidation due to fear of the unknown.

Tacey writes, ‘The hope for the future is that we can overcome our obsession with imitations, stand-ins, substitutes and copies, and face the nature of the real. Not just the surface real, but the deep real, from which surprising, alarming, and transforming things emerge.’ This takes courage. Similarly Dr Annie Besant referred decades earlier in her writings to the ‘turning point’, the period of transition between the *Pravṛtti mārga*, or path of forthgoing, and the *Nivṛtti mārga*, the path of return. As with transitions generally, this can be a painful period, because on the one hand we may gradually respond more sensitively to the One Life in every person and being we encounter; yet, often we are still wanting to act for personal gain, to expand our personal self into the world. In short, there are contradictions between our incipient new North, on the one hand, and how we act in the world on the other.

Sages throughout history have demonstrated the beauty of humility — the subdual and transmutation of the sense of personal self in order to serve the Sacred in all. False humility is quite common. Authentic humility does not seem to have much currency in the twenty-first century; in fact, it seems to be remarkably rare. The

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

individual reigns supreme, as is obvious in different types of social media and self-branding. Some years ago *Time* magazine made ‘you’ the person of the year. It was intimating that we are obsessed with ourselves. Yet, what would happen if we could let go of our ego, even for a short while?

To a painter the Master said:

‘To be successful, every painter must invest hours in unremitting toil and effort. To some it will be given to let go of the ego as they paint. When this happens, a masterpiece is born.’

Later, a disciple asked, ‘Who is a Master?’ The Master replied, ‘Anyone to whom it is given to let go of the ego. Such a person’s life is then a masterpiece.’

In contrast to the supremacy of the individual in today’s world, David Tacey has described spirit (or, we could say, the Sacred) as ‘the fount of human creation and the core of the natural world’ (p.147). He maintains that although it may be discovered initially within ourselves through quiet introspection or perhaps seclusion, once contacted it brings an imperative to go outside ourselves, to serve others and the world. This parallels the Bodhisattva Path in the Buddhist tradition, which brings us now to the Sacred.

### The Sacred

Within the pages of the *Viveka-Chūdāmani* is the observation:

As by mixture with water and by friction, sandalwood emits an excellent odour, removing all bad smells; so divine

aspiration becomes manifest when external desire is washed away. (274)

In proportion as the mind becomes firm by devotion to *ātman*, it renounces all desires for external things; when all desires are completely exhausted, the realization of *ātman* is unobstructed. (277)

So it seems that the antidote for the worldly, for the Utopia complex, was prescribed by Sri Shankaracharya thousands of years ago, being the renunciation of the desire for externals in order for the *ātman* to be known. This sounds simple enough in theory, but its practice is probably the ultimate challenge for the human being.

The Sacred also featured in ancient Greece. The Greek term *eudaimonia* is used in Aristotelian ethics and political philosophy. Commonly translated as happiness, or *welfare*, it is said to have implications of wholeness, wisdom, human flourishing. In Aristotle’s works, it denoted the highest human good, relating to ‘a life well and nobly lived — duty done, sacrifices made in others’ service, suffering endured courageously, virtue nurtured, compassion selflessly offered’.

Today, author Hugh Mackay writes about living a good life, not as something which is going to make you feel terrific, or which is going to make you necessarily rich or poor, but as a life animated by kindness and compassion, a virtuous and even noble life. Such a life may produce inner calm, moral confidence and a deep sense of wellbeing. His view is that if the circumstances are right, and with a ‘dollop of luck’, ‘we will also experience moments

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

of towering satisfaction and occasional sparks of happiness’ (p. 68). For any act to count as noble or virtuous, he asserts, ‘we need to delete our own happiness from the list of motives’ for such an act. If such an act is performed for our own emotional benefit, ‘if we are acting compassionately, virtuously, or ethically in order to feel good about ourselves, we’ve missed the whole point’ because this ‘amounts to exploitation of the person towards whom we have acted charitably’. Here we have a contemporary Western resonance to one of the core messages in the *Bhagavadgītā*, in which Arjuna is exhorted by Krishna not to be concerned with the fruit of action.

A number of exponents of Theosophy have expressed the Sacred in ways which are not too dissimilar from this. The words ‘Sacred’ and ‘sacrifice’ have similar origins. Dr Besant mentioned ‘The Law of Sacrifice’ in her little book, *The Laws of the Higher Life*. She described it as the life of the Spirit which ‘consists in giving, and not in taking, in pouring itself out and not in grasping, in self-surrender and not in self-appropriation . . . The Life inexhaustible is found . . . bubbling up out of the illimitable fullness of the Self.’ (p. 58)

Putting it quite starkly, she described the sacrificial fuel as everything that belongs to the personal lower self. Renunciation, or giving up certain things, is the note of the *Nivṛtti Mārga* — the note of our return to the Sacred. However, it is our attitude to this kind of process which makes all the difference. Rather than the occasional experience of happiness

mentioned by Hugh Mackay, Dr Besant viewed sacrifice not as pain, but as joy, not as sorrow, but as delight — even bliss to the Spirit. She also described the Law of Sacrifice as the Law of Joy — as unencumbered life, in which the personal nature is surrendered to Brahman, the Eternal. A profound sense of unity pervades a life which is steeped in the Sacred, rather than being steeped in — and hostage to — all that is worldly. Perhaps, in fact, we are all hostages to the worldly to a greater or lesser extent. We all live in this world; we all need certain things around us in order to function within it. But giving up the personal in order to dedicate our lives to the Sacred does not necessarily require giving away all of our possessions. Rather, it is a state of mind marked by reverence and discernment, regarding the Sacred as having supreme importance. It is *Divine* Wisdom, not worldly wisdom. A mind which is dedicated to the Sacred is deeply wise, rooted in Divinity (recall the *Aśvattha* tree), and able to function in practical ways in the world.

Two outstanding modern visionary scientists who have glimpsed the Sacred are worth mentioning here. One was Albert Einstein, possibly the greatest physicist who has ever lived, and who was reported to have a copy of Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine* on his desk. Significantly, he wrote:

. . . I maintain that the cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research.

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

A contemporary has said, not unjustly, that in this materialistic age of ours the serious workers are the only profoundly religious people. (Quoted in Wilber, pp. 105-106)

The importance of the religious element in human nature was recognized also by Max Planck, the German theoretical physicist and Nobel prize winner who originated quantum theory:

Every serious and reflective person realizes, I think, that the religious element in his nature must be recognized and cultivated if all the powers of the human soul are to act together in perfect balance and harmony. And, indeed, it was not by any accident that the greatest thinkers of all ages were also deeply religious souls, even though they made no public show of their religious feeling.

Science enhances the moral values of life because it furthers a love of truth and reverence – love of truth displaying itself in the constant endeavour to arrive at a more exact knowledge of the world of mind and matter around us, and reverence, because every advance in knowledge brings us face to face with the mystery of our own being. (Wilber, pp. 161-162)

The approach to science by both men was clearly informed by the Sacred; not the worldly.

The Sacred is a word we use to describe a state which is in many ways a mystery, unknown, and therefore strange. Lessening our attachment to the worldly indeed has a pivotal role to play in its revelation. The *Viveka-Chūdāmani* describes this using the following image:

As the water in the tank covered by a collection of moss does not show itself, so the *ātman* enveloped by the five sheaths, produced by its own power and beginning with the *annamaya*, does not manifest itself. (151)

Upon the removal of the moss is seen the pure water capable of allaying heat and thirst, and of immediately yielding great enjoyment to man. (152)

Moss can grow so densely and richly that what is underneath is completely hidden. It is also lovely to behold. Only when it is removed, though, can we view what has been hidden. Moss, here, represents the complex, multifarious aspects of human nature which cover up the pure consciousness beneath. It represents all those things which bind us to the material, to the worldly, and which appear so attractive for many lives. It represents everything which makes us feel 'safe' in this world. It is the letting go of this apparent safety, tempered with discernment, which invites a complete change as consciousness opens up to the timelessness of the Infinite, to pure Consciousness.

The *Viveka-Chūdāmani* provides a logical sequence in order for us to proceed:

The (pursuit of) external objects being checked, tranquillity of the mind (*manas*) is produced; from the tranquillity of *manas* arises the vision of Paramātman (the Logos); from the clear perception of Paramātman (results) the destruction of the bondage of conditioned existence. Restraint of the external is the way to liberation. (336)

## The Wheels of Change: Transitioning from the Worldly to the Sacred

Realize that thou art ‘That’ — Brahman — which alone shines, which is beyond the Logos, all-pervading, uniform, truth, consciousness, bliss, having no end, indestructible. (264)

Finally, imagination is also a very powerful tool which can help to engineer change. Can we actually *visualize* ourselves as vessels of ‘That’? We define ourselves in so many ways, especially through our accomplishments, our possessions, and so forth. Is it possible to let go of these definitions and simply visualize ourselves as Brahman, which alone shines?

\* \* \* \* \*

We have ventured from the worldly, to the often painful transition from the worldly to the Sacred, to the Sacred itself. The sense of the Sacred is perhaps

our *ultimate* sense. There is a very real interiority about it. The sense of the Sacred is energized and sustained by a clear perspective on the material world, by reverence, compassion, truth, beauty, goodness, by an ability to discern what is really important and, most of all, by an unshakeable sense of Unity. It is fitting to finish with another verse from Longfellow’s *Keramos* which describes, poetically, the Unity of humanity. The poet’s words speak for themselves:

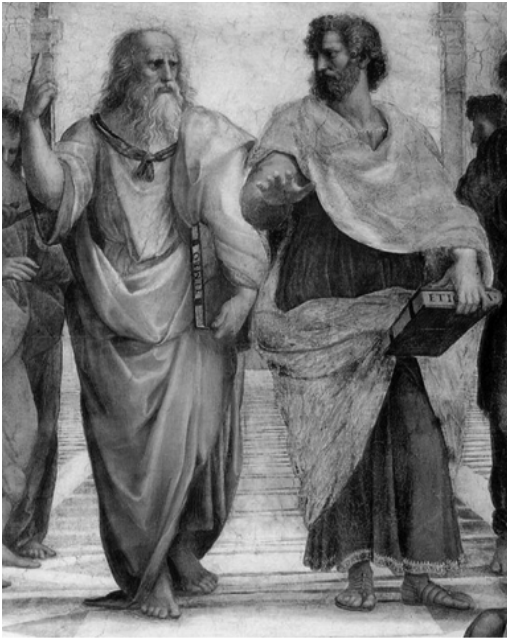
Turn, turn, my wheel! The human race,  
Of every tongue, of every place,  
Caucasian, Coptic, or Malay,  
All that inhabit this great earth,  
Whatever be their rank or worth,  
Are kindred and allied by birth,  
And made of the same clay.      ✧

### References:

- The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 4th edition, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2004.
- Besant, Annie (trans.), *The Bhagavadgītā*, The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), Adyar, 2005.
- Besant, Annie, *The Laws of the Higher Life*, TPH, Adyar, 1985.
- Chatterji, Mohini (transl.), *Viveka-Chūdāmani*, TPH, Adyar, 1973.
- Hoskins, Ianthe, *Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy - from the writings of H.P. Blavatsky*, TPH Ltd., London, 1980.
- Mackay, Hugh, *The Good Life*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 2013.
- de Mello, Anthony, *One Minute Nonsense*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Gujarat, 2008.
- Tacey, David, *The Spirituality Revolution*, HarperCollins Publishers, Sydney, 2003.
- Wikipedia (accessed 5 November) – definition of *eudaimonia*.
- , *accessed 17 November 2014* <[http://www.hwlongfellow.org/poems\\_poem.php?pid=307](http://www.hwlongfellow.org/poems_poem.php?pid=307)>.
- Wilber, Ken, *Quantum Questions, Mystical Writings of the World’s Greatest Physicists*, Shambhala, Boston, 2001.

# Modern Science and the Evolution of Humanity: A Theosophical View

WIM LEYS



Plato and Aristotle, details of Raphaël's fresco  
'The School of Athens'

**D**URING the evolution of humanity there are three stages of consciousness: First, human beings live in paradise, among the gods. They are *unconsciously* omniscient, because their mind is not yet separated from the cosmic mind. It is as though it

were asleep. In the second stage the soul enters *the cycles of necessity*, as we call it in Theosophy, and humanity descends into the material world, developing *self-consciousness*. Thirdly, in the future, when that soul will have completed its journey, it will be omniscient again, but now consciously. It will be among the gods again as in the first stage, but now as a cooperator, fully awake.

In the second stage, in which we are now, we find ourselves on our own, and have to develop our individual minds, and learn to experience reality as it is divided into subject and object. A long road through the opposites now starts, where thinking in dualities is developed. It is not only the body which falls into matter, but also the mind, or as H. P. Blavatsky puts it in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, 'Spirit falling into matter': 'The three middle principles in earth and man become with every Race more material; the Soul stepping back to make room for the physical intellect'.

In Western European culture, which is the 5th period in the Post Atlantean Era,

---

Ms Wim Leys is President of the Hague Lodge of The Netherlands and Vice-President of the TS in The Netherlands.

## Modern Science and the Evolution of Humanity: A Theosophical View

starting with the fruit of the 4th period, the Ancient Greek culture, we can observe the following in history:

Looking at man's spiritual and mental life we first find mythology. The origin of the world is experienced as follows: First there was Chaos, which was boundless space, without measure, beginning, or end. Out of this vast void originated Gaia, Earth. Gaia brought forth the boundless sea and infinite heaven, Pontos and Uranos. They had offspring but Uranos felt his dominance threatened and killed many of his offspring. Of the remaining only Kronos was brave enough to avenge this gruesome act. Kronos maimed Uranos and took over power, but was in his turn overthrown by Zeus. This can be interpreted as follows: eternity (Uranos) was followed by time (Kronos/Saturn), and time was followed by space (Zeus/Jupiter). So it was seen by man who was still in touch with the creative powers as he was about to enter the second stage.

Then Philosophy emerged in ancient Greece. Man starts bringing about his own thinking and he moves from the mythological into the logical. After Greek culture, science emerged as an outcome of Greek philosophy, being man's own contribution during the second stage, the work of physical intellect in the physical world, man's descent into space and matter. How this transition took off is nicely depicted by the Renaissance painter Rafaël in the Vatican fresco 'The School of Athens', where in the centre Plato and Aristotle are shown in a pose typical for their philosophical approach. Plato pointing upwards to

eternity, the world of Ideas, the first stage where we come from, so as not to forget our origin in the *other world*; and Aristotle, seen as the father of science, stretching his hand out forward with the palm down, as if saying 'time has come for the mind to turn its attention to *this world, existing in space and matter*': with his *physical intellect*, as Blavatsky puts it in the previously quoted statement.

In Roman times Christian philosophy developed along Platonic lines, and this was carried on in Western Europe all through the Middle Ages. In the Arabic world however, Aristotle's philosophy was eagerly absorbed. And through contact with this Arabic culture in the late Middle Ages Western Europe discovered Aristotle, and learned about the scientific discoveries that were made in this part of the world. This triggered philosophy to free itself from theology, to which it had been the servant in the previous centuries. But about four centuries later Aristotle would be rejected and the emancipation of physics from philosophy came about. I assume you all know the names of Francis Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. The Western mind descended deeper into matter and started employing mathematics as a tool in the development of physics.

The quantitative approach became more important than the regard for the qualitative, and the trinity 'number, measure, weight' became the ruling principle, as a triangle pointing downwards, whereas the upward pointing qualitative (or ethical) triangle 'goodness, truth, beauty' of the Platonic tradition played no part in physics

## Modern Science and the Evolution of Humanity: A Theosophical View

any longer. Separation of subject and object was necessary in science, not their union, like the spiritual life requires.

In the seventeenth century empirical science took great strides forward, the scientific method was developed with its rules to arrive at the unquestionable laws of the physical world through experimentation and verification. The Western mind was now firmly anchored to the material world by the dominance of science. Philosophy and religion played a secondary part. The danger of this road was of course that in man's perception matter would become so powerful that spirit would be forgotten, and in the course of the nineteenth century spirit was by many thought to be a mere product of matter; and to this day this strange idea is still predominant in many of the scientifically oriented circles. As theosophists we know that it was precisely to counterpoise this danger that in 1875 the Theosophical Society was established.

In the 20th century we saw what could be a turning point in science with the emergence of the theory of relativity and quantum physics. But can this mean science is entering the spiritual realm? At least it does show that the Western mind is knocking at heaven's door. Physics is still confined to the physical and mental planes, and has not yet discovered the ethereal and astral planes as such, except for biologists like Rupert Sheldrake, who look for causes in *life*, not just in matter. As for philosophy, the Western mind is gradually approaching the buddhic plane.

Now has this 'turning upward' already

reached a degree that we can say that we have definitely entered the path to the third stage? I think not, and I do not want to speculate when this will occur, although theosophy does provide some insight into this.

Has science then contributed anything to spirituality? Not directly but I assume that the spiritually inclined can learn something from the scientists. For among the esotericists we see a tendency to speculate rather carelessly, to arrive at only those conclusions that confirm their already accepted opinions, so their philosophies satisfy their egos instead of looking for the truth unconditionally and selflessly. Esotericism could benefit a lot by heeding the so-called 'scientific method', although moving in an opposite direction. So, not by relying on perception by the senses, experimentation, and mechanization, but by gaining insight from the practising of minute observation of one's own reasoning, clear, logical, and truthful thinking could benefit esotericism. A lot of useless by-ways could be avoided with patience, by deduction and induction, repeatedly testing the outcome of their thinking, as the scientific method demands.

I would like to end with a metaphor given to us in the fairy tale of *Hansel and Gretel*, a small esoteric masterpiece, like many fairy tales:

When Hansel and Gretel — the Monad — had to leave their father's house, they could first find their way back with the help of the opaque white pebbles (meaning purely spiritual Ideas), which Hansel had put into his pocket before leaving their



## Modern Science and the Evolution of Humanity: A Theosophical View

father's house. But the second attempt to find their way back with the bread crumbs (meaning man-made thoughts) was not successful. So the Monad (Atma-Buddhi, Hansel-Gretel) had to move on, deeper into the woods, where they reached a cottage. In it they found precious multifaceted gemstones some even translucent, allowing light to pass through. As opposed to the beginning of the story, when only the

naturally formed pebbles, (the ideas from their father's house) could take them back home, now however, at the second stage, the children took and carried home *these* multifaceted gemstones (thoughts and ideas created out of their many experiences and suffering during their exile). These they brought back as a gift to their father's house in the form of philosophy and science. ✧

**Evolutionary wisdom is quite simply the deep realization of our nature as Nature. I am not referring to an abstract knowledge of other primate species as our ancestors, but rather to a deep sense of our co-emergence with the elements, the sea and atmosphere, cellular life and sunlight, plants and animals, sentience — the whole evolutionary shebang. When we can experience ourselves as part of the processes of biological and cosmic evolution, we automatically begin to break free from the domination of ego. We are finally able to loosen the tight shoe of self. Our lives gain a new dimension, context, gestalt. We begin to give ourselves some space.**

Wes Nisker  
*Buddha's Nature*

# The Theosophical Attitude

SHIRLEY MACPHERSON

WHAT is the attitude that we have most of the time, as the basis for all our feelings, actions, and thoughts? Have we ever really stopped to examine it? How we think and feel and act, how we meditate and pray, whatever we do, is an expression of ourselves as individuals, as personalities, and for the most part as separate entities, thinking in terms of 'me' and 'mine', 'you' and 'yours'. This is the attitude that most of us work from nowadays, an attitude I would call the 'outside attitude'.

In contrast, the Theosophical attitude is an expression of ourselves as true human beings, as Gods in the becoming, as sparks of the Divine Fire, an attitude completely different from the other, and so an attitude that I would call the 'inside attitude'. We might try to examine what it is that makes this Theosophical attitude, this 'inside attitude', so different from the one we normally take.

Let us stop for a moment to think of Theosophy, the Ancient Wisdom we have been so privileged to know of, which has been in the world since time began, but veiled to so many and available to only a few. In the past, each religion or

philosophy brought into the world gave one aspect of this Wisdom, suited to the people at that time. But in Theosophy, since the last century there has been available to everybody not just one aspect, but every aspect, every conceivable viewpoint, so that there is possible a broader, wider outlook than has ever been before.

Certain laws of Nature, which Theosophy has brought to our notice, are such that when we know them we are changed for all time. For instance, when we are presented with the idea that all life is one, that there is a unity of life everywhere, in every kingdom of Nature, not only in the human, if even for a moment we can feel the throb of the same life in everything and in everybody, then for just that moment our attitude has completely changed; we have the true Theosophical attitude; we have for a moment been, as it were, turned inside out.

Now if that can happen once, it can happen at other times, and the more often it can happen the easier it is. Even hearing about these ideas intellectually or reading of them, gives us a moment's glimpse of

---

**Ms Shirley MacPherson** is a long-standing member of the Australian Section of the TS and a former President of the Adelaide Lodge.

## The Theosophical Attitude

the unity of life and completely changes our viewpoint.

So also, when we are given the idea of the Great Plan which is Evolution, when we can see the truth of the idea that all life is guided, is ordered, we can understand why Browning said: 'God's in His heaven — all's right with the world!'

Many would criticize this attitude and say: 'That is just shutting your eyes to the facts. If you look around the world today, all is not right with the world'. I know it is not, and I do not think we can just say 'God's in His heaven — all's right with the world' and let Him take care of it all. But I feel that the things in the world are an outer expression, just as our personalities are only the outer expression of our real selves. We are much nicer than we appear; and surely the world is the same, and behind it all is a guiding, ordered Mind.

Knowing of evolution too gives us the idea of older and younger souls, and explains the differences in people. Why does this person do this and why does that person do the other? The different experiences they have had, and perhaps the fewer experiences in the case of the younger souls, make them act in a particular way. It is exactly the same as in a school. The child in kindergarden cannot be expected to act in the same way as the child in the higher standards. So, against this background, all the virtues and the vices are relative; we begin to understand that what is good for us is not quite so good for somebody else. These things help us all the time in our attitude

towards people and towards circumstances, so that gradually there is a wider out look from which we work.

When the Ancient Wisdom states that the great Laws of Reincarnation and Karma, the 'twin laws', as they have been called, are facts in Nature, that, to us in the West, is a revelation. It is as though a key has been given and all doors opened, all problems solved. It explains all the apparent injustices, 'apparent' because where there is a God of Love and Justice, there cannot be injustice. But if I were not a Theosophist, if I did not know about the Law of Reincarnation and Karma, I too, would feel that there is a great deal of injustice in the world. That is again looking from the outside attitude, and not from the inside, the Theosophical attitude. The Ancient Wisdom explains to us that we have only ourselves to thank or blame for who we are and what we are and where we are; and also that we have ourselves to thank for where we are going to be in the future. We learn that we have not merely this one short life of seventy years or so in which to perfect ourselves. We have time to grow, to evolve, and reach that goal of perfection. It explains, too, why we have these ties of love and hate; why we are drawn towards some people, why we feel a little, an attitude of 'please keep away' with others. Why are we in a particular family, nation, or country? Or in a particular religion? All these problems are solved with that key of Reincarnation and Karma, so that knowing these laws even just a little, even feeling them for a moment, means a change in our whole

## The Theosophical Attitude

attitude, and we view things from a completely different standpoint. Our attitude becomes comprehensive. We see the whole, each and every aspect and person, and not just the one 'I'. So from this reversed, Theosophical attitude which springs from knowing the Divine Wisdom, we can view everything and everybody differently.

All circumstances have something to teach us, wherever we are, in whatever situation we find ourselves in life. Many people, especially many young people, feel that they are cribbed in a certain condition, so that they cannot get out and do the things they want to, and express themselves freely. But if only they can realize that it is necessary to learn something in these very conditions, the difficulties will completely disappear. Within these circumstances, let us try to live each day and moment to the full, realizing that all the time opportunities, big and small, are being presented to us. Do not think they will all come in a gratifying or obvious form. There will be the little things that you have to look for and try not to miss. As C. W. Leadbeater says, the result of taking an opportunity is invariably that another and wider opportunity is given. But the reverse may also be true: if we miss an opportunity, then perhaps a better one will fail to come.

The way we approach and meet people will be different with this changed, reversed, inside-out attitude. We begin to like all people. Why? They are a part of ourselves, and most of us like ourselves, so we must like other people;

and there we bridge the gulf straightaway. We become a part of them, so that any other problem that may come up between us is ready to be dealt with on the ground prepared.

Some, of course, we love. We have our special ties in the family and among our friends. We have to have these; we have made the ties in the past, and it is natural that we should begin to love a few, before we can expand that into loving the whole of humanity.

So we see each man has his own mission to fulfil in his own way. And we have been told in many of our books that we must learn not to interfere, but to let him do it in his own way, be he a friend or a foe, or a fellow Theosophist.

The true Theosophist surely shows a happiness, a joyousness, an inner radiance that marks him. He has found something to help him and bring him happiness, and he wants others to have that too. As Clara Codd has said: 'It is more important to make people happy than to make them good'. We have been told that it is our duty to be happy, that it is not fair to be depressed and miserable, because our attitude is going to affect everybody. Miserableness, depression, are things that are so catching. As Leadbeater has said, a miserable person is a public nuisance, a centre of infection, spreading misery and sorrow. But when you are feeling happy, you are still a centre of infection, and so you can share and give to others some of your happiness.

A sense of humour is also most definitely a mark of the true Theosophist. It

### The Theosophical Attitude

is important that we do not take ourselves too seriously, that we are able to laugh at ourselves; to say if we make a mistake: 'Well we've made a mistake — we are not the only ones, and we know we can pick ourselves up and begin again', so that troubles and worries and 'molehills' need not be made into mountains. A sense of humour saves many a situation.

There are many more qualities, of course, that I could go into; these are just a few. But it is important for each one of us to find out how much of this Theosophy, this Ancient Wisdom, we have built into ourselves, made a part of ourselves, so that our attitude is one of continual awareness every moment of the day. ✧

### The Three Great Truths of Theosophy

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

- ◆ The soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.
- ◆ The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.
- ◆ Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man.

Mabel Collins  
*The Idyll of the White Lotus*

## INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY

Date	Section	General Secretary, etc.	Address	Magazine	Email address
1947	Africa, East and Central	... Mr Ebrony Peteli	... PO Box 40844, Mufulira, Zambia	... <i>The Theosophical Light</i>	<b>ebrony.peteli@gmail.com</b>
1909	Africa, South	... Mr Jack Hartmann	... 9 Ronean, 38 Princesses Ave., Windsor E. 2194	... <i>The South African Theosophist</i>	<b>hartmann.jack.c@gmail.com</b>
1956	Africa, West	... Mr John Osmond Boakye	... PO Box 720, Accra, Ghana	... <i>The West African Theosophist</i>	<b>tswafrica@gmail.com</b>
1929	America, Central *	... Mrs Ligia Gutiérrez S.	... Rept. Los Arcos # 43, Ent. Princ. 1 c. Sur 2 c. Abajo, 1 c. Sur, Distrito 2, Managua, Nicaragua		<b>ligusimpson@hotmail.com</b>
1920	Argentina	... Mr Jorge Garcia	... Santiago 257 — 2000, Rosario	... <i>Teosofía en Argentina</i>	<b>stargentina@sociedad-teosofica.com.ar</b>
1990	Asia, East and Southeast †	... Mr Chong Sanne	... 540 Sims Avenue, No. 03-04 Sims Avenue Centre, Singapore 387 603	... <i>Newsletter</i>	<b>sanne@theosophyasia.net</b>
1895	Australia	... Mrs Linda Oliveira	... Level 2, 162 Goulburn St., Surry Hills, NSW 2010	... <i>Theosophy in Australia</i>	<b>tshq@austheos.org.au</b>
1912	Austria *	... Mr Albert Schichl	... Oberbaumgarten 25, 4204 Haibach im Mühlkreis	... <i>Theosofie Adyar</i>	<b>theosophie.austria@aon.at</b>
2013	Bangladesh †	... Mr B. L. Bhattacharya	... B/4-3, Iswarchandra Nibas, 68/1, Bagmari Road, Kolkata 700 054		<b>blbtos_2005@yahoo.com</b>
1911	Belgium	... Mrs Sabine Van Osta	... Place des Gueux 8, B1000 Brussels, Belgium	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	<b>sabine_van_osta@hotmail.com</b>
1965	Bolivia †	... Mrs Teresa W. de Nuñez	... Casilla de Correo 3911, Cochabamba		<b>uparati@hotmail.com</b>
1920	Brazil	... Mr Marcos L. B. de Resende	... SGAS Quadra 603, N. 20, CEP 70200-630 Brasilia (DF)	... <i>Sophia</i>	<b>marcos.resende@riedel.com.br</b>
1924	Canada *	... Mr Medardo Martinez Cruz	... 3162 Rue de la Bastille Boisbriand QC., J7H 1K7	... <i>The Light Bearer</i>	<b>martinez6@sympatico.ca</b>
1920	Chile *	... Mr Cesar Ortega Ortiz	... Casilla 11 Sucursal Paseo Estacion, Estacion Central, Santiago	... <i>Revista Teosófica Chilena</i>	<b>sociedadteosoficachile2010@gmail.com</b>
1937	Colombia †	... Mrs Nelly Medina de Galvis	... Carr 22, # 45B-38 (Cons. 404), Barrio Palermo, Bogotá	... <i>Selección Teosófica</i>	<b>nmedinaga@yahoo.es</b>
1997	Costa Rica †	... Ms Maria Orlich	... Apartado 8-6710-1000, San José		<b>orlichsm@yahoo.com</b>
2007	Croatia ▲	... Mrs Nada Tepeš	... Krajiška ulica 24, 10000 Zagreb	... <i>Teozofija</i>	<b>z.zemlja@gmail.com</b>
1905	Cuba	... Ms Barbara A. Fariñas Piña	... Apartado de Correos 6365, La Habana 10600		<b>teocuba.sociedad@gmail.com</b>
1987	Dominican Rep. †	... Mrs Magaly Polanco	... Calle Santa Agueda 1652 Les Chalet Col San Juan Puerto Rico Apartado 23 00926		<b>polancomagaly@yahoo.com</b>
1888	England	... Mr Colin Price	... 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA		<b>president@theosoc.org.uk</b>
1907	Finland	... Ms Marja Artamaa	... Teosofinen Seura, Vironkatu 7 C 2, Fin 00170, Helsinki	... <i>Teosofi</i>	<b>teosofinen.seura@netti.fi</b>
1899	France	... Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu	... 4 Square Rapp, 75007 Paris	... <i>Le Lotus Bleu</i>	<b>trankimdiêu@sfr.fr</b>
1902	Germany	... Mrs Manuela Kaulich	... Hauptstr. 39, 93138 Lappersdorf	... <i>Adyar</i>	<b>theosophie-adyar@gmx.de</b>
1928	Greece	... Mr Antonis Papandreou	... 25 Voukourestiou St., 106 71-Athens	... <i>Ilisos</i>	<b>info@theosophicalociety.gr</b>
1907	Hungary †	... Mr Thomas Martinovich	... Hunyadi Janos ut 17. II. 8, H-1011 Budapest	... <i>Teozófia</i>	<b>tshutau7@hu.inter.net</b>
1921	Iceland	... Mr Halldor Haraldsson	... PO Box 1257 Ingólfsstraeti 22, 121 Reykjavik	... <i>Gangleri</i>	<b>iceland.ts@gmail.com</b>
1891	India	... Mr S. Sundaram	... The Theosophical Society, Varanasi 221 010	... <i>The Indian Theosophist</i>	<b>theosophyvns@gmail.com</b>
1912	Indonesia	... Mr Herry Ispoernomo	... Jalan Anggrek Nelimurni A-104, Jakarta 11410, Timur	... <i>Theosofi</i>	<b>theosofi.indonesia@gmail.com</b>

1919	Ireland *	...	Mrs Marie Harkness	...	97 Mountsandel Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, UK BT52 ITA	...	<a href="mailto:marieharkness@yahoo.co.uk">marieharkness@yahoo.co.uk</a>
1954	Israel ▲	...	Mr Abraham Oron	...	PO Box 9114, Ramat-Gan, Israel 5219002	... <i>Or</i>	<a href="mailto:ornet@theosophia.co.il">ornet@theosophia.co.il</a>
1902	Italy	...	Mr Antonio Girardi	...	Viale Quintino Sella, 83/E, 36100 Vicenza	... <i>Rivista Italiana di Teosofia</i>	<a href="http://sti@teosofica.org">sti@teosofica.org</a>
1997	Ivory Coast *	...	Mr Pierre-Magloire Kouahoh	...	Yopougon, 23 Rue Princesse B. P. 3924, Abidjan 23	... <i>Sophia</i>	<a href="mailto:pm_kouahoh@hotmail.com">pm_kouahoh@hotmail.com</a>
1919	Mexico	...	Mrs Lissette Arroyo Jiménez	...	Ignacio Mariscal 126, Col. Tabacalera Mexicana, Mexico, D.F. 06030		<a href="mailto:sede@sociedadteosofica.mx">sede@sociedadteosofica.mx</a> <a href="mailto:info@sociedadteosofica.mx">info@sociedadteosofica.mx</a> <a href="mailto:info@theosofie.nl">info@theosofie.nl</a>
1897	Netherlands, The	...	Ms Els Rijneker	...	Tolsraat 154, 1074 VM Amsterdam	... <i>Theosophia</i>	<a href="mailto:np@theosophy.org.nz">np@theosophy.org.nz</a>
1896	New Zealand	...	Mr John Vorstermans	...	18, Belvedere Street, Epsom, Auckland 1022	... <i>TheoSophia</i>	<a href="mailto:saleh.noshie@bedriftshelse1.no">saleh.noshie@bedriftshelse1.no</a>
1913	Norway *	...	Dr Saleh Noshie	...	N-6873-Marifjora		<a href="mailto:TheosophicalSocietyCF@gmail.com">Theosophical SocietyCF@gmail.com</a>
1935	Orlando ▲	...	Mr Carl Metzger	...	1606 New York Ave. Orlando, Florida, 32803-1838, USA		
1948	Pakistan †	...		...	Jamshed Memorial Hall, M. A. Jinnah Road, opp. Radio Pakistan, Karachi	... <i>The Karachi Theosophist</i>	<a href="mailto:bhagwanbharvani@hotmail.com">bhagwanbharvani@hotmail.com</a>
1924	Peru †	...	Mr Julio Pomar Calderón	...	Av Republica de Portugal 152, Breña, Lima 5	... <i>Búsqueda</i>	<a href="mailto:sede-central@sociedadteosoficaenperu.pe">sede-central@sociedadteosoficaenperu.pe</a>
1933	Philippines, The	...	Mr Rosel Doval-Santos	...	Corner P. Florentino and Iba Streets, Quezon City, Manila	... <i>The Philippine Theosophist</i>	<a href="mailto:philtheos@gmail.com">philtheos@gmail.com</a>
1921	Portugal	...	Mr Carlos Guerra	...	Rua Passos Manoel no. 20 cave 1150 - 260 Lisboa	... <i>Osiris</i>	<a href="mailto:carlos.a.g.guerra@gmail.com">carlos.a.g.guerra@gmail.com</a>
1925	Puerto Rico †	...	Mrs Magaly Polanco	...	Apartado 36-1766 Correo General. San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936-1766.	... <i>Heraldo Teosófico</i>	<a href="mailto:polancomagaly@yahoo.com">polancomagaly@yahoo.com</a>
2012	Qatar ▲	...	Mr Dom Escobido	...	Teyseer security services Doha, Qatar		<a href="mailto:qatarblavatskyldodge@yahoo.com">qatarblavatskyldodge@yahoo.com</a>
2013	Russia †	...	Mr Pavel Malakhov	...	Molodyozhny pr., 10-221, 650070, Kemerovo, Russia		<a href="http://pr@ts-russia.org">pr@ts-russia.org</a>
1910	Scotland *	...	Mr Gary Kidgell	...	28 Great King Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6QH	... <i>Circles</i>	<a href="mailto:garykidgell@hotmail.com">garykidgell@hotmail.com</a>
1992	Slovenia *	...	Mrs Breda Zagar	...	Kunaverjeva 1 SLO-1000 Ljubljana	... <i>Teozofska Misel</i>	<a href="mailto:zagarbreda@gmail.com">zagarbreda@gmail.com</a>
1921	Spain	...	Mrs Angels Torra Buron	...	Av. Vall d'or, 85-87 08197 - Valldoreix (Spain)	... <i>Sophia</i>	<a href="mailto:presidencia@sociedadteosofica.es">presidencia@sociedadteosofica.es</a>
1926	Sri Lanka †	...	Mr M. B. Dassanayake	...	2-C/60, Maththegoda Housing Scheme, Maththegoda	... <i>The Sri Lanka Theosophist</i>	<a href="mailto:mhdassa@gmail.com">mhdassa@gmail.com</a>
1895	Sweden	...	Mr Pertti Spets	...	Henriksdalsringen 23, SE - 131 32 Nacka	... <i>Tidlös Visdom</i>	<a href="mailto:teosofiska.samfundet.adyar@telia.com">teosofiska.samfundet.adyar@telia.com</a>
1910	Switzerland †	...	Mrs Eliane Gaillard	...	17 Chemin de la Côte, CH -1282 Dardagny, Genève	... <i>The Lotus</i>	<a href="mailto:egaillard@bluewin.ch">egaillard@bluewin.ch</a>
1997	Togo *	...	Mr Kouma Dakey	...	S.O., A.R.T.T., BP 76, Adeta		<a href="mailto:org@theosophy.in.ua">org@theosophy.in.ua</a>
2013	Ukraine *	...	Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko	...	Office 3, 7-A Zhylianska St., Kiev 01033	... <i>Svitoch</i>	<a href="mailto:admin@theosophical.org">admin@theosophical.org</a>
1886	USA	...	Mr Tim Boyd	...	PO Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60187-0270	... <i>The Quest</i>	
1925	Uruguay *	...	Mr Ramon Garcia	...	Javier Barrios Amorin 1085, Casilla de Correos 1553, Montevideo		<a href="mailto:st.uruguay@gmail.com">st.uruguay@gmail.com</a>
1922	Wales *	...	Mrs Julie Cunningham	...	Bryn Adda, Brynisiencyn, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey, LL61 6NX UK	...	<a href="mailto:theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk">theosophywales@yahoo.co.uk</a>

*Date refers to the date of formation*

\* *Regional Association*

† *Presidential Agency*

▲ *Lodge attached to Adyar*

The Council of the European Federation of National Societies: *Chairman:* Miss Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, 67 Rue des Pommiers, F-45000 Orleans, France. Email: [trankimdieu@msn.com](mailto:trankimdieu@msn.com)

Inter-American Theosophical Federation: *President:* Ms Ligia B. Montiel L., Calle 38, Av. 12 y 14, casa 1276, sabana sureste, San José, Costa Rica. Email: [info@teosoficainteramericana.org](mailto:info@teosoficainteramericana.org)

Indo-Pacific Theosophical Federation: *President:* Mr John Vorstermans, 60B Riro Street, Point Chevalier, Auckland 1022, New Zealand. Email: [john@theosophy.org.nz](mailto:john@theosophy.org.nz)

Pan-African Theosophical Federation: *Chairman:* Mr Jack Hartmann, 9 Ronean, 38 Princess Avenue, Windsor E 2194, South Africa. Email: [hartmann.jack.c@gmail.com](mailto:hartmann.jack.c@gmail.com)

## SUBSCRIPTIONS: US \$ AND RUPEE RATES

(Effective from 1 September 2013)

COUNTRY	THE THEOSOPHIST				ADYAR NEWSLETTER			
	ANNUAL		5 YEARS		ANNUAL		5 YEARS	
	Surface Mail	Air Mail	Surface Mail	Air Mail	Surface Mail	Air Mail	Surface Mail	Air Mail
India	Rs 100	-	Rs 450	-	Rs 25	-	Rs 100	-
North America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, European Union and other Non-Eastern European countries; the Middle East, and Pacific Islands.	-	\$ 35	-	\$ 170	-	\$ 10	-	\$ 45
All other Asian countries and Africa.	-	\$ 15	-	\$ 70	-	\$ 5	-	\$ 20
Russia, Poland, Eastern Europe, and CIS (former USSR States), Central and South America.	-	\$ 25	-	\$ 115	-	\$ 5	-	\$ 25

*Please send the Subscription to:* THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE, ADYAR, CHENNAI 600 020, INDIA

**Some issues of *The Theosophist* are now available online and can be read and/or downloaded from:**

**<http://www.ts-adyar.org/magazines.html>**

---

Printed and published by Mr S. Harihara Raghavan, Manager, The Vasanta Press,  
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai (Madras) 600 020, India, on behalf of the President, The Theosophical Society.



## **RECENT REPRINTS**

### **A STUDY IN CONSCIOUSNESS – A Contribution to the Science of Psychology**

*Annie Besant*

An instructive book on the unfolding and development of Consciousness intended as an aid to students.

### **THE POWER AND USE OF THOUGHT**

*C. W. Leadbeater*

Valuable guidelines on the correct use and control of the power of thought and emotion, and our responsibility for their effect upon others.

### **GAYATRI – The Daily Religious Practice of the Hindus**

*I. K. Taimni*

A monograph explaining the sacred Gayatri mantra used by Hindus in their daily devotions, to meditate upon the Solar Deity and invoke its Light from within.

## **FORTHCOMING REPRINTS**

### **THE KINGDOM OF THE GODS**

*Geoffrey Hodson*

A fascinating account of evolution as it relates to a kingdom of Nature parallel to humans – the angelic hosts – known in the East as Deva-s or the ‘Shining Ones’, with beautiful colour illustrations and descriptions of the various Deva-s.

### **INVISIBLE HELPERS**

*C. W. Leadbeater*

This book describes in detail instances of help given on the physical plane by beings on other planes, invisible to our physical sight. It is an absorbing record of such instances with detailed information about the astral plane.

---

For catalogue, enquiries and orders, write to:

### **THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE**

Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India

Phones: (+ 91-44) 2491-1338 & 2446-6613

E-mail: [tphindia@gmail.com](mailto:tphindia@gmail.com) & [tphindia@adyarbooks.com](mailto:tphindia@adyarbooks.com)

Buy our books online at [www.adyarbooks.com](http://www.adyarbooks.com)

Receive a quotation/estimate by placing an indent for our books at  
[www.ts-adyar.org/alltitles](http://www.ts-adyar.org/alltitles)