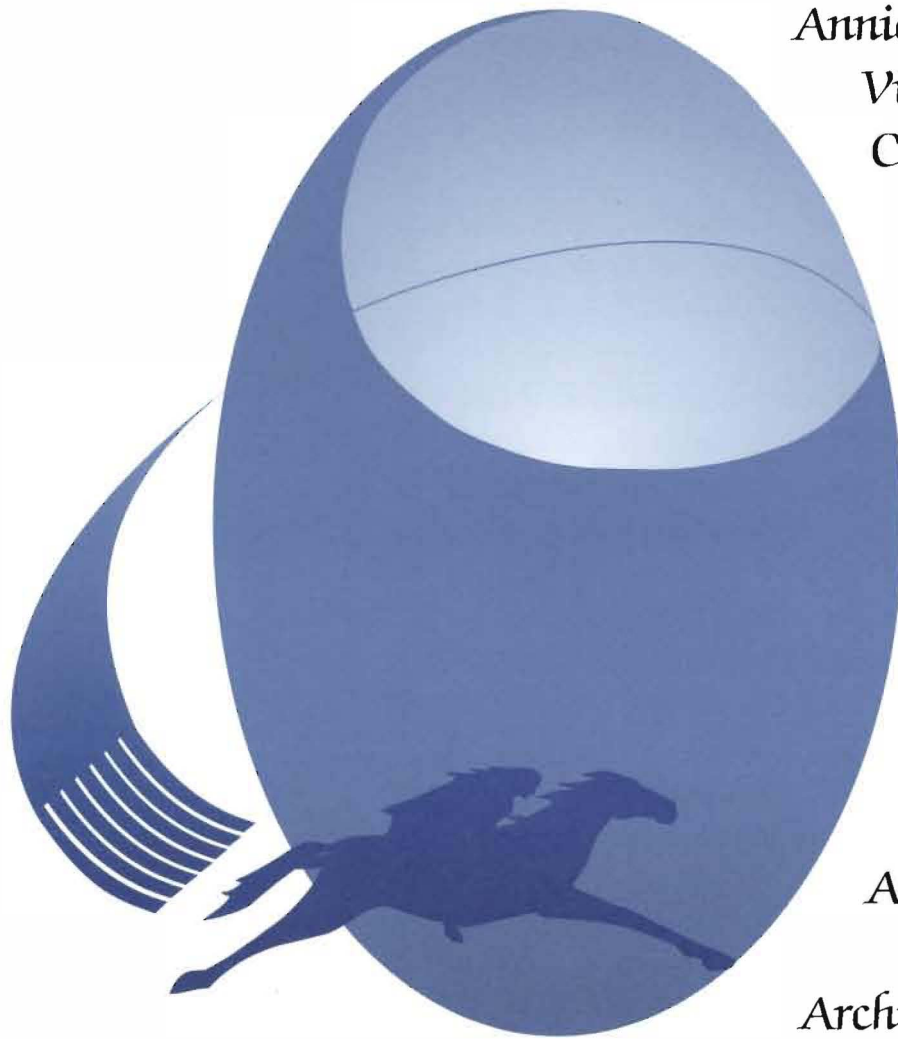


# FOHAT

Volume XI, Number 3

Fall 2007



*Annie Besant's  
Visits to  
Canada*

*Creating an Avatar:  
Krishnamurti  
and the T.S.*

*The Messenger of  
the Last Quarter  
of the Century*

*An Interview  
with  
Archibald Keightley*

*A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition*

*This magazine is an invitation for followers of all traditions to enter into a dialogue whose goal is Truth and whose means is Universal Brotherhood.*

## On Argument

I do not like arguments. They lead into endless labyrinths and convince no one. For conviction must come from the inner consciousness absorbing a truth.

If you overcome an adversary in argument you do not convince him of any fact — save that you are better posted on your side of the subject than he is on his side; and leave him with no intention of adopting your theories, but of studying to strengthen his own that he may the better combat yours.

It is better to ask permission to state your case clearly, producing your evidence, then leave your case to mature deliberation in the mind of your adversary.

If you have a truth, and the soil in which you desire to plant your seed is ready, he will receive it. If not, it is quite useless to argue the matter, thus setting up vibrations of antagonistic force harmful both to yourself and others.

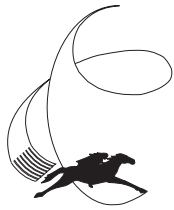
You may say that Plato point by point combated all opposition to the theory of the Immortality of the Soul. True; yet, in all the centuries subsequent, how many have believed in the soul's immortality because of the victory of logic, compared to those in whose consciousness awoke a conviction from the gentle teachings of Buddha and of Jesus?

Controversy belongs chiefly to the intellectual plane, and is seldom waged for the pure spiritual uplifting of humanity.

When we have come into a higher conception of brotherly love there will be no argument; for if a brother cannot perceive a truth when its evidence is stated, then he is not ready.

*Seeds are never beaten into the unbroken ground, but sown in the tilled soil.*

- William Q. Judge  
*Echoes of the Orient III, p.246*



# FOHAT

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### To be featured in coming issues:

#### Doing Battle with the Lower Self;

A LOOK AT POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS MADE ON  
BEHALF OF THE EARLY THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

## *Fohat* and the Movement

A friend of the magazine recently asked *Fohat* to reflect on its confrontational approach to the various Societies in the Movement. Similar requests have been made in the past, and for many reasons, perhaps now is a good time to stop and address some of these questions. To understand how *Fohat* has arrived at where it is today, it would be instructive to go back to the beginning.

*Fohat* is a publication of Edmonton Theosophical Society (hereafter ETS). At one time the members of ETS belonged to TS in Canada, which was affiliated with Adyar TS. In the 1980s, ETS started a republishing program in order to make available old theosophical material, especially that material pertaining to W.Q. Judge, that was slowly turning to dust in archives around the world. Much of this material was shared with libraries and researchers around the world with the remainders being sold off to private collectors. When ETS began this project, it also invited interference from Adyar with various officials coming to visit us with the purpose of trying to dissuade us from our task. Eventually Adyar, at an annual meeting, after having collected proxies from theosophical groups around the world, quietly excommunicated TS in Canada from the Society and by default their problem child, ETS. Some of the Sections whose proxies were used to remove TS in Canada from the Society later contacted ETS to find out what happened and were quite surprised to learn that it was on the strength of their proxies that Canada was removed. They made it clear that had they known, they would never have allowed that to happen.

Shortly after this, members from several TS in Canada groups contacted ETS looking for some of our members to run for the board of TS in Canada and eventually assume editorship of *The Canadian Theosophist*. After a nasty election in which none of our members were elected, the Rosicrucian-Bailey cabal that had gained control threw the members of ETS out of TS in Canada. To add insult to injury the group had to endure juvenile psychic attacks through all of this that, despite their failure to destroy ETS, nevertheless separated the group from some of its most loved members. Out of this, *Fohat* was born. The governing bodies of the various theosophical groups could turn their backs on ETS, but that was not going to stop ETS from taking the Blavatsky-Judge school of theosophy to the various members of these groups who were open and willing to listen.

It is common knowledge, that a reliable way to defeat an enemy is to divide it against itself and then move in

and conquer. The reality is that The Theosophical Society has been divided and conquered. This should not be a surprising statement to anyone who has taken a moment to reflect on the Movement's history. It should also be understood that the enemy of theosophy would infiltrate its agents into the various splinters of the Society, and these agents would actively work their ways into positions of power. One thing most theosophists have never understood is just how dangerous a healthy and active Theosophical Society is to those looking for power over the minds of others. Small little seemingly insignificant ETS has been taught this because of how much attention has been paid to it.

Information is power. When dividing an enemy, lies and subterfuge are used. Afterwards, in order to rule your enemy these lies and subterfuges must be hidden away from the ruled. The various theosophical societies of today have their various secrets that they guard jealously. Over the years ETS has learned to tread lightly concerning certain subjects when interacting with the governing bodies of the various theosophical societies. There are certain topics that are not brought up in the polite conversation of a particular group. It is here that any organization that follows the dictates of the motto, "There is no religion higher than truth", comes into trouble. Theosophical ruling bodies have no business getting in the way of legitimate researchers looking into the history of the society. On principle, as per the motto, they have nothing to hide; and yet they do hide and limit what gets out of their archives, and the various organizations do it for various reasons.

Theosophy's enemies work in terms of far off ends. They work slowly with an eye for as much as one hundred years down the road. One aspect of what they have been working at is conditioning the public to not question authority. The authorities are the experts, they know better, and they do not need to explain themselves. This is seen within the various theosophical societies as well. There is an ongoing silent theft where the rights of the citizen are stolen by government bodies and turned into powers. For example, you lose the right to look after the health of your own bodies, government authorities are given increasing powers to inoculate you with vaccines, decide on the types of treatments that you can have for certain illnesses, and even decide how much knowledge you can have about the very foods that you put into your bodies. These types of powers are being exercised over every aspect of a citizen's life from health, to education, to privacy and security, and on

and on. Questioning authority and making waves is not practiced by a civilized and polite society.

*Fohat* understands that leaders who hide information and reject questioning by their membership have also rejected the motto, "There is no religion higher than truth." They have rejected the sovereignty of the individual to decide for themselves, to make their own mistakes. Carlos Cardoso Aveline's article in this issue, "The Making of an Avatar", expresses forcefully the subtle and not so subtle ways in which theosophical leaders can take power onto themselves. He demonstrates with examples from the Mahatmas, how directing someone to do something that they do not understand and agree with is an attack on the sovereignty of the individual and antithetical to the spirit of theosophy.

This attack on sovereignty is present in the history of the Movement. You cannot have a "nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity" until you can guarantee the sovereignty of the individual. The Theosophical Society was set up to protect the sovereignty of the individual and survived as long as HPB was alive, and then in the American Section until the death of Judge. It is crucial for the survival of the Movement that this be understood. Currently, there is a move afoot to undermine the reputation of Judge. When this is done, libelers can turn to Blavatsky and question her judgement. Blavatsky, right up to her death exhorted theosophists and members of the ES to stand behind Judge. Remember, if there is damning evidence out there concerning the post Blavatsky-Judge leadership, the enemies of theosophy are no doubt in possession of that evidence. If the names of Blavatsky and Judge can be tightly tied to these leaders and if these leaders are proved to be morally wanting, then this will reflect on Judge and then on Blavatsky. It is prudent for theosophists then to get as much of this type of evidence out into the open so that it can be dealt with. History is constantly being re-written and it is usually the first accusations that end up sticking.

Before ETS and others began an effort to reclaim Judge's good name, there was an understanding among the few historians who actually cared that Judge had fallen prey to mediumship after HPB died. Although this is nowhere reflected in his writings which before and after HPB remained consistent on this subject; in certain "so-called" diaries, and private letters there seemed to be clear proof, in the doubting minds of some, that Judge had indeed looked to mediums after Blavatsky died in order to find his way. The one name that comes up in this regard is Katherine Tingley. If Katherine Tingley can be shown to be Judge's medium guide, thereby demonstrating that Blavatsky was wrong about Judge, then

what else was HPB wrong about? Perhaps Besant was not "all intellect" and possessed some spiritual gifts that manifested only, after HPB died, under the careful tutelage of her "Master", Chakravarti. Maybe Besant took the Movement in the right direction having members swear their unquestioning loyalty to the Masters, and through them their spokesman, the Pope at Adyar. Is this Theosophy or Romanism? Theosophists are being taught to think like Roman Catholics. If this is true, and it certainly appears to be, then who is in control of the Movement? What about the doctrines put forward by HPB, Judge, and the Mahatmas — are they false? In the end was HPB simply a disguised Satanist, a Russian spy?

Theosophical literature and associations can be destroyed. Witness what happened in Nazi Germany where the Theosophical Society was disbanded and theosophical books burned. What cannot be destroyed is spiritual progress. What kind of progress is made through the intellectual understanding of theosophical literature? If it is not put into practice then no progress is made. *Fohat* is sympathetic to the difficulties of bringing new members into a Movement at war with itself. How do you explain to new members that an organization that espouses universal brotherhood is so fractured? Perhaps you can remind new members that they are entering onto the path of the Spiritual Warrior. They will be given access to knowledge and the only way to understand this knowledge is to put it into practice in the communities in which they live. They must learn compassion for humanity. They will be challenged and attacked for the efforts they make in proportion to truth of those efforts. If they are not willing to practice what they learn and fight for what they think is right then perhaps they should seek some other organization in which to fulfill themselves.

The goodwill that is built up between individual members of different societies interacting with one another must also be put to the test. If it is meaningful, it will survive the difficult questions that are being asked by this magazine and those like it. If it is not it will shatter easily under the stresses being generated. In the end this magazine hopes that nobody will begrudge it its right to question the authority of the theosophical leadership and attempt to engage that leadership in dialogue. It has done its best to keep alive information that makes it more difficult to destroy Judge. It continues to uncover and bring to light more facts concerning the history of the Movement. By protecting Judge, this protects Blavatsky. It does what no other magazines do — it questions authority and fights for this right among all theosophists whether they are ready for that responsibility or not. To do any less would be to seal the fate of the Movement and resign it to death.

# Annie Besant in Toronto

Ted G. Davy

Annie Besant (1847-1933) made three visits to Toronto, the first and last being separated by thirty-three years. The primary purpose of each visit was to give public lectures. Internationally renowned, she was recognized as one of the leading orators in the English speaking world. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> her audiences were often reckoned in thousands; and she enjoyed international celebrity status for most of her long life. After she joined the Theosophical Society in 1889, Branches clamoured for her to visit them. Toronto was no exception.

## 1. 1893

In the first two years following its founding in 1891, the Toronto Theosophical Society enrolled several socialist members who were attracted by Mrs Besant's dual interest in Socialism and Theosophy.<sup>1</sup> It was probably at the urging of these individuals especially that efforts were made to bring her to Toronto to lecture. The first opportunity arose at the end of 1892 when in early December she began a two-month tour under the auspices of the American Section TS. Toronto TS President Albert E.S. Smythe (1861-1947) wrote to the Section headquarters asking that Toronto be included in her itinerary. The General Secretary of that body, William Q. Judge (1851-1896), replied to this request by regretting that "... all the points which it is possible for her to visit have already been arranged for."<sup>2</sup>

Undeterred, a few months later, learning that Mrs Besant would be back in America in September to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, the Toronto TS asked that she might be able to visit their city either before or after that event.<sup>3</sup> To this end Smythe again wrote to Mr Judge who on July 24 promised to forward his request to her. As before, he held out no hope she would be able to respond favourably, inasmuch as she was scheduled to go to India immediately after the Theosophical Congress at the Parliament. One week later Judge had to reply

discouragingly to yet another Smythe plea. Finally, however, on August 21 he was able to write on a much more positive note:

Mrs Besant has written to me that she considers the idea of going to your place to lecture as proposed by you, favorably. . .

As you know, she has no means of sustaining her work but by her own efforts as none of us get any salary. And just at this time the frightful stringency in finance prevents me from assuming risks I would otherwise take and as I did on the last trip she made here.

The branch or individuals would have to find money for the hall and advertizing and she would make an equitable division of any proceeds.

Theosophical participation at the Congress was not confined to American Theosophists only. From India came Professor Gyendra Nath Chakravarti (1861-1936), a Brahmin who also represented the Indian Theosophical Society; another Theosophist, the Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) Hevavitarana Dharmapala (1864-1933), went as the spokesperson for Southern Buddhism; and from England came several TS members including Mrs Besant.

In spite of Mr Judge being at a low ebb physically during these months, the Congress was a significant success for the Theosophical Society whose delegates delivered no fewer than 28 papers. With her four talks and dynamic platform presence Mrs Besant was certainly a noticeable figure at the Parliament.

Following the Congress, accompanied by Prof. Chakravarti, Mrs Besant first took the train from Chicago to Toledo, Ohio, where, on September 19, she spoke twice and took part in the opening ceremonies of the Toledo TS' new quarters.<sup>4</sup> On a tight schedule, they left immediately for Toronto, where

<sup>1</sup> See "Early Canadian Theosophists and Social Reform", *Fohat* I: 4 (Winter 1997), 81. One of the early Toronto members may have met her when working in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> William Q. Judge, Letter to Albert E.S. Smythe, Dec 2, 1892. This and other letters from Judge to Smythe are in the Archives, Theosophical Society (Pasadena). Unfortunately, as far as is known, Smythe's letters at this time are no longer extant, and their contents are assumed from Judge's replies to him.

<sup>3</sup> The World Parliament of Religions took place September 11-26, 1893. The Theosophical Congress, which was part of the program, was scheduled on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> *The Path* 8: 8 (Nov 1893), 261.

they were met next day at the railway station by Smythe and Sam Beckett (1850-1928).<sup>5</sup> It was her first visit to Canada and she arrived without her luggage which still had not turned up from Chicago.<sup>6</sup>

Superlatives were not spared in the newspaper advertisements for Annie Besant's Toronto talks. In one she was described as "The Most Eloquent Woman Living." In another, "England's great Socialist." Chakravarti was not mentioned in the ads: until his arrival in the city the local members were unaware he would be accompanying her! The Toronto TS was not identified as sponsor in the advertisements of the talks; and the only mention of the Society *per se* in the press reports was in *The Globe*. There, it was merely stated that Smythe, the President of the Toronto branch, had introduced the speaker. Following a lengthy verbatim report of the second lecture, the obviously well informed unnamed reporter added notes of an interview he had with Smythe, in this way giving the Society more favourable publicity.

The daily papers were generous in reporting the talks, and today it is interesting to read the impression she made on the local press:

Mrs. Besant is a tall, pleasant looking woman with a face not handsome when judged by beauty standards, yet beautiful, expressive of the noble soul which she possesses. She has an easy, natural manner when speaking and possesses a voice remarkable for its clearness and pleasant as charming music.<sup>7</sup>

In personal appearance she is a little above medium height and her countenance in part expresses the power of mind behind.<sup>8</sup>

She impresses one as a woman whose prepossession is the result of difficulties brought under subjection after long struggling.<sup>9</sup>

Chakravarti's appearance was not described by the reporters. However, the audience might have seen

. . . a light complexioned, rather fat-faced, sleepy Brahmin . . . with a small, drooping, pointed black

mustache, a 'black observing eye,' a shiny black turban and a flat white necktie. . .<sup>10</sup>

Annie Besant gave two public lectures to large and enthusiastic audiences, the subjects on consecutive evenings being "Dangers Threatening Society" and "What Theosophy Is."<sup>11</sup> Her oratorical powers were demonstrated on the first evening. Smythe chaired the meeting and reported:

Mr. Chakravarti was asked to say a few words the first night and he spoke for three-quarters of an hour. The audience was tired but Mrs. Besant took hold of them with her splendid eloquence and stirred them to the depths . . . [T]he Shaftesbury Hall . . . was filled on the second night when Mrs. Besant spoke alone.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, her triumph was marred before she left the city the following day:

The impression on the public was very fine, but many adherents among those who attended the meetings but who had not joined the Society met their first initiation when at a reception to which they had been invited to meet Mrs. Besant, she refused to shake hands with any who were not members. The Society felt the effect of this and many left who declared that the profession of Brotherhood was inconsistent.<sup>13</sup>

Although it was published in her lifetime, as far as is known Mrs Besant never repudiated this story of her standoffishness. When Smythe reiterated this incident several years later he remarked that the visit ". . . had one excellent effect, however, it cured us of idolatry."<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, her presence in the city generated a good deal of publicity, thanks to her talks being written up in the press. Surprisingly, however, the public interest, while welcomed by the Toronto TS, resulted in few new memberships.

\* \* \*

In passing, it is interesting to note that at the time of their Toronto visit Annie Besant and Gyendranath Chakravarti, who had met for the first time only a few

<sup>5</sup> CT 7: 7 (Sep 1926), 146.

<sup>6</sup> "Mrs. Besant's Lecture" Report in *The Globe* (Toronto), Sep 21, 1893.

<sup>7</sup> *The Toronto World*, Sep 21, 1893.

<sup>8</sup> *The Toronto Mail*, Sep 21, 1893.

<sup>9</sup> *The Globe* (Toronto) Sep 21, 1893.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Nethercot, *The First Five Lives of Annie Besant*, 390.

<sup>11</sup> *The Toronto Mail*, Sep 21, 22, 1893.

<sup>12</sup> A.E.S.S[mythe], "Out of the Past" *Toronto Theosophical News* I: 2 (Aug 1925), 5. See also Smythe, CT 25: 4 (June, 1944), 122.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> "A Belated Exposure" *The Canadian Theosophist* 19: 1 (Mar 1938), 5-6.

weeks earlier in England, were at the beginning of a disciple-guru relationship that lasted eleven years. At the time and later some Theosophists thought she was completely under his spell, and indeed he had the reputation of being a “skilful hypnotist.”<sup>15</sup> Their association significantly affected early Theosophical history.

## 2. 1897

Mrs Besant’s next visit to Toronto was in 1897. In the interim the Theosophical movement had been transformed. Two years earlier the Theosophical Society headquartered in Adyar had suffered its first major split, for which state of affairs she herself was mostly responsible. Her dispute with the head of the American Section, William Q. Judge<sup>16</sup> had led to the formation in 1895 of a new organization called the Theosophical Society in America, under Judge’s leadership. His untimely death in 1896 resulted in Ernest T. Hargrove (1870?-1939) being elected President of this organization, although the *de facto* leader was Katherine Tingley (1847-1929).

In Toronto the outcome of the controversy had been the splitting of the local Society, a minority of members holding on to its original Adyar charter with Alexander Horwood (1856-1927) as President; and the majority establishing a new Lodge named the Beaver TS, which was loyal to the TS in America.<sup>17</sup> The two members most responsible for the 1893 visit were now in the Beaver branch, of which Sam Beckett and Albert E.S. Smythe were President and Secretary respectively. On the whole, the two groups were fairly friendly to each other, with only occasional minor disputes to disturb the peace. Unfortunately, the rivalry was more pronounced in the months before Mrs Besant’s second visit than at any time before or after.

Personalities aside, the local rivalry in Toronto was largely due to competition for public attention. It was stepped up in mid-March, 1897 when the Countess Constance Wachtmeister (d. 1910) came to Toronto as part of a lecture tour under the auspices of the original American Section of the TS. The European Countess had been a friend of the late Madame H. P. Blavatsky, and was well known in the Theosophical

Society, including in America where she had lectured extensively. Only two weeks later the city received another prominent Theosophical visitor in the person of the aforementioned Katherine Tingley. She was accompanied by several members who had accompanied her on a round-the-world “Crusade”.

A short item on the entertainment page of *Saturday Night* magazine announced Mrs Besant’s arrival on Saturday August 21 and the titles of her lectures the following week. It reads like a publicity handout, and may well have been paid for. On this occasion she was accompanied by the Countess Wachtmeister who was thus on her second visit to Toronto within a few months. The item announced: “While here Mrs. Besant and the Countess will receive any persons interested in the teachings of Theosophy.”<sup>18</sup>

Annie Besant was not the only celebrity in Toronto that week — indeed she was one of many. Her visit coincided with the meetings in Toronto of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held in association with the University of Toronto. The timing may well have been deliberate and due to the fact that as early as 1895 Smythe had begun floating the idea of holding a Theosophical Congress in Toronto simultaneously with the British Association’s meetings.<sup>19</sup> Science today is far more specialized than it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so it would be hard to compare this gathering with modern scientific conventions, but for its time it was a huge convention, which attracted the contemporary leading authorities of every scientific discipline. Many well known scientific personalities were present, including Lord Kelvin (formerly Sir William Thompson) who was cited several times in H.P. Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*. Ironically, Smythe himself was not present, having gone to Ireland soon after the Tingley visit.

Annie Besant’s series of Theosophical lectures at the Auditorium began on Sunday evening, August 22, with a well attended introductory meeting. *The Toronto World* reported:

Mrs. Besant appeared in a loose-fitting gown of pure white, and spoke eloquently for nearly an hour about reincarnation, evolution, karma, brotherhood and kindred topics.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Arthur Nethercot, *op. cit.* 391.

<sup>16</sup> This major event in Theosophical History is the subject of an exhaustive study by Ernest E. Pelletier, *The Judge Case: A Conspiracy Which Ruined the Theosophical CAUSE*.

<sup>17</sup> This upheaval will be described in more detail in my yet to be published article “Theosophy in Toronto 1891-1921”.

<sup>18</sup> “The Stage and Platform” *Saturday Night* [Toronto] 10:40 (Aug 21, 1897), p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> See *The Lamp* II: 56, 72 and 152. Also “Theosophy in Toronto 1891-1921”.

<sup>20</sup> *The Toronto World* “Mrs. Annie Besant Lectures to Fifteen Hundred People at the Auditorium – The Study of Theosophy.” Monday Aug 23, 1897.



The following evening the topic “Reincarnation or the Evolution of the Soul” was even more popular. According to *The Daily Mail and Empire* the lecture drew a “full house” at the Auditorium.<sup>21</sup> However, instead of a write-up of the talk, ninety per cent of the space was given over to a report of an interview with the lecturer. Finally on Wednesday Mrs Besant’s title, likely deliberately chosen for the occasion, was “Theosophy and Recent Science,” which received scant attention in the press. In addition to her public lectures, she also participated in a members-only meeting of the Toronto branch.

Proof of Annie Besant’s ability to attract crowds was that the competition of the scientists in Toronto that week made hardly a dent in the success of her visit. The only noticeable difference was that newspaper coverage of her talks, while generous, was not on the same scale compared to the 1893 visit. Clearly, the scientific papers and their presenters were editors’ top priority that week. Day after day, several pages were filled with reports of the science convention, leaving less room for reports of other local news including the Theosophical talks.

In passing it may be noted that yet another Theosophical personality was visiting Toronto that same week, and it was one of Mrs Besant’s former colleagues in London. This was James Morgan Pryse, a brilliant scholar and writer, one of the many supporters of William Q. Judge who continued their affiliation with The Theosophical Society in America, with loyalty to Mrs Tingley. He had been invited to Toronto by the Beaver branch, and “lectured to full houses at the Forum Hall on the 22d and 23d.”<sup>22</sup> One of his talks covered his personal experiences travelling in Mexico, Central and South America studying native mythology. As interesting as this and his other lecture, “Theosophy and Christianity” might have been, it is hardly to be expected his lectures would have drawn many if any away from Mrs Besant’s talks. His presence in the city drew even less media coverage than hers, so he cannot in any way be considered to have been serious competition to her.

As in 1893, however, although Mrs Besant attracted large audiences in Toronto, in 1897 the number inspired by her to study Theosophy was not large. Indeed, in the years immediately following, measured by popularity, Theosophy in Toronto was in a state of decline.

In 1906, Canadian members were expecting another visit from Mrs Besant the following year, hoping she would be present at the inauguration of a new Canadian Section of the TS, if a sufficient number of branches could be formed in time.<sup>23</sup> In the event, the visit did not take place. Annie Besant was elected President of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) in June 1907 and because of time limitations, curtailed her previously planned 1907 tour of the American Section.

Had her itinerary that year included Toronto she would have noticed more changes in local Theosophical affairs, especially that since 1903 the Beaver members were once again enrolled in the Toronto TS. However, they were without their former leader Albert E.S. Smythe who at this time was still being refused readmission into the Adyar Society. He and a few others were bolstering the local branch of The Theosophical Society in America, which had separated from Mrs Tingley’s Universal Brotherhood in 1898.

### 3. 1926

After 1897 nearly thirty years went by before Annie Besant again set foot in Toronto. In 1926, now in her 80<sup>th</sup> year, she had been President of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) continuously since 1907. She also headed the E.S., and led or strongly supported other organizations connected with her various interests. At the same time she was still heavily involved in Indian politics.

The situation of the Theosophical movement in general had changed considerably since 1897. Mrs Tingley’s Universal Brotherhood was still active; the United Lodge of Theosophists had come into being in 1909 and by now was widely represented internationally; and here and there were a few independent Theosophical Societies, usually with small memberships. Most of these organizations wore the Blavatsky-Judge label, whereas the Adyar Society had drifted away from Blavatskian Theosophy. Most of its leaders were also active in other organizations such as the Order of the Star in the East which was preparing for the coming of the World Teacher (Krishnamurti) and the Liberal Catholic Church.

The Theosophical situation in Toronto was also much altered. The Toronto Theosophical Society was

<sup>21</sup> *The Daily Mail and Empire* (Toronto) Tuesday Aug 24, 1897.

<sup>22</sup> “Mirror of the Movement” *Theosophy* XII: 7 (Oct 1897), 382.

<sup>23</sup> N.W.J. Haydon, “Theosophy in Canada” *The Vahan* (London) 15: 7 (Feb 1, 1906), 1. Haydon wrote a similar letter to the editor of *The Occult Review*, (June 1906), 330. Canada actually remained part of the American Section until 1919 when the TS in Canada was finally chartered. See “The Birth of the TS in Canada” *CT* 75:5 (Nov-Dec 1994), 97-104.

now one of the largest TS Lodges on the American continent thanks in no small part to Smythe who had been readmitted and was again its President. The big difference was that under the umbrella of the international Society the Canadian branches and individual members no longer came under the jurisdiction of the American Section. In 1919 the Toronto TS had been one of the Canadian branches that had applied for a separate national charter authorizing the formation of the autonomous Theosophical Society in Canada.<sup>24</sup> Smythe was the elected General Secretary of the young Canadian Section and he also edited its magazine, *The Canadian Theosophist*.

Almost from the beginning, the elected General Executive of the TS in Canada were critical of the leadership in Adyar, and their dissatisfaction was given unrestrained expression in the Section's magazine. In 1923-24 a few branches loyal to Mrs Besant, annoyed with how she and others were portrayed in it, split away to form a separate Canadian Federation which reported directly to Adyar. The President herself had permitted this unfortunate fractionalization of Theosophical work in Canada, a situation she had carefully avoided in other countries. However, the majority of Canadian branches, including the Toronto TS and a smaller group in Toronto known as the West End Lodge, had remained in the Canadian Section and strongly supported the magazine and its Editor. It should be pointed out that *The Canadian Theosophist* was not hostile to Mrs Besant *personally*, but within the Society as a whole it continued to be the sternest critic of her policies.

1926 had been a busy year for Annie Besant, starting with a continuation of her intensive political work in India. In May she sailed for England where she attended Theosophical conventions and also engaged in her usual public lectures at the Queen's Hall in London. In July she travelled to Ommen in Holland to join Krishnamurti for the Star Camp. Then it was back to England for more lectures and other activities. Finally, in mid-August she sailed to New York in company with her now famous ward and began the American tour which included a stopover in Toronto. It was a schedule that few people of her age would want to attempt, but if she was tired, she did not show it. It is a credit to her stamina that at her first lecture in Toronto according to one paper she "... addressed the audience in a strong and vigorous voice."

On her arrival in America Smythe, the Canadian General Secretary, and writing in his dual capacity as President of the Toronto Theosophical Society, sent her a letter reminding her of the 1893 visit. He went on:

"... if we differ from you in some matters we trust you will accept our welcome to Toronto on the broader basis of the primary object of the Theosophical Society."<sup>25</sup>

In his letter Smythe requested that she would attend a joint meeting of the Lodges on the evening between her professional engagements on November 2. She did not receive Smythe's letter until a month later when she was in San Francisco but her reply was positive. She not only agreed to meet with the local TS members but also offered to have a separate meeting with those, i.e., the Canadian General Executive, who disagreed with her policies.<sup>26</sup>

Near the end of her continental tour and accompanied by some well known names in the American Section, Mrs Besant arrived in Toronto on the morning of Sunday, October 31, 1926. She was met off the train by Albert and Janie Smythe and several prominent local members. Typically, she set about attending various functions of organizations that were nominally separate from the TS, but closely identified with it, such as the Liberal Catholic Church.<sup>27</sup>

Her fellow travellers included Marie Poutz, Max Wardall (d. 1934) and A.P. Warrington (1866-1939), all three prominent names in the American Section TS. Just what function they served that could not be provided by the Canadian members is a matter of speculation, but it may be noted that Mr Warrington was the head of the Esoteric Section in North America and perhaps came in that capacity. That their presence hardly impressed the Toronto Theosophists may be gathered from the view expressed by one of them at the time:

With all due respect to the remaining members of her party, it was felt that the President was not surrounded with people of her own calibre and that a great many reflected her well-earned glory.<sup>28</sup>

Annie Besant's two Toronto lectures on November 1 and 3 were arranged by the Pond Lecture Bureau.<sup>29</sup> In all, she had contracted to give 30 talks on her American tour, paying her, according to one scholar,

<sup>24</sup> See "Birth of the TS in Canada." *CT* 75: 5 (Nov-Dec 1994), 97 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Albert E.S. Smythe, "Mrs. Besant in America" *CT* 7: 7 (Sep 1926), 146.

<sup>26</sup> "Mrs. Besant's Visit" *CT* 7: 8 (Oct 1926), 169.

<sup>27</sup> [Smythe], "Mrs. Besant in Toronto" *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 182.

<sup>28</sup> "Mr. Kartar Singh's Impressions" *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 188.

<sup>29</sup> [Smythe], "Mrs. Besant in Toronto" *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 182.

\$1,000 per lecture.<sup>30</sup> She was, after all, a professional speaker, and earned her living in this field.<sup>31</sup> From her point of view, having an agency external to the TS gave her freedom to talk on non-Theosophical subjects in which she was interested, especially Indian politics. Also, professional management meant a smooth running program wherever she spoke. On this occasion, however, she was ill-served. The lectures were given in Massey Hall, Toronto's fine concert hall which sat 3,800, but each talk filled only about ten per cent of its capacity.

The same prominent Toronto member who had criticized her entourage left no doubt as to his opinion of Mrs Besant's agents:

Mrs. Besant's Toronto visit as far as the public was concerned was an entire failure. Toronto members expected that her visit would give a renewed impetus to Theosophy which expectation unfortunately did not materialize. They feel that enough publicity was not given to her lectures by those who were in charge of the arrangements and they feel that they could have made this visit a great success had they had the liberty to choose lecture subjects suitable for local conditions, and had they been in charge of the entire arrangements.<sup>32</sup>

This was undoubtedly true. On the other hand, the members of the Toronto TS were highly principled and would not have relished the task of helping to "sell" Theosophy for a fee, so the arrangement whereby the business details of her visit was out of their hands was probably not unwelcome to most.

Originally the title of the first talk was that which she had given numerous times before entering Canada, "The Coming of the World Teacher," but in the event this was replaced with "Theosophy and Life's Riddles." Even so, the former subject was given due attention when for example she spoke of

. . . a return of the Messiah to earth in spirit through the body of the young Hindu [Krishnamurti] of whom she was guardian.<sup>33</sup>

The other talk was "India, Past and Present: Has She a Future?" This one was extraordinarily badly timed because that very same evening the Speaker of the

Parliament of India was talking on a similar subject in a free lecture at the University of Toronto.

Newspaper coverage of Annie Besant's stopover in Toronto on her 1926 North American tour was disappointing, although Smythe felt it had been treated "with some consideration."<sup>34</sup> Except for a brief advance notice probably written by her Agent, *The Globe* all but ignored Annie Besant's presence in the city. A report on the first talk was contained in three short paragraphs near the last page; and the second talk went unnoticed. She fared better in the *Toronto Daily Star*, in which appeared a favourable writeup of the evening she spent with the members. However, this was almost certainly written by insider Albert Smythe himself, who at the time was contributing editorials and other pieces to the *Star*.

If the public lectures failed to help the Theosophical cause in Toronto, the meeting for members on Tuesday November 2 was a huge success. Nearly 300 were in attendance at the Toronto TS Theosophy Hall to hear her talk on a variety of issues of interest to them. She reminisced on her association with H.P. Blavatsky, and spoke of *The Secret Doctrine* as a "most wonderful book." Nor did she shy away from current controversial topics such as the World Religion. Indeed, she said she welcomed differences of opinion.<sup>35</sup> In general, she stayed away from issues that would not have gone over well with the local members. Smythe made a point of saying that "She made no attempt at propaganda for any of the causes with which her name has been associated, and recognized the correctness of the attitude of the [Canadian] National Society regarding these."<sup>36</sup>

From the perspective of Canadian Theosophical history, however, more important than the public and members' meetings was her private meeting with the Toronto members of the General Executive of The Theosophical Society in Canada, held in her suite at the King Edward Hotel. It was a significant occasion during which she dealt frankly with issues that had upset the Canadians in the 1920s. These included the property rights of Sections and Lodges, and the current attempt by Adyar to promote the so-called

. . . continued on page 70

<sup>30</sup> Nethercot, *op. cit.*, 383. Needless to say, this was very substantial remuneration in 1926.

<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note the price of admission to Mrs Besant's lectures. In 1893 it was 50¢ and 25¢; in 1897 60¢ and 25¢; in 1926 the tickets ranged from \$2 down to 50¢.

<sup>32</sup> Kartar Singh, "Mr Kartar Singh's Impressions" *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 188.

<sup>33</sup> "Expresses Views on Many Subjects: Dr. Annie Besant Claims Europe Needs Divine Intervention." *The Globe* (Toronto) Nov 2, 1926.

<sup>34</sup> [Smythe] "Mrs. Besant in Toronto" *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 182.

<sup>35</sup> There is a verbatim report of her talk to members in *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 185-187. The talk is also referred to in Smythe's article "Mrs. A. Besant at 80" *Toronto Daily Star* Nov 3, 1926, *rept* in *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 184-85.

<sup>36</sup> *CT* 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 194.

# H.P.B.'s Alter Ego in Europe: Dr. Archibald Keightley

Ernest Pelletier

Archibald Keightley is a familiar name to students of theosophy mostly because of his dedication to H.P. Blavatsky — especially at the time she was writing *The Secret Doctrine*.

The following article by a *New York Times* reporter is an interview with Keightley after his arrival in New York City to attend the Third Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, American Section held in Chicago on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 1889. The actual date of his arrival is not known but he delivered a talk at the Aryan T.S. on Tuesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup>. From there he and W.Q. Judge travelled together to Cincinnati where a special meeting of the Society was held on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Archibald Keightley first met Judge at A.P. Sinnett's house in 1884 when Judge was on his way to meet H.P. Blavatsky in Paris before continuing his journey to India. Keightley met Blavatsky for the first time shortly after (*Theosophical Quarterly* 28:289). While in Paris Blavatsky wanted Judge to stay to help her with the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*. Is it only by chance that A. Keightley later became her principal assistant with the *S.D.*? There are hints that since the Masters had other plans for Judge, in America, they also had plans for Keightley to serve as Judge's replacement to help Blavatsky. Bertram Keightley later acknowledged in his *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky* that during this time much of his focus was also as "sub-editor of *Lucifer*" while "Arch's centred upon the *S.D.*" (pp.12,17).

In A. Keightley's January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1895 pamphlet, written in defense of Judge, he states:

H.P.B. ∴ made a very close tie between W.Q. Judge and myself over nine years ago. She also wrote: "Regard Bro. . . . and William Q. Judge as my two *alter Egos*. — H.P.B." (p.2)

Blavatsky's special occult relationship with A.K. is naively misunderstood by Bertram Keightley. In his book Bertram also writes:

Our after-dinner gathering . . . I recall those evenings as most delightful and instructive. But often they were painful. For H.P.B. "trained" those she took an interest in rather drastically. She pos-

essed an absolutely uncanny insight — clear and unerring — into the foibles, weaknesses, defects and faults of those about her. She watched her opportunity to drag such out into the light. . . . This she insistently did — with me at least — at any or every moment of the day: but rather especially at those evening gatherings. . . . (pp.18-19)

Once I asked her why she left him [A.K.] out in her "training". She replied, it was "because he has a blue liver"\* — whatever that might mean. (p.27)

From the article which follows it becomes clear that Blavatsky did not leave A. Keightley out of her special "training" program — that she in fact had a special occult connection with him, as she had with Judge.

A. Keightley came from England as a Delegate from the Branches in Great Britain, and as Special Representative of H.P. Blavatsky. This was the second time in as many years that Blavatsky had chosen him to represent her at the American Convention. While in America some earnest theosophists offered to pay Keightley's expenses to visit distant Western Branches but he declined saying that he could be called back to London at any moment. On Keightley's return from Chicago he and Judge revisited Cincinnati on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Keightley went on to visit branches in Philadelphia, Boston and Malden.

This article was reprinted in *The Theosophist*, July 1889 with the addition of three footnotes; it is reprinted here directly from the *New York Times*. Upon reading the opening paragraph one cannot help but think that the article must have been written by a member of the Theosophical Society. Another clue is that it was immediately forwarded to the editor of *The Theosophist* — most likely by the reporter himself. The reporter who comes to mind is James H. Connelly, a close friend of Judge and a member of the Aryan T.S. at the time. Although Connelly was associated with *The Sun* for years he did work for other prominent New York newspapers as well. Another interesting fact is that Richard Harte, also a New York newspaper man, was then in India and, at this particular time, was "the interim Editor of *The Theosophist* while Olcott left for a tour of Japan, January to July 1889." (*The Judge Case* I:343)

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\* One interpretation of Blue Liver goes as follows: as the liver symbolizes the lower quaternary and as Blue is symbolic of the higher mind, blue liver means one whose lower quaternary has been purified. This would have made Archibald of immense value to H.P.B. in editing *The Secret Doctrine*, and would also explain why she did not focus on any of his flaws — there simply were none. - Ed.

# THE USEFUL ASTRAL LIGHT\*

## By Which One Can Quote What He Has Not Read.

### Very Latest News About The Condition of Theosophy, Occultism, and Mme. Blavatsky.

Dr. A. Keightley of London, one of the leading theosophists of England, passed through New-York a day or two ago on his way to attend, as a representative, the annual theosophical convention in Chicago. In a conversation here upon topics of theosophic interest he said:

“When Col. H.S. Olcott was in England last October there was a reorganization of the British section of the Theosophical Society upon a plan analogous to that of the American section. Prior to that time we had only one lodge, situated in London, but having members all over the country. It was a large, unwieldy body, too much scattered and its members too generally personally unknown to each other to admit of that unity of feeling and harmony of action which were deemed essential to right progress. Col. Olcott, President of the society, therefore chartered new branches in London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Cambridge, and elsewhere, and put the English section upon a new basis, with an autonomous government so far as its own affairs were concerned. The movement is now flourishing well in England, including among its earnest supporters some of the most intelligent, learned, and progressive thinkers of the present day in that country. It is, of course, not advancing so rapidly as in the United States, but that is not to be expected. For England is doing remarkably well. Col. Olcott also effected like reorganization in France, and established a Continental European section similar to the British, the American and the three already in being in India.

“There have been recently some noteworthy defections from the theosophic body in England; some previously prominent members have developed a personality of feeling not in harmony with theosophical principles, and have abandoned or been read out of ‘the fold.’ While they are to be regretted — mainly for their effect upon the persons themselves — they were not at all unexpected, and the explanation of them is peculiarly interesting. A few months since a class was formed, under the direct instruction of Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, for the prosecution of study in occultism known as the ‘esoteric section,’ and a considerable number of the most earnest and devoted theosophists of Europe and America are included in it. When that class was formed the warning was to all who entered it that an inevitable effect of occult stud-

ies, and an early one, would be the animating and bringing to the surface with almost irresistible force of all the most hidden and powerful impulses, desires, purposes, and traits of character in the student. Every possible phase and degree of selfishness, from the loftiest purposes of personal ambition down to the most degrading tendencies to vicious self-indulgences, however previously concealed or suppressed, or even if only latent and hardly visible to the self-knowledge of the student, would rise up with hitherto undreamed-of energy as tempters and betrayers that would have to be overcome and crushed out of being forever in the student’s soul before real progress could be attained. It is probable that few realized the importance of that warning, certain that some did not believe in the reality of the dangerous condition they would inevitably be called upon to endure. But the realization of what was foretold has come already, and some of those most sensitive to the effects have developed such personal characteristics and tendencies as render further progress impossible for them until they shall have achieved such victory over self as at present seems too great for them even to comprehend. And as the study progresses more will no doubt be similarly affected among those who are slower, but none the less certain, to find that obstacle in their way. The study of occultism has an effect in the soul like the furious boiling of a liquid that drives to its surface and makes visible all the scum and impurities it may contain. Not until the scum has been brought to light and removed can the liquid become clear and pure; not until the evil that is in the soul is made manifest, recognized, and expelled can the soul be elevated and rendered capable of grasping and making use of the higher knowledge. That there are dangers, real and terrible, thus to be encountered almost at the threshold of occultism is beyond all question, as sad proofs in our experience already amply attest.

“Mme. Blavatsky continues to labor as ceaselessly as of old, and under conditions of such physical disability as render not simply her working but actually her living truly marvelous. I may say, as a physician, and not simply upon my own authority, but as a fact known to some of the leading medical practitioners of London, that never before has a patient been known to live even for a week under such conditions of renal disorder as have been chronic with her for very many

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\* Reprinted from *New York Times*, April 29, 1889, p.5

months past. Lately they have been somewhat modified by the action of strychnia, of which she now takes a little over six grains daily. Very frequently she has attacks of cerebral apoplexy, but without any treatment known to medical science wards them off and goes on, firmly confident as ever that her present life will not end from any cause before its work is fully accomplished. And in that work she is indefatigable. Her hours of labor are daily from 6:30 A.M. to 7 P.M. with only a few minutes interruption for a light meal just before the sun reaches the meridian. During that time she devotes a great deal of her attention to preparing the instructions for the 'esoteric section,' giving out such knowledge as is permitted her to impart and its members are capable of receiving. Then the editorial labor connected with the production of her magazine, *Lucifer*, devolves entirely upon her. And she also edits the new French theosophical monthly magazine *La Revue Theosophique* published by the Countess d'Adhemar in Paris, and writes occasional articles for the *Path*, the *Theosophist*, and other journals. In addition to this she carries on a voluminous personal correspondence. The Countess d'Adhemar, by the way, is an American by birth. Her magazine is now publishing a series of brilliant articles by 'Amaravelia' and a translation in French of Mme. Blavatsky's 'Secret Doctrine.'

"The third volume of 'The Secret Doctrine' is in manuscript ready to be given to the printers. It will consist mainly of a series of sketches of the great occultists of all ages, and is a most wonderful and fascinating work. The fourth volume, which is to be largely hints on the subject of practical occultism, has been outlined, but not yet written. It will demonstrate what occultism really is, and show how the popular conception of it has been outraged and degraded by fraudulent pretenders to its mysteries who have, for greed of gain or other base purposes, falsely claimed possession of the secret knowledge. This exposure will necessitate its being brought up sharply to date as a historical record, so that the actual work of writing it will not be commenced until we are about ready to bring it forth.

"In the evening, from 7 until 11 o'clock, and sometimes 2 o'clock A.M., Mme. Blavatsky receives visitors, of whom she has many. Of course, many are friends, others are serious investigators, and not a few are impelled by curiosity to see a woman who is one of the prominent personages of the world to-day. All are welcome and she is equally ready in meeting all upon any ground they select.

"Mr. G. J. Romanes, a Fellow of the Royal Society, comes in to discuss the evolutionary theory set forth in her 'Secret Doctrine;' Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who is a great admirer of the 'Secret

Doctrine,' finds much in it that seems to invite further elucidation; Lord Crawford, Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, another F. R.S. — who is deeply interested in occultism and cosmogony and who was a pupil of Lord Lytton and studied with him in Egypt — comes to talk of his special topics of concern; Mrs. Besant, whose association with the National Reform Society has made her famous, drops in to express her interest in theosophy as a power affecting the social life of humanity; Mr. Sydney Whitman, widely known by his scathing criticisms upon English cant, has ideas to express and thoughts to interchange upon the ethics of theosophy, and so they come.

"Generally they are pronounced free thinkers and people who see that the loss of spirituality, which is so prominent a feature in the thought of the present day, is saved by theosophy, which at once demonstrates it and places it upon a scientific basis, which is altogether missed by the Christian churches. But sometimes among her visitors are devoted church members, who come to take exceptions to her teachings. Then a battle royal ensues, she speaking with real knowledge of symbolism and full comprehension of the true and hidden meaning of rites and ceremonies, they insisting on the dead letter of the law as it is known to them. All may not agree with her, but none can fail to be impressed by her eloquence, her power of argument, and her vast erudition, the resources of which seem to be so unfathomable that one listening to her is often compelled to feel that it is impossible that she should be drawing entirely upon her own stores of knowledge, great as they may be, but that she had the efficient aid of powers invisible to those about her."

"Does she now ever produce any of the phenomena of manifestation of occult potencies with which she has been credited in the past?"

"Very rarely, except as they occur in a practical, matter-of-fact way in the course of work. One such recurs to my present remembrance. While working upon her 'Secret Doctrine' Mme. Blavatsky had not a single book of reference or authority about her, yet would frequently make long quotations of two or three hundred words from various works, giving author, volume, and page as precisely as if by immediate reference. I became a little uneasy about it and said to her: 'Do you not think I had better verify the accuracy of some of these quotations?'

"Certainly, if you wish to.' she replied. So I took a lot of them and went to the British Museum; the only place where the books were, to my knowledge, accessible. There I found them accurate to the minutest degree, except that in one or perhaps two instances I did not find the passage quoted upon the page she had given. Say, for instance, the page specified was

307. It was not there. But, acting upon an idea that occurred to me, I tuned to page 703, and there found it, word for word. The cause for the transposition of the figures was in their reversal in the astral light, which presents things exactly as if shown in a mirror. She did not always, when physically very weary, take the trouble to carefully reverse the process and bring the image down on the physical plane in its exact order there when copying from the astral light the matter she wished to use. The quotations referred to were mainly from the Journal of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, many of them from Col. Wilford's papers, works not more than fifty or sixty years old and not exceedingly rare, but in the possession of very few private individuals, and certainly not in hers, nor consulted by her in the process of her work otherwise than in the astral light in the manner I have indicated.

"Two other incidents demonstrative of her strange powers and worthy of note as phenomena, impossible of production by any trick, and not intended to impress anybody, but just occurring in a perfectly natural way as if quite ordinary things, I recall. One day it so happened that I came home late to a meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge — which meets in her house, on Lansdowne road — and found that she had left word that she desired to see me immediately when I came in. She said to me: 'I have been told to quote to you a letter. I have not got the letter, but it has been photographed in the astral light for me.' I sat down and wrote it out from her dictation. She asked me: 'What would you do with that?' I said that I would recommend her to quote it — as she already had to me — to the person to whom it was addressed, who would be in attendance at the meeting of the lodge. She did so, repeating it word for word to the individual who had not received it more than ten minutes before and had not made it known to any other person. The letter was not one that either the writer or the recipient would voluntarily have made known to her, and there was not any other way in which it could possibly have been made known to her than that which she stated to me. The astonishment of the recipient of the letter was unbounded, for he fully comprehended that fact.

"The second instance was this: Working at the office in Duke-street one day, I became very seriously annoyed over what seemed to justify some strong language as a sort of safety valve, and did express myself, when altogether alone in my private room, with rather more vigor than propriety. That was about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, or a little after. Before 3 o'clock I got a letter from Mme. Blavatsky, from her Lansdowne-road residence, four miles distant, quoting my exact language and asking: 'Why do you utter it?' To get that reproof to me in the time I received it she must have mailed the letter almost in-

stantly upon my utterance of the objectionable words. There would not have been time for anybody to have reported them to her in any way, and it was simply utterly impossible that they should have been heard by anybody's merely material sense of hearing when they were uttered.

"In this way things frequently occur in the knowledge of those intimately associated with Mme. Blavatsky that make the phenomena of occultism so far a recognized part of the ordinary course of events that they are accepted with scarcely even remark as quite what might reasonably have been expected. And, so far as the public is concerned, the progress of the theosophic movement is ethical far more than phenomenal in its tendency. It appeals most strongly to the interest of those upon whom the pressure of life comes heaviest, those to whom the conditions of physical existence seem absolutely unjust, and who seek in vain explanation and consolation in the dogmas of Christianity. To them the laws of Karma and reincarnation afford a rational explanation of the why and wherefore of human suffering as consequent upon the acts of the past, and accord such comprehensible knowledge of the measure of individual present responsibility in the determination of the individual future as is found in no other system.

"It is not to be expected, however, that the growth of theosophy in England or in any part of continental Europe will even approximate to what it will be in America, the cradle of the new race. Ethnologically speaking, the Americans are the descendants of the union, practically, of all the races of the Old World. Thus arises what may be termed a loosened physiological constitution in the direction of that which is below the ordinary physical constitution, and the necessary conditions are provided for the starting up of a new growth, a new type of race and humanity. This is why Americans have a tendency to run into specialties. They are 'all or nothing,' full of energy, purpose, and resource in whatever chosen line of direction they may apply themselves.

"The typical American has no 'middle course'. The consequence of that is that whatever Americans undertake they do to their utmost, and their success is, as a rule, proportionately great. This is equally true whether they devote themselves to material interests or spiritual. If they are religious at all they are likely to be ultra-religious. Therefore when such things as psychic force and spiritual considerations come up, they run riot in the minds of a people sufficiently free from previous prejudice to take up such things. And, in consequence of the lack of confinement to particular type and what we may call their physiological looseness, their development in such directions will be rapid, as is seen in the numberless instances of

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# The Making of an Avatar

## Examining Adyar's Attempt to Fabricate the Return of Christ

Carlos Cardoso Aveline

“Night before last I was shown a bird’s-eye view of the Theosophical Societies. I saw a few earnest, reliable Theosophists in a death-struggle with the world in general, and with other — nominal but ambitious — Theosophists.”

[H.P. Blavatsky in a letter to William Q. Judge<sup>1</sup>]

Error is doomed to imitate truth, and real Theosophy has always been surrounded by a host of often brilliant or spectacular forms of pseudo-theosophy. One significant example of this occult law can be found in the creation of a *theosophical cult* around the personality of Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986). Even now the *Krishnamurtian* creed still subsists, although in a rather quiet way, and Mrs. Radha Burnier — the president of the Adyar Theosophical Society since 1980 — is one of its staunchest leaders.

Krishnamurti was 14 years old when he was “discovered” in Adyar by a clairvoyant of lower Iddhis, Mr. C.W. Leadbeater. By then, both Annie Besant and Leadbeater used to have long imaginary conversations with some kind of “Lord Christ”. Soon after the “discovery”, the boy was officially presented to the world as being a high initiate and future avatar — the vehicle for the second coming of “Lord Christ” himself.

It is true that, with regard to the expected return of Christ, H.P. Blavatsky had explained, in plain words:

Two things become evident to all (...): (a) “the coming of Christ,” means *the presence of CHRISTOS* in a regenerated world, and not at all the actual coming in body of “Christ” Jesus; (b) this Christ is to be sought neither in the wilderness nor “in the inner chambers,” nor in the sanctuary of any temple or church built by man; for Christ — the true esoteric SAVIOUR — *is no man*, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being. He who strives to resurrect the Spirit crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions, and buried deep in the “sepulchre” of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back the stone of matter from the door of his own inner sanctuary, he has the risen Christ in him. (“For ye are the temple of the living God” (II Cor., vi, 16)).<sup>2</sup>

In this as on other occasions, HPB’s words had been most clear. Yet, as the popular saying goes, “there is

no one so blind as they that will not see”. The Adyar leaders were so busy fabricating Lord Christ that they did not have time to take real Theosophy into consideration.

A “Liberal Catholic Church” was then organized to serve as a “vehicle” for Krishnamurti, the Christ. The Order of the Star was to be the main messianic organization. The Adyar Theosophical Society and Esoteric School were transformed in auxiliary instruments for the Adventist experiment. The new Master’s catechism was to be the little book *At the Feet of the Master*, cleverly written by Leadbeater but presented as being the result of instructions of an Adept-Teacher to Krishnamurti, who then supposedly had taken notes.

Mary Lutyens, Krishnamurti’s close friend and main biographer, reports in Chapter One of her book *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti* that the would-be notes and originals written by Krishnamurti “disappeared”. The only originals anyone ever saw of that devotional booklet were the ones typewritten by C.W. Leadbeater. Once Krishnamurti reached adulthood, he denied being the author of *At the Feet of the Master*. The booklet was never included among Krishnamurti’s works. Krishnamurti Foundations do not sell it. Yet its “authorship” is still nominally ascribed by Adyar publishers to “Alcyone”, which is the pseudonym created by Leadbeater for Krishnamurti in his phantasy-book *The Lives of Alcyone*.

Written in Leadbeater’s unmistakable style, *At the Feet of the Master* repeats many of his misconceptions about the spiritual path. The false authorship of this little book is one of the leading literary frauds in the long career of “Bishop” Leadbeater. Since its first edition, the booklet has been put in a very special place by members of the Adyar TS. Thousands of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *The Friendly Philosopher*, Robert Crosbie, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, 1945, p.389.

<sup>2</sup> “The Esoteric Character of the Gospels”, by HPB, in *The Collected Writings of Helena P. Blavatsky*, TPH, Adyar, volume VIII, p.173.



theosophists still believe in the authenticity of such a book. Few of them have read the testimony given by the former international secretary of the Adyar Society, Ernest Wood, who for long years was a personal assistant to C.W. Leadbeater. In his autobiographical book, Wood relates the story of a distinguished young Adyar Theosophist, Mr. Subrahmanyam. In 1910-1911 Subrahmanyam happened to be the witness of a revealing conversation between young Krishnamurti and his father. Questioned in Subrahmanyam's presence about the authorship of *At The Feet of the Master*, Krishnamurti answered to his father, in Telugu language: "The book is not mine; they fathered it on me."

Deeply surprised, Subrahmanyam related the dialogue to his close friend Wood. "Bad news run fast", according to a popular saying. As soon as the all-powerful Annie Besant was informed of the fact, she called Subrahmanyam to her presidential office. Mrs. Besant told him that it was simply "not possible" that Krishnamurti had ever said such a thing. She then presented Subrahmanyam with the alternative of "immediate recantation — or banishment from Adyar".

Unfit to live in a world of "officially idealized fancies", Subrahmanyam resisted the pressure. He did not recant and, therefore, had to leave Adyar at once and for good. He returned to his native town, and Wood reports that, for some reason, Subrahmanyam — "died there shortly afterwards, while still himself little more than a boy".<sup>3</sup>

Since its appearance in 1910, the best-selling booklet *At the Feet of the Master* was a great and spectacular event. Its success gave strength to the creation of the messianic organization "Order of the Star in the East". From the viewpoint of Mrs. Besant, the creation of a new Messiah could never be disturbed by such uncomfortable facts like that dialogue witnessed by Subrahmanyam. The mere idea that a young boy had written a 'grown-up text' was used and presented as a 'phenomenon' in itself. It was something "quite extraordinary". It seemed to be a hard evidence that Christ/Maitreya had indeed decided to come back. All that people had to do was to *believe* in the pyrotechnic display of imaginary wonders.

Ernest E. Wood writes about the "Order of the Star", which was rapidly growing worldwide:

Thousands of the members of the Theosophical Society flung themselves into the new movement. Some held aloof, among them myself. Some few criticized it on various grounds. One or two pronounced the opinion that Krishnamurti did not know enough English to write the sentences in the book. I quite agreed with them, but I explained the difficulty away to myself by saying that the preface announced that Krishnamurti had not written it himself — they were the words of the Master. Still the difficulty remained that Krishnamurti could not have linked the sentences together and punctuated them so well. Nor could he have written the preface, in my opinion. These problems I left in suspense. We could very well wait to see if the Teacher came.<sup>4</sup>

Ernest Wood found that the book was too simple and too narrow to have such an importance as a social event. Wood narrates a frank conversation he had with Leadbeater:

I delivered my opinion — a delightful little book, but extremely simple. Would the instructions contained in it be sufficient to bring one to the "Path proper," to the First Initiation, which Mrs. Besant had described in her book? Yes, said Mr. Leadbeater, more than that, if completely carried out these instructions would lead one to Adeptship itself.

Here Leadbeater spoke as if he were a great sage. Self-important fancies were so strong in Adyar that some years later, in 1925, Annie Besant would announce a most remarkable fact: she herself, as well as C.W. Leadbeater, J. Krishnamurti, George Arundale and others, had all achieved Adeptship and were now "Masters and Initiates of the fifth circle". For some reason, though, soon after that announcement it became obvious that Besant had lost both her mind and her balance, as duly reported by Mary Lutyens and Ernest Wood.

Mr. Wood goes on describing his conversation with Leadbeater:

I remarked that there were one or two curious things about the manuscript. It was very much in Mr. Leadbeater's own style, and there were some sentences which were exactly the same as in a book of his which we had already prepared for the press. He told me that he wished indeed that he might have been able to write such a book himself. As to the sentences I mentioned, he had usually been present when Krishnamurti was being taught in his astral body by the Master; he remembered these points . . . .<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Is This Theosophy?*, Ernest Wood, London: Rider & Co., 1936, Paternost House, E.C., reprinted by Kessinger Publishing LLC, MT, USA, 318 pp., see p.163.

<sup>4</sup> *Is This Theosophy?*, see p.162.

<sup>5</sup> *Is This Theosophy?*, see p.161.

Leadbeater explained everything away. As to Annie Besant, Wood reports that she herself decided on the title *At the Feet of the Master*. Of course, at that age, Krishnamurti was not very interested in books or in writing. All he was expected to do was to play the outer role of a young Initiate and future Messiah. On the other hand, what the booklet says is also very different from the teachings of the Masters. Ms. Jean Overton Fuller, an English theosophist, reports on a conversation with Ms. Lutyens:

I talked with Mary Lutyens about this. She inclined to think the composition was very largely Leadbeater's.<sup>6</sup>

The content of the booklet confirms that idea. In *At the Feet of the Master* the word "God" is used a number of times. "God has a plan", says the booklet. "If [anyone] is on God's side he is one with us", it insists. Its author says: "For *you* are God, and you will only what God wills".<sup>7</sup> Moreover, in the foreword, Krishnamurti is made to say: "These are not my words; they are the words of the Master who taught me."

It is worth examining what the very same Master, who according to Leadbeater dictated the booklet to Krishnamurti, had to say about God in his famous Letter 10 in the *Mahatma Letters*. The real Adept said:

Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H.<sup>8</sup>

Leadbeater — the undercover author of the booklet — makes his imaginary Master say, "listen to His voice, which is *your* voice" (p.9). On the other hand, the real Adept teaches:

A constant sense of abject dependence upon a Deity which he regards as the sole source of power makes a man lose all self-reliance and the spurs to activity and initiative. Having begun by creating a father and guide unto himself, he becomes like a boy and remains so to his old age, expecting to be led by the hand on the smallest as well as the greatest events of life.<sup>9</sup>

Leadbeater makes his "Master" say: "God is Wisdom as well as Love; and the more wisdom you have the more you can manifest of Him" (p.12). Whereas in the *ML* Letter 134 (the Prayag Letter) one reads this from a Mahatma:

Faith in the Gods and God, and other superstitions attracts millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful agents around them, with which we would have to use more than ordinary exercise of power to drive them away. We do not choose to do so.<sup>10</sup>

The Master thus explains that Adepts can hardly get near persons who believe in superstitions like "Gods and God". Why such a deep contrast between the two viewpoints? In fact, C.W. Leadbeater — Krishnamurti's teacher — had failed in discipleship soon after being put on probation in the 1880s. As a result, later on, he was never admitted to HPB's Esoteric School as long as she lived.<sup>11</sup>

As to the "God issue", it is no mere question of "personal opinion". It is linked to a technical and practical matter of decisive importance in occult learning. Belief in an all-powerful God — just as adoring imaginary Adepts of "unlimited power" — is an essential article in the idealized version of discipleship which Annie Besant and Mr. Leadbeater created in their messianic attempt. According to them, individual autonomy is to be entirely left aside "out of devotion". In this, as in other aspects, they thought very much like Vatican priests.

Issue by issue, *At The Feet of the Master* contradicts real Theosophy. The booklet says, for instance, that an extreme physical cleanliness is of great "occult" importance. Leadbeater was slightly obsessive about that, and in *At the Feet of the Master* the following recommendation is made to all aspirants to discipleship:

The body is your animal — the horse upon which you ride. Therefore (. . .) you must feed it properly on pure food and drink only, and keep it strictly clean always, even from the minutest speck of dirt.

<sup>6</sup> *Krishnamurti and the Wind*, by Jean Overton Fuller, The Theosophical Publishing House, London, 2003, 300 pp., see p.23.

<sup>7</sup> *At the Feet of the Master*, by Alcyone, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL, USA, Pocketbook edition, 1984, 32 pp. See p.9.

<sup>8</sup> *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, T.U.P., Pasadena, CA, USA, 1992, 494 pp., see Letter X, p.52. The quotation is in the opening lines of the letter. In the Chronological Edition of *The Mahatma Letters* (TPH Philippines), it corresponds to Letter 88.

<sup>9</sup> *Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom*, 1870-1900, First Series, transcribed by C. Jinarajadasa, TPH, Adyar, Madras (Chennai), India, 1973, see Letter 43, p.95.

<sup>10</sup> *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, T.U.P., Letter CXXXIV, p.462. In the Chronological edition, Philippines, Letter 30, p.95.

<sup>11</sup> Living once more in London after several years in Asia, instead of having access to HPB's Esoteric School, Leadbeater joined the "Inner Group" of Mr. Alfred P. Sinnett, as Sinnett says in his Autobiography (Theosophical History Center, London, 1986, 65 pp.). It was in that group that Leadbeater developed his lower siddhis, during mesmeric and mediumistic sessions in which they talked to false Adepts. By that time, Sinnett's group was already inimical to HPB's work. After HPB's death, it did not take a long time for Annie Besant to join that group of deluded people, which she actually did in 1894. Coincidence or not, in the same year the persecution against William Q. Judge, who was loyal to HPB, started.

For without a perfectly clean and healthy body you cannot do the arduous work of preparation, you cannot bear its ceaseless strain.<sup>12</sup>

Let us remember the words “stricly clean always” as we see what the Masters themselves say about personal hygiene at the physical plane. In *The Mahatma Letters*, an Adept explains to Mr. Sinnett:

Our best, most learned, and holiest adepts are of the races of the “greasy Tibetans”; and the Penjabi Singhs — you know the lion is proverbially a dirty and offensive beast, despite his strength and courage.<sup>13</sup>

The word ‘Singh’ as used here is a mystical/symbolical name used by the same Mahatma who writes the letter. The metaphorical identity between the Mahatma and ‘lions’ comes from the fact that in Sanskrit the word ‘Singh’ means ‘lion’.

From this we may conclude that eastern Adepts can often be physically “greasy” and “dirty”. Their regular disciples sometimes even refuse to present themselves in clean clothes, as the Mahatma narrates in the same letter. In fact, one of his chelas emphatically refused to deliver a letter to Alfred Sinnett, the reason being that HPB had simply asked him to present himself with a “cleaner personal appearance”, in order not to offend Mr. Sinnett’s *western prejudices* against “dirty people”. The Master explains to Sinnett that the young disciple would not accept acting like the chelas of illegitimate and rival sects, which do recommend physical cleanliness (see p.16 in TUP edition).

The episode shows that both Masters and disciples pay scarce attention to the question of physical cleanliness or dirtiness. It also shows that a true Master entirely preserves the autonomy of a disciple, who is therefore entitled to have and to keep *his own prejudices against physical cleanliness*. In the same letter, besides admitting his chela’s mistake, the Master also offers a Western example of “saintly resistance” against physical cleanliness:

Prejudice and dead letter again. For over a thousand years, — says Michelet, — the Christian Saints never washed themselves!<sup>14</sup>

What is the real reason, then — one may ask — for Leadbeater to recommend such an “occult phobia” against any physical dirtiness? In his essay “Totem And Taboo”, Sigmund Freud offers us a psychiatric explanation. Such a phobia, Freud says, is con-

nected to compulsive neurosis: “The most common of these obsessive acts is washing with water (washing obsession).”<sup>15</sup>

In reality, discipleship or esoteric learning is an inner process which not only preserves but enhances the learner’s autonomy; and this is quite the opposite of what one can find in *At the Feet of the Master* and other books dating from the Besant period.

According to most Adyar authors, the would-be disciple should develop a total and automatic obedience to the supposed Master. This, they say, must be done out of devotion. Such in fact is the *blind-obedience principle* of “doing whatever the Master wants”. Of course, the idea has been most convenient to Adyar leaders, who place themselves as “intermediaries” between imaginary Masters and the rest of the movement, and thus concentrate every power in their own hands.

Up to the early 1950s, direct “orders” coming from supposed Masters were received through the leaders of the Adyar TS and its esoteric school. The system operated until C. Jinarajadasa’s time. It formally stopped with N. Sri Ram by 1953, yet power has since then remained concentrated in the hands of the international presidents and “heads” of the esoteric school, who, according to custom, must be implicitly treated as Popes by the rest of Adyar members — since they behave as “occult representatives of the Masters”.

In *At the Feet of the Master*, as in many other works by Besant and Leadbeater, one can read a direct recommendation of devotional blind obedience:

When you become a pupil of the Master, you may always try the truth of your thought by laying it beside His. For the pupil is one with his Master, and he needs only to put back his thought into the Master’s thought to see at once whether it agrees. If it does not, it is wrong, and he changes it instantly, for the Master’s thought is perfect, because He knows all. Those who are not yet accepted by Him cannot do quite this; but they may greatly help themselves by stopping often to think: “What would the Master think about this? What would the Master say or do under these circumstances?” For you must never do or say or think what you cannot imagine the Master as doing or saying or thinking.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *At The Feet of the Master*, pp.9-10.

<sup>13</sup> *The Mahatma Letters*, TUP, see Letter IV, first paragraph, pp.15-16. In the Chronological Edition (Philippines TPH), Letter 5.

<sup>14</sup> Letter IV, p.16.

<sup>15</sup> *Totem and Taboo — Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, by Sigmund Freud, Dover Thrift Editions, Dover Publications, Inc., Mineola, New York, USA, 1998, 138 pp., see p.25.

<sup>16</sup> *At The Feet of the Master*, pp.13-14.

The false assumptions in the quotation above deserve some examination.

\* First, the text supposes that a disciple is able to fully understand his Master’s consciousness and thoughts. The absurd idea is that there is no difference, in mental horizons or in karma, between an Adept and his poor, ignorant disciple.

\* Second, the text supposes that a disciple should mimic his Master trying to imitate his thoughts, his words and actions. In reality, since master and disciple are two different beings who have widely different amounts of wisdom, they must inevitably think, speak and act in different ways, if they are true to themselves.

\* This would-be student totally renounces thinking for himself, or being responsible for his own life and actions. He hides behind that which he fancies to be his Master’s thoughts. Of course, in order to make “discipleship” easier, such “thoughts from the Masters” will be implicitly or explicitly “transmitted” to him by the popish Adyar authorities. It is enough for him to “believe”.

Things are much deeper than that in esoteric philosophy, and more democratic, too. True, students can’t compare their *individual* thoughts to the individual thoughts of any Adept. On the other hand, they can easily compare their views about discipleship to the general teachings of the Masters on the same subject, as they are safely recorded in the *Mahatma Letters* and elsewhere.

Such a comparative study is a revealing if not revolutionary experience. What the Masters actually teach about discipleship is absolutely antithetic to what one sees in *At The Feet of the Master* and — alas — in many other “later time” writings. As early as 1882, the Masters were directly fighting the “blind obedience heresy”, which can also be called the “mental laziness principle” of mechanical, if not mediumistic, obedience to an imaginary Master. An Adept of the Himalayas wrote:

The objections of last year are creeping out also, you have a letter from me in which I explain *why* we never *guide* our chelas (the most advanced even); nor do we forewarn them leaving the effects produced by causes of their own creation to teach them better experience. Please bear in mind that particular letter. Before the cycle ends every misconception ought to be swept away. I trust in and

rely upon you to clear them entirely in the minds of the Prayag Fellows.<sup>17</sup>

This central pedagogical *Principle of the Autonomy of the Learner* is scattered all over HPB/Masters writings. In the *Letters from The Masters of the Wisdom*, for instance, one reads this appeal made by a Mahatma to a certain lady of altruistic intentions:

You have offered yourself for the Red Cross; but, Sister, there are sicknesses and wounds of the Soul that no Surgeon’s art can cure. Shall you help us teach mankind that the soul-sick must heal themselves?<sup>18</sup>

Conscious individual responsibility before Life is the basic and fundamental condition for any student of Theosophy, if he wants to have a reasonable amount of success in his endeavours. The same applies to lay disciples and aspirants to lay discipleship.

Although the 20<sup>th</sup> century messianic attempt made by Adyar leaders and “bishops” clearly failed as a project, its false notions and unconscious attachment to *comfortable illusions* still intoxicate minds and hearts of theosophists, worldwide. Related mayavic trends influence many who are *not* situated within the Adyar TS itself. Both truth and illusions are implicitly and thoughtlessly shared by several theosophical groups, at an occult level. Even now the majority of nominal theosophists indirectly accept and thus are limited by the same “avataric” and clairvoyant assumptions and delusions created in the first three decades of last century. This is one of the reasons why the motto of every true theosophist must be, as H.P. Blavatsky states in *Isis* —

“I accept *unreservedly* the views of no man, living or dead”.<sup>19</sup>

Somehow, the movement must thoroughly renew itself in order to take the necessary steps towards the now seemingly “distant” year of 2075. Fortunately, one can trust that the means for that *self-renewal* will emerge at the right time and in the right way — perhaps *unseen, unperceived*, and little by little; yet as surely as the arrival of any new cycle. ☸

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See more on the theosophical movement at [www.filosofiaesoterica.com/english](http://www.filosofiaesoterica.com/english)

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<sup>17</sup> *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, TUP, Letter LXXII, p.374. In the Chronological Edition (TPH Philippines), this is Letter 95, p.333.

<sup>18</sup> *Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom*, transcribed by C. Jinarajadasa, TPH, Adyar, India, second edition, 1973, see Letter 72, p.129.

<sup>19</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, H. P. Blavatsky, Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, vol. I, p.x.

# The Messenger of the Last Quarter of the Century

Richard Robb

Many students looked forward in anticipation of a theosophical luminary to appear on the scene. There were those who took the earlier prognostications of a Messenger literally, expecting that, as of January 1975, evidence would make itself known. And many, holding fast to the literal view, constructed their concept of a leader as being similar to Blavatsky or Judge, and imagined the head of their own group as the one of elevated status. In retrospect, however, it is difficult to single out a single individual, and many wonder what happened. Some of the hints from the 19<sup>th</sup> century are as follows:

But I must tell you that during the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those "Masters," of whom I have spoken, to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. (*Key*, p.194, 1893 ed.)

At that time another messenger will come. In my opinion he will be the same being as now directs our efforts. . . . If this shall be accomplished, then in 1975 there will be an instrument ready at hand [the T.S. movement] for the returning Messenger to use during the last twenty-five years, instead of having to construct it anew. (*Echoes*, Vol. III, p..296)

Every century an attempt is being made to show the world that Occultism is no vain superstition. Once the door permitted to be kept a little ajar, it will be opened wider with every new century. (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p.xxxvii-iii fn)

In Century the Twentieth some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called Gupta-Vidya . . . (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p.xxxviii)

In fact, as is nearly always the case in recurring cycles, they are lengthened or shortened by other factors, and are labeled by their *average* period. True, W.Q. Judge did actually specify 1975, but in the above passage he does not say that another Blavatsky will appear, but that one of the Mahatmas will be the messenger, and of course they almost never appear in public.

Many wanted to believe that their particular leader was the embodiment of the resurgence. And the plethora of 'enlightened' gurus did nothing to dissuade their followers from entertaining heroic thoughts. Benjamin Creme touted his Maitreya, Elizabeth Clare Prophet her 'ascended masters',

Bhagwan Rajneesh, and even the Dalai Lama was thought by some to be the 'messenger', although he cannot be placed in the same category as the others. We now know that none of the foregoing were solely responsible for the phenomenon witnessed in the last quarter.

In the area of Theosophy, an interesting coincidence surrounds the spontaneous appearance of a number of efforts, which all occurred in a 12 month period, and largely unaware of each other:

- *The Eclectic Theosophist*, (quarterly) edited by W. Emmett Small
- *Theosophy Weekly*, edited by Jerome Wheeler
- *Viewpoint Aquarius*, (England) edited by Rex Dutta
- *Blavatsky Foundation Newsletter*, (Fresno, CA) edited by Walter Carrithers
- *Unattached Members Newsletter*, (London)
- *Tibetan Friendship Group Bulletin*, Rosemary Vosse, (South Africa)
- *The Mind of Time Newsletter*, (ULT Ottawa)
- Point Loma Publications, Iverson Harris, (San Diego)
- Wizards Bookshelf SD Reference Series, Richard Robb (Minneapolis)

There are undoubtedly others that could be cited, but they all began in 1971-2, subsequently discovering each other. Where did the impulse come from? Not from any *visible* source. The same is true of a huge number of metaphysical and New Age enterprises that flourished in the explosion of interest that characterized the last quarter of the century. Think of a subject and it was explored, promoted, and written about. In every possible area of thought from pyramid power to spontaneous human combustion, to psychic archaeology, yoga, acupuncture, the list is virtually endless. Theosophy was NOT the only area to have an opening and expansion. At the center of this phenomena was the oldest metaphysical publisher, wholesaler, and distributor in the world, DeVorss & Co, of Marina del Rey, California. Their chief buyer was Hedda Lark, former secretary to Manly P. Hall, who started with DeVorss in 1968.

. . . continued on page 71

## THEOSOPHICAL FRIENDS REMEMBERED



Photo by Ron Pelletier during his visit January 1995

Shirley Adele Cooper died August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 at her home on the farm, “The Diggings”, situated near Bega in New South Wales, Australia. She was the widow of the well-respected Theosophical historian, John Cooper, who died May 12, 1998.

Shirley was a renowned artist in weaving and pottery. She and John were very involved with the local community in various capacities and were especially enthusiastic about the arts festivals. In 1989 the Coopers moved to their farm “in the bush”, on a government land reserve approximately 300 miles south of Sydney on the coast. Getting established there required a lot of manual labour: water was supplied by two dams; their electrical supply was by solar energy; and bush had to be cleared regularly. A separate building was erected for John’s library and Shirley’s studio. They spent many hours together working side by side, each at creative outlets they loved. Shirley continued to look after all this following John’s death.

Although she did not share her husband’s enthusiasm for theosophical doctrines, Shirley was deter-

mined to see his library and archives preserved. John had spent some time with us in October 1989 and Shirley was aware of Edmonton TS Library and Archives. She called asking if we could come to Bega to catalogue John’s collections. We unfortunately had to decline due to long-term commitments here. She donated the collection to the National Library of Australia, ensuring both its preservation and its accessibility. She was equally determined that the arrangements made with John regarding the HPB letters project he had been working on when he passed away would be honoured. Unfortunately, Shirley experienced much distress over this matter as discussion with the publisher degenerated to coercion. Dr Gregory Tillett was very helpful in assisting Shirley with both these endeavors.

When announcing on [theos-talk@yahoogroups.com](mailto:theos-talk@yahoogroups.com) that Shirley had recently died, Dr Tillett wrote that generations of historians of Theosophy will owe her a great debt but that her efforts will inevitably remain largely unknown and unrecognized as she had an unassuming and entirely unpretentious nature.

A celebration of Shirley’s life was held at her home on Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. She is survived by her daughter Danielle, and son Damien.

Rogelle & Ernest Pelletier

. . . **Besant** *continued from page 59*


“World Religion”. Clearly, however, she refused to be swayed by the Canadians’ opposition to her policies, and they in turn did not cease to criticize them in the coming years.

If Annie Besant’s final visit to Toronto was a box office disappointment to her agent, she nevertheless left the city richer from her fees and no bills to pay. The three local Lodges had agreed in advance to cover the expenses — quite large for the times — on a per capita basis.<sup>37</sup> She was also given “. . . a portrait of herself, photographed by a new un fading process on metal, to be preserved at Adyar.”<sup>38</sup>

Before leaving Toronto she wrote a farewell message to the members.<sup>39</sup> In it she again touched on the pos-

itive value of differences of opinion and pointed to the unity all might find in their gratitude to H.P. Blavatsky. She closed by “. . . thanking the General Secretary and the Theosophists of Canada for the friendly welcome given to me, and the pleasant meetings we have shared.”

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Although for four days in 1926 the Toronto Theosophists were enthused by Annie Besant’s presence, few new members were attracted to the Society as a result of her visit. As in 1893 and 1897, she evidently left no lasting impression on the city. 

<sup>37</sup> “Official Notes” CT 7:10 (Dec 1926), 218.

<sup>38</sup> [Smythe], “Mrs. A. Besant at 80” *Toronto Daily Star* Nov 3, 1926.

<sup>39</sup> “Mrs. Besant’s Message to Canadian Theosophists” CT 7: 9 (Nov 1926), 180. This 500-word letter, given to Albert Smythe for publication, was written in pencil “close on midnight.”

. . . **Useful** *continued from page 63*

development of magnetic and psychic constitutions in this country. The cause for the wonderfully-rapid development and spread of the spiritualistic movement in the United States was in the freedom from prejudice and the conditions of physiological constitution which favored psychic development, the psychic dominating the physical and not the physical mastering the psychic, as in the older races. As the spiritualistic movement in the direction of psychic phenomena took its rise in this country and ran riot, so it is further practicable to have a like development in the direction of the occult. Consequently the probability is that there will be an extreme development of numbers of persons in this country toward what are now termed 'magic powers.'


"Let it be clearly understood that the Theosophic Society is by no means a school of magic, but it recognizes the facts of an occult knowledge of the higher — and as yet little understood by the world at large — laws of nature and desires to do away with the selfishness inherent in present man and to utilize those magical powers which do exist for the benefit of the race. Incalculable would be the harm of general knowledge of those magical powers at the present time, for they would naturally be employed for material considerations connected with the personal life of man for selfish and illusory ends. The Theosophical Society endeavors to promote knowledge of and care for, rather, that individual life of man (not personal) which extends from incarnation to incarnation over a period of many thousands of years.

"In the language of medieval and cabalistic thinkers, 'man's true endeavor is in the direction of his greater self and of the universal life, in contradistinction to the personal life,' and it is in the new race in America that such ideas are likely to take root and grow rap-

idly. There will be an upheaval in the direction of magic, both white (good) and black, (evil,) and it is the mission of The Theosophical Society to teach men how to use their newly-acquired powers wisely, for the good of humanity."

"How will those new conditions be manifested?"

"The progress will be shown by an increasing number of people being born with abnormal senses, and they will increase until the generality will be what we would now term abnormal and those born with the present ordinary range of senses will be looked upon as failures in development. And, as those of awakened psychic perceptions marry and have children, their offspring will be even more highly endowed than they with psychic powers. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought transference, direct perception without the use of any of the external senses, the development of one sense which shall be the synthesis of all and which will correspond to the faculty of intuition, will be the outcome of the psychic development of which I have spoken.


"The most prejudiced materialist, if he is not grossly ignorant, cannot deny that the possibility of such abnormal powers has been amply proved by innumerable isolated instances. It is, therefore, not difficult to conceive their spread among the generality of a race suitable for such development. If the Theosophical Society succeeds in its mission and does not fall away from it, as similar efforts have fallen away in past centuries, there will be a development of such powers of knowledge during the next century as will in great measure destroy the material considerations of the present day and direct science mainly toward the study of the occult rather than the phenomenal and physical." 

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. . . **Messenger** *continued from page 69*

She told me that at that time they had a small list of titles, and a few hundred stores on their mailing list. By 1975, they had over 1000 and their booklist was many hundred titles. By 1980 there were 2000, and by 1985 there were 3500 stores on their list. I can verify this number, because when DeVorss accepted a Wizard title for distribution, they asked for flyers in that quantity. Correspondingly, their catalog grew to several thousand entries.

When Hedda Lark retired in 1998, the denouement had taken hold of the entire publishing industry, and with the advent of the internet, most of the small new age bookstores were gone or dying. Giant mega-cor-

porations took over, and forced conformity with their regulations and procedures. The small independents of which the entire movement consisted, were forced out. Today, we find self-help, self-improvement, personal interaction, has replaced the metaphysical interest in most areas. The internet has become a huge auction, with only the wealthy able to afford books trading at ten to fifteen times their price only a few years ago. Those of us in the center of it all can truly say that it was limited to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. No one can doubt that the messenger sent a powerful message, from behind the scenes, and to all, not just theosophists. 

# *Fohat is the Steed, Thought is the Rider*

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*It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. . . . Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualized and attains to self – or reflective – consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life. – Secret Doctrine I, 16*

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