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**Editor**

**PRADEEP H. GOHIL**

*PRADEEP H. GOHIL*

## **A STEP FORWARD**

Most of the theosophists know Dr Radha Burnier or Radhaji as she was fondly called. However, it is necessary to introduce her briefly when the Indian Section is bringing out a special publication of “*The Indian Theosophist*” in November 2023, to celebrate her birth centenary on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2023. It is almost an impossible task to talk about such a gigantic personality in an editorial. However, the work had to be done and a best attempt has been made to do it well.

She was born in a Theosophical family in Adyar, Chennai, within the campus of the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society (TS). She was the daughter of Mr Nilkanta Sri Ram, who was the fifth International President of the TS, and Srimati Bhagirathi, who was also an active member of the Society. Although she was born a Brahmin, her family did not follow the exclusivist customs attached to their caste but adhered to the Theosophical ideals of “There is no Religion Higher than Truth” and “Universal Brotherhood”.

Radhaji was a third-generation Theosophist. Her grandfather, A. Nilakanta Sastri, was an early member of the TS, much inspired by the founders of the organization when they came to Madras, India. As a child, she had the opportunity to make acquaintance with the then President of T.S., Annie Besant of which she kept some memories even during later years. She was educated in the National Girls High School, which was founded by Annie Besant and other theosophists. After Dr G.S. Arundale started the Besant Memorial School, she joined it and completed her secondary school education. She then went to the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) from where she obtained a Master’s Degree in Sanskrit with distinction and standing first in that university. Later on, the Nagarjuna University, India, conferred an honorary D. litt. on her in 1984.

She studied classical Indian dance with her aunt, Rukmini Devi Arundale, at Kalakshetra, the Art Academy that was near the Adyar campus of the TS. She was the first student to graduate in Bharat Natyam from Kalakshetra and gave dance recitals in many cities in India and abroad. On 10<sup>th</sup> July 1948, Radhaji performed a dance

recital in front of Lord Mountbatten, his wife, and Pt. Nehru, etc. Everyone was impressed by her graceful movements and the technical perfection of her performance. It was felt by many that this was possible only as a manifestation of inner possibilities and capacities.

Early in 1951 Radhaji married Raymond Burnier, a Swiss photographer, who helped her begin a brief film career. He had come to India in 1942 to photograph temple art and met young Radhaji at BH U in Banaras. She played a major role in director Jean Renoir's classical film, 'The River' based on Rumer Godden's novel. The film was made in only 5 months. The producer of the film, Kenneth McEldowney, was skeptical to have Radhaji in the film until he saw her dance. She was like a goddess to him and his wife could not comprehend that a goddess can have such a delightful sense of humour, such honest intelligence, such understanding of people and still be so young. Her family's broad-minded view of culture permitted Radhaji to accept the role in the film. Shortly after her marriage, the Burniers travelled to Beverly Hills and then to New York with the Renoirs. Her film was well received by the public and several Indian and American film makers. The Burniers separated soon after. During this time she met some famous people like Charlie Chapin, with whom she had a meal. She was offered to participate in movies produced by Hollywood but she declined the offer.

Radhaji joined the TS in 1935, when she was only 12 years old. She became actively involved with its various activities from 1945 to 1951, while pursuing her studies at BHU. She served as a Librarian at the National Headquarters of the Indian Section of TS. She was President of the Youth Lodge and Adyar Lodge for several years and President of the Madras Theosophical Federation from 1949 to 1953. From 1954 to 1959 she was the assistant director of the Adyar Library and Research Centre founded by Colonel Olcott. From 1959 to 1980 she was its Director. She edited the Library's Research Journal '*Brahmavidya*' and supervised its publications. She translated several Sanskrit works, such as *Hatth-yoga-pradipika*. In 1960, Radhaji was elected as General Secretary of the Indian Section of TS and stayed in office for 18 years. During that time she lectured extensively throughout India and the world on Theosophical, philosophical and cultural subjects.

Besides her work as General Secretary of the Indian Section and as International President of the TS later on, she was member of the Society's General Coun-

cil since 1960, a member of its Executive Committee since 1957 and a member of the Adyar Estate Administration Committee since its inception in 1960. She was also the President of several Theosophical centres such as the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California, USA, The Manor in Sydney, Australia and the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, The Netherlands.

Radhaji was elected International President of the T.S. at Adyar on 4-7-1980 and took charge of the office on 17-7-1980. She was eventually re-elected four times. As the 7<sup>th</sup> President she was the longest serving President for 33 years. She presided over four World Congress of the TS: In 1982 at Nairobi, in 1993 at Brazil, in 2001 at Sydney and in 2010 at Rome. She lectured frequently all over the world. She was asked to present the prestigious Blavatsky Lectures on ‘Self Knowledge in the Light of Theosophy’ in 1979, on “The Universal Yoga Tradition” in 1988 and on “Living Truth: The Future of T.S.” in 2005, all at the TS in England. Her approach to Theosophy was that it should not be taken merely as a conceptual spiritual philosophy, but as a tool to produce a human regeneration. The wide and deep perspective of life and human beings that Theosophy offers is meant to give people the right perspective so that their actions can be wise and have a transformative effect.

Although she was actively engaged in movements that worked on an external level to palliate the effects of suffering on human beings, animals and the environment, she viewed the role of the TS as having to do primarily with the inner, rather than the outer challenge. She said, “I think the work of the TS is to point to the challenge within, because it is of much greater importance to see it and deal with it than to go on dealing with what is outside. If we do not look at the source of the problem, but only at the effects, then only temporary, partial and superficial solutions are found”. She frequently spoke about the need to produce a radical or fundamental change in the human being. She said, “The fundamental change is therefore from selfishness, which is also self-centredness, self-preoccupation, and so forth, to a state of sympathy, harmony and unity, where other people’s well-being is realized to be of as much, if not more, importance than one’s own. Human society cannot change unless the individuals change, and the change must be in the direction of universal outlook.”

Radhaji was involved in many other cultural, educational and spiritual activities and organizations. She was the Secretary of the Cultural Association of Varanasi,

and supported the work of Beauty without Cruelty, an animal rights movement based in India. Under her presidentship and guidance, the work of the Social Welfare Centre and the Animal Dispensary at Adyar were vitalized, the Olcott Memorial School, which was languishing, became known as one of the best schools for underprivileged children, while in Varanasi, she was the Manager of the Besant Theosophical School, Annie Besant Primary School, Vasant Kanya Inter College, Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalay (College) and the Hostel for girls. She also became the head of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS), a service branch of the TS, putting into action the tenets of Theosophy. Service had always been an important part of Radhaji's life as she helped the underprivileged students receive education, gave opportunities to the poor, worked for the need of environmental awareness and promotion of animal welfare while helping many people with her own money.

M. III. Bro Radha Burnier, 330, was the Most Puissant Ground Commander (MPGC) of the Eastern Section of the Order Le Doit Humain. In 2001, after a disagreement in the proceedings of the order and its future, she founded the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry. She was The Most Illustrious Ground Master (MIGM) of the Order as well as President of its Supreme Council from 2001 to 2013.

Keeping in mind that much of Dr Annie Besant's work for India was aimed at the rehabilitation of India on a moral and spiritual basis amid the fogs and storms of increasing materialism, Radhaji started New Life for India Movement in 1968 under her leadership to create an awareness in Indian youth of right citizenship, right values and right means of livelihood. Throughout her life Radhaji met many religious and political leaders in India and from all over the world. She spoke at the Parliament of the World's Religions which took place in Chicago on 'Self-Transformation and the Future of Religion'. She met with Tenzin Gyatso, the XIV Dalai Lama several times during her presidentship. She was also a close associate of J. Krishnamurti. They had known each other from the time he was a young man at Adyar and she was a child. Once Krishnamurti gave her a tricycle as a birthday present and enjoyed watching her riding it. Radhaji was a trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation India. She also maintained a good friendship with Mrs Indira Gandhi and Pupul Jayakar. They had met frequently and on Nov 1, 1984, Radhaji was to leave for Delhi to have lunch with Mrs Gandhi but the latter was assassinated on 31.10.1984.

Radhaji served as the editor of *'The Theosophist'* and wrote many articles and editorials. She has authored about 960 published articles. In addition, she wrote books, lectures and booklets. Some of the titles are "*The Way of Self Knowledge*", "*No other Path to Go*", *Truth, Beauty and Goodness*", "*Human Regeneration*", "*Masters and Gurus: Stages on the Path*", "*The World Around Us*", "*On the Watch-Tower about the Work of the TS*", "*Theosophy is for Everyone*" and many more. She passed to higher planes on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013. Her ashes were consigned to the Garden of Remembrance, as is tradition with Theosophical Presidents, and to the Bay of Bengal on the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> November.

A friend of Radhaji once asked her in 1951, when she was only 28 years old, "what do you want from life, Radha? Do you want to marry and have a family, do you want to have a career as a dancer or do you want to be a teacher? I think you can be anything you want to be. What is really your ambition?" She answered the question directly and in simple words as she always did. "MY ambition is to perfect the art of self-discipline". She was indeed a great example of someone who had perfected the art of self-discipline. If we can attempt to do this sincerely, it will be a step forward in our life.

**When Universal Brotherhood and Compassion for all creatures becomes the law of our life, when self-discipline purifies the body, mind and the whole of our nature, and when our daily life expresses the supreme principle of harmlessness, then grace descends. No one needs to ask for grace, it rains down on all who live the right kind of life.**

**RADHA BURNIER**  
**'On the Watch Tower'**  
***The Theosophist*, October 2004**

*RADHA BURNIER*

## **INAUGURAL ADDRESS\***

Let me say first of all that it is a great pleasure for me to come here again after years of acquaintance with the work of the Indian Section of the T.S. Without this expression of happiness I would not be doing the right things.

We are meeting here to consider a topic which is before every one of us. Let us not think that it is a subject which is vague or general, that it applies to all the people in the world except oneself, that we are individually free of conflict, while the aims of the rest of the world create the problems. This is the attitude that most people have.

First of all, where does conflict arise? It seems as if people have conflicts for various reasons. But are there really so many reasons? Or, is there only one reason which we can call 'ignorance' or 'selfishness'. Both are in fact the same. Or are there different reasons for conflict – between people, between nature and man, between almost everything which we find in the world.

Is there in man a desire to see that his own desire for satisfaction is fulfilled, that the area around him does more or less what he considers to be right. Almost everybody has this idea. Conflict may arise because concepts about this differ. Let us first of all take this question of conflict which affects every person. Conflict which goes on even when he is not aware that there is conflict. This very fact makes it difficult for him not to be in conflict when the time arises. So can each of us go into ourselves to see whether basically we think conflicting positions can put an end to conflict, the opposing what we think is in favour of conflict can put an end to it, and so on. We have to look at ourselves very carefully before we come to a conclusion on this matter.

Let us look at what is happening in the world today. Everybody believes or likes other people to believe that he is in favour of peace. It is for peace that another country is invaded because the other person, the other people, the other government is not dealing with the things properly. But if I were to be in charge, then it would be different. So this is one reason for conflict that we imagine we can put an

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\*Delivered in the Conference on '**Peace & Conflict**' organized by the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society at Varanasi from 5 to 7 March, 2010.



end to, by standing up against it. I do not want to particularize, but we can take an obvious case, where the conflict seems to be created and proceeded according to the wish of the agent who wanted the conflict. That is the conflict which was created by the United States, which became much wider problem than they imagined it would be.

Why was it created? Most people believe that it was for selfish reasons. They wanted any amount of gas and petrol to command, but did not want to say so, but to say something else which would appear more moral and more right. And of course the whole thing ended in a fiasco. So many of us enter into small problems, or large conflicts such as happened in Iraq and the middle East, and leave traces which cannot be erased very easily.

The reason for conflict is never the same as what it is said to be. The reasons given to other people may be different, from what one knows. Whatever it is, it is conflict. So what we have to consider very carefully is conflict which is in our own minds, for it creates the conflict outside.

I think this subject is very closely connected with that of peace. Much is talked about peace, and people say they want peace. But do they really want peace? The conditions, which people think are suitable for themselves, they call peace. Peace is a subject which is easy to talk about, but very difficult to realize for oneself. This is not peace in the superficial sense, but the peace which will make conflict impossible.

I am reminded of the story of Lord Buddha when he met Angulimala. Angulimala was a rough kind of individual. He knew how to solve problems by cutting off heads, an important part of the opponent. And he added one *anguli* or finger as a mark that he had killed a person, and like this he acquired a whole string to wear around him (*angulimala*). When he heard that the Buddha was walking through a particular forest, he said it was a wonderful opportunity he had and he went nearer. The Buddha was left alone, because all the other monks had run away. Angulimala arrived there, and was surprised to find his return to be so full of peace and happiness which welled up from within. Then he began to converse with the Buddha and as he spoke, he became more and more convinced that his approach to things were wrong, and Buddha knew what was right. His inner knowledge made him different from others. This is a story which is of interest to every one of us. Later he became a disciple of the Buddha.

Do we really know the solution to the immense sorrows which are caused by conflicts of various kinds? I will not go into the details, but conflicts seem different from each other, but all of them have the same source. If we find the source, not theoretically talk about it, if we actually find it, then we end conflict of every kind. The truly spiritual people have no conflict at all. There may be other people who are in conflict with them and their ideals, who would like them to change, but they do not need to change.

What is this kind of peace which nothing can disturb? We all know superficial peace. It can come to an end through conflict, or through apparent conflict, through what we think of as no conflict at all. But the peace we feel is superficial, allows the possibility of conflict, while peace with no concern with any worldly objective is free. We have an order of service and there are people who think if only the order of service can spread everywhere, there will be no problem at all. This has existed in many forms in many parts of the world and the problems continue. But when the Buddha walks and he meets different people, whatever conflict exists subsides.

What is real freedom from conflict, when it doesn't depend on other people. A single person can be so full of peace, peace under all circumstances, that every problem is solved for that person. That kind of peace is hard to find, but from time to time, it has existed. Some of the words of Jesus Christ indicate this. Many things were attributed to him as is the case of people who lived centuries before, but some words have universal value. He who feels kindness towards those who do not know the meaning of the word 'peace' influenced thousands of people all over the world. The Buddha, Christ, these were examples of people who showed to human beings that there is a way of life which is different, which is so filled with peace, love, and goodness, that nothing else matters. That is why perhaps the Vedantins have considered various aspects of the world as not really true because it does not last. That which lasts is the real. So we have to consider the subjects what is conflict, what is peace, what is that which lasts when everything else is at an end.

*(The Indian Theosophist, July 2011)*

*TIM BOYD*

## **RADHA BURNIER - A PERSON WHOSE LIFE, THOUGHT, AND WORK WAS WHOLLY COMMITTED TO THE T.S.**

I first laid eyes on Radha Burnier in New York at the 1975 Centennial World Congress. She was seated on the dais with a number of other Theosophical luminaries from around the world. I remember her as slender, elegant, and poised. At that time she had already been the General Secretary of the TS India for 15 years. Although she addressed the assembled members during the Congress, I do not have any memory of what she said. It was a very busy event. However, I remember very clearly first meeting her.

A group of us from Chicago, young theosophists at the time, came to the Congress along with Bill Lawrence, a long time TS member who was a mentor for us and the centre of a Theosophical community that formed around him. After the banquet Bill introduced himself and us to Radha. We all gathered around her and told about some of the things we were doing in Chicago. What I remember about the meeting was how focused and present she was. It was a crowded hall and many people were clamouring for Radha's attention, but the quality of her listening made you feel as if you were the only one in the room. Many years later I experienced a similar sense of presence on first meeting the Dalai Lama - a wordless communication in which you are fully acknowledged. We invited her to visit us in Chicago whenever it was possible. Although that never happened, little did I know that our paths would intertwine in the coming years.

Four years later, following TS International President John Coats' untimely death, Radha was elected to the position. As president she travelled the world and would visit the TS in America frequently. Always the group of us would make the one hour drive from Chicago to the TSA headquarters in the suburb of Wheaton, Illinois to hear her speak and to give our greetings. Over the years, as my responsibilities within the TS grew the number of people involved in my meetings with her got smaller. Still I had never had a private conversation with her. As the head of not only the TS, but also every allied and ceremonial group related to the TS, she was iconic to me, and the idea of a one on one conversation never occurred to me. Plus,

in her public persona, she projected some degree of aloofness. I would come to realize that it was not intentional, neither was it the coldness that accompanies the aloofness of many. There was no sense that she was “above it all”, or “better than”. It was simply the make up of her personality.

I was never the person to stand up and ask questions in public meetings. Very occasionally my question would be “Could you say more about...?” when something that felt vital to me needed fleshing out. But a time came when I did have a question for her. It was something sensitive and personal, related to my own path. Once again she was visiting the USA and staying for a few days at the Olcott headquarters. I called to ask if she could find time for the two of us to meet. She agreed and invited me to see her in her quarters.

I arrived at the appointed time and was directed to her room on the ground floor. I knocked and she invited me in. At that point she had been travelling for a long time. She had already visited the Krotona Institute in California and conducted a retreat there, in addition to having just finished participating in the TSA Annual Convention. When I arrived she was just getting up from some well needed rest. It was Radha’s custom to wear her hair in a bun at the back of her head. It was the only way I had ever seen her. When she invited me to come in and sit I was surprised to see the bun undone, and her hair in a long braid. After our initial exchange of conversation about the just finished Convention and a couple of other matters, I launched into my reason for seeing her. I explained the situation, and she asked one or two questions. After less than ten minutes, she dismissed my concern as a non-issue that had no bearing on a spiritual path. Then she started talking about her own life and involvement in the TS. She talked about the unplanned nature of her own life path, and the guiding effect of a variety of unforeseen circumstance in shaping her life within the TS. About how her early graduation from High School meant that she could not enter University for a year; about how, for lack of another direction, she accepted her aunt, Rukmini Devi’s, invitation to study Bharanatyam dance; how she found that she excelled at it; how, based on this unintended involvement with dance, the French director, Jean Renoir, cast her in the film *The River*, and the life she lived travelling the world among the film and cultural glitterati of the time: about her becoming the TS India General Secretary at a time when the Section was in need of strong financial skills, that previous to this time she had no real exposure

to budgeting and financial management, but again she found that she excelled. To the best of my memory our conversation took place in the mid-1990's, but even then she was thinking about succession in the TS. She said that she would gladly give up the role as President, if she could identify someone to succeed her. Although the conversation was still going strong, about an hour and a half after I entered her quarters I began to feel a little guilty about taking up so much of her time. We parted with the agreement to talk again in the future. It would be years before I was active in International TS work, and I was not travelling to Adyar. So, our contact was limited to the occasions when her travel brought her to the US.

Taken as a whole our one to one conversations were few in number, but the ease and depth at which they took place meant a great deal to me. One thing was clear: Radha was a person whose life, thought, and work was wholly committed to the TS. She was born and raised at Adyar, and she died there. She served the Society as President longer than any person in the TS's history. She was a person who had internalized the Ageless Wisdom teachings in both a profound and personal way. Her association and appreciation for Krishnamurti's thought was clear, but the way it expressed through her was different than JK. Like Krishnamurti she faced the unavoidable frustration of sharing a teaching that exceeded the grasp of those for whom it was intended. Loved, respected, even revered by people around the world, still in many ways hers was a lonely life - the curse of those who earnestly walk a spiritual path.

**As Theosophists we have to learn to be unified and work for the good for all, and I hope we will have success in this direction. I hope we will take humanity along the path towards unselfishness that human beings are meant to go along, a way which frees them from the shackles and proceed towards a greater life.**

**RADHA BURNIER  
Varanasi, 19.10.2008**

*DEEPA PADHI\**

## **INDELIBLE MEMORIES OF RADHA BURNIER**

When Radha Burnier, the 7<sup>th</sup> President of The International Theosophical Society, was only 28 years of age, she was asked by one of her friends as to what she would like to be in life. Her prompt answer was, ‘My ambition is to perfect the art of self-discipline.’ She knew very well that the society cannot change, if the individual does not change. This was her ambition and mission which she achieved and later, that became her teaching to the human society. True learning can bring about internal change, growth and understanding.

Her approach to Theosophy was very practical and she believed that Theosophy is not only meant for the intellectuals and educated people. It is for one and all. It is as important for an illiterate woman as it is for a highly placed intellectual. The simple reason is Theosophy is an art of living a harmonious life.

Radhaji used to give emphasis on reflecting over our experiences of everyday life in relation to not only other human beings but also non-human beings around us. According to her this helps in living a harmonious, righteous and orderly life and helps in developing empathetic and compassionate attitude towards other life forms. To quote her words, ‘To build a gentle world, there must be gentle thoughts’.

This reminds me of one of the incidents when Radhaji had visited Bhubaneswar in 2003 to attend the Annual Conference of Utkal Theosophical Federation. She was seated on the dais and the meeting was just about to start, a member walked up to her to present a flower bouquet. Radhaji did not like the way he had held the bouquet almost crushing the flowers and told him that if a bouquet was to be presented, one should have learnt first how to handle gently the flowers – the most tender and beautiful creation of Nature.

As I was sitting in the front row, I could overhear her comments which made me lost for a while remembering Radhaji’s words in one of her articles—

“Awareness of beauty has nothing to do with the perception of mere facts. We

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\*International Vice-President of the Theosophical Society.

may know every fact concerning the nature, but to be aware of its beauty we must learn to be conscious at a different level. It is also possible to look at a garden and see nothing at all of its beauty because the mind is busy thinking about a dispute or investment. When a medley of thoughts and images pass through the brain, consciousness is much reduced”.

This reflects her sensitivity, sense of aesthetic value and keen observation of minute detail.

On another occasion while we were walking together, she shared her thoughts and expressed her concern for the lack of the sense of orderliness in case of majority of people. As she said,

“One should know that there is an orderly and harmonious pattern in the macrocosm and there is a conscious design and intent behind and within this orderliness. Therefore, we must try to maintain this orderliness in the micro level in all our activities, outer and inner. So that there will be no chaos and disharmony.”

In her article, ‘In Tune With the Universe’, she had written the following passage which reflects her feeling of oneness with other beings. As she writes:

“The subject of attachment is of vital importance to humanity. Being out of tune with other people, with the environment, and with ourselves, we have done enormous damage to mutual relationship and to our own progress. The damage we do to ourselves can at no time be separated from the damage we do to others. We are responsible for the whole. Those who are inwardly well-tuned and integrated, radiate harmony and happiness wherever they go and whatever they do. On the other hand, when there is discord inside, it breeds discord outside. All discord blinds the vision and human progress is retarded.”

During the same visit of Radhaji to Bhubaneswar an extraordinary event took place. Soon after our afternoon session, one of our TS members of good standing came to her with his 3 years old son for blessing as the child was suffering from an acute neuro-physical disorder. His head had become abnormally large and the face was swollen. He was not able to speak except making some hoarse sound. Radhaji looked at him very intently with empathy and compassion. While she was looking

at the boy, her face was glowing with a divine radiance. I was a witness to that. Neither did she place her hand on his head nor say anything but only stared at him eye to eye for few minutes. Thereafter, the family left for their home and on the same evening the boy passed away obviously being relieved of his physical pain and suffering.

Most members may not be knowing an incident that speaks of the kindness, love and compassion of Radhaji for animals. It was sometime in 1970s, Radhaji and one of her guests were going to attend a meeting in the convention. Her car suddenly hit a street dog while it was crossing the road. Immediately Radhaji stopped the car, jumped out of the car, knelt down on the road and started giving tender care to the dog. Though she had a large audience waiting for her in the meeting, she couldn't ignore the injured animal but stayed on till the Animal Care team arrived. This was narrated to me by Diana Dunningham Chapotin, the then TOS International Secretary who was an eye witness to it.

Radhaji was very fond of my father Late Dr R.C. Rath who was the founder of Utkal Theosophical Federation. In 1995 she had come to Bhubaneswar for the conference. My father was in his last stage. She heard about my father's condition and wanted to look him up. He was 86 and was on catheter and nasal feeding tube. By that time he had lost his ability to speak but was fully conscious. Seeing her, his face brightened up and tried to convey something to her by drawing geometrical figures in the air. Radhaji felt sad seeing him in that condition and expressed her feelings to my brother who was a doctor and being a son was trying his best to prolong father's life. She wanted us to understand the fact that life in a particular body must be sustained at any cost is a superstition. Prolonging life by some days or months in a decaying body has no meaning in the perspective of the higher evolution of human soul. The process of reincarnation is intended to pass through a variety of experiences which help the individuals realize his indestructible inner being. One should not interfere with Karma. The wise persons follow the law as they are aware that these laws of the universe bring about what is spiritually good for all. Here I recall a passage from Radhaji's article on Karma:

“When a particular relationship seems special and then ends, only the forms through which life manifests are parted. Life itself cannot be separated any



more than space. One may put a box here and a vase there, both of which contain space, but space is a whole, even if the containers are shattered. Life's inseparability is a fundamental truth."

*(The World Around US-page 230)*

Radhaji used to live a very simple life. She was never conscious of her attire or physical appearance. Once she had remarked that the obsession with the body, its health and beauty was a form of materialism as the typical New Age spirituality is considered as 'spiritual materialism.'

On the centenary celebration of her Birth Year 2023, all of us should get inspired by the indelible memories of her and try to bring change in ourselves which will consequently help changing the world.

**The Theosophical Society is a small society. But small though we are, we can help the world to recover; we must bring to the attention of people, again and again if necessary, that there must be a revolutionary process to develop virtues, to become more intelligent and less selfish. If we have this thought in our minds, and we think about it together and also individually, we can bring new life to the Theosophical Society. Instead of repeating old ideas let us think about everlasting principles, and the way we should present them to people in the present day.**

**RADHA BURNIER**  
**'On the Watch Tower'**  
*The Theosophist, May 2009*

P. KRISHNA\*

## MEMORIES OF RADHA BURNIER

I have been requested to pen some memories of my cousin Radha. She was the daughter of my father's elder brother N. Sriram and was 14 years older than me. So, we did not have much interaction in childhood. She lived in Adyar while my parents stayed and worked in Indore. We would meet her during visits to Adyar during vacations. She was learning Bharat Natyam under Rukmini Devi, who was my father's younger sister, married to Mr. Arundale. She was known to be a very good dancer and we looked forward to see her performances. I got to know her more when she came and stayed with us in Indore while studying for her exams for M.A. in Sanskrit from the Banaras Hindu University. She did better than all the students taking those exams.

I was very surprised when I learnt of her role in the movie entitled "The River" and was thrilled to see her photograph on the cover of the popular film magazine called 'Filmfare'. I saw the movie and felt her dance in the movie was excellent, but her acting was rather ordinary. A few years later we heard of her marriage to Mr. Raymond Burnier, a Swiss citizen of French origin, who was a professional photographer. He had migrated to India and adopted Hinduism out of his fascination with India. However, after a few years he returned to Europe but Radha did not wish to leave her work at Adyar. They visited each other for a few years but gradually grew apart as their interests diverged greatly. They parted as friends without divorcing each other. Radha had acquired Swiss citizenship by then.

She was for several years the General Secretary of the Indian Section of the TS at Varanasi. It was during this period that we came closer to each other. She invited me to give talks in the TS at Varanasi and we occasionally invited her home for meals. We were both greatly interested in Krishnaji's teachings and had long discussions about what he said. Later, when she took up full time work at Adyar and became the President of the TS, she would often invite me to speak at the TS convention in December and conduct the School of the Wisdom at times. I became a regular contributor to 'The Theosophist'. We went together as lecturers at Confer-

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ences and summer schools at TS centres in California, Naarden, Nairobi, Switzerland, Rome, and Costa Rica. Some of these lectures and seminars were recorded and made into books (1-2) by TPH in Adyar.

Radha had known Krishnamurti from her childhood, so I interviewed her about JK. This interview was recorded and made into chapter 7 in a later book (3) about Krishnamurti. In a public dialogue which we had at the TS in Varanasi in 2008 on Theosophy and Krishnamurti, I asked her why there is a division between the TS and the Krishnamurti Foundation when both have Truth as their ultimate objective? She gave a very profound reply, "I think we do not know what Theosophy is and we do not know what Krishnaji is talking about, therefore difficulties arise!" (3- p.240). This is of course true of all division between human beings; they are all results of ignorance as illusion created by the mind, which is then attached to its own illusions/opinions/ judgements. The learning mind does not get attached to any opinions/ conclusions; it observes instead and considers with deep attention, positing the Truth as the unknown,

From time to time, Radhaji told me several anecdotes about her interactions and experiences with JK, most of which I have reproduced in chapter 4 of my book (3). People asked her how she could reconcile being a Trustee of the K foundation and at the same time President of the TS. She said, "I find nothing to reconcile." She also said on another occasion that there are Theosophists who are not members of the TS and there are members of the TS who are not Theosophists. To her a true Theosophist was one who was free of division and felt one with the whole world. In that sense Krishnamurti was a true Theosophist. Theosophy is the wisdom religion and Krishnamurti all his life pointed out how a human being can grow in Wisdom. If one sees a division it is because of one's own narrow-mindedness. All her life she remained devoted to the TS and to Krishnaji. She invited Krishnaji to talk at the TS in Varanasi in 1985 and she had earlier invited him to enter the gates of the TS at Adyar after a lapse of nearly 48 years. In her lectures and writings she would often quote K and that revived the interest in Krishnaji's teachings in the TS throughout the world.

After I became a Trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation India in 1986 I would meet her more often and visit her home in Adyar as I had to regularly visit Vasanta Vihar for meetings and conferences. Whenever I was invited to speak at the TS,

Radha would invite me to stay with her and I got to meet several distinguished Theosophists and public figures in her home. It was a great privilege to know her so closely, listen to her lectures and learn so much from my conversations and dialogues with her.

**References:**

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**We should try to discriminate between the real and the unreal. This requires extremely clear intelligent perception. A mind which is normally not clear and logical, is not capable of becoming suddenly receptive with regard to spiritual matters. Therefore we should always be logical and clear in our thinking as far as we can.**

**RADHA BURNIER**  
**‘The Cause of Sorrow’**  
*The Theosophist*, September 2013

*LINDA OLIVEIRA\**

## **RADHA BURNIER — AN UNCOMMON LIFE**

Some individuals who contact the T.S. stay with it for a while and then, for various reasons, move on to other pursuits. On the other hand, Mrs Radha Burnier, or ‘Radhaji’, was one of those individuals in whom the Society’s work took root deeply. Not everyone who is born into a family of Theosophists makes Theosophy the core of their life’s work, but she certainly did this. Her dedication to the Theosophical Society and related activities remained steadfast throughout her long life.

I had the privilege of commencing an association with Radhaji in 1981, during a sojourn in the United States. In 1998, during my first visit to Adyar, she generously gave an hour or so of her time to show me around some areas of estate at the International Headquarters. Her deep feeling for this place, spiritually and physically, was clearly evident.

Our paths were to cross on various occasions after that, culminating in an invitation by her to work at Adyar. This resulted in my residency at the sacred centre of the T.S. from early 2009 until late 2011, serving as one of the Society’s officers.

For so many, Mrs Burnier was not only their President, but their spiritual leader. One could list her academic qualifications, the many activities allied to T.S. work in which she was involved, as well as an honorary Doctorate which was bestowed upon her. One could also speak of the esteem with which she was held in higher echelons in India, and the many individuals she quietly helped. However, these things seem in some way to be superficial, compared with who she was and the special influence which accompanied her wherever she went.

In the International President’s office, Radhaji made it clear that she wanted tasks to be done well. On observing her, this quality was evident. She did not rush when doing a task, or when reviewing a paper. On the contrary, she gave it careful attention at that moment. In this respect she showed by example the ideal of ex-

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\* Former International Vice-President of the Theosophical Society.

tending that quality of concentration, which is required in order for one to commence the meditative process, throughout the day.

At times her personality was not so easy to comprehend; indeed, she had her detractors over the years. However, Mrs Burnier also had around her an abiding aura of strength, deep contentment and an undeniable holiness. One did not have to be especially sensitive to feel this and to be affected by it. At times it could pour forth like sudden a wave of beneficence. It also infused her office at Adyar. With her often luminous eyes and steady gaze, one gained a sense that she could read into the hearts of others.

The keynote for Radhaji's Presidency of the T.S. was sounded in the book, *Human Regeneration*, for she had a profound conviction of the need for a radical change in the human psyche. Her substantial interest in the tide of human affairs, as well the breadth of her interests and insights into life, were amply demonstrated in the anthology, *The World Around Us*. They spanned topics such as evolution, civilization, progress, ethics, religion, the art of living, inhumanity, violence, love, freedom and brotherhood. It was evident that she viewed world affairs from a larger point of view, with an unwavering conviction of what is right and important.

I had the privilege of attending a number of retreats which Radhaji led, demonstrating not only her ability to draw inspiration from diverse sources, but also her own unique and special insights into Life. At such times she was a particularly strong conduit for influences which were not of this world.

Radhaji demonstrated repeatedly in her talks and her writings a relatively rare fusion of heart and mind – that intelligence which is implicit in the 'unveiled spiritual perception' of which H.P. Blavatsky wrote in *The Golden Stairs*. On many occasions this was reflected in a superior kind of Wisdom, which made itself known in different ways. She had a clear conviction about what is implied in leading a meaningful life. She also kept very much alive in the T.S. the spirit of serious reflection, along with open-minded enquiry.

During a difficult age of the world, dominated by the material in so many respects, hers was an exemplary life lived with careful restraint; yet with an unmistakable spiritual fullness which comparatively few are able to enjoy, infused with a love that transcends the personal.

In her words:

Only when there is clarity together with a deep concern for the good of all beings, is the search [for the spiritual] well begun. Finding out what is spiritual is itself the leading of the spiritual life. For the great truths of life are not external facts but dimensions of consciousness. Harmony, love, goodness and peace cannot be known as one knows a car or a stone – objects whose shape, colour, texture and other characteristics can be perceived and may be retained in the memory. Love is not such an object outside oneself. It must be in one's own nature for the only way of knowing love is to feel love and be loving.

*No Other Path to Go*

**This, then, is the challenge that life offers -- that man should consciously learn to understand and to receive its message, as non-human life learns to receive it unconsciously. It has been said that in the vast design which nature is working out, there is a movement from unconscious perfection to conscious imperfection and that from conscious imperfection one has to move forward to conscious perfection. Conscious perfection can come about only when we learn to work in harmony with the design of life itself. Life demands that the mind of man should renounce its own desires, its own impulses, instincts and reflexes, so that a power which is greater can unfold and reveal itself, not in accordance with man's will but in obedience to divine laws and the will of nature.**

**RADHA BURNIER**

**'The Challenge of Life'**

***The Theosophist*, November 2013**

THE INDIAN THEOSOPHIST, November/2023/25

NARENDRA M. SHAH\*

## **RADHA BURNIER — LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO HUMAN REGENERATION**

Born on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1923, at Adyar, Mrs. Radha Burnier was a truly outstanding personality. Her extraordinary qualities and talents in so many different fields of human existence, more particularly on the subtler levels rather than the physical level, made her stand out as a very intelligent, cultured and dignified person with a heart full of compassion and kindness. In any gathering or audience – intellectual, artistic, environmental, scientific, spiritual, philosophical, cultural, fine arts, etc., she left a lasting impression on all who got a chance to be in her presence. The fact that she was born and brought up in Adyar and also the fact that she was the daughter of N. Sri Ram, the 5<sup>th</sup> International President of The Theosophical Society, must have contributed immensely to her flowering into such a great personality. Few people must have had the opportunity to be influenced and be affected by Theosophy and its headquarters' harmonious and serene environment at Adyar for a whole lifetime – from birth till she breathed her last on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013.

Radha Burnier obtained a Master's degree in Sanskrit from the Benares Hindu University and this led her to become the Director of the Adyar Library and Research Centre where she supervised an amazing amount of research and publication work for 20 years from 1959 – 1979. In 1984, the Nagarjuna University conferred on her the Honorary Degree of Letters in recognition of her *“distinguished contribution to the advancement of learning and the promotion of human rights”*. After serving the society for over 30 years in various capacities, in 1980 at the age of 57, she was elected as the 7<sup>th</sup> International President of The Theosophical Society.

She was a warm-hearted person and had greatly endeared herself – not only to the members of the Society but to all those who came in contact with her. Her work for the spread of the message of Theosophy and growth of the Theosophical Society was so phenomenal that she ended becoming the longest serving International President of The Theosophical Society.

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\*General Secretary, East & Central African Section



She visited the East & Central African Section five times and it was during her visit to Nairobi in 1982 to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the Theosophical Society, that I first met her and subsequently, I have had several opportunities to interact and travel with her. It is from that background that I write a few words about her life and work.

During Radhaji's five visits to East & Central Africa her clarity of thought, depth of vision and an all rounded intellect left a lasting impression, not only amongst members of the Society but all others – reporters, scientists, philosophers, professors, religious leaders, social reformers, interviewers etc – all who had the opportunity to talk to her or to listen to her numerous lectures on a wide variety of subjects.

She never had any doubts about the correctness of her opinions or the appropriateness of her actions. During one of her visits to Kenya, she had just opened a convention of the East & Central African convention and given her keynote address when she received a message from Adyar informing her about how state authorities wanted to hive off a piece of the Adyar estate to pass a highway through the Adyar estate! Radhaji cancelled all her planned lecture tour and flew back to Adyar the very next day. She put up a strong argument with the authorities and convincingly managed to put a stop to the controversial state project passing through the Adyar estate.

A strong-minded and strong-willed person, Radhaji's life is a beautiful example of true selfless service. She devoted her whole life to work for the cause of human welfare and liberation - never thinking about her own self. Her book "*Human Regeneration*" clearly shows her focus and emphasis on 'human welfare and change' through ethics and morals. It is a beautiful guide to all serious workers who want to help the cause of 'human regeneration' and 'transformation'.

She was a serious thinker, reflected deeply and encouraged open minded inquiry. Her lectures and writings were full of wisdom and insight. They reflected a beautiful fusion of an open mind and a pure heart – almost resulting into some sort of an intuitive state. For over 30 years, every month she wrote the lead articles in "*The Theosophist*" entitled "On the Watch Tower". The clarity and simplicity of these articles was such that if even an average reader, started reading it, he would

not want to leave it till he had read the whole article. These articles, though very profound, were written in such an interesting style and on then topical issues that most members of our Section would be eagerly waiting for the next issue of '*The Theosophist*'. These articles often became the basis of group discussions at our Lodge meetings.

Very thorough in everything she did, Radhaji was a great proponent of right use of time and resources. Always mindful of others, she never indulged in idle talk or meaningless conversation. She was outstanding in her interests and her activities – as a dancer, Sanskrit scholar, profound thinker, an eloquent speaker, a versatile writer, an environmentalist, a clear organizer and a social reformer. In her talks, she spoke deeply about compassion, regeneration, oneness of life, environment, etc. with clear examples and statistics.

She always sympathized with the underprivileged and was deeply concerned for the welfare of the less privileged, especially animals. She was consciously aware of the 'oneness of life'. As a result she was a great admirer and a true friend of nature. In one of her articles, she writes "***As each person enters deeply into his or her own consciousness and understands how Nature works, the truth and beauty of the unbreakable whole illumines human consciousness***". This is clearly reflected in her book "*Truth, Beauty and Goodness*". She could easily convince and move listeners to positive action. Her articles talked strongly against abuse of and cruelty to animals.

She was always very calm, composed and peaceful - almost in a contemplative state. Her inner Peace showed on her radiant face all the time. Incidentally, upon her death, M.P. Singhal, our then vice - president wrote: "***Lying in state at the Headquarters Hall, her smiling face reflected peace, as if she was in deep sleep or meditation***".

On the occasion of her Birth Centenary, we take note of and admire her for the wonderful work she has done for the cause of Theosophy during her lifetime. Her exemplary life in the service of her Master is a clear example of what an ideal Theosophical worker should be.

*BARBARA HEBERT\**

## **REMINISCENCE OF RADHA BURNIER ON HER 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY**

Our past International President, Mrs. Radha Burnier, was known to many theosophists around the world, both personally and through her extensive and very deep writings. She was a revered spiritual leader who dedicated her life to sharing the Ageless Wisdom. A serious student and a strongly contemplative individual, she could be perceived as unapproachable; however, this is far from the full reality of who she was. Sharing a couple of stories about interactions with her on a personal level may be helpful in seeing the fullness of this amazing woman.

One time while Radha was visiting the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California, US, to give a series of classes, my two-year old son adamantly refused to come into our home and take his evening bath. Instead of fighting with this strong-minded toddler, I simply took off his clothes and gave him a bath outside using the hose. As he and I were playing/cleaning in this manner, I looked up to see Radha walking down the street. My first thought was... "I am going to be in trouble for being so thoughtless as to have a naked toddler in the front yard!" However, Radha stopped in front of our home and laughed at my son's antics. She thought he was adorable and that my solution to the bath problem was a very good one. Her laughter and joy at the innocence of childhood and her understanding of my struggles as a young mother were a beautiful reminder of the love and understanding she felt for all of humanity.

On Radha's next visit to the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, I was nearing the end of my pregnancy with my second child. One day, she came to the door of my home with a lovely dress that was tent-like in shape! Radha said that she had this dress with her and thought it would be useful to me in the final months of pregnancy. It was! In fact, it was the only thing that fit me! However, in retrospect, I realized that Radha would never have had a dress of this type with her. With all of the travelling she did, Radha only travelled with saris. She must have gone shopping and found a dress that she thought would be useful to me. She offered it as one she

\* Former President, TSA

could not use so as not to make me feel uncomfortable with the gift. Once again, her kindness and thoughtfulness shone through her actions.

While these two incidents may seem very minor in the overall scheme of things in our world, they clearly indicate her loving and gentle nature, her graciousness, and her understanding of the needs of others. Radha Burnier was all of these things and so much more. She led the Theosophical Society with commitment and dedication. Her writings indicate that she looked deeply into her own nature as well as into that of all humanity. She lived Theosophy.

On the occasion of what would have been her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, hopefully the life she lived will not only provide us with inspiration to try to live as she did, but will encourage us to feel a sense of gratitude for all that she accomplished, both personally and as International President of the Theosophical Society. Thank you, Radha.

**If love of truth and compassionate action are part of  
the whole theosophical world, we will attract much  
more attention and goodwill.**

**RADHA BURNIER**

**‘Presidential Address’**

***To the 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Theosophical  
Society Adyar, 26 December 2005***

PEDRO OLIVEIRA\*

## WILL, WISDOM AND LOVE : WORKING WITH RADHAJI

Having become a life subscriber of *The Theosophist* in 1979, I used to read the articles by Radhaji in that journal. But it was her Inaugural Address, delivered at the Headquarters Hall at Adyar, on 17 July 1980, that led me to study her articles and editorials more seriously. In the end, I did translate into Portuguese every single editorial of hers in that journal from 1980 to 1985. They were published later on by the Theosophical Society in Brazil as a booklet entitled *The Theosophical Society Today* and distributed throughout the Brazilian Section.

The closing paragraph of her Inaugural Address, reproduced below, represented a keynote of her Presidency:

As time passes, generations change. Every generation faces the basic problems of man in terms of a changing environment. No teaching, no philosophy can be of adequate aid to any generation if it is converted into a mere idiom or tradition. But the Wisdom of a truly religious mind can speak the tongue of any generation and communicate its own quality of significance.

One feels it communicates the same essential idea as HPB's foundational statement in the concluding chapter of *The Key to Theosophy*, published in 1889:

Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. You must remember that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences. If, then, they cannot be freed from such inherent bias, or at least taught to recognize it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off on to some sandbank of thought

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\*Is a former Education Coordinator of the TS in Australia. He served at Adyar in the early 1990s as International Secretary, and later as Head of the Editorial Office.

or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die.

Radhaji knew that if Theosophy was converted into a mere doctrine, jargon or discourse it could not help humanity out of its serious predicament, which is created by selfishness in its many forms. She devoted her energies during her Presidency to conveying the realization that Theosophy is indeed a Living Wisdom, a regenerative power that can transform the human mind in a very profound way, thus making it 'a beneficent force in Nature'.

In July 1981, while in Rio de Janeiro attending talks by Eunice and Felix Layton, well-known international lecturers from the American Section, I mentioned to Mr Layton that I was translating articles by Mrs Radha Burnier into Portuguese. He said: "Very good. This is a good way of coming to know a person's mind." Mrs Layton had a more direct approach. When asked by a member of the TS youth group, "Is there any advice that you would like to share with us as young Theosophists?" Mrs Layton replied: "Question everything!" Naturally that would include our own assumptions of what Theosophy is.

From January to March, 1983, I had the good fortune of being a resident student at the Krotona School of Theosophy, in Ojai, California. The School's Director was Joy Mills, and the faculty included Dr John Algeo, Miss Ianthe Hoskins, Dr Renee Weber, Dr Catherine Roberts, plus Diana Dunninghan (now Dunninghan-Chapotin), who was in charge of coordinating the students' programme. It was a period of intense learning about Theosophy together with co-students.

Upon my return to Brazil, we had the first visit by Radhaji to Porto Alegre in April 1983, my hometown. It was a short visit with many activities, including a press interview at the airport. She gave a popular public lecture at an education institution in the city, when over 500 people were present. I had been asked to be her interpreter, a task which was far from easy as I had few seconds to listen to her and then formulate her thoughts in Portuguese before the next sentence came up!

At conversation during lunch at her hostess's apartment, I asked her for her view on HPB's statement in *The Key to the Theosophy* where she said that in the twentieth century a new torchbearer of Truth would come. She replied: "In my personal view the new torchbearer is Krishnaji. I know many will not agree but this is my view."

It became evident that she was very focused, and did not want to waste time on activities she did not consider important, although she replied to questions that had been asked. A young woman in the audience, who was both a ballet and contemporary dancer (and who had done her homework!) asked Radhaji: “Are you a dancer?” To which she replied: “I was a dancer.” In the Archives at Adyar there is an Indian newspaper cutting that describes her, in the days of her performance as a Bharatnatyam dancer, as “the jewel of the nation”.

On the day before her departure from Porto Alegre I needed to inform Radhaji that I would pick her up from her hostess’s apartment at 5.00 am as there would be a long journey to the airport. “I will be ready”, she said. At the airport a small incident opened the way for our future communication. After she checked in, she asked me: “May I have your address?” I promptly gave it to her. The communication, which was started in 1983 ended in 2013, when she left her physical body.

On two other occasions I met her in Brazil: in 1987, when she delivered another packed public lecture at the State Assembly auditorium in Porto Alegre, and in 1990, in Brasilia, when she was a guest of the National Section’s summer school. After Brasilia she visited Porto Alegre once more. While driving to the local TS members’ meeting, she said: “I mention this because you have a feeling for his teachings. I believe Krishnaji is a liberated man. Earlier in his life he had some karmic entanglements, but in his mature and older age his was a liberated consciousness.” I listened to her attentively and could not comment on her statement, while agreeing with it silently.

We would meet again at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, The Netherlands, in July 1990, for the seminar on ‘Human Regeneration’. There, representatives of many countries were in attendance. Radhaji would give a talk in the morning which would be followed by a discussion based on quotes she had previously selected. After lunch there would be group discussions on the subject dealt with in the morning. At 5:00 pm there would be a plenary session of questions and answers with Radhaji.

During her morning talks Radhaji generated an atmosphere of seriousness and earnestness, which conveyed to the participants how important the work of the TS was for the world. In one of her striking moments, she said that “Universal

Brotherhood is a mind without barriers of any kind”, which has a profound implication for the way we both treat and approach others. It seems to imply a level of understanding that was also profoundly present in Sri Ramana Maharshi’s following statement. He was asked: “How can we help others?” He replied: “There are no others.”

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1992, and after the International Convention, Radhaji asked me to visit her in house at Adyar, Parsi Quarters. She said Adyar needed younger people working there and she then invited me to work as International Secretary. After due consultation with my family in Brazil I decided to accept her offer. I returned to Brazil in 1996. The events and circumstances of that period are too many to mention. But it may be worthwhile to present some of them as they embody aspects of Radhaji’s contribution to the Theosophical Society.

Before she signed the notice of my appointment to be sent to the departments at Adyar she looked at me and said: “You will be occupying this office at a relatively young age. People may start to flatter you. Remember: no matter what people say, you are what you are. If we look within, we will see that there are many impurities that need to be removed.” To my own detriment I did not always heed her advice. Hers was the most profound advice I ever received in this life.

Her well-developed will helped her not to be under the influence of fear in any form. Mrs Norma Sastry, former Accommodation Officer at Adyar, mentioned that Radhaji once told her that she did not worry about problems [in the TS] because she knew there will always be problems. Her mind was always steadily focused on theosophical work. In her life there was no room for distractions.

She would act decisively in matters that required her attention. When infiltration by other self-interested groups threatened the work of two Sections of the Society, she took action. When a former General Secretary was undermining the work of his successor she wrote him a letter, the draft of which she shared with me. The first paragraph simply said that senior members of the Society should help to maintain harmony, and not create divisions. In the second paragraph she said that the only reason we are in this world is to purify our minds.

When she invited me to work as International Secretary, she said that one of



the things I needed to learn about was the purpose of Adyar in the TS work. She used to quote C. R. Groves, former General Secretary of the TS in England, who had spent time together with his wife, Doris Groves, at Adyar. Mr Groves had written that at Adyar, unlike any other place, one could realize that the centre of Reality is everywhere except in the personal self. Walking with her from the Headquarters Building to her house at the very end of the compound, was a wordless experience. While her eyes surveyed trees, shrubs, plants and buildings along the way, her benign face could not hide a sense the complete exhilaration and oneness with the sacredness that dwells at Adyar. For her Adyar was an *âœrama*, a place to learn how to discover the true Self within, Atman.

Many workers, visitors and employees experienced the lofty atmosphere of her office at the International Headquarters. She only spoke when it was necessary to speak. One of the visitors, Mark Tully, a renowned former Bureau Chief of BBC, New Delhi, a journalist and writer who was born in India, once said to Radhaji: “Your Society’s principles and Objects are so sane and so important. How come that you have so few members?” Radhaji replied: “It is like the human being. The body is small, but the consciousness can be vast.” In an interview in the United States, in 1981, she said that if only ten per cent of TS members lived the life that Theosophy shows the Society would be a strong force in the world, for it would become the instrument for a Power much greater than itself.

Radhaji passed away on 31 October 2013 at Parsi Quarters. In his article for the October-November 2014 commemorative issue of *The Theosophist*, Sri Harihara Raghavan wrote:

When I reached her residence I saw her lying peacefully. Has she merged with Eternity? On her table was the *Bhagavadgita*. There was a paper on which a few verses in Sanskrit, from the *Gita*, were scrawled by her. One verse is reproduced below along with the translation:

*yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pasyati  
tasya’aham na pranasyami sa cha me na pranasyati*

(chapter 6, verse 30)

‘He who sees Me in all things, and all beings in Me,  
him I will never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.’

To my knowledge, Radhaji never spoke about her ‘spiritual status’. But once she told me that Krishnaji had mentioned to her that, receiving a very high Masonic degree, he was ‘given’ two vast angels. He then said to her: “I am considering passing one of them to you before I die.” I could not possibly ask her anything about this. But once, visiting her very early in the morning at Adyar, when she was about to have breakfast, I could see how her eyes were full of *âtmâ-œakti*, and how very lofty and potent influences emanated from her. She was a true *sâdhaka*, ‘effective, efficient, energizing (said of the fire supposed to burn within the heart and direct the faculty of volition)’. (Monier-Williams’ *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*)

The Theosophical Society owes her a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid, in many lives to come. I am convinced that she will continue to help the Society, wherever she is.

**Peace and understanding are generally by-products of a compassionate attitude; they refer to the normal response of a person in whom peace is predominant. There can be peace even when another person does wrong. The one who has understanding responds peacefully to everything, even to the remarks or the actions of a person who lacks the qualities which make for peace. This is because he knows that in the long run even those who do not know what to do in the present will learn.**

**RADHA BURNIER**

**‘Compassion : The Basis of Peace and Understanding’  
*The Theosophist*, September 2007**

SONAL MURALI\*

## REMINISCING RADHAJI

I first met Radha Burnier, fondly called Radhaji, in 1981 during a Retreat in Bhavnagar, a city in the southern part of Gujarat state. She would have been in her late fifties by then but her energy was young. As a young member of the TS, I was quite awestruck with her clarity of thought, her presence and the way she held the audience in her mind-space. This was something I felt again and again every time I heard her speak. Often while giving talk, her words would flow seamlessly. Her expression was brilliant – free from excessive words, brief and measured, with focus on the heart of the matter. Her talks appealed to the audience in a very personal and direct manner.

As a young person, she was asked, ‘What do you want from life, Radha?’ Her answer was: ‘My ambition is to perfect the art of self-discipline’. This clarity of perception guided her entire life. Uncompromising in her convictions, she lived an austere, uncluttered and frugal life rather simply and imperceptibly, without making a show of it. There was very little space for the personal in it. She never used any of the Society’s resource for herself, she did not even use her own resources for her basic comforts and yet was very liberal in donating her own money to the organizations she was associated with and to needy persons. She says in *No Other Path to Go*:

‘Transcending the worldly life means to be internally free from demand, to be content with what comes unasked, whether it is joy or sorrow. To ask and be satisfied in getting what is asked is the way of the world. Not to ask for anything, whether of karma, of God, of other people, and remain content with whatever is, is the sign of an unworldly nature.’

Her outlook on the spiritual life naturally impacted on how she lived. Contentment suggests simplicity. Many of us complicate our lives in myriad ways. Her demeanour, her appearance, her home and her person exemplified simplicity – re-

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duced to what she considered essential. In her life, as in her talks, there was little space for the superfluous or the superficial. There was a kind of unworldliness about her, never focussing on the personal.

Her life exemplified order and discipline. Material acquisitions were of little value to her. She had a huge capacity to work tirelessly for the good of others. One would not be surprised to see her at her desk within an hour after returning from her foreign tours and often go directly to the office. She did not like to stay in hotels and preferred staying in the home of a fellow theosophist. Some of her hosts have remarked on how simple she was and how effortless it was to be with her.

She embodied a possibly unparalleled dedication to the Society and its work. Many members considered her to be not just their President, but their spiritual leader. Her talks were inspiring and were unmatched in their capacity to touch the hearts of people, answering their unasked questions and resolving their dilemmas – shining light on their own responsibility as individuals in the world. Her talks would stay with one often for that entire day and often for days to come, inducing one to self-reflection and awareness. Focussing on the intent of the actions and urging one to dig deeper and deeper into the inner layers of one's being.

Linda Oliveira says that :

‘One could speak of her qualifications, her work in various capacities, the many activities allied to TS work in which she was involved, her scholarly erudition, the various honours bestowed upon her... However these things seem superficial in terms of her deeper life. She had around an aura of abiding strength, deep contentment, and oftentimes an atmosphere of undeniable holiness. Many felt this and were affected by it.’

Theosophical literature speaks about the differences between *kama-manas*, the personal, desire-propelled mind and *buddhi-manas*, the mind illumined by insight, depth and an awareness of the sacred. Radhaji was one of the golden examples of the latter. She possessed a rare fusion of heart and mind – a superior kind of Wisdom with steady inspiration. She had deeply confident certainty about various matters including what is implied in living a Theosophical life. She says in *No Other Path to Go*:

‘True renunciation is not a single dramatic act. It is the daily wiping away of the thoughts, motives and memories which are of the world – the little desires to dissemble, the unkind impulses, the small attachments, the recalling and remembrance of pleasure and so forth.’

Exemplifying this, she lived a life of careful restraint. She had a quality of spiritual fullness and fulfilment that made any interactions with her uplifting. For her theosophy was a ‘Living Power’ and she radiated it in the outer world.

The question that some would ask is, ‘Was she guided by the Masters?’ When asked, she simply said, ‘The Masters are never far away.’ On another occasion, while discussing the nature of inspiration, she said: ‘It all depends on what your attitude is. Inspiration is like a vast ocean, but if what you bring is a small bucket, you receive very little.’ She certainly had her mind and heart open to receive it.

Her mornings and evenings were sombre and meditative. She would be often found keenly listening to the sea tide ebbing in and out and the sounds of little living things around her. In the evenings, we would see her walking briskly from her office to Parsi Quarters. Metaphorically speaking, she knew every tree, every bush and every creature that stirred on the estate. She knew the compound in all its wildness and tameness, in all seasons. Once I was walking in a heavy downpour towards the Vasanta Youth Lodge to see whether anyone had turned up for our weekly study class on *The Mahatma Letters*. She stopped her car and asked where I was going and with a chuckle said, ‘I don’t think anyone is coming.’ She was very much a hands-on person on the ground. During many cyclones that Chennai faces, she would be one of the first persons along with the General Manager, inspecting the roads, the damage done to trees and giving directions. She had a very deep concern for the maintenance of Adyar – in its physical as well as spiritual aspect. To her, Adyar was no ordinary community in which people may cooperate or not for a variety of ulterior purposes. She tried her best to maintain a sacred atmosphere at Adyar and keenly prevented any attempts to corrode it. She said,

‘Those who live in a place like Adyar, if they really want to make it and maintain it as it should be, should have a spirit of giving, of contributing to its inner spiritual wealth rather than receiving advantages for themselves. Every person must be there to give something of himself.’

Wanting to be at Adyar should come from a deep urge within. And the bond with Adyar had to be forged by oneself working in a selfless manner, doing any task assigned with equal dedication and fervour. In that sense, one had to prove oneself to work at Adyar as it required an inner preparation.

She often worked on Sunday mornings and on holidays as she could work uninterruptedly but would not mind if we dropped in to discuss something. She was meticulous as an editor and a perfectionist. She handled the editing of all books, reprints and magazines. Nothing would escape her eye and there would be marks made in pencil with deliberate strokes on the proof.

Her Watch-Tower notes would be dictated to her Secretary on quiet afternoons or on Sunday mornings, with hardly any editing required later on. The flow of ideas and its expression were seamless. Now when we look at a rich record of three decades of her insight and thoughtful observations on life, it gives us a glimpse of what occupied her mind-space as she went about her daily life. Being an avid reader, interested in the state of the world as well as in diverse subjects on which theosophical principles could shed light, her notes covered topics from politics to economics, from education, alternative modes of healing, cultural ideals, to vegetarianism, veganism science and on to environmentalism and beyond. In this fast changing world where values deteriorate and collapse from moment to moment, her *Watch-Tower Notes* afford a rare and sane theosophical perspective from higher up as if from atop a watch-tower with concern for the world.

When you met her, she gave her full attention to you. She was fully present. There was no feeling that her attention was wandering over or to the next thing she would say. There was never a sense of hurriedness in her and I never found her saying that she was busy. Much later, when I handled many responsibilities and became busy, I often wondered how she managed to give full attention to somebody or something when her desk had piles of papers that she had to go through and correspondence that awaited her response. When the conversation was over, there would be a slight shake of her head giving a cue that the meeting was over. Small talk did not come easily to her. She was candid, straightforward and direct.

I was much younger and inexperienced, but she would often call me and very candidly ask for my opinion on some matters. During my later visits, while talking

about the next President of the TS, she said, 'I don't think anyone who has personal ambition, can ever become the President of the TS.' It was akin to stating an occult law. This was one more example of her conviction in theosophy and that the organization was guided by the Higher Forces. During conversations, her eyes would sparkle if something interesting was said. She had humour what she said in the lighter vein would be accompanied by an endearing chuckle. A person of integrity, I found her way of interacting the same, be it with a worker or a dignitary. Similarly her way of dressing was always the same. Simple, dignified and elegant on all occasions. It was never too much or too little. Outer shows of respect did not mean much to her.

I asked her once if she prepared her talks. She said she would think about a topic and organize her thoughts but mostly it would be something that she had been contemplating about. When she left us on 31 October 2013, it felt that a vast void had been created which would be impossible to fill. But as time goes by, one can often feel her presence in random moments, be it listening to a talk in the Headquarters Hall, or while walking on one of the many pathways in Adyar, or suddenly in a quiet, reflective moment, unannounced, she is there.

**A mind that is universal regards the whole earth as home and all people, in fact all living beings, as kith and kin, whose welfare cannot be divorced from that of any other creatures. In the absence of that approach, which must be unconditional as a principle, although in partice at times, there may be some lapses, there is nothing to distinguish the Society from other associations formed to fulfil lesser purposes. The Theosophical Society's universal approach does not have a merely profane end; it opens the way to the higher levels of realization, where one sees life as an all-pervading essence, which does not lend itself to disvision.**

**RADHA BURNIER**

**Presidential Address**

**To the 128th Annual Convention of the Theosophical  
Society Adyar, 26 December 2003**

*KESHWAR DASTUR\**

## **MY EXPERIENCE WITH RADHAJI AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO T.S. WORK**

Radhaji knew me because of my aunty Vira Dastur, who was her friend. Radhaji knew her very well. In the year 2000, Radhaji invited me to come to Adyar to work. First, I refused and said that I will work for Gujarat Federation. It was Vira's wish that we both work at Adyar. In Dec 2000 Convention, I told Radhaji that I will come for 6 months. She said in 6 months what you will learn? Come for at least 2 years and I agreed. I went to Adyar in June 2001. I asked Radhaji to give me a house with a kitchen. She gave me upstairs of Sita Vilas. Sarla, my companion also came to Adyar. She is T.S. member, so Radhaji permitted her to come. My Brother-in-law had come to leave me at Adyar. Radhaji told him that do not worry about Keshwar, she shall be safe here. Radhaji told me to assist the Treasurer and I became Assistant Treasurer for 1.5 years. In January 2003, I was made International Treasurer for a term of 3 years. I had full support of Radhaji. She came to my house many times. She liked the house. She told Superintendent of House-keeping department that whatever furniture Keshwar wants you give her because she keeps her house tidy, neat and clean.

Radhaji was very simple. In Conventions, during the evening programme of dance and music, she used to sit down on the mat in front of the stage, taking the support of the pole. During the School of the Wisdom session, Hostel children used to perform, and we were going to see that. One day during that programme I was sitting cross-lagged on a low wall. There were some chairs for VIPs. Suddenly Radhaji came and pushed me. I uncrossed the legs and she sat near me on the wall. She did not sit on the chair and allowed foreigners to sit there. When I went to Adyar I saw that Radhaji's toenails were very long. She was not able to cut them. I asked her, Shall I cut them. She hesitatingly refused. I told her that I was cutting nails of my parents also. After few days she herself asked me to cut her nails. Since that time till her death, I had been cutting her nails in her office, in her house and in my house too. We used to sit on a sofa, she was putting her legs on my lap where I used to cut her nails. She was 30 years older than me, so I considered her as my mother. Radhaji was wearing old and worn-out sleepers and in that sleeper only she

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\*Former International Treasurer of the Theosophical Society.



went for foreign lecture tours. Every day while going to her office, I was seeing those sleepers and didn't like that. One day I told her that her sleepers are in bad condition. Shall we buy new chappals for you. She said it was not her chappal. Her chappal was stolen in Surat and this chappal was given to her at Surat. Next day Radhaji, Malthi who was her secretary and me went to Bata show room. I purchased one pair of chappal of her choice. She selected a very ordinary chappal. I asked her to wear new chappal and leave old chappal there. But she got old chappal packed and took it home. Such simple she was. If she had wished, she could have lived a very luxurious life.

My first term as International Treasurer was getting over, hence I told Radhaji that my term is getting over and she should find some new Treasurer. She told me that I had to continue for the second term and maybe for the third term also. This got proved right. I worked as Treasurer for three consecutive terms, that is for nine years. She had so much trust in me that along with my duties as International Treasurer of T.S., I was Grand Secretary of The Indian Administration, Eastern Order of International Co-Free Masonry. I was Vice-Chairman of Olcott Education Society. I was maintaining an account of Esoteric School. I was joint account holder in her personal bank accounts. I was Trustee in her three personal Trusts. I was executor of her Will. When she died, I was not at Adyar. Immediately I came to know, and I went to Adyar by flight. From the airport I went directly to crematorium, but by the time I reached there, the body was already cremated. In the evening at four, her ashes were put in the Garden of Remembrance.

At Adyar I stayed upstairs at Sita Vilas and Vasantalay. In Vasantalay N. Sriram was staying when he was President. Radhaji told me that once Sriram was not well and Radhaji went to see him, she felt divine presence in Sriram's bedroom. The same room used to be my bedroom also. So lucky I am that I was sleeping in the bedroom where Masters had come earlier. She used to say that her father was a saint. She had kept everything, all the papers of her father as it is. She had not destroyed anything of her father.

I had gone there for 2 years but had worked there for 14 years. On two occasions I wanted to come back, but Radhaji did not allow. Whenever I was asking for her blessing like on my birthday or on new year, she used to say that "my blessings are always with you". She was so much charismatic that everybody felt that he or she is nearer to her. When I went to Adyar she was able to sit down on the floor so quickly and swiftly.

In Masonic meetings she was doing long - long ceremonies without keeping books in hand. I was so impressed and inspired that I also worked hard and memorized long ceremonies. Then I was also doing long ceremonies without a book in my hand. I got the 33<sup>rd</sup> and the highest degree in Masonry. I had not even thought of getting it. That time Radhaji told me that “Higher the degree Higher the responsibility”. Another time she told me that “I cannot assure you that there will be no problem, wherever human beings are there, problems will be there”. Wisdom, strength and beauty were personified in her. She was not only Master in Sanskrit, but she was master of all. With her deep knowledge and understanding of Theosophy and Masonry, she has not only remained preacher, but she lived the life accordingly. She was able to judge the person. She had fought many battles in her life like a brave soldier. Clean and pure life gave her inner strength. She was not afraid of anything because she used to fight for the truth. To be the Head of T.S., E.S., Masonry, T.O.S., O.E.S. and to carry out the responsibilities is not an easy thing. Apart from all this she was attached to many other organizations like New Life For India Movement, Beauty without Cruelty, Krishnamurti Foundation, Indian Vegetarian Congress, etc. she remained very busy doing the work of all these organizations. She must be feeling tired, but she never said that she was tired. Because of her inner strength and strong will power she was able to do all that great work. With her knowledge and her long experience, she had a capacity to solve all the problems. She was not only beautiful outwardly, but she had inner beauty too. Her heart and mind were also beautiful. Her eyes were bright and there was a spark in her eyes. Her life was dedicated to the work of Masters. She lived the life of virtues – Truth, Love and Charity. She has sacrificed her whole life for the cause of Theosophy and Masonry. She lived for the benefit of humanity. I have seen long queue outside HQ when Radhaji was coming to office, and she used to give money to them from her purse. Her outward appearance was of a strict and serious person, but she had a loving heart. She was feeling the suffering of human beings, animals and the whole nature. She was mother to everyone. She lived the life of a yogi. She was a karma yogi. People at Adyar used to say that she had the wisdom of her father and temperament of her mother. Whenever I had any question in my mind, many times it happened that I got answer in the E.S. meeting taken by Radhaji. Radhaji liked chocolates, ice-cream (though she was vegan), fresh figs, moong dal halva, parsi sweets. She was an animal lover. She was vegan, but for her cats and dogs every day 3 to 4 liters of milk was coming to her house. I was meeting her almost every day. When I was going to her house, she used to sit on double seat sofa, and I used to sit next to her. But in a few minutes her cat used to come and sit near her or sit in her lap and

I had to get up and sit on the next sofa. That cat was very dear to her and Radhaji was very dear to the cat. The one that missed her very much after her death was her cat. After her death I used to go to her house daily for doing my work as executor. As soon as I opened the door, her cat used to rush inside and search for Radhaji everywhere. It was a very pitiable scene. While locking the door I had to ensure that the cat had gone out.

It was the policy of Radhaji that we should not go to any function where political leaders are coming because their eyes were on our land. Radhaji firmly believed that the President of T.S. should stay at Adyar HQ. whenever she was going for lecture tour of 2-3 months, the then Vice-President Bro. Surendra Narayanji used to come to Adyar. So Adyar was never without a President or Vice President. For the President election of 2008, she asked brother John Algeo to stand for President's post, but he said that he will not stay at Adyar, so she stood for Presidentship and won with huge majority.

Radhaji, was born in Parsi Quarters at Adyar on 15th November 1923. She lived there for her whole life and died also at Parsi Quarters on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013. She had worked in one English movie named "The River". We saw that movie at Adyar. She was paying all the charges to T.S. like maintenance charges for the house she was using, electricity and food charges etc. she used to say that President is the Trustee of T.S. and not the owner. She said that she feels happy in giving to T.S. and not in taking anything from T.S. She said that they have not celebrated any festivals other than T.S. Red Letters Days.

She has given her teachings through her books-*Human Regeneration, No Other Path To Go*, her articles under the heading "On The Watch Tower" in *The Theosophist*, articles in *The Morning Star*, her talks in E.S. meetings, etc. but above all, her life is her teaching and message for all of us. A truly Theosophic life she has lived – an inspiration for all.

The spark has merged with the flame. She has gone to a world which is beyond our vision, but she is watching us. So let us carry out her work, the work, which was dear to her, to become worthy of her blessings.

I am fortunate to have got the opportunity to work with her, under her and for her. I am grateful to her for her care, affection, protection and the trust in me.

*R. REVATHY\**

## **SMT RADHA BURNIER**

I am really fortunate to have been born and to have grown up in the campus of the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. I had the great privilege of being in closely associated with our former International President of the Theosophical Society, Smt. Radha Burnier.

At every stage of my life I had the opportunity to see different facets of her personality, and admire her great qualities. During my school days she was a very affectionate and loving aunt. We used to call her “Radha Aunty”. I enjoyed receiving her birthday wishes, and the small, very valuable present she used to send every year as she remembered my birthday.

When I joined the MBBS DCH Course she was the first to bless me and to extend a helping hand. When I was hesitant to join government service, as I had been posted to a remote village in South India, she advised me to join and work. She said, “It is a test for you. The Masters want you to do service in that place.”

I was posted at a very busy city Medical College Hospital in the Emergency Casualty Department. While working there I remembered her words, and with the Masters’ blessings, gained valuable experience in dealing with any Hospital Emergency.

Later, I received the Best Performance Award and Certificate of Appreciation from Government of India for the work done while heading one of the peripheral hospitals in the city.

Radhaji was a great ceremonialist. She made me take interest in the Ritual of the Mystic Star, the Esoteric School of Theosophy, and Co-Freemasonry. She always liked us to do our part in ceremonial work perfectly. The reward for good work was more responsibility and more work. That was our Radhaji.

Her assessment of men and matters was very correct. She wanted the workers

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\*Member of Adyar Lodge,

of TS to be hard-working, co-operative and committed.

She was very helpful towards the poor, the needy and the suffering. She would first get the correct information, analyze it and then make sure that the help reached them confidentially, and at the right time. That was our large-hearted Radhaji.

I have the greatest admiration for her. She was a scholarly, kind-hearted person, and at the same time, a strict disciplinarian. Her writings were simple and understandable, her presentations enlightening, each one of them carrying a profound truth to be pondered over. Her books, “*The World around Us*”, and “*Human Regeneration*”, are for me very special. I always keep them on my table for ready references on theosophical subjects.

Her lectures were very enlightening, to the point, with powerful Sanskrit quotations and theosophical thought of very high order. Always very punctual, she would never carry written notes, nor exceed the time allotted to her. She wanted all of us to follow this code of moral behaviour. She was very particular that silence be maintained in the Headquarters Hall, and that no unnecessary movement of furniture or persons took place therein. She was an example of self-discipline.

Many high-ranking dignitaries all over the world have listened to Radhaji’s talks on many occasions. All agree that very rarely have they listened to such a clear explanation of high theosophical thought. They are unanimous that they are very fortunate to have met such a simple, glorious, and special person.

I had the opportunity to travel with her within India many times. I found she was very simple, highly independent, and had regulated food habits. Radhaji had confidence in me as a medical professional, and used to take my advice and treatment whenever she had any discomfort.

On this 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Radhaji, may we extend our homage to her by following in her footsteps and doing what she always strived for. That is, to help the Masters in their work for the upliftment of humanity, taking forward the evolution of humankind, and safeguarding civilization.

MANJU SUNDARAM\*

## MOMENTS OF LEARNING MOMENTS TO CHERISH

It is by no means an easy task to reminisce about somebody who has seen, keenly observed one grow from childhood till the age of say 68 or 69. Yet, the invitation, the very thought of sharing one's reminiscences of the wonderful, fruitful moments and days spent with none other than Radhaji, strikes a chord within, filling instantly the depths of one's being with profound resonances of reverence, gratitude and inexplicable joy.

Stepping out of the waters, standing on the banks of the stream of one's own life, gazing at it, observing it in a state of *Sakshi Bhava* (witness consciousness), as it were, is, in itself, an experience so beautiful, enriching and fulfilling. Thus, breaking away all the barriers of time, space and age, out of some inner compulsion, the mind's kaleidoscope starts weaving vivid and vibrant pictures of the days of yore and one breathes and lives the days all anew, all afresh!

Seeing her either standing near the entrance of the Adyar Theatre or sitting quietly, all by herself, in one of the cane chairs, watching, observing people coming and going was certainly an experience in itself. One suddenly became alert, conscious of oneself as also conscious of her silent gaze, a silent yet far-reaching gaze. And in that seeing was perhaps a wordless communication and spontaneous communion with one and all. Her presence, though strong and vibrant, was never imposed but was deeply felt by people around.

As for one, as an individual, the words grace, dignity, poise, uprightness, restraint suddenly became alive, living, breathing, expressing and conveying their profound meanings and vast connotations through such an individual. I remember long ago a devotee of Maa Anandamayee said about her :

“ She does not give me inspiration on a platter but lets me labour for every word, so that I may become its meaning.”<sup>1</sup>

Living and being the meaning!

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Never even once did one think of emulating her, yet one could well understand or realize as to how much there was to learn from individuals such as Res. Radhaji.

Hearing her speak at a theosophical gathering or address different audiences on various occasions was certainly a tremendously valuable learning experience, in many dimensions and ways. From deeply spiritual and philosophical subjects to global socio-political ones, contemporary world issues with its innumerable burning, raging human problems - whichever subject she spoke on, she spoke with intense concern from the depths of her wisdom and perception, with clarity of perception as well as clarity in expression. Truly speaking, it is the clarity of perception that manifests itself, unawares, perhaps in facility and clarity of expression. The way she broached a subject, elaborating, elucidating gradually and coming to the core of it was undoubtedly something one couldn't avoid noticing. Without thrusting her ideas upon people she came to the significant, central point spontaneously and effortlessly. Pondering on this, one strongly feels that this spontaneity and effortlessness couldn't be possible without years and years of 'self preparation', putting in years of ceaseless effort, thus prepare oneself towards understanding Life in its wholeness, to attune oneself to Truth and Significance of Life in its vastness, in its limitless expanse.

In Radhaji's own words:

"Thus self-preparation is an important aspect of theosophical work. It is important because when a person comes to the threshold of truth perception, everything in his life changes and he also has the power to influence changes around himself."<sup>2</sup>

As for oneself, as a serious, keen listener and reader it was a constant process of learning, imbibing and most importantly reflecting, contemplating on whatever one received and perceived. These intense learning moments still energize one, enriching one's whole being.

For Radhaji, it was effort that mattered. Sincere, wholehearted effort that was of importance and not so much the result, in terms of success or failure. In success one, perhaps may, to an extent, gain in confidence whereas in failure one learns so much. One may celebrate success for a while whereas failures teach one lessons for a lifetime.

One still remembers the day, so very vividly. We were in Adyar to attend the International Convention. We were about to leave the Bhojanshala after having lunch when the lady-in charge of the Bhojanshala came to me and said that the President (Radhaji) was on the line and wanted to talk to me. I went to the office and received the call. Radhaji said, “Manju, I want you to take up the Devotional Meeting during the Convention this year.” This was quite unexpected and took me by surprise. After a few seconds of silence I hesitantly asked her as to what I was expected to do, how to proceed and conduct the Devotional meeting etc. Very calmly and affectionately she said, “Manju, you have full one hour with you. You may proceed the way you want to. You can chant, sing, you can recite poetry, you can speak or read out from books, and then, the one last sentence “anything that inspires devotion!” This apparently simple sentence, nay, every word, every syllable of it still rings in my ears, striking instantly, a chord deep within. One could well understand that she would not be uttering these two significant words unless they enshrined in them some great truths with their manifold facets and hues. And then, while reading her book *Human Regeneration* one came across these statements:

“Pure devotion is a force and it must evoke something.”<sup>3</sup>

As also:

“Devotion is not sitting in front of an image, physical or mental, offering prayers, requesting blessings, saying ‘I am yours’. Devotion lets go of the ‘I’ totally; it does not ask for anything, blessing, knowledge, grace, anything. To the devotee, whatever the Supreme wills is good. Everything in manifestation is good, because everything is part of the one Reality. ... the real devotee is one who does not want anything. He surrenders the self totally.... Self-surrender means the idea of the separate self must be completely given up. Then there is the realization of something more infinitely wonderful, beauty, truth, a universal divine presence.”<sup>4</sup>

And then Inspiration! It is perhaps that which reaches, touches the deep recesses of one’s being, that which melts one, humbles one. It is the state of complete surrender in which great things happen!

A very sensitive and deeply spiritual poetess of Mithila (Bihar) begins one



of her beautiful poems with this line:

“May my intellect, my knowledge melt into a melody of devotion; may there be total immersion of the ego with one’s being just transforming into a blemishless mirror.”

Reflecting upon all this, one could and did realize what the word devotion enshrined in itself, a state of being when there is complete surrender, unconditional surrender, when there is complete immersion of one’s ego, when one is humbled.

Shri Rushikumar Pandya, one of the foremost disciples of the all time great musician (Sitar & Sur Bahar player), Smt. Annapurna Devi said these very significant words about her sublime music in one of his interviews.

“There is nothing like approach to a particular. Raga, It is approach to the music total. For her music is like an act of worship. When she surrenders to it, it just happens. In the Zen sense. The Zen master archer does not aim and shoot. He shoots and the target is there.”

Just a simple sentence that miraculously opened the windows of the soul, bathing one’s whole being in the Light and Warmth of the Ever Shining One! These are the moments when one is open to an entirely different realm of consciousness in all its endless expanse, transcending time and space. One’s whole being then resonates with the Harmony of the Universe.

Are these not the moments of learning? Moments ever new, ever fresh and everlasting? Learning the lessons of Life and cherishing these moments in one’s heart of hearts?

Not only does one learn through spoken words, lectures, discourses etc given by the Elder Ones like Radhaji. One learns through their powerful presence, through their silence, which, at times, speaks much more eloquently and effectively than words spoken. One also learns by taking hints through their restraint in behaviour even from the depth of expression that conveys so much! What is needed, on one’s own part, is the readiness, the keenness and receptiveness to ‘see’, to ‘hear’ and to understand.

One then, in such blissful moments hears the sound unstruck, the note unsung and 'sees' the Beauty behind the veils, in all its celestial splendour.

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3. Radha Burnier, *Human Regeneration*, TPH, Adyar Second Reprint, 1999, p. 30.
4. *Ibid*, pp.117-118.

**Through watchfulness and care exercised in daily life, one can begin to realize what is the state of freedom. Within the mind, there is the possibility of both bondage and freedom. One has to pray to no god, find no priest, to free oneself but only discover what is deep within. The Bhagavadgita speaks about the stable man who is non-dependent because circumstances do not have power over him. That is what all human beings have to learn. By active watchfulness, one can cease to be the victim of conditions and a source of spiritual energy.**

**RADHA BURNIER**  
**'Bondage is in the Mind'**  
*The Theosophist*, July 2013

*S. SUNDARAM\**

## **LIVING RESPONSIBLY**

Success of any movement or mission depends on several factors. But the striking and noteworthy characteristic of dedicated and committed leaders is that instead of worrying about the eventual success or failure of a mission, they observe, they watch, as to how much sincere and genuine effort has been put in by the persons entrusted with the responsibility.

Dr. Rahda Burnier, out of great affection and respect, mostly addressed as Radha ji, was always concerned about good, noble and higher values of life which may help in making one a good human being. A concerned person, because of his/her positive thinking and approach is generally able to explore the avenues in order to improve the situation. Radha ji laid great emphasis on living responsibly and was always interested in things which would help one to evolve morally and spiritually. Her deep study of Theosophy, her clarity of thought, her clean and sensitive mind, her depth of perception and understanding, her complete commitment for a cause-perhaps all these together provided her the required intensity and energy for the Great Mission in which she was totally immersed and involved.

Radhaji was greatly concerned about the protection and well being of all living beings. In this connection it will be worth mentioning that a two day teachers' training workshop for the school teachers of Varanasi was organized at the Section Headquarters in April, 2003. The workshop was aimed at making the educators sensitive towards and aware of the environmental problems that have engulfed the society. Issues like ecological footprint, mixed solid waste, air pollution, water harvesting were discussed in the course of the workshop. The teachers were encouraged to think of the problems holistically and to try and come up with solutions for these problems locally. The idea was to encourage the teachers to play an active role in the schools with children to try and combat this pollution.

The details of the aforementioned workshop were published in a magazine. We at the Indian Section Headquarters did not know about it. Radhaji sent a Xerox copy of the report and encouraged us by suggesting to organize more such work-

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\* Former General Secretary of the Indian Section and Member of Kashi Tattva Sabha, Varanasi.

shops. Later we had one workshop on 'Nurture Nature for Future' in which 80 students participated.

While working in the Gandhian Institute of Studies I visited and stayed in some villages of five States during different years in connection with different Research Projects. Radhaji knew it and sometimes she used to enquire about the development works which were being carried out in those villages and if they have helped people living there and whether some improvement and progress have taken place in those areas or not.

Apart from the work of the TS she was equally concerned about the welfare of people and society in general. She used to admire the humble and gentle behaviour and moral outlook of the so-called uneducated or less educated people known to her. In this context I would like to mention the following noteworthy instances:

Mangal- the fruits and vegetable seller at the Indian Section HQ of the TS in Varanasi was very polite in his behaviour and always used to speak in low tone. His parents and elder brothers had been selling fruits etc. in the campus for the last more than eight decades. Mangal also took up this responsibility at a very young age. When Radha ji became International President, Mangal used to send vegetables for her through some member who was going to attend the Convention at Adyar. Once he too went to Adyar during the Convention and when he went to meet the President, she took him in her car and showed all the places in the TS at Adyar. Then, as told by Mangal- he was feeling very uneasy to sit with Radhaji- neither he could stand in the car nor could feel at ease while sitting. After showing him all the places he was taken to the canteen and Radhaji gave instructions there that whenever and whatever he wants to eat may be given to him. But, for its payment the Bill should be sent to her.

Once during her visit to Varanasi she narrated an incident to a few of us. A peon had borrowed money from a professional money-lender. The money-lender laid down a condition that even if the borrower is in a position to repay the whole amount, he will have to keep paying interest every month upto a specific fixed period. Sometimes, due to the extra expenses incurred for the domestic purposes he used to run short of money and then used to borrow money from Radhaji in order to pay interest to the money-lender. Once when

he approached Radhaji, she said that she will give him the whole amount which he had borrowed from the money-lender and he should repay the entire amount to him and get rid of this problem. To this, the worker politely said that though there was no written agreement for paying of interest for a certain fixed period of time, but paying the entire amount in order to be relieved of the problem means “I will be going back from the verbal assurance which I had given to him”.

Once she started her lecture by narrating an incident which occurred in the campus of the Section HQ when she was the General Secretary of the Indian Section. A resident member-cum-worker of the TS was bitten by a dog. Then it was decided to catch the dog and release it at some far-off place so that others may not become its victim. But no body could catch the dog. A milk man used to supply milk daily in Bhojanshala and used to give some milk to the dog as well, which purposely used to be nearby that area in the evening. So the milk man was approached to help in this regard. The reply given by that young boy was “I shall never betray the dog that comes to me with trust and confidence”.

The aforementioned incidents show the manner in which some so-called financially weak and uneducated or less educated people are guided by moral values and their conscience in their day-to-day life. Radhaji admired these qualities and appreciated the stand taken by them.

Radhaji was always keen in promoting and strengthening good thoughts, proper action and noble work. She was never cut-off from the main stream of society. Her deep concern for the social issues was manifested in ‘On The Watch-Tower’, her articles, lectures and dialogues. All this shows how integrated and holistic her vision was. She was a versatile scholar who utilized her time, energy, wisdom and insights to promote not only better understanding of Theosophy but to live Theosophy.

Revered Radhaji’s approach to life teaches us that what is required is not a casual or indifferent way of dealing with a problem or a situation but a positive and constructive attitude and outlook in order to work out an effective alternative and amicable solution. Life must mean dynamism and progress towards greater human unity as well as preservation and protection of all living beings. We must be true to the social surroundings in which we live, true to nature and must be true to our own selves.

## NEWS AND NOTES

### Bengal

The National Lecturer Bro. N.C. Krishna conducted a lecture session on the topic “*The Secret Doctrine*” on 5 & 6 August/23 depicting the evolution of man, animal, plants, minerals, & environment vis-a-vis universe in a greater perspective. The sessions were very thought provoking.

On 20<sup>th</sup> August/23, Federation President, Eminent Writer, Bro. Pankaj Kr. Datta delivered a unique Annie Besant Memorial Lecture on the topic “*Bharater Swadhinata Andolaner 75 Bachhar Purtir Prekshapate Swadhinata Andolan O Theosophy Andolane Annie Besanter Bhumika*” He narrated some of the unknown and rare events pertaining to Annie Besant’s relations with Rabindra Nath Tagore, Manishi Hirendra Nath Dutta, one of the pioneer of the Theosophical Movement in Bengal and other prominent personalities for accelerating the India’s freedom movement, Theosophical movement, and many other movements like Women’s Education, women empowerment etc. during India’s Pre-independent period having its roots in Bengal.

The Bengal Theosophical Federation conducted its 103rd Annual General meeting and Annual Conference on 3rd Sept./23 at BTS Hall, 4/3 A Bankim Chatterjee St., Kolkata with a Full day’s Programme. The Annual General Meeting was held in the morning session under the Presidentship of Bro. Pankaj Kr. Datta, and Annual Conference was held in the afternoon Session. Ven. P. Seewali Thero, General Secretary, The Mahabodhi Society of India, graced the Occasion as Chief Guest and Maulana Taherul Haque, President, West Bengal Madrasah School Teachers’ Association was the Special Guest. Chief Guest awarded the Diploma to the new members in the function and at the end a cultural programme was held where Sis. Madhusree Chowdhury and her group presented a dance item titled “*Namo Sambhuddhaya*” based on a poem written by Swami Vivakananda on Buddha.

The session was very successful and enjoyed by the audience with full appreciation.

## **Bihar**

Birthday Celebration of Dr. Annie Besant and a Symposium on Practical Theosophy:

The 118th Annual Convention of Bihar Theosophical Federation was organized on 1st and 2nd October 2023 at Gopalganj Lodge, Gopalganj. The Convention started with Prayers of All Religions and invocation of Universal Prayer. Welcome address was given by Lodge's President Bro. Brij Kishore Prasad. Then Chitaranjan Sinha "Kanak", President, BTF. Prof. Raj Kishore Prasad, Secretary, BTF, made some important announcements regarding the programme. On the first day (on 1st October 2023) a talk on the topic- "Role of Dr. Annie Besant and Theosophical Society in independence movement of India" was organized in which speakers were- Bro. Chitaranjan Sinha, "Kanak" and Bro. Niraj Kumar, Assistant Secretary, Gopalganj Lodge. Then, on the second day (2 October) a symposium on 'Practical Theosophy' was organized. Chairperson of this symposium was Bro. Chitaranjan Sinha "Kanak" and the speakers were—

1. Prof. S.C. Prasad, President, Motihari Lodge
2. Dr. Sharda Charan, Vice-president, BTF
3. Bro. Suresh Prasad, Vice-president, B.T.F. and
4. Prof. Raj Kishore Prasad, Secretary, Bihar Theosophical Federation.

Then short talks on the book, "*At the feet of the Master.*" were held. Chairperson of this session was Prof. Raj Kishore Prasad, Secretary, B.T.F. and the speakers were-

1. Bro. Niraj Kumar of Gopalganj Lodge
2. Bro. Ramesh Prasad of Muzaffarpur Lodge.
3. Bro. Amrit Priyadarshi of Chapra Lodge.
4. Bro. Raj Kishore Sah of Samastipur Theosophical Lodge.

Vote of thanks was given by the BTF Secretary, Prof. Raj Kishore Prasad.

## **Bombay**

'FUNDA – THEOSOPHY BY ART' was a creative vision of BTF Treasurer

Bro. Taral Munshi with his spirit of '*Kala Disha – Kala Ki Udan Har Disha*'. He had promised one of the BTF Goals '*To reach out to School & College Students for Theosophical Themes through Arts & Theater*' at SMART GOALS MEET of Indian Section, Varanasi, on 18-19 March 2023.

His vision crystallized on Saturday 16th September 2023 morning with School students gathering in Besant Hall of Blavatsky Lodge in their colourful attires for Inter-School Junior & Senior Group competitions of Hindi Skit – Street Play. The Judges' Table was on the Stage and for performance was the open space in centre of the Hall surrounded by chairs for the audience.

This competition jointly organized by Bombay Theosophical Federation and Junior Red Cross Maharashtra had following theme options for both groups:

Stories of Munshi Premchand, Stories from Dhammapada (Buddha Stories), Any story with Humanitarian Message, and Any story on Brotherhood.

The Competition was graced by BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya, and Rtn Godrej Dotivala, President Junior Red Cross Maharashtra with his wife Havovi Dotivala.

The Judges Panels with professional Theatre Artists were as under:

Junior Group (Std 5th-7th)	Senior Group (Std 8th-10th)
1. Ms. Namrata Pathak	1. Ms. Namrata Pathak
2. Mr. Tapan Bhatt	2. Ms. Shilpa Mehta
3. Mr. Rahul Mewavala	3. Ms Archana Munshi

It was the first innovative experience with entertaining and giving knocks to conscious presentations by both Junior and Senior Groups. There were six entries in Junior Group and 10 entries in Senior Group. Four artists from each school presented Teachings of Humanity & Brotherhood or Stories of Munshi Premchand & Dhammapada.

In *Nukkad* style, Street Plays by students were without Mike. The Props used for Skits were full of students' imaginations & creativity like: Toys, Bat-ball, Damru-Daf - Guitar, Utensils, Placards, Plants in Pots and Tree - Cows & even Hut from cardboards.



Bro. Taral Munshi had organized shooting of the whole competition. He plans to put it on U-Tube.

The Judges of both Groups with appreciation & guidance announced the Results. Surprisingly all the winners are from North Mumbai Schools. The Winning performances and Prize distributions will be at the BTF Annual Session to be held on 1st-2nd-3rd December 2023.

The students were given Hindi books '*At the Feet of the Master*' & '*Short Biography of Dr. Annie Besant*', Participation Certificates and Snacks. The Judges were presented Hindi books - '*At the Feet of the Master*', '*The Textbook of Theosophy* by CWL' & '*The Path of Discipleship* by AB'. The Volunteers were also presented Hindi Theosophical books.

Dr. Rajam Pillai congratulated Bro. Taral Munshi & his wife Archana Munshi for spreading Theosophy through Theatre for students. She thanked the Judges; Junior Red Cross Maharashtra Team of State Coordinator Shri Bhavesh Sao, Secretary Ms. Joyce Pinto, Volunteers Ashton Chitty & Tushar Tuloonkar & Peon; Jyoti Lodge Volunteers Mathur Nath, Kasutubh, Mahadev & Tejal Munshi; Hospitality Team Sis. Navaz Dhalla & Sis. Maya Chavda and Blavatsky Lodge for providing Besant Hall and all the facilities.

Bro. Arni Narendran was invited to speak virtually for LOTUS CIRCLE on 25th September 2023 as part of the series 'THE FLAMING TORCH'.

This Group of Singapore Philippines, India & Netherland started four years ago by Youth is for Universal & Self-Healing Meditation. Bro. Arni's talk Ended with 10-minute meditation - 'JUST BEING'.

## **Gujarat**

The President, Shri Harshavadan Sheth and the Secretary, Shri C.K. Soni of the Gujarat Theosophical Federation organized a special GTF Website Launching Programme and the Training Workshop for the Presidents and the Secretaries of all the lodges of the GTF on 30th July 2023. It was held in the Natvarlal Mehta Masonic Hall, Ahmedabad. The Vice-President and National Lecturer Shri Narsinhbhai Thakaria, the Treasurer Shri Rameshchandra Dolia, the CO Secretary Shri Prashant Shah and the other council members attended the special meeting which started at 10 a.m. The Secretary explained the purpose of the meeting. He put forward the

important Propagations of the GTF. The Website was launched by the President of the GTF along with others after the brief explanation of the Nodal officer Shri Deepakbhai Pandya. He, in his short speech mentioned the importance of the website which would work to spread and share the important informations about the GTF lodges. Then others shared their views and felt free to solve their local problems and work faster than earlier.

The deliberations were very fruitful. The afternoon session continued with the administrative guidance. The President of the GTF congratulated all for their support and enthusiasm.

A special function to distribute the ‘ Diplomas to the new members ’ was organized on 20th August by the newly founded Santram Lodge in Nadiad. It was held in the Santram Temple hall. The function started at 10 in the morning. The President of the GTF Shri Harshavadan Sheth, the Secretary Shri C K Soni, the Nodal officer Shri Deepakbhai Pandya, Youth Activity President Pratik Shrimali, Sub Editor of *Theosophic Jyoti* Shri Girish Nilgiri, Council Member Shri Manharbhai Patel and members of the Santram Lodge attended the special occasion. The Lodge President Manubhai Rathod welcomed all and explained about the Theosophical activities being carried out in the Nadiad and Kheda district. The Mahant of the Santaram Temple also remained present and lighted the lamp with other dignitaries. He blessed all for the special task of the Theosophical activities.

The Secretary of the Santaram Lodge, Mrs Madhuben Makwana spoke about the vital activities of the new lodge members and sought for more guidance from the GTF President and Secretary.

Then, the President along with the Secretary Shri C K Soni distributed the Diplomas to the members. In his short speech, the Secretary explained about the importance of the administrative work to spread the Light of Theosophical activities.

The Nodal officer Shri Deepakbhai Pandya also spoke about the importance of the website and quick communication.

The President Shri Harshavadan Sheth congratulated the Diploma holders.

Then Shri Girish Nilgiri, Pratik Shrimali and Shri Manharbhai Patel spoke about the bright TS work being done in Kheda, Anand and Nadiad.

The vote of thanks was given by the Santram Lodge's Secretary, Mrs Madhuben Makwana.

The inspiring function ended at 1.30 p.m. with the Pious Lunch in the Temple Kitchen hall.

### **Karnataka**

The following programmes were held in June 2023:

On-line lectures were given on every Sunday on the book "*Self Culture*". Sis. Navarathanamma gave lecture on "The Function of Physical Body and its purification", Bro. Y. A Vasudeva spoke on "The functions of Astral Body and its purification", Sis. B. Sandhyarani dealt with the subject "Lower mental plane and its purification". Sis. Jyothi Nagesh gave talk on 'Causal body and its functions' and his other talk was on "Higher mind and its development".

On-line lectures are being held on every Thursday on the book "*You*". In this context Sis. Usha Prakash gave lecture on the first 10 chapters, Bro. Dr. R. V Vastrad gave a lecture on 'You' and transfiguration"; Sis. D J Prema Leela explained 'You and Aesthetic Exploration', Bro. A. Venkata Reddy delivered talks on "You and Theosophy", Sis. R. Madhavi spoke on "You and your destination". Bro. M. R Gopal and associates Bro. H. C. Jagadish, Bro. I. A. Basavaraja Reddy, J. M Dhananjaya and Sis. Navaratnamma are conducting on-line lectures every day in the evening except on Sunday and Thursday. The book chosen for study is "*Gayathri*".

Sis. Vanivasudeva delivered lecture on "Ramana Maharshi's Upadesha Sarani" on 4-6 2023, and Bro. Dr. L. Nagesh delivered talks on "The infinite universe, the infinite life and lonely journey". These were held in Bangalore City Lodge.

Sis. Lalitha Nataraj gave talks on 'Vipasyana Dhyna and its practice', Keeping Radhaji's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in view. Bro. C. A. Shinde and Bro. Pradip Mahapatra gave talks on Sis. Radhaji's writings and achievements and the same were translated into Kannada by Bro. Reddappachar, Sis. B. Sandhyarani spoke on the same subject in Vijayanagar Lodge.

Sis. Dr. Jyothi Nagesh delivered lecture on 10.6.23 and the subject of her talk was "*Parama Padakke Chaturdasha Dvaragalu*". She continued her lecture on 17.6.23. Bro. M.S. Sridhara continued his lecture on "Creative Silence" on

24.06.23. Bro. Sridhdhara Chakrabhavi gave lecture on J. K.'s views on Education and Life.

Sis. N. Puttamma spoke on the subject "Karma Siddhanta" at Malleswram Bangalore Lodge on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Bro. Rangadhama talked about the book "*At the Feet of the Master*" on 12 June. Sis. N. Puttamma explained "Human Regeneration" on 19 June and Bro. Krishnamurthy gave a talk on "Karma Niyama" on 26 June.

Bro. T. Srinivasa spoke on 'Sadachar' Bro. Sivaprasanna's subject of talk was "Vairagya". Bro. Sudharshan Achar gave a talk on "Prema". These three talks were held on 17 June.

Sree Vireshaguruji delivered lecture in Kottur Lodge on "Meditation" on 3 June. Sis. Geetha spoke on "Jaganmata" on 7 June. Bro. teacher Nagaraju spoke on "*The Sharana Ambigara Chaudayya*". Bro. B. Hanumathappa gave lecture on "The Gita Bhavadhara" on 14 June and Sis. V. Kannika spoke on 'Jinarajadasa' on 17 June.

Bro. N. Hampanna explained the content of the "Bharata Samaja Pooja" on 20.06.23 and Bro. T. Kotreshappa spoke on "Life Skill" on 21 June. Bro. N. Hampanna gave talks on "Human Regeneration" and "The Source of Spiritual Energy". A symposium was held on "The Mind, Bhakti and Bhava" at Srinivasapura Lodge on 4.06.23. Bro. M. Reddappachar directed a day-long T.S. Meet. Bro. A. Venkata Reddy gave a talk on "The purpose of life" Sis. R. Madhavi delivered lecture on "Reincarnation". The director gave lecture on "Life after death"

Bro. Vidvan Rajagopal Bhagavatar presented a discourse on "The Spirituality and Indian Arts" at Davanagere on 18 June. Bro. Dr. R.V. Vastrad directed a day-long T.S. Meet and gave lecture on "Dhammapada" and Appamada" on 25.06.23 Bro. I. A. Basavaraja Reddy spoke on "Yamakavagga".

A T. S. Meet was organized at Chitradurga Lodge with the Presidents, Secretaries of central and North Zone lodges. It was conducted under the direction of K.T.F Secretary on 4 June. Bro. M.S. Sridhara, Bro I. A. Basavaraj Reddy, Bro .B. K. Nagarajappa , Bro. Venkatachalapathi, Bro. Adikeshava Prakash and Bro. M.R. Gopal were present at the meet. Administrative directions were given by Bro. M.S. Sridhar to all those present at the meet .

Bro. R.V. Vastrad directed a day-long meeting on 11 June. The book chosen

for study was “*The Voice of the Silence*” The director spoke on “Siddhies” and Bro. Basavaraj Reddy spoke on “Three Sabhanganas”

Bro. N. Sanjeeva Reddy directed a day-long discussion on Dr. Annie Besant in Gowribidanur Lodge The director spoke on “Besant’s Contribution to India”. Bro. R. Krishnamurthy spoke on “Spirituality and Indian History” Bro. B.K. Krishnamurthy gave a musical lecture on “Saint Kabira’s couplets (dohas).”

A programme was held at Kyadigunte Lodge from 16 to 18 July under the direction of Bro. A. I. Basavaraja Reddy. In this Union of Seven lodges of Challakere taluk, Bro. B.K. Nagarajappa gave lecture on “The principles of higher life”, Bro. T.R. Thippeswamy spoke on “Theosophical Teachings”, Bro. M. Reddappachar delivered lecture on “Reincarnation”, Bro. A. Venkata Reddy gave talk on “Life after death”. Sis. R. Madhavi explained “our thoughts and their features”. Bro. T. Chandrashekhar spoke on “Theosophy and Society” and Bro. P. Thippeswamy spoke on “Meditation”.

Sis. Sailaja Thyagaraj Setty gave lecture on “Blind beliefs and the Discriminative Beliefs”. On 18.06.23 Bro. I. A. Basavaraj Reddy spoke on “What Theosophy is the real life in action”. Bro. H.P. Jagadish gave talks on “Karma”. Sis. Bhuvaneshwari explained “Para and Aparā Vidya”.

Sis. R. Madhavi directed a day-long T.S. Meet at Chintamani Lodge on 8 May 2023 where *Shwethapadmastmi* was observed. The director delivered lecture on “The teachings of Madam Blavatsky” Bro. A. Venkata Reddy spoke on “*Swethapadmastmi*”. Bhavadgita Slokas were Chanted by Sis. Ambujakshi. Ex-  
traction from “*The Light of Asia* and *The Voice of the Silence* were read by Sis. Leela on 18.06.23. A day-long T.S. Meet was held under the direction of Sis. Sandhyarani from Bangalore on 18 June. Bro. M.S. Pradeep gave lecture on “Planetary Chains”. Bro. M. Nagaraju explained “The Teachings of Bro. Jinarajadasa”. The director spoke on “The Fruitfulness of Theosophical Studies”.

Bro. Venkata Reddy directed a T.S. Meet at Konankuntlu Lodge on 21 May in which Bro. Y. A. Vasudeva gave a talk on “Vaishaka Poornami”. Bro. Reddappachar lectured on “What is Theosophy”. Sis. R. Madhavi explained about “Moral Principles and Theosophy”. The director spoke on “Universal laws of life”. Sis. R. Madhavi directed a camp on 25 June at the same Lodge. Bro. M. Reddappachar gave lecture on Jnan Yoga from Bhavadgita, Bro. A. Venkata Reddy spoke on Bhakthi

Yoga and the director delivered lecture on Karma Yoga.

Sis. Shubha spoke on “Reincarnation” at Nittur lodge on 25 June and Bro. Virupakshappa gave lecture on “The Evolution of man behind Creation”.

### **T.O.S. Programme**

The President of T.O.S. Bro. Varun and Bro. U.S. Mahesh, Secretary distributing School bags and Exercise books in different parts of Rural and Urban areas with great Zeal and Enthusiasm.

### **Kerala**

Inter Lodge Meeting at Sri Sankara Lodge, Ernakulam, Kerala.

In connection with the Birth Centenary of Dr Radha S Burnier (1923-2023) an Inter Lodge Meeting was organized at Sri Sankara Lodge Ernakulam, Kerala on 16 th September 2023.

The book taken up for the study was “ *Listen to the Song of Life*” By Dr. Radha S Burnier and the theme was ‘Web of Life’.

Programme commenced with Bharat Samaj Pooja conducted by Sis. Laxmibai and Madhusoodanan Pillai.

Meeting started with Prayers of religions.

Lodge’s President Dr T.P. Babu presided. In his presidential address he briefly described the life of Radhaji. K. T. F President Dr. M. A. Raveendran inaugurated the meeting and emphasized the need of deep study of Theosophy. Bro. S. Sivadas, President of Alleppy Lodge spoke on the subject “ To live is to Die”

Secy. of the Lodge Bro. T.S. Usman spoke on “Listen to the Song of Life”. Bro. Balaji Narsyanaswamy spoke on “ Discovering Oneself”.

Bro. K Dinakaran, Secretary K. T. F., spoke in the afternoon session on “ The pain and the Glory of being human”

Bro. E.P. Pankajakshan spoke on “ The Adept and the Disciple”.

An open forum was also conducted in which members actively participated.

The meeting came to a close at 4.00 p.m.

## **U.P. & Uttarakhand**

The AGM of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, was held on 06 September. Then, in the meetings held on 13, 20 and 27 September talks were delivered on the topics 'Krishna Avatar', 'Life after Death' and 'Will Power' by Bro. U.S. Pandey, Bro. Pramil Dwivedi and Bro. B. K. Pandey respectively.

A symposium was organized by Nirvan Lodge, Agra, on 07 September on the topic 'Human Character and its Building'. During the meetings held on 14 and 21 September talks were delivered on the topics 'Shri Krishna' and 'Spirituality in *Ramcharitamanas*' by Bro. Devendra Bajpai and Dr. Ramvir Singh respectively. The Lodge held its AGM on 28 September.

Bro. S. K. Pandey, Federation Secretary, visited Agra lodge on 09 -10 September, when he discussed administrative matters including renovation/repairs of lodge building, with lodge officials and delivered a talk there on 10 September on the topic 'What brings a man back on earth?'

In the meetings of Sarvahitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, held on 06 and 13 September Bro. S. B. R. Mishra delivered talks on 'Seven Chakras of the body' and '*Trikaya*' respectively. Then, talks were delivered on 20 and 27 September in which the subjects dealt with were 'Importance of Avatara' and 'Man-Visible and Invisible'. The speakers were Bro. A. P. Srivastava and Bro. Arvind Rai respectively.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted study of the book "*Creating Character*" by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater at Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad, on 3 and 10 September.

Group study of the book '*Nirvana*' (Ch.7) was held at Noida Lodge. The Lodge held its AGM on 17 September.

Talks were delivered by Bro. S. S. Gautam at Chohan Lodge, Kanpur, in two sessions on the topic 'Law of Sacrifice'. These talks were held on 3 and 17 September. Then, on 10 and 14 September Bro. S.S. Gautam spoke in two sessions on 'Avatar Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita'. The Lodge also arranged a group study of the book "*At the Feet of the Master*" on 19 and 20 September.

Talks on the topics 'Pleasure', 'Astral Plane' and 'The Seven Principles of Man' were delivered by Sis. Archana Pandey, Bro. Sudeep Mishra and Sis. Sushma Srivastava at Anand Lodge, Prayag Raj. These talks were held on 3, 10 and 24 Sep-

tember respectively.

A meeting of the members of Managing Committee of Kashi Tattva Sabha was held on 07 September.

Annie Besant Lodge, Varanasi, organized the Discussion and Interaction session on 22 September on the book “*The Ultimate Reality and Realization*” authored by I. K. Taimini. During this session, first section of this book titled ‘Sambhavopaya’ was read and discussed and summaries were circulated among lodge members. It highlights matters of inner experience and way of treading the path to gain such experience.

Bro. Shesh Nath Tripathi delivered a talk on the topic ‘Law of Karma’ in the meeting of Brahmvidya Lodge, Vill. Jigna (Distt. Gorakhpur). It was held on 25 September.

Bro. D. K. Satsangi delivered a talk on the topic ‘*Pratibhijna Hridayam – Fundamentals of Kashmir Shaivism*’ based on I. K. Taimini’s book ‘*The Secret of Self-Realization.*’ It was held at Maitreya Lode, Gr. Noida on 10 September.

During the meeting of Pragya Lodge Lucknow held on 03, 17 and 24 September, study of the book “*At the Feet of the Master*” was conducted by Sis. Vasumati Agnihotri. The Lodge held a joint meeting with Satyamarg Lodge, Lucknow, on 10 September when Sis. Vasumati Agnihotri delivered a talk on the topic ‘The Path of Discipleship.’

Fed. Secretary Bro. S.K. Pandey visited Muradnagar Lodge on 27 September where he discussed the matter regarding renewal and revival of membership with Lodge members and also delivered a talk on ‘Basics of Theosophy and its importance in our lives.’

### **Contribution in other Federations**

Karnataka Federation: On invitation by the Federation, Bro. U. S. Pandey as chief guest delivered a talk on 22 September on ‘Spirit, Spirituality, Spiritual’ during the 118th Annual Conference of Chitradurga lodge of Karnataka Federation. He also participated in the 114th Annual Conference of Karnataka Federation held at Chitradurga on 23 and 24 September. Besides, he delivered a talk on the topic ‘Social Service – its Spiritual Dimensions’ during the Annual Conference of T.O.S. Karnataka Region held at Chitradurga on 23 September.



M.P. and Rajasthan Federation: On invitation by the Federation, Bro. S.K. Pandey participated as chief guest in its Annual Conference held in Ujjain on 23 and 24 September where he delivered two talks on 'Divine Plan – Journey of the Infinite' and '*Nivritti Marga*' based on the theme "First stage of journey of the infinite is Curiosity." He also delivered a public lecture there on 'Reincarnation.'

On invitation by Delhi Federation Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered an on-line talk on the topic "Unity in Diversity of Religions". It was held at Shankar Lodge on 30 September.

### **Contribution to the Indian Section Work/ Programme**

Bro. S. S. Gautam translated the Section's journal "*The Indian Theosophist*" of October 2023 in Hindi.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty moderated the session on "Value education in the light of Theosophy" held on 10 September.

### **National Lecturer**

Joint Lodge meeting of Rewa and Rohit lodges of Gujarat Federation and Jyoti lodge of Bombay Federation: Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered an on-line talk on 'Anne Besant – A Great Occultist'. It was held on 12 September.

Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered an on-line talk on 17 September on "Esoteric Foundation of the Philosophy in the Secret Doctrine –Part 3".

### **Gone to Peace**

Dr. Narendra Deo (Dipl. No. 106382) of Lucknow and Shri Gitish Chandra Pandey (Dipl. No. 103959) of Varanasi passed to peace on 3 and 9 September 2023 respectively.

