

Krishnamurti: Ninety Years of Theosophical Ripples — III

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IN the February 1964 issue of *The Theosophist*, in his column “On the Watch-Tower”, N. Sri Ram, as President of the Theosophical Society (TS), addressed the controversial matter of E. L. Gardner’s booklet. Below are some extracts of what he wrote:

It is stated in the pamphlet, “Obviously there has been no Coming”. I would add to this sentence the words “as expected”. Krishnaji is giving a teaching, message or whatever else we may call it, which is of unique value and importance. He is him-self quite an extraordinary person, unlike anybody else in so many respects. May it not be that he *is* fulfilling the mission to which the prophecy really referred? Even after breaking from the Society and with the traditional lines of Theosophical thought, Krishnaji in 1928–1929 did claim to have reached complete identification with the Truth. He used the words, “One with the Beloved”, and explained — this explanation is printed in Mr Gardner’s pamphlet — “To me it is all, it is Sri Krishna, it is the Master KH, it is the Lord Maitreya, it is the Buddha, and yet it is

beyond all these forms. What does it matter what name you give?”

Dr Besant started her political work in 1913, and it was then that she said she put aside the use of her clairvoyant faculties. The proclamation as to the Coming was made by her in a Convention lecture at Adyar, entitled “The Opening of the New Cycle” in December 1910, three years after she became President, and while she was still obviously in the plenitude of her powers. It is difficult to imagine that in a matter of such tremendous importance, she could have made the proclamation without any grounds of her own. She spoke with great assurance and as if she knew, and not as if she had been told by a colleague.

It is quite possible that both Dr Besant and Brother Leadbeater understood what was hoped for and expected according to their own ideas of the form it should take, but based the central idea on what they had learned through contact with the higher Sources. . . .

There is the statement in Mr. Gardner’s pamphlet that “The Lord Maitreya and the Masters with whom C. W. Leadbeater

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(CWL) was on such familiar terms were his own thought-creations”. This is a statement which the world at large would readily believe, but in the form in which it is made it may not coincide with the truth. Brother Leadbeater through the faculties he had probably got a great deal that is valuable and correct, yet there might be mixed with it certain of his personal ideas and the influence of his personal predilections.

I feel that no one — and not only Brother Leadbeater — should be considered infallible, and such a view is consistent with the highest respect to the person concerned, and with faith in his integrity.

As HPB says in *The Secret Doctrine*, there are “enormous mysteries connected with the mind”. Something might easily go wrong in the process of translation from a higher to a lower plane, in one’s recollections of what he had heard or knew inside himself. The only safe rule for all of us is to consider for oneself impersonally every statement, from *whatever* source it may come, and act according to one’s own understanding, not imagining that one’s understanding and judgment must be absolutely correct.

Radha Burnier on Krishnamurti

In an interview at the San Rafael Theosophical Centre, Argentina, in April 2004, Radha Burnier, then President of the Theosophical Society, answered questions from young Theosophists. The full text can be seen here: <theosophical.society.org.au/articles/j-krishnamurti-theosophy-and-the-theosophical-society>. Below are a couple of excerpts:

Q: *Many people say that, when he left the*

TS, Krishnamurti betrayed the TS and the Masters who instructed him. What do you think about this?

RB: Not many people, but some people say this. I think it is a wrong idea. There was no question of Krishnamurti betraying the TS or the Masters who instructed him. In the TS at that time, there was a group of people who claimed to have contact with the Masters, and who assumed authority for themselves. They believed they were in a position to declare: “You have been put on probation; someone else has become a pupil of the Master”, or “Now you are an Initiate”. But it could be seen by the behaviour of these people that they did not fulfil the qualifications which are described in *The Masters and the Path* and other books about what a true disciple of the Master or Initiate would be like. So it became like a drama, a farce, and Krishnamurti disliked all this very much. . . .

I think the idea that he betrayed the Masters is ridiculous. My personal opinion is that he was in constant touch with the Masters. He knew far better what the Masters were than most of the people who talked much about the Masters and claimed to be their agents. According to Krishnaji, the mistake made in the TS at that time was that the sacred and holy were brought down to a personal and material level. Swami T. Subba Row objected even to HPB talking as much as she did about the Masters, because of the danger of degrading the concept of the Masters. God is said to be made in the image of man; similarly people attribute to the Masters what is familiar to themselves, but it has little to do with

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what they actually are: very holy, pure, wise people. Madame Blavatsky also made it clear that those who want to contact the Masters must rise to their level, it being impossible to bring them down to the worldly level. But the bringing down was what was happening. Krishnaji rejected the ideas about the Masters, but not the existence of liberated ones. . . .

According to Pupul Jayakar’s account of Krishnaji’s life, when the “process” was taking place, he sometimes said: “They are here.” Who are the “they”? “They” were doing something to his brain, and so on. Even just before he died, it is reported that he remarked: “I am ready to go. They are waiting for me.” Another side to the matter was that in the TS too much was made about where the Masters lived, what kind of colour of hair each one had, and that kind of thing. These details, even if accurate, concern only the outer appearance; the Master is really a state of consciousness. He may wear a certain body at some time, and another body at another time. Thinking of the appearance and the physical body as the Master is completely wrong. HPB wrote that the people who say they want to contact the Master do not know what they are talking about, because the body is only a mask, not the real thing. This is true even in our case; the body is a mask, concealing a different reality. In the case of the Mahatmas, the reality is a certain level and quality of consciousness. Perhaps Krishnaji did not like reducing the Masters to these details, and thinking about them as being somewhat like ourselves.

Krishnamurti on the Masters

An article containing some of my

conversations with Radha Burnier was published in *The Theosophist*, January 2014. It contains some passages about Krishnaji:

While walking along with her and with others, Krishnaji said to her on seeing the Garden of Remembrance [at Adyar]: “Something is not right.” He then asked her what kind of ceremonies were being held at Adyar and she told him that only the usual ones were being performed like Masonic rituals, the Ritual of the Mystic Star, ES meetings, etc. He said: “It is none of these.” He then asked her: “Has anything been changed here?” Radhaji then told him that during John Coats’s administration many changes had been made including the two pillars which were shifted from their original location near the six-pointed star to the entrance. “That’s it!”, he said, “there were magnetized jewels under them. They should not have been moved.” After an absence of forty-seven years from Adyar he was aware of a change that had taken place without his knowledge.

After she offered him some orange juice and they talked for a while in her house, Krishnaji left in the car with Radhaji accompanying him. When the car was about to reach the main gate he asked her: “What are you going to do now?” Radhaji said: “I will walk back”, to which Krishnaji said: “No, we will drive you back.” When the car started off from the main gate area Krishnaji asked her: “Radhaji, do you believe in the Masters?” Radhaji replied: “Yes.” Krishnaji said, with emphasis: “What do you mean by saying ‘yes’? Do you know that Annie Besant’s life was entirely different

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because of it?” There was silence for some time after which Krishnaji again asked: “So Radhaji, do you believe in the Masters?” Radhaji replied: “Yes, Krishnaji, I do believe in the Masters.” “Good”, he said. . . .

Once at Adyar we were having lunch at Mr Ranjit Tolani’s house. Several TS members were present. Eventually the conversation moved to an incident involving Krishnaji. Radhaji told us then that she wished she had asked Krishnaji many more questions as she felt he knew so much. But there was one question in particular that she [had] wanted to ask him [and she did]. She said: “Sir, in your talks and in your books you have sometimes said that the Masters are not important and that they may not even exist. However, we have documents and letters signed by you when you were younger attesting to the effect that you saw them. What do you have to say about this?” She clarified that she was talking about the two Masters involved in the formation of the TS, M. and KH. She said Krishnaji was silent for some time and the only thing he said was: “They were two of many people.”

In her book *Krishnamurti — A Biography* (Harper and Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1986, p. 129), Pupul Jayakar relates an incident with Krishnamurti while he was staying at Ootacamund, South India:

Krishnaji had been suffering excruciating pain in his head and neck, his stomach was swollen, tears streamed down his face. He suddenly fell back on the bed and became intensely still. The traces of pain and fatigue were wiped away, as happens

in death. Then life and an immensity began to enter the face. The face was greatly beautiful. It had no age; time had not touched it. The eyes opened, but there was no recognition. The body radiated light; a stillness and a vastness illumined his face. The silence was liquid and heavy, like honey; it poured into the room and into our minds and bodies, filling every cell of the brain, wiping away every trace of time and memory. We felt a touch without a presence, a wind blowing without movement. We could not help folding our hands in *pranams*. For some minutes he lay unmoving, then his eyes opened. After some time, he saw us and said, “Did you see that face?” He did not expect an answer. He lay silently. Then, “The Buddha was here, you are blessed.”

HPB on Truth

Some have suggested that because his [Krishnaji’s] teachings departed, in many respects, from the teachings of HPB, they are not true. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the following statement by Madame Blavatsky on absolute and relative truth:

To sum up the idea, with regard to absolute and relative truth, we can only repeat what we said before. *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND — he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.* Were even the goddess who dwells at the bottom of the well to issue from her place of confinement, she could give man no more than he can assimilate. Meanwhile, every one can sit

near that well — the name of which is KNOWLEDGE — and gaze into its depths in the hope of seeing Truth's fair image reflected, at least, on the dark waters. This, however, as remarked by Richter, presents a certain danger. Some truth, to be sure, may be occasionally reflected as in a mirror on the spot we gaze upon, and thus reward the patient student. But, adds the German thinker, "I have heard that some philosophers in seeking for Truth, to pay homage to her, have seen their own image in the water and adored it instead."

("What is Truth?", *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. IX, pp. 40-41)

HPB on the Torchbearer

In *The Key to Theosophy* by H. P. Blavatsky, originally published in 1889, at its Conclusion, Madame Blavatsky alludes to the coming of "the new torchbearer of Truth" in the 20th century. This is what she had to say:

Theo. I must tell you that during the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those Masters, of whom I have spoken, to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. Towards the close of each century you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality — or call it mysticism if you prefer — has taken place. Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge and teaching has been given out. If you care to do so, you can trace these movements back, century by century, as far as our detailed historical records extend.

Enq. But how does this bear on the future of the Theosophical Society?

Theo. If the present attempt, in the form of our Society, succeeds better than its predecessors have done, then it will be in existence as an organized, living and healthy body when the time comes for the effort of the 20th century. The general condition of men's minds and hearts will have been improved and purified by the spread of its teachings, and, as I have said, their prejudices and dogmatic illusions will have been, to some extent at least, removed.

Not only so, but besides a large and accessible literature ready to men's hands, the next impulse will find a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the new torchbearer of Truth. He will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path.

Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish. Measure it by comparison with what the Theosophical Society actually *has* achieved in the last few years, without *any* of these advantages and surrounded by hosts of hindrances which would not hamper the new leader. Consider all this, and then tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say that if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years — tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-

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first century in comparison with what it is now!

<theosociety.org/pasadena/key/keyconc.htm>)

Also in *The Secret Doctrine*, Introductory, p. xxxviii, originally published in 1888 (facsimile edition, The Theosophical University Press Online Edition), Madame Blavatsky makes another allusion to the coming of an advanced disciple of the Masters:

In Century the Twentieth some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called *Gupta-Vidyā*; and that, like the once-mysterious sources of the Nile, the source of all religions and philosophies now known to the world has been for many ages forgotten and lost to men, but is at last found.

K on the Benediction

Below are excerpts from *Krishnamurti's Notebook* in which he alludes to non-ordinary states of consciousness:

But there's a sacredness which is not of thought, nor of a feeling resuscitated by thought. It is not recognizable by thought nor can it be utilized by thought. Thought cannot formulate it. But there's a sacredness, untouched by any symbol or word. It is not communicable. It is a fact. . . .

Our look is as bound by time-space as our brain. We never look, we never see beyond this limitation; we do not know how to look through and beyond these fragmentary frontiers. But the eyes have to see beyond

them, penetrating deeply and widely, without choosing, without shelter; they have to wander beyond man-made frontiers of ideas and values and to feel beyond love. Then there is a benediction which no god can give. . . .

It's as though everything stood still. There is no movement, no stirring, complete emptiness of all thought, of all seeing. There is no interpreter to translate, to observe, to censor. An immeasurable vastness that is utterly still and silent. There is no space, nor time to cover that space. The beginning and the ending are here, of all things. There is really nothing that can be said about it

Last night woke up with that sense of complete stillness and silence; the brain was fully alert and intensely alive; the body was very quiet. This state lasted for about half an hour. This in spite of an exhausting day.

The height of intensity and sensitivity is the experiencing of essence. It's this that is beauty beyond word and feeling. Proportion and depth, light and shade are limited to time-space, caught in beauty-ugliness. But that which is beyond line and shape, beyond learning and knowledge, is the beauty of essence.

Adyar Day 1924 – Adyar Day, 17 February 1986

This is what Krishnaji wrote about Adyar in 1924:

It is essential for the individual member and for the Society that Adyar, as a great spiritual centre, should be maintained worthy and dignified. The importance of

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this is so obvious that few can doubt it. Adyar is and always has been a spiritual oasis to which the weary traveller looks for comfort and repose. Though it may not be the privilege of each member in the Society to go there from the world of wilderness, yet the mere existence of such a centre gives hope and encouragement.

I have visited many a wonderful land and seen many a famous sight, but there is none to equal the extraordinary intangible something of our Adyar. There is an atmosphere there that does not exist in many a church and temple, and there is a Presence there that we expect to perceive in a sacred shrine. One can become either a God or a pitiful sinner at Adyar. It is a wondrous spot, and it must be maintained as though it were a holy temple.

Adyar Day exists to remind the members of the glorious place and to urge them to do their best to make Adyar a worthy and dignified shrine for the Masters¹. (From *Adyar – Historical Notes and Features up to 1934*, compiled by Mary K. Neff, TPH, Adyar, 1999, pp. 45, 46. Quoted from *The Adyar Notes and News*, 12 April 1928)

Much before the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer was made upon his return from India to California, to his residence in Ojai in early 1986, Krishnamurti had told some of his close friends, including Mary Lutyens and Mary Zimbalist, that he knew when he was going to die. However, he would never reveal to them or to anyone else the date. He used to say that “they” know it, the beneficent presences that had accompanied him throughout his life and which he had not

named. He died on 17 February 1986, which the TS observes worldwide as Adyar Day, when members throughout the world remember Adyar as both the International Headquarters of the Society as well as the home of the Founders. It was also for some years Krishnaji’s home.

But before the physical end came he made a significant statement, on 7 February 1986, which was recorded. It speaks for itself:

I was telling them this morning — for seventy years that super energy, no, that immense energy, immense intelligence, has been using this body. I don’t think people realise what tremendous energy and intelligence went through this body — there’s a twelve-cylinder engine. And for seventy years — was a pretty long time — and now the body can’t stand any more.

Nobody — unless the body has been prepared, very carefully, protected and so on — nobody can understand what went through this body. Nobody. Don’t anybody pretend. Nobody. I repeat this: nobody amongst us or the public, know what went on. I know they don’t. And now after seventy years it has come to an end. Not that that intelligence and energy — it’s somewhat here, every day, and especially at night. And after seventy years the body can’t stand it — can’t stand any more. It can’t. The Indians have a lot of damned superstitions about this — that you will and the body goes — and all that kind of nonsense. You won’t find another body like this, or that supreme intelligence operating in a body for many hundred years. You won’t see it again. When he goes, it goes.

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There is no consciousness left behind of *that* consciousness, of *that* state. They'll all pretend or try to imagine they can get into touch with that. Perhaps they will somewhat if they live the teachings. But nobody has done it. Nobody. And so that's that. (From *Krishnamurti — The Open Door* by Mary Lutyens, John Murray Publishers, London, 1988, pp. 148–149.)

His ashes were distributed among the several schools he had founded, but part of them were immersed in the sea by Prof. P. Krishna, a Trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation India and one of his close associates, near the spot on the Adyar beach where Krishnaji was discovered in 1909. That is near the place where the Adyar river merges into the sea, which is also a metaphor for Liberation.

When he dissolved the Order of the Star, in 1929, he shook the TS to its foundations, but more importantly, he caused the Society to question what its purpose was. Was it to create a creed or an army of “initiates”? To make high-sounding statements about the Masters? Or to focus on its Three Objects and its motto, “There is no Religion higher than Truth”, helping people know that “such a thing as Theosophy exists”?

The theosophical ripples about Krishnaji will probably continue in certain quarters. The momentum created ninety years ago is not easy to dispense with. There were also ripples coming from individuals associated with the different

Krishnamurti Foundations. But it is a fact that both HPB and the Mahatmas alerted TS members about the conditioning of the mind and how an “unexamined life is not worth living”. They also decried any form of speculation about the Masters and their work. One of them wrote to Annie Besant: “How few are they who can know anything about us.” (*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, Letter no. 59, TPH Adyar.)

Ripples exist on the surface of the ocean. In its depths there are strong currents that cause the life of the ocean to move. Although Krishnaji ceased to be a member of the TS in 1930 his work was profoundly theosophical, for he was helping people to become aware of their own conditioning and go beyond it.

He probed very deeply into the nature of the mind and showed how an individual can become completely free, thus unfolding love, intelligence, and compassion in his or her life. He was convinced that this would change society at a very fundamental level. He said that choiceless awareness effortlessly causes the mind to be silent. In this complete silence, free from any activity of thought, there is an uncreated perception of the all-embracing unity of all life, which is sacred in its incomprehensible newness. Such flowering of goodness transforms the world.

In his mind there were no ripples. After ninety years, it is time for them to end in our minds too. ✧

The dewdrop slips into the shining Sea!

Sir Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*