

The Aquarian Theosophist

SUPPLEMENT



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“OLD DIARY LEAVES”

(FULL VERSION OF THE PLAY)

A play in 4 Acts by Alan Hughes
lasting about 50 minutes

The formation of the Theosophical Society

A NOTE ABOUT THE PLAY

I spoke to Alan Hughes about this play just after its world premiere (!!?). He has extracted and dramatised this story from “Old Diary Leaves” by HS Olcott, which is one of the main historical sources about the foundation of the Society.

Alan chose a simple 4 act structure featuring:-

- ✚ first an introduction of the 3 main characters,
- ✚ then the first main meeting between HPB and HSO,
- ✚ then the talk by G Felt which was the first time the formation of a society was mentioned,
- ✚ then, finally, the last scene before the departure of HPB and HSO to Europe and then India.

Alan confessed that the details of the talk by George Felt are not recorded in any of the historical sources available to him, so he has made it up!! However, his talk WAS the occasion when the formation of a Society was first proposed.

From the publisher.

Dramatis Personae

in order of appearance

Narr. – the Narrator, and melodramatic “deus ex machina” for this play.

HPB – Helena Petrovna Blavatsky – A Russian noblewoman, domineering, perhaps speaking English with a French accent.

HSO – Henry Steele Olcott – A lawyer and Colonel from the American Civil War.

WQJ – William Quan Judge – An Irish lawyer.

Honto – an American Indian squaw – a materialised spirit.

Felt – George Felt – an architect and engineer, who gave the first talk “The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians”.

Other materialised spirits may also appear, as required.

The Audience – ideally of a melodramatic disposition and willing to join in!

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The complete text

Act 1

(To be performed andante, with appropriate pauses)

(set: Three chairs facing the audience)

Narr: (Narrator extends suitable greeting to audience, mentions the title of this evening's 'play' and that it is expected to run for one night only, is in four parts, and should last for about 50 minutes)

The idea for this truly amazing and potentially world-changing Society of ours was first discussed in New York on the evening of September 7th 1875 and it officially came into being on November 17th of that year. However, as those of you who have studied that Pearl Beyond Price (*The Mahatma Letters*) will know, plans to start the modern society were occupying the Adept Community for around 100 years prior to that eventful get-together in Manhattan.

Two things tell us this: first, that there come special times in the cycles of humanity when those better versed in the ways of Nature share - indeed, are obliged by their rules to share - some of the accumulated knowledge of mankind of which they are the custodians.

And secondly, in the 22nd Letter of that unique volume, we read: "after nearly a century of fruitless search"- please consider the implications

of that! - "our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity" - the only opportunity, note - "to send out a European body upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country" - those countries - "and our own".

Clearly, from this we can see that the formation of the Theosophical Society was not just the brainchild of Henry Olcott and Madame Blavatsky - nor even of the Mahatmas K.H. and M, for it came from their Masters. In fact, in the only letter we have from the Mahachohan - K.H. and M's Chief - he clearly states why the formation of the T.S. is necessary, and how vital to the world it is that it does not fail.

These are the Mahachohan's words: "How is the combative natural instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hitherto unheard of cruelties and enormities, tyranny, injustice, etc, if it is not through the

soothing influence of a brotherhood?" A worldwide brotherhood. And speaking of tyranny - lest we are inclined to attach the word to the political or religious activities of other groups of people - we must heed the Mahachohan's warning that every one of us has to fight the tyranny of the desires and demands of our own personal Ego - our illusory apparent self- and to recognise our True Self, our Inner Abiding Presence.

So to draw back the curtain, as it were, on the run-up to that momentous year, I will call upon the main character in this evening's story (calls out):

Madame Blavatsky, would you be kind enough to come forward. (HPB comes forward and stands facing the audience).

Permit me, Madame, to say a few words of introduction -



H. P. B. at her desk, 17 Lansdowne Road, London.

This picture was taken one morning in the Fall of 1887, just as she was about to begin her day's work.

The sheet of paper in front of her is part of the MSS of The Secret Doctrine, other sheets lying about. Her famous Matara tobacco basket is just beyond her hand. The pen she holds is an American gold pen given to her by a New York Theosophist and made by John Foley.

Originally published in The Path, New York, Vol. VII, May, 1892, p. 39.

HPB: (Turning to Narrator) Are you not a member of the Theosophical Society?

Narr: That I am, Madame.

HPB: (huffily) And you consider I need an introduction??

Narr: I was thinking, Madame, of the others here tonight.

HPB: Are they not all members of the Society?

Narr: Er - yes, your point is taken, (quietly) I knew we should have had a rehearsal for this. (to HPB) Well, I was going to say something complimentary but -

(If the audience are in general NOT members of the Society a brief biography has been added as an appendix at the end of the play - this can be given by either the Narrator or dramatized by HPB herself.)

HPB: Who are you, anyway?

Narr: I'm the - I'm the Silent Watcher.

HPB: Not so silent, it would seem. Did you think I'd be pleased to hear complimentary things said about me?

Narr: Well, it's just that -

HPB: It's the personal Ego, young man, that feeds off things like compliments. And have you not just quoted the Mahachohan that it's the tyranny of the personal Ego that we all have to subdue?

Narr: (opens mouth but is silent - pause) Perhaps you'd care to take a seat, Madame, while I introduce Colonel Olcott? (calling out) Colonel Henry Steele Olcott!

(HSO comes forward, bows to HPB and stands facing audience)

HSO: (loudly) Good evening, everyone.

(If audience response is muted, ask HSO to repeat greeting)

Narr: Colonel, I don't want to get a second ticking-off, but would you care to say something about yourself.

HSO: Certainly. Well, my life seems to have divided itself into two halves. The first - my domestic life - really came to an end when my wife and I divorced after we'd had four children, and my father's business -

Narr: Hey, just a minute; can we go back a bit? You were born - when?

HSO: August 1832.

Narr: And married?

HSO: 1860. Er - yes, as I was going to say: father's business failed in 1851 so I had to take up farming. I thought - if farming's going to be my life, I'm going to do it scientifically. I studied the science of agriculture, wrote a few books on the subject and actually started a School of Agriculture.

HPB: Didn't your government offer you a "Directorship of Agriculture?"

HSO: (to HPB) That's so - but how did you know that? Yes, they sent me to Europe to see how they did things. This led me to writing a few more books and becoming the Agriculture Editor of the *New York Tribune*. Then the war broke out.

HPB: You'd better tell them which war you mean.

HSO: Madame; "the war" to an American means the war - the Civil War.

HPB: It's possible you Americans may have to be less parochial about war in the future.

HSO: (shrugs) Why should we involve ourselves in other countries' affairs? (pause) Anyway, I enrolled in the Northern Army -

Narr: You went through the very bloody North Carolina campaign, I hear.

HSO: It was - yes, it was rough. But I got sick and er -

HPB: He wanted to go back to the fighting - typical man; but the Government needed

someone like him, they said, to root out corruption in the War Departments. This he did so successfully, despite heavy threats and tempting bribes, that he was made a colonel.

Narr: Then the Navy got hold of you.

HSO: They wanted me to do a similar job for them.

Narr: Which you did?

HSO: Yes; then I resigned my commission as I wanted to study Law. I was admitted to The Bar in 18-

HPB: 86.

HSO: 86? No, it was 68.

HPB: Of course! I keep forgetting I also have to reverse the numbers I see in the astral light.

HSO: Ah, that reminds me, Madame, though the City of New York Treasury retained me to handle any big law suit against the city, I kind of wanted to spend some time looking into all those spiritualistic goings on up at Chittenden, in Vermont, where the two Eddy brothers had a small farm.

Narr: And as these things seem to arrange themselves, you got an assignment from the New York Sun newspaper to do some investigative reporting.

HPB: His reports caused a sensation!

Narr: And this, Madame, is where you come into the story?

HSO: Not quite. I came back to town but another newspaper, the New York Graphic got so interested they asked me to go back and take an artist by the name of - what was the fellow's name? (looks

enquiringly at the audience) -some name like Kapila - and very good he was too. Kappes, that was it! Anyway, he and I went back to Vermont to record some of the weird and wonderful - let's call them spectral people, that were appearing out at the farmhouse.

HPB: His articles appeared twice a week for 12 weeks.

HSO: Madame arrived on October - on the 14th, I think it was -

Narr: This would be in 1874?

HSO: 1874, yes.

Narr: And this meeting we'd like to hear more about in a minute; but first, there's someone else I want to introduce to you all. So if you'd take a seat. Colonel, I would like to call forward (raises voice) Mr. William Quan Judge!

(HSO sits next to HPB as WQJ comes forward, bows to HPB, shakes hands with HSO and turns to face the audience)

Mr. Judge, we think of you now as the third member of the theosophical 'trinity',

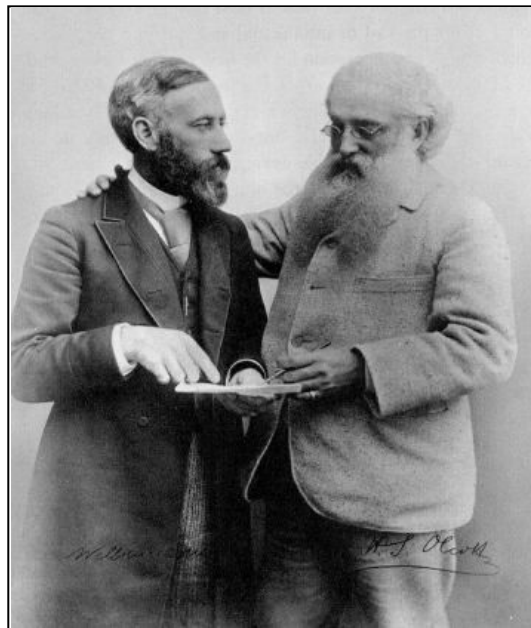
but am I not right in saying that your doctor many years ago would not have believed such a career as yours would be possible.

WQJ: He pronounced me dead.

Narr: Could you elaborate a little, please?

WQJ: Not really. I was dead. The doctor had said to my parents who were at the bedside: "I'm deeply sorry, but your son is dead".

Narr: (pause) I suspect that everyone in this room feels there's something more you have to tell us.



William Q Judge and Col. Olcott.

This was taken in 1891 and signed by both WQJ and Olcott.

WQJ: Well, you can imagine my parents' surprise when I not only opened my eyes but then started to tell them of having been somewhere else.

Narr: And in the following months this visiting "somewhere else" continued each time you slept?

WQJ: My mother was a strict Methodist and hated any talk about mysticism and things like reincarnation or the religions of the East.

Narr: And your dreams were of places in the East?

WQJ: Yes, in India. But they weren't dreams. I was there - as a boy - a boy of noble birth. Then - (pause)

Narr: Yes?

WQJ: Then he - or rather I - that is, the I in India, died too (pause) Well, actually he didn't die but he became one with me; or I became one with him. (turns to HPB) Please, Madame, can you explain this better?

HPB: Use your intuition, Judge, and try to understand.

WQJ: To this day I'm not really sure why it was but when I recovered after that near death in Ireland, I found I had an intense interest in books on occultism, and mesmerism and such like. Poor Mother. She felt she'd brought some sort of changeling into the world. And it was doubly "poor Mother" as she exhausted herself giving birth to seven children.

HSO: Didn't you tell me she died soon after that seventh birth?

WQJ: (pause) Yes. (pause) Father decided that perhaps we'd have a better life in America, so to the United States we came.

HSO: Not so united.

WQJ: I was 13. That was - let me see - in 1864.

Narr: And then?

WQJ: I got a job as a clerk in a law firm but then - then Father died.

Narr: Life must have been tough for you and your siblings.

HPB: Tough!? What do you expect? Anyone who makes the decision to take his spiritual life seriously, thereby accelerating his karma, is of course going to find it tough, (to Narrator) You'll see too, one day.

Narr: Perhaps I'm just a wuss.

HPB: Wuss? Is that an English word?

Narr: Well, it will be by the year 2000. But please go on, Mr. Judge; how did you meet Colonel Olcott?

WQJ: You could see it as inevitable, I suppose; we were both East Coast lawyers. I'd been fascinated by his book *People from the Other World*, and though I wasn't able to visit the Eddy's place up in Vermont, I did meet Madame soon after, and on the evening of the 7th of September -

Narr: Whoa, whoa, Mr Judge! Before we get to that fateful day, I think we need to pay a visit to that farmhouse.

(WQJ, HSO and HPB return to seats in the audience).

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Act 2

(set Remove one of the three chairs and push back the other two to give a bit of space for Honto to dance between them and the audience)

Narr: Well, I am now in one of the old (shivers) - and cold - rooms in the farmhouse belonging to William and Horatio Eddy. These two brothers are simple souls, with little education, used to hard work and, it must be said, of a surly nature; this will be

understood because of their being regarded as freaks in their youth and repeatedly beaten. William is the usual medium and will (pointing to rear of audience) take position in the cabinet at the back of the room at this evening's séance. (Narrator now turns round to look behind him, ie. away from the audience) There are, I see, about 30 people present tonight and - ah! here come Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. (HSO and HPB take the seats facing the audience)

Now, if we'd all remain quiet and wait. (pause) Quiet as mice.

HSO: (quietly to HPB) The first spirit to appear usually is Honto. (there is a movement in the back row of the audience and Honto comes forward to the space between front row of audience and HSO and HPB) She's a Red Indian squaw. (Honto bows to HSO)

HPB: I can see that!

HSO: She turns up most evenings. (Honto dances up and down for a while -perhaps playing an instrument and singing a song, then bows again to HSO and returns to audience. HSO claps loudly)

HPB: Don't do that, Olcott! Look, you've made her dissolve.

(Other spirits may appear here, as long as it does not distract too much from the story)

Narr: Now, for the sake of keeping this evening within bounds, can we imagine half an hour has passed. (HSO and HPB close their eyes. Narrator intones quietly) "Time was not; for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration", (pause) There now, Madame, Colonel; if you'd open your eyes again -

HSO and HPB: Good gracious me!! (and other exclamations of surprise, as they both point at audience)

HPB: I must say, I've never seen so many spooks at one time!

HSO: It must be somebody's army. (turns round to look at imaginary guests behind him). Did any of you try to invoke the Mongol hordes?!

HPB: What a motley crowd! Just look at them! (points into audience) See that one over there! He looks like Moses in a collar and tie! (the actors can make comments about other members of the audience who may be known to them)

HSO: Would anybody believe what we're seeing at this moment!!? (shakes his head) Truly unbelievable! (To HPB) Why is it, Madame, that these manifestations are so much more spectacular now you are here? (possibly other audience participation at this point ?)

HPB: I'm worried for William; let's see if we can't get rid of them all by shouting and clapping. (HSO and HPB both shout and clap)

HSO: They're gone. (turns to HPB) Now, Madame, may I ask you a question?

HPB: Only one?

HSO: (laughing) Yes, what a pity I didn't meet you before I wrote my newspaper articles.

HPB: The Wise Ones have their methods.

HSO: Who do?

HPB: Do you really think our meeting at this remote place was by chance?

HSO: It was - it was planned. ?

HPB: My dear Colonel, although you and I are free to do as we please - for good or ill - there are those advanced souls whose only concern is for the welfare of humanity collectively. From a child I've known I've been privileged to have had a special protection - and a special task. That's why most of my life has been spent in travelling.

HSO: You're right, I have a hundred questions!

HPB: I was told when I was in Paris to come to America - to meet a Colonel Olcott.

HSO: I don't believe it!

HPB: (puts hand on HSO's arm) There will, my new friend, be plenty of time for us to talk. Some - but not all - of what I've been taught I can share with you.

HSO: I don't know what to say.

HPB: Well, for a start you can tell me exactly what you think all those astral forms were.

HSO: When I wrote my book about them, I called it "**People from the Other World**", because that's what I thought they were - people who had died, and these spooky forms were literally their spirits re-appearing.

HPB: Didn't it occur to you that if that's what they were, they would have better things to impart than the trivialities they speak of?

HSO: Indeed I did, Madame. And if you read my book you'll see I remarked on that very aspect. If someone had returned from, say, Timbuktu, they'd be full of the most interesting stories of what they'd seen and experienced; what it was like there and so on; but here were these so-called spirits of the dead returning from somewhere far more - er -

HPB: Intriguing?

HSO: Exactly: and what did they talk of? As you say - trivialities (pause) Well?

HPB: Well what?

HSO: Aren't you going to tell me what these things are?

Narr: I've got a feeling we need to pay attention here.

HPB: (with a big sigh) They are many things: William Eddy has a loose *linga sharira*; some of those forms you saw were that subtle - yet still physical - substance drawn out and clothed with the thought forms of those present. However some are *kama lokic shells* and have little to do with

William, (holds up hand to HSO) Yes! I promise one day to explain! Mostly they are elementals ensouling the astral light, and these can be controlled by anyone with a strong enough will.

HSO: They can be made to do one's bidding?

HPB: Yes. Other forms may be *mayavi rupas* formed accidentally or by intent. In rare cases one's Higher Ego may take on a vague form, usually to serve as a warning. And we mustn't forget of course, that occasional, and terrifying phenomenon called *The Dweller on the Threshold*. But "Angel Guides" they are not. (HSO is slowly shaking his head) And, my friend, they are certainly not the spirits of the dead. (turns to look at HSO) You did ask!

HSO: I can't believe you didn't know I was writing that book. Why did you let me mislead people?

HPB: You described what you saw. That wasn't misleading anyone. Anyway, the reality of so-called spirit-world forms needed championing, and preferably by someone who would command respect.

HSO: I see. I was set up, was I?

HPB: And another thing -

HSO: No, no, no! I can't take in any more just now! Can I leave lesson 2 for another time. And if it's OK with you, can we return to New York? They have houses and apartments there that actually have fires in them.

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Act 3

(set: 5 chairs: One out front facing audience for G. Felt; three skewed, to half face both the audience and Felt; and one off to side for the Narrator)

Narr: And so we come to that very important day - the 7th of September, 1875. To put the date in context - er, I'm afraid I've got

to do a few more minutes of talking here, so if you want to get out your sweets, peanuts and crisps, this would be a good time; yes, to put the date in context, we could say that it is now 10 years since Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses Grant, thus putting an end to the bitter Civil War; though in that same year -1865 - President Abraham Lincoln - as you all know - was assassinated.

16 years have passed since Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, and 6 years since both the opening of the Suez Canal and the completion of the first trans-America railroad, (although this year -1875 - saw the 50 year celebrations for the start of The Stockton and Darlington railway). 5 years ago the Vatican Council had informed the world that from now on any proclamation from The Pope must be considered infallible.

Also in this present year -1875 - Bizet wrote his opera *Carmen*, and Thomas Edison - who later became a member of the T.S. - was in the middle of an extraordinary period of invention. He had made the first electric typewriter three years ago, will follow this with the phonograph two years from now and a patent on the first electric light bulb two years after that. In 1875 Alexander Graham Bell was getting very excited with the prospect of perfecting his telephone, and Queen Victoria was doubtless equally excited - though showing it in a less exuberant way than Bell - at the thought that she would soon be able to add to her titles - "Empress of India"; whilst Gladstone and Disraeli continued to glare at each other across the floor of the British House of Commons.

An eventful time, - oh yes, and I forget to add that in 1875 The Royal Engineers beat The Old Etonians 2-1 in the final of the F.A. Cup. I must also add that 1875 was the year that Captain Matthew Webb became the first person to swim the English Channel.

All this, and with the prospect, in about 20 years time, of the Dawn of a New Age; for the Great Cycle of the first 5000 years of Kali Yuga is to end in 1897.

So, there we are!

And here we are in HPB's rooms at 46 Irving Place, New York.

Notwithstanding the fact that Irving Place is not the most up-market part of the city, this evening has attracted a notable group of people. Apart from our three friends here in front, I can see (looks around) some of the finest minds in town!

The reason for this extraordinary gathering is due to the anticipation of learning something of a revelational nature from tonight's speaker. He is Mr. George Felt, the brilliant architect and engineer, who has not only made a lifelong study of ancient art, architecture and hieroglyphics, but has also made an epic discovery. He said that his talk - entitled "*The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians*" - is like Gaul of Caesar's time - divided into three parts. As this remark produced a few polite chuckles from our sophisticated audience, I assume it was a joke, but I'm afraid it went over my head.

He has just taken a break after speaking for about half an hour, during which he has been comparing the geometry of some of Egypt's oldest buildings to what he has termed "the Cosmic scheme of proportion"

(enter Felt who faces audience. Narr. drops his voice) Now, I believe, we are coming to the really exciting part so let us be attentive and try to absorb what he has to say.

Felt: (standing) The burden of what I wish to set before you next is twofold: first, we have been assured by all the scholars of Egyptology that the age of most of the buildings of antiquity in Egypt can be ascertained with reasonable accuracy. Let's take as an example, that most famous structure of all - the Great Pyramid. The reason the academics are confident that this building can be dated accurately is because when it was built, that long sloping passage was directed towards the Pole Star. When I say 'the Pole Star', I mean *Alpha Draconis*, the then pole star; and that this was in the required position in 3350 B.C.; so it has to have been built then because this special position of

Alpha Draconis could not occur again for a whole sidereal year. And as a sidereal year lasts 28,868 years, its construction has to have been about 5,200 years ago as no one is bold enough - or foolish enough - to consider that it could have been built a whole sidereal year earlier, because this pushes us back into what we unwisely call pre-history.

HSO: Indeed it does! Mr. Felt, you're surely not going to suggest -

WQJ and HPB: (to HSO) Ssh!

HPB: Please go on, Mr. Felt.

Felt: If that shocks you. Colonel Olcott, I am now going to risk giving you a heart attack because I can confidently proclaim that I have correctly interpreted the Zodiac which one finds on the ceiling of the temple of Dendera, and this clearly shows that not ONE, nor TWO, but - yes- THREE sidereal years have passed since The Great Pyramid was built!!

Narr: It says in my script that everyone gasps in amazement, (encourage with wave of arm)

Felt: This - this iconoclastic discovery, which incidentally I cannot claim sole credit for, means we have to re-write completely our ancient history. According to the Egyptologists - according to all historians - 80,000 years ago we were all supposed to be running around trying to bang our dinner over the head with a club. But, ladies and gentlemen, perhaps not ! Here in Egypt at least was a civilisation not only with a knowledge of exactly where the chakras of the Earth are - or were - but cultured and knowledgeable enough to build these great structures with extraordinary precision; structures which were built before the time of the Pharaohs, and therefore definitely not built as their tombs, but - among other things - as sanctuaries for the initiation of those deemed ready for admission into The Mysteries.

In what is now called the King's Chamber is the font which is at the centre of these ceremonies, which our books would have us believe is a sarcophagus - although for

which Pharaoh they're not all in agreement.

HSO: You imply, Mr. Felt, that the siting of the Great Pyramid was significant but is not so now; is that correct?

Felt: Well, it's still significant, but the chakra I mentioned - er - you all know, I take it, what a chakra is; it's a (makes a spiral motion with his hand) - it's a vortex of energy - it's one of the umbilical cords that connect our planet to the Mother Womb of Cosmos. The one that touched down at the site of the Great Pyramid has since moved to Jerusalem,

(more exclamations of surprise from HSO and WQJ)

The shift of this astral cyclone is recorded in detail - if one can read The Bible esoterically - in the chapters of Exodus. You'll all remember, I'm sure, from your school Bible studies, the pillar of smoke by day, which became - not surprisingly as it was so highly charged - a glowing pillar of fire by night - yes? And how the Israelites - symbolizing the "New Race" - were saved by the vortex keeping them safe in the 'Eye'; - to say nothing of it conveniently creating by its centrifugal force a dry path for them to cross the Red Sea, - and allowing the waters to crash back after them, thus putting an end to the 'Old Race', (looks at watch) Oh dear! I'm afraid I get rather carried away with my enthusiasm for all this and I see it's later than I thought. I don't want to miss my railroad train. Er - would it be acceptable to you if I kept the last part of my talk about the correct method of reading the hieroglyphics on ancient structures until another evening?

HSO: (jumping up with enthusiasm) My dear Mr. Felt! I'm sure I'm speaking for all when I say a second visit from you would not only be "acceptable" to us, but it would awaited with extreme impatience.

Felt: You're very flattering. Colonel; we'll be in touch soon then to arrange a date.

HSO: Indeed we will; but to let you slip away without expressing our thanks would be very remiss of us. To say we're grateful to

you for sharing with us that which I feel certain is the fruit of years of painstaking study –

HPB: He wants to be off to catch his train, Olcott!

HSO: Er - yes. Well, on behalf of us all, please accept not only our thanks but our congratulations, (claps vigorously, joined by WQJ and rest of audience)

Narr: Hope he doesn't dissolve.

(G. Felt waves to audience and exits).

WQJ: Well, well, well! What an amazing fellow!

(HSO is scribbling on a piece of paper. He hands it to WQJ. WQJ silently reads it and hands it to HPB)

HPB: (holding out note in front of her and reading slowly) "Would it not be a good thing to form a society for this kind of study?"

(HPB looks into the distance, turns to HSO and slowly nods).

Narr: And with that nod our Society was born.

(End of scene. All return to audience)

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Act 4

(set: 3 empty chairs out front)

Narr: The scene is now a room in HPB's apartment on 8th Avenue at 47th Street, nicknamed "The Lamasery".

The Theosophical Society, for that was the name that had been agreed upon, is now a properly constituted body, with Colonel Henry Steele Olcott as its president, William Quan Judge as Council (counsel ?), and with Madame Helena Blavatsky given the title of Corresponding Secretary. It is the 17th of December, 1878, which is to be the last day for HPB and Col. Olcott in America

before sailing on the steamship *Canada* bound for London, from whence they will make the long voyage to India. The room is bare, all the furniture having been sold or given away.

For all the adventures of the last three years since that fateful day in September '75, you must needs read Col. Olcott's 1st series of "Old Diary Leaves" and the 1st Volume of *The Collected Writings of HPB*.

There has been much laughter as the deep friendship of the founders increased. There was the first cremation in America, which Olcott organised - and if you think that couldn't have been a high spot - read his diary notes. Some of the events were no doubt more than the casual happenings of day-to-day, and could have been serious tests for those concerned, which we can be sure were being watched by the less obvious organisers of our beloved Society. But the main thing to record at this time is the publication of the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled*, considered by all the literary critics to be among the most remarkable books of the century. Yes, they were a sensation and the first edition of 1000 copies was sold out in 10 days. If proof was needed that HPB was - to quote the Mahatma M - "a woman of the most exceptional and wonderful endowments", then here was evidence, and though the importance of these two books may have been overshadowed by her later masterwork *The Secret Doctrine*, we would be profligate indeed to ignore their contents.

If I could now re-call our 'trinity' back to the front here - (WQJ, HPB and HSO take seats out front. HPB immediately starts to write.)

It is not surprising that though HPB's fame had spread before the publication of *Isis*, and had attracted many leading thinkers to her apartment, after the volumes came out the stream of visitors so increased that she had to use every moment to compose the essays and deal with the correspondence she felt were vital to her mission.

HSO: No wonder, Madame, that you want to stay up late every night; you must regard

sleep as an unwelcome interruption to your writing.

HPB: We've not too much time left to us.

HQS: Wish you wouldn't say things like that.

HPB: (stops writing) My dear friend, it's so important! In fact we couldn't overstress the importance of what we have to do. Remember Western science has become so materialistic that any aspects of Nature that are non-physical are deemed impossible. All the great names of science say so.

HQS: I disagree with you, Madame; not all of them.

HPB: Yes, there are one or two exceptions.

HQS: So, in short, what are we trying to tell them?

HPB: That the forms of matter - including of course human physical forms - are transitory, and should be understood as vehicles of consciousness. Science declares consciousness to be a by-product of matter - a result of molecular action!! But all forms eventually dissolve away, however mighty they are.

To teach our children in school that nothing persists - that nothing of value continues after that dissolution, is to close their minds, and - worse than that - to condemn them to living lives that have no purpose. To steal a child's future is the grossest of felonies!

HQS: Well put, Madame; and what of the pronouncements of the more dogmatic of the world's theologians?

HPB: Well, they get very hot under the collar at any mention of spiritualism, as you've both already found out. It's ironic really, when you consider that this seeming proof of a life after death should be *welcomed* by them as a demonstration of what they believe.

HQS: Now even the spiritualists themselves have turned against us. Some are beside themselves with fury?

HPB: I hope you two are not going to flinch.

HQS: They do want their 'Angel Guides', though.

HPB: In a way they're a substitute for a personal God; something to have a relationship with - petition, even. Why can't mankind see that all must walk in life relying upon themselves instead of leaning on a theological crutch that for countless ages has been the direct cause of nearly all human misery.

(WQS and HQS exchange glances)

HQS: Taking on the spiritualists is one thing; taking on the massed ranks of the world's priesthood will have us labelled as apprentices of The Devil.

HQS: The belief in a benevolent Man-in-the-Sky is certainly a handicap to humanity's spiritual progress.

HPB: (takes a deep breath and speaks slowly) The Masters say that the idea of a personal God is pure invention. It was evolved by humanity - who could not grasp the idea of a Universal Spiritual Essence - to explain the causes of the world. And this First Cause has been made into a Being; a Being which for thousands of years people have worshipped or feared. How can we demean such a sublime wonder by turning it into a personal God!? And this personal God is supposed to be a "loving God" who, nonetheless, delays sending that "soft refreshing rain" in Africa until it's too late, causing the deaths of millions of people in frightful agony. He's said to be an "A Powerful God" but he can't - or won't - prevent hurricanes or tidal waves from causing horrendous suffering and overwhelming grief; also, a "Creator God" who is himself perfect and who has created an imperfect Man so he can threaten him with eternal hell-fire if he doesn't believe in him. Well, the demise of such an ogre is not only long overdue but should attract no mourners to his passing, (resumes writing)

HQS: (to WQS) Batten down the hatches, brother! We're in for a rough ride!

WQJ: Yes indeed; but we must also try somehow to make everyone see how ridiculous is the notion that with all the richness and variety the human condition can offer, we have but one short experience of it.

HSO: And for some - very short.

WQJ: The Great Law of Nature is carried out through the alternation between periods of activity and rest in endless cycles.

HSO: Each one being the effect of the one before.

WQJ: KARMA!

HPB: But, my friends, how that Great Law is misunderstood.

WQJ: It is seized upon by the ignorant to say how gross is the idea of telling a young lad born terribly deformed that it's all his fault. Little do they understand Christ's teaching that "no man is given a cross heavier than he is able to bear." So if some are asked to bear a heavier cross, it may well be that they are inwardly stronger than others and are able to absorb some of their past karma more rapidly than the rest of us. (pause) It's not a "Good Lord" that we should put our trust in but The Good Law!

HPB: Bravo, Judge! When you say things like that you give me confidence that we are leaving our work here in America in safe hands.

WQJ: Thank you, Madame. And I would try to stress above everything else that all is a Unity; not a series of things joined together. Existence is One Thing. After all, what am I but a vehicle of experience for the whole of Nature.

HSO: (to HPB) The fire is upon him, Madame!

WQJ: Well, it's just that the fact seems so obvious to me. Beneath the manifold world of temporary forms there is a Single Reality which is the Essence of all things. When Olcott wanted to make our Society a body which studied the Ancient Wisdom, you stressed that first and foremost our object should be the formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. If all of us have our

being in the same Essence - the same indivisible Essence - then this Brotherhood is not a pious ideal but a fact of Nature.

HPB: Music to my ears!

WQJ: All manifest things issue from the One Divine Unity. They are that Divinity in their innermost nature, even though they are clothed in different forms and given different names. This must be the hallmark of what we teach. It surely follows that no doctrine based upon a fundamental duality - in other words, of spirit and matter forever separate; of Divinity and Man as essentially distinct; and of good and evil as eternal realities - no such doctrine, I say, can have a place in the teachings of The Theosophical Society!

(HSO and HPB applaud)

HSO: True wisdom. Judge!

HPB: A Living Wisdom!

Narr: A good theme for one of our Summer Schools.

(HSO stands up)

HPB: Er - are you going to make a speech now, Olcott?

HSO: The most important thing I can remind you of, Madame, is that the time when we should be leaving here to catch the steamship has already passed, (shakes hands with WQJ) As Madame has said, dear friend, we're leaving the New World to you. Our task it seems is elsewhere, (smiles)

WQJ: Why are you smiling?

HSO: To think that all I did that evening out at the Eddy's farmhouse was to say "permettez-moi, Madame," and offer her a light for her cigarette.

WQJ: That'll teach you to think twice before trying to get to know exotic looking ladies!

HSO: It certainly will!

WQJ: Well, I shall very much look forward to meeting up with you both again out in India - and before too long.

HSO: And how welcome that will be! Come now, Madame, our carriage awaits.

HPB: (still scribbling) Ask him to wait awhile, would you; I'll be there as soon as I've finished this sentence, (still scribbling, HPB reads as she writes:)

Theosophy belongs neither to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, nor Christianity, for it is the essence of these. The world's religions have all sprung from Theosophy - the Ageless Wisdom - and the time has now come for them all to merge back into that One Religion which - (pretends to cross something out)

Narr: Did I hear a ship's hooter? (gets audience to make noise)

HSO: (with irony) Would you like me to ask the captain of the boat too, to delay his departure for you? (looks up to 'heaven') Aristocrats!! (exits)

Narr: There's the hooter again, (audience again)

HPB: (still writing) - That One religion of Nature from which every dogma has grown and - and become sadly materialised, (pretends to gather up papers, stands up, kisses WQJ and follows HSO, waving as she goes)

(pause)

Narr: Our revels now are - almost - ended. To round off the story of the formation of our Society this evening, I would like to ask Mr Judge if he would care to say a few closing words - Mr Judge.

WQJ: (to Narr.) Thank you, Mr - er - thank you. (faces audience) Brothers and Sisters, it is surely unnecessary to say to you - members of the T.S. as you all are - that this Society must not fail. It will not fail. As you've just heard, we are entering a New Cycle with all the opportunities that it offers! Humanity has a choice; it can either move further down that road to where its goals are wealth, possessions and selfish gratification, or up towards a Golden Age

of compassionate love and the true joy that comes from an awareness that none of us are separate but integral parts of the whole of Nature. We have been assured by The Masters that in this task, as long as The Theosophical Society exists, the link between them and ourselves will be maintained.

So, though many attempts will be made to break our resolve through slander, malice and deliberate distortions of what we are attempting to teach - and, more importantly, to show by the way we live - it is only indifference that can seriously weaken our cause.

To study what The Masters have given us is a privilege. What individually you do with that privilege is up to you.

Remember, when we have gone on, you will be the Society's advocates; you will be its emissaries. And remember too that wonderful phrase - our "Inner Abiding Presence". Draw comfort from the thought of its existence, or - dare I say - from its realisation.

Therefore, dear friends, whatever your achievements or failures; whenever come your times of happiness or sorrow; wherever you go, may your Inner Abiding Presence always guide you. (puts hands together) Namaste.

(turns to Narr:) Namaste.

Narr: Namaste.

THE END

(If it seems appropriate. Narrator can ask WQJ to stay and then bring back HPB, HSO, Mr Felt and Honto to take a final bow.)

Permission to reprint the play was kindly given by the author, Alan Hughes, London UK. Ed.

Biographical notes on H P Blavatsky

Mme Blavatsky ('HPB') was born in Ekaterinoslav in the Ukraine at midnight 11th / 12th August 1831. Her parents were Col. Peter von Hahn, a German officer in Russian service, and Helena Andreyevna Fadeyeva.

Her mother belonged to an old Russian noble family and was the author, under the pen-name Zenaida R, of a dozen novels. Described by Belinsky as the "Russian George Sand", she died at the age of 28, when Helena was eleven.

HPB married three weeks before she turned seventeen, on July 7, 1848, to the forty-year old Nikifor Vassilievitch Blavatsky, vice-governor of Erivan. After three unhappy months, she took a horse and escaped. They never consummated their marriage, remaining a virgin until she died.

After extensive travels around the world, visiting Greece, Egypt, France, Quebec, England, South America, Germany, Mexico, India and especially Tibet, in 1873 she emigrated to New York City.

Impressing people with her knowledge of the world's many esoteric traditions and her own psychic abilities she established a reputation as a champion of the spiritual causes and founder of the Theosophical society in NY in 1875.

During her life she was able to perform physical and mental psychic feats which included levitation, clairvoyance, out-of-body projection, telepathy and clairaudience. One feat was materialization, that is producing physical objects out of apparently nothing. Quite adept at these feats, she nevertheless maintained that interest should be paid to the theory and laws of how they work rather their performance.

CORRESPONDENCE

An Open Letter from Canada to Adyar

Brazil, 12th July 2009

Dear A.T. Editor,

A few days ago, an open letter from Canada to Mrs. Radha Burnier, dated 29 March 2009, was sent to us. It is reproduced below.

Signed by Robert Bruce MacDonald, the text is part of our yearly chain of Letters to Adyar on William Judge. It also addresses the present crisis in the Adyar Society, a deep and lasting predicament which expresses part of the karmic acceleration the theosophical movement now undergoes.

We have been sending letters to Mrs. Radha Burnier for four years now. This is but the beginning of a movement to yearly celebrate W.Q. Judge's life and work for humanity, while also writing to our friends in Adyar and suggesting they could better investigate and accept historical truth.

In 2009, we have nineteen letters, signed by 45 people from seven countries. These countries are: 1) Argentina; 2) Canada; 3) England; 4) Portugal (with two letters); 5) Germany (with two letters, one of them signed by two persons); 6) Brazil (ten letters); 7) Mexico (with two letters, one of them signed by 26 people).

As we know, H.P.Blavatsky did more than writing a lot about the occult significance of number seven, in "The Secret Doctrine", in "The Key to Theosophy" and elsewhere. She also wrote that it has a great significance for the dharma and the karma of the theosophical movement; and she gave a number a examples to illustrate the fact.

See below the letter from the seventh country to report in 2009.

Best regards,

Carlos

The Canadian Letter

Ms. Radha Burnier
The International President,
The Theosophical Society,
Adyar, Chennai 600 020,
India.

Edmonton Alberta, Canada

March 29, 2009

Dear Radha,

Congratulations on your recent re-election.

After following much of the election news on the website Theos-Talk, it became clear that there is a polarization occurring within the Adyar-based Theosophical Society. If we read our history and try to learn from the mistakes of those who have gone before us, it looks like the Society is heading towards another major split. Clearly, there are interests in the West looking to rest control of the Society from its Indian safe-keepers. The way that the Adyar Society is structured, means that there is still a lot of power sitting in the hands of the President and the post therefore is tempting to those who wish to exercise power for whatever end. This was not how the Society was originally structured by Blavatsky and Olcott; and Besant and Leadbeater taught us why such a powerful President could lead only to silliness and disaster for such a Society.

I believe that you understand this and will hopefully take steps to dismantle some of the subtle and not so subtle ways in which theosophical leadership can influence and coerce its membership. Theosophy needs enlightened moral leadership, setting an example for others to follow; not leadership that uses subtle means of coercion through pretended ties to the Masters, or through direct ties to its own theosophical church. I am sure you are aware more than any, of the many currents of power running into your office and how such power can be easily misused. The

theosophical leadership in many Western Countries does not come off as being overly capable, often doing more harm than good. This is clearly evidenced by the declining membership. What are people like this going to do if they get their hands on the reigns of power. It certainly appears as if they are currently working towards that end.

William Q. Judge managed to build a strong and capable American Section without much help from Adyar. In fact, the major complaint of the Americans of that time was that Adyar was a major drain on their resources preventing the American Section from doing even more. Perhaps it is time to reclaim one of Theosophy's founding members and use his example to inspire National Presidents around the world to look to their own back yards and start building theosophy there. At the same time, reducing the Presidential influence to strictly a moral influence, would help with that refocusing. Perhaps, the Theosophical Society is involved in too many projects right now, with not enough focus on bringing people to an understanding of the Path.

Materialism is stronger now than when Blavatsky started the Movement. In part, materialism was one of the philosophies that Theosophy was founded to oppose. How successful it has been is certainly up for debate, but what the world needs now is not more material progress, it needs a spiritual message. We need people to learn to think for themselves and to look for a different kind of leadership. What is Adyar doing in order to point people in the right direction? William Q. Judge could very well hold the key of a Theosophical Renaissance. I don't know what the myth concerning Judge is at Adyar, but perhaps if you were to read "The Supplement" to Ernest Pelletier's The Judge Case you might get a better idea of who this man actually was.

Now more than ever, there is good reason to look back at the lessons of William Q. Judge, the biggest one perhaps being the future of an international theosophical society headquartered at Adyar.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

R. Bruce MacDonald