

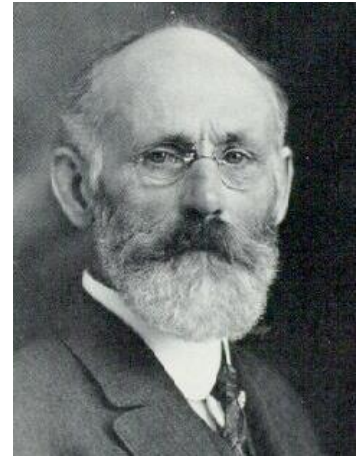
# Great Theosophical Reformers of our Time



William Quan Judge



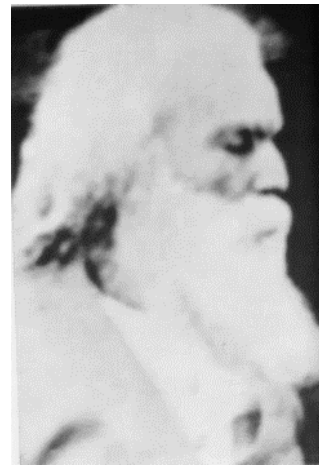
Helena Blavatsky



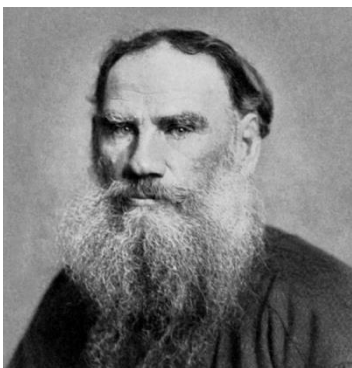
Robert Crosbie



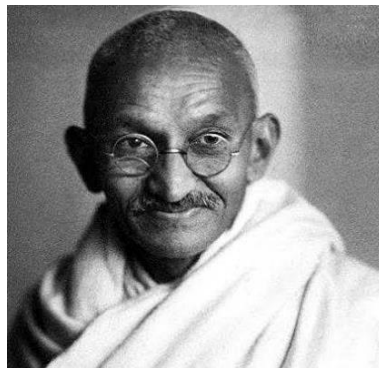
B. P. Wadia



Bhavani Shankar



Leo Tolstoy



Mohandas K. Gandhi



Martin Luther King

The fifth *"On The Path"* Seminar  
Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 ~ from 3 - 6.15 pm

The United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queen's Gardens, London, W2 3AH

## H. P. Blavatsky (1831-1891) and William Q. Judge (1851-1896)

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, HPB as she was known to her friends, was the great mover and force behind the founding of the modern Theosophical Movement from its start on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1875 in New York USA.

She was born of noble Russian and German parentage in Ukraine on 11/12 August 1831, and after her coming of age for over twenty years until 1871 she traveled the world in study and preparation, under the direction of her Indian Masters, in order to launch and steer what would become the Theosophical Society (TS).

William Quan Judge, born twenty years later in Dublin, Ireland, was a co-founder of the TS with HPB. He had migrated to USA as a teenager with his family, and 10 years later in 1874 had met Mme Blavatsky and became her co-worker. When HPB and Col. Olcott sailed to India in 1879, Judge was left almost alone in the America to sustain the Theosophical Society from the seeds they had sown.

The wisdom and extraordinary ability of Judge is apparent from how he transformed the Theosophical Society into a major and flourishing movement far and wide across the country. The Eastern Mahatmas, whom he pointed to as the real founders, said he was one of their accredited co-workers with HPB. Judge died in 1896 aged only 45 years old but after a wonderfully successful period building up the TS in America, working in closest co-ordination with his old friend and co-founder, HPB while she was in England or Europe.

Their joint aim was to make the TS a philanthropic body like no other seen before, and they gave it three objects that would provide a suitable platform for its remarkable and ambitious reforms:

1. To form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood (wholly without distinctions of race, color or creed)
2. To promote the comparative study of world religions and myths, especially of the Brahminical, Buddhist and Zoroastrian religious philosophies, and
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and psychical and spiritual power latent in man.

Each of these three objects were radical departures from the comfortable formality of the usual literary and scientific Societies of those times. They called on members – if they were to pay more than lip service to these objects – to make great adjustments in their outlook and their thinking.

In her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, HPB wrote about this reform and the resistance it would face:

“Our work, then, is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently universal Wisdom Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology. To show that we do not at all conceal from ourselves the gravity of our undertaking, we may say in advance that it would not be strange if the following classes should array themselves against us...” (**the Preface to Isis**)

She goes on to list them: the Christians whose faith will be questioned, the shallow and pseudo-Scientists whose pride would be hurt, the Freethinkers and Authorities whose deference to popular prejudice would be exposed, and the Press “who prostitute its more than royal power.”

Let us read more of her own words on what was intended by these reforms:

“Those who gave us commission to found the Society (the Mahatmas of the Eastern fraternity) foresaw this, now rapidly growing, wave of transcendental influence following that other wave of mere phenomenalism (the spiritualism of seance rooms). The Theosophical Society led the van (front)

of this movement; but, although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. But there are others among us who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy—*the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets*—is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.” **The First Message to the American Theosophists, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1888**

Their mission was to uproot the battered ethics that the Europeans had inherited from the Dark Ages – which the perfected Lamas of the East thought was *barbarous* – and to give the West a real basis for its growth, rooted in well-understood laws of Nature. It was to be from this basis that would come a new and just society, one which would be based on the superb ideal of a Universal Brotherhood of all mankind.

Judge describes the ideal path of Western development and how it is to be carried on, on good, safe lines:

“The new era of Western Occultism definitely began in 1875 with the efforts of that noble woman (HPB)... It has to furnish to the West that which it can never get from the East; to push forward and raise high on the circular path of evolution now rolling West, *the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world* – the light of the true Self, who is the one true Master for every human being; all other Masters are but servants of that true One; in it all real Lodges have their union.”

**Letters That Have Helped Me, by William Q Judge, p 75**

## Col. Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907)

Col Olcott was a distinguished American military officer who fought in the American Civil War and later investigated corruption in the Department of the Navy in Washington DC. He was well respected and following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865 he assisted in its investigation. As a journalist he had written widely on the mass of spiritualistic phenomena occurring at that time, which is how he came to meet Mme Blavatsky. Later, as the President of the Theosophical Society, he became one of the earliest Americans to make a formal conversion to Buddhism and so helped to create an enduring interest in its study.

Looking back over his life, history shows it to be a curious mix of wonderfully unselfish work for the TS – he gave up all his time and money and also a good legal career to follow Mme Blavatsky from America to India to start the Movement in that far off country – and then some years later becoming marred by an odd mistrust he developed for his two co-founders, HPB and William Judge.

But here we’ll focus on his earlier and happier years with HPB, and to introduce you to him let us see firstly what he says about a meeting with one of the mysterious Masters who was behind the Movement, and then about the way *Isis Unveiled* was written.

In his own words, on meeting the Mahatma whom is known as Master M:

One evening in New York, after bidding H.P.B. good-night, I sat in my bedroom finishing a cigar and thinking. Suddenly there stood my Chohan beside me. The door had made no noise in opening, if it had opened, but at any rate there he was. He sat down and conversed with me in subdued tones for some time, and as he seemed in an excellent humour towards me, I asked him a favour. I said I wanted some tangible proof that he had actually been there, and that I had not been seeing a mere illusion or maya conjured up by H.P.B. He laughed, unwound the embroidered Indian cotton fehta [That fehta is still to be seen at the T.S. Headquarters at Adyar] he wore on his head, flung it to me, and – was gone. That cloth I still possess, and it bears in one corner the initial ... M of my Chohan in thread-work.

And this on the extraordinary way in which *Isis Unveiled* came to be written:

In her whole life she (HPB) had not done a tithe of ... literary labour, yet I never knew even a managing daily journalist who could be compared with her for dogged endurance or tireless working capacity. From morning till night she would be at her desk, and it was seldom that either of us got to bed before 2 o'clock a.m.... She worked on no fixed plan, but ideas came streaming through her mind like a perennial spring which is overflowing its brim. Now she would be writing upon Brahma, anon upon Babinet's electrical "meteor-cat"; one moment she would be reverentially quoting Porphyrios, the next from a daily newspaper or some modern pamphlet that I had just brought home...

One might fancy, upon seeing the numerous quotations in *Isis Unveiled* that she had written it in an alcove of the British Museum or of the Astor Library in New York. The fact is, however, that our whole working library scarcely comprised one hundred books of reference.<sup>1</sup> Now and again single volumes would be brought her by Mr. Sotheran, Mr. Marble or other friends, and, latterly, she borrowed a few from Mr. Bouton. Of some books she made great use ... yet not to exceed the hundred, I should say. Then what books did she consult and what library had she access to?...

To watch her at work was a rare and never-to-be-forgotten experience. We sat at opposite ends of one big table usually, and I could see her every movement. Her pen would be flying over the page, when she would suddenly stop, look into space with the vacant eye of a clairvoyant seer, shorten her vision as though to look at something held invisibly in the air before her, and begin copying on her paper what she saw. The quotation finished, her eyes would resume their natural expression, and she would go on writing until again stopped by a similar interruption... [Old Diary Leaves, 1, 203-9]

So runs the extraordinary story behind the great work *Isis Unveiled*.

Geoffrey Farthing, founder of the Blavatsky Trust wrote in 1998 that these "are a few examples of the marvellous story that unfolds as we attempt to discover the beginnings of the Theosophical Society and the knowledge of the inner workings of Nature, *Theosophy* as it came to be called, which the Masters intended the Society to promulgate. The story has never been written up fully... but it can be pieced together... Taken together these all form a vast mass of material which unfortunately has come to be largely neglected, both within and outside of the Society."

## Robert Crosbie (1849-1919)

"Keep the link unbroken. Do not let my last incarnation be a failure." (Last words of H. P. Blavatsky)

"There is always one Witness on the scene. After the death of Mr. Judge, Robert Crosbie kept the link unbroken. "Crosbie," said Mr. Judge at their first meeting in this life, "you are on my list." None at the time suspected, and none has to this day suspected, that the quiet, earnest, steadfast man whose heart and soul were assimilated to the nature of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. was to be in fact the agent for the regeneration of the Theosophical Movement on the lines laid down from the beginning by the Masters. . . . When the time of trial was over he found grateful and loyal comrades to hold up his hands in the gigantic task of restoring that which had become lost and obscured. The work revived in 1906, from then onward he worked unceasingly to vindicate the calumniated reputations of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. . . . "Stick to the Messengers and the Message," he was wont to say. . . . "Go on with the work. We are working in the present for the future. Unless the nature of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. is grasped, Theosophy is not understood, and cannot be understood." He lived to see the work inaugurated by him grow till the United Lodge of Theosophists numbers hundreds [now thousands] of Associates in all quarters of the world, devoted in unity of thought, will, and feeling to one aim, one purpose, one Teaching – the dissemination of the fundamental principles of the philosophy of Theosophy as it was given by Those

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<sup>1</sup> "...some 1,300 other works from remotest antiquity through mediaeval times to the modern, are quoted from" in *Isis Unveiled*. "[The Extraordinary Story behind Isis Unveiled](#)" by Geoffrey Farthing.

who brought it, and the exemplification in practice of those principles.” (**“Robert Crosbie: Their Colleague Passes” obituary article, “Theosophy” Magazine, August 1919**)

Five key themes can be found running through every one of Robert Crosbie’s talks, thirty of which were published after his passing in the book “The Friendly Philosopher” and which also comprise a smaller book, “Universal Theosophy.” Those themes are:

**(1)** The ONE REALITY; the One Spirit, the One Consciousness, Deity, as the True Self of all and the underlying universal essence of everything. **(2)** Knowledge and understanding of our true nature as the right basis for thought and action; human suffering and sorrow caused by ignorance of it. **(3)** The Law of Karma (inherent within our own being) and the reincarnation of the soul – responsibility (including justice) and hope. **(4)** The ongoing evolution of everything. **(5)** The Masters of Wisdom as the outcome of evolution; the Elder Brothers, Teachers, and Guides of humanity.

Contained in these are the Three Fundamental Propositions of “The Secret Doctrine,” also known as the Three Fundamentals of Theosophy. Two other books contain words from Crosbie: “Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy,” in which he provides answers to many questions about each of the chapters of William Judge’s book “The Ocean of Theosophy,” which has always been a key study text of the ULT; and “Notes on the Bhagavad Gita,” in which he completes a chapter-by-chapter commentary on the Bhagavad Gita (ancient Indian Theosophy of 5,000 years ago) which had been started by Judge but interrupted by his passing. All of these were published only after Crosbie’s own departure and do not purport to be “new teachings” but only comments and expositions on the original Theosophical teachings. He never presented himself as a teacher but rather as a student endeavouring to help and inspire other students.

“The Friendly Philosopher” also includes many of his letters and the following extracts are from these:

“There is one thing that should be remembered in the midst of all difficulties; it is this – “When the lesson is learned the necessity ceases.” . . . so, whatever happens, it is well to remember that it was caused by ourselves, precipitated by ourselves, can be met by ourselves. We must, then, assure ourselves that nothing can possibly overwhelm us.” (p. 10)

“Do not try to open up conscious communication with beings on other planes. It is not the time and danger lies that way, because of the power of creating one’s own images, and because of the power and disposition of the dark forces to simulate beings of Light, and render futile your efforts to reach the goal.” (p. 14)

“It is no small thing to stand between the Masters and Their work in an obstructive way. The fact cannot be too often repeated that Theosophy is a record of knowledge, and cannot be assimilated or understood if trimmed and modified in order to suit the preconceptions and prejudices of the time or people; it is *sui generis*, and must be so taken if benefit is to accrue from it.” (p. 118)

“All forms of religion are pale and distorted copies of the original statements upon which they are based, the Three Fundamental Propositions of Theosophy.” (p. 124)

“No one who sees his mistakes can be a hopeless case. The moment we see that we are deluded, that moment we are no longer deluded, although we may be surrounded by the consequences of delusion and have to work through them. Any trouble and hindrance comes from self-identification with delusion and mistakes; this is the delusion of delusions.” (p. 147)

“The lives we have lived with their joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, are forgotten; the one we are now living will pass into the same limbo of the past; but we shall be what we have made ourselves, strong or weak, as the case may be, and face once again what we have brought about. We have only the present in which to do what may be done, so we ought to be bold and courageous and go forth and show our strength in the face of any and all difficulties, for they are veritably our saviours.” (p. 194)



## **B. P. Wadia (1881-1958)**

Sri. B. P. Wadia was born on 8th October 1881 into the Wadia family, well-known master shipbuilders from Surat, India who had built many sailing ships for commercial and naval use.

As a student he lived and was schooled in Bombay and during this time his uncle, Sri. Khursetji J. B. Wadia, a member of the Theosophical Society in Bombay, acquainted him with Madame Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine, after which in 1904 Sri. Wadia joined the Bombay Branch of the TS and became an active member, later going to Adyar, Madras in 1907 to work under Col. Olcott, and later Mrs. Annie Besant. However after more than a dozen years he left to join the ULT where he worked for 36 years until his death at the age of 77.

There are several biographies online with more details of Sri Wadia's life, this link has two of them <http://www.teosofiskakompaniet.net/BPWadiaBiografi.htm> but this one has a very pertinent review of what is known of his inner life <https://blavatskytheosophy.com/the-occult-life-of-b-p-wadia/> and its relevance to his role in the ULT. There is also a Wikipedia page with more biographical details.

We give here some evidence that points to him being a disciple of the Eastern Masters, the Founders of the Movement, although it should be noted *he* never make this claim on his behalf. However important information is available, some of which was neither published nor known of during his lifetime, which gives inspiring insights into his occult life. It also encourages and assures students that the Masters have not abandoned the Theosophical Movement and that Their genuine work continues to this day. Here are a few of these little known events that shaped his life.

The first was in 1907, the year he went to work for at the headquarters of the TS in Adyar, when he visited Elephanta the famous ancient cave temple on the island a few miles off the coast of Mumbai. Among the many statues and carvings there is a 20 foot high sculpture of the Hindu Trinity or Trimurti, Brahmā-Vishnu-Shiva and there he had a "vision" as well as meeting and speaking with one of the Masters of Wisdom. Although it is not known whether the meeting with the Master took place bodily on the physical plane or what was said (he spoke very about it), but it appeared to have been a life-changing and mystical experience for this 26 year old student of Theosophy.

The second event was at Adyar when Sri Wadia was asked to speak at the 8th May 1909 "White Lotus Day" Meeting, the annual commemoration of the life of H.P. Blavatsky who had passed away 18 years earlier. Although he had written his talk and memorised exactly what he was going to say, he found when on the platform that he had somehow completely forgotten it. As he was expected to speak, he began to do so, finding that the words just came to him and the audience seemed unusually enthused and inspired, although once the talk was over he had no recollection of what he had said. Taking off his shirt later that day, he noticed it smelt strongly and unaccountably of sandalwood incense. The shirt retained the unmistakable odour for many weeks afterwards and he formed the opinion that he had given his "White Lotus Day" talk under the influence and unseen presence of one of the Masters connected to those he had met in the Elephanta caves.

Th third was on 21st November 1918 when Sri. Wadia experienced a "vision" of HPB, which served as a great inspiration to him for the remaining forty years of his life. No details are known but it is interesting to note that this occurred at the time that he was beginning to busily engage himself with the "Back to Blavatsky" movement, an attempt within the Adyar Theosophical Society to restore the focus to HPB's own work, writings, and teachings which are those of the Masters Themselves.

The last we will look at was when he came into contact with the British esotericist and medium Dion Fortune shortly after the First World War. She wrote the following in the July 1936 issue of her “Inner Light” magazine:

“When Mr. Wadia, once a worker at Adyar, and later founder of (many Lodges of) the United Lodge of Theosophists, was in England shortly after the War... he gathered together a small group of people, of whom I was one, and put us in touch with the Himalayan Masters. For what my testimony is worth, I can vouch for the genuineness of these contacts.”

The biographer John Selby clarifies this in his “Dion Fortune and her Inner Plane Contacts”:

“During the immediate post-war years, Fortune had no continuous inner contacts of her own and so, when invited by a respected Indian Theosophist, B. P. Wadia, then visiting England, to make contact with the Eastern Masters for the purpose of regenerating the group soul of the British nation, she readily agreed. However, it was not long before she became sensitive to Wadia’s underlying dislike of Britain as an imperial power and perceptively he soon invited her to leave the group...”

Having considered these events one can only leave it up to each to make their own conclusions about Sri Wadia’s connection and relationship with the Mahatmas.

## **Bhavani Shankar (1859-1936)**

Bhavani Shankar was one of the most prominent of the last surviving Indian chelas (disciples) of the Masters from HPB’s Adyar days. The Masters wrote of his fitness in glowing terms and it is known, both from Them and from his own private letters to fellow chelas like Damodar Mavalankar, that he was a chela of the Master K.H.

He once testified regarding the Masters in the pages of “The Theosophist” that:

“These Brothers are not mere fictions of our respectable Madame Blavatsky’s imagination, but real personages, whose existence to us, is not a matter of mere belief, but of actual knowledge.”

Viewing the attitudes and teachings of the Adyar leadership after HPB as “blasphemous talk” and “flippant prattle” and saying that in their books “high names and doctrines have been dragged down to the level of modern ignorance,” he ended up separating himself entirely from The Theosophical Society and eventually aligned himself instead with the ULT when Sri. Wadia established it at Bombay.

He felt that here was an association true to the real Cause and Teachings of the Masters, of whom he was the faithful disciple and with whom he was personally acquainted. As part of his regular daily *sadhana* or spiritual practice in the latter part of his life, Bhavani Shankar used to focus on HPB in heartfelt and reverential meditation and invited and encouraged others to do the same.

We learn from a past ULT student, Dallas TenBroeck, whose family knew Bhavani Shankar, that at some point following Sri Wadia’s joining of the ULT, Sri Shankar “was living temporarily at Versova (north of Bombay, near Juhu beach, where the Wadias had been given land in part payment for their services as ship-builders many years before, by the British East India Company). BPW was invited to come and to attend the Pandit’s “morning puja” – a period which he spent in meditation and devotion with thought centered on HPB and the Masters. This, BPW said, began at 4.00 a.m. and would continue for a period of 4 to 5 hours. Bhawani Shankar used at that time a special bell which had a “peculiar, a curious ring to it” and “produced a deep psychological effect on those who heard it.”

“At the time of his death, Bhawani Shankar asked B.P. Wadia to come to visit him. He apparently delayed that event until his arrival. They had a private talk, after which he expired. The date was the Full Moon of the month of Ashadha – the 4th of July 1936. Born in 1859, Bhawani Shankar was 77 years old, and, active to the last, was ever ready to help and instruct his fellows.”

To finish let us take one idea from his book “*The Doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita*,” a concept almost entirely unknown amongst spiritual seekers today but which is of great importance, the distinction between the higher and lower Kundalinis.

In the “*Theosophical Glossary*” H.P. Blavatsky explains that Kundalini is “The power of life; one of the Forces of Nature; that power that generates a certain light in those who sit for spiritual and clairvoyant development. It is a power known only to those who practise concentration and Yoga.” The Yoga endorsed in Theosophy is a form of Raja Yoga which incorporates Jnana Yoga and never those types of Yoga practice which are popular now, such as Hatha Yoga and Kundalini Yoga. Theosophy distinctly warns against these types of exercises as well as the practice of Pranayama (the suppression and retention of the breath) which all of the Masters are unanimously opposed to.

In the Gupta Vidya or Esoteric Doctrine, Theosophy, it is only the *higher* Kundalini to which attention is called. Most people will maintain that there is only *one* Kundalini and that it is seated in the Muladhara Chakra at the base of the spine. Hence some unwisely attempt to awaken it from its dormant position there and cause it to rise up through all the chakras to the crown of the head.

However the Theosophical texts, following the *esoteric* Yogacharya School of pure Buddhism with which the Masters of the Trans-Himalayan Brotherhood are associated, say otherwise.

“The Voice of the Silence” teaches that it is “the *inner* chamber of the *Heart*” which is “the abode of the World’s Mother,” Kundalini, and not the base chakra, and Bhavani Shankar in Chapter 3 of his book says “the electro-spiritual force called Kundalini is the result of the spiritual development of man and has nothing to do with physical and mechanical processes.”

He speaks of initiation producing a profound devotion and renunciation that transmutes “the light of Ishwara” into an “electro-spiritual force *which is called the higher Kundalini*” and this rises upward “from the heart into the head and there brings into full functioning all the spiritual centres in the brain which up to now it was vivifying, and it passes on to what *Shri Shankaracharya* calls the Dhi-guha, the cave of the intellect, the space between the brows, and there electrifies Buddhi into a dynamic power resulting in spiritual clairvoyance. It then merges in the great Goddess seated in the centre of the full-blown Sahasrara (thousand-petalled lotus)... And through these higher spiritual centres the initiate subdues and controls the lower Chakras.”



## Count Lev (Leo) Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910)

H. P. Blavatsky wrote much about Leo Tolstoy in several appreciative articles on him.

In “Leo Tolstoy and his Uneclesiastical Christianity” she considers his argument for the existence of an Eternal and Infinite Principle (the universal Deity) which this great thinker concludes is the *ultimate ground* of human reason.

But before we examine his beliefs, let us look at what led him there. Quoting the same article:

“For some years he succeeded in thus stifling his inner discontent, but ever more frequently, more poignantly, the question forced itself upon him: What am I living for? What do I know? And daily he saw more clearly that he had no answer to give. He was fifty years old when his despair reached its height. At the summit of his fame, a happy husband and father, author of many splendid poems full of the deepest knowledge of men and of the wisdom of life, Tolstoi realized the utter impossibility of going on living. “Man cannot imagine life, without the desire for well-being. To desire and attain that wellbeing – is to live. Man probes life only that he may improve it.”

“But how does it (science) help me to know that I live for that for which all Humanity lives...? Why does the world exist? What is the outcome of the fact that it does exist and will exist? Philosophy gives no answer.

“Scepticism, Nihilism, Despair – thither the thinking man is driven by such thoughts, if he seeks the last word of Wisdom in the Science and Philosophy of the schools. *Such, too, is the real, inner, mental condition of many an one, both without and within the Theosophical Society.*

“In regard to this, the problem of life, Tolstoi divides men in general into four classes:

1. Some, young and feeble of intellect, live happily in their ignorance – for them the problem of life has, as yet, no existence.
2. Others know and understand the problem well enough, but turn purposely away from it, favoured by fortunate surroundings which permit them to pass their lives as it were in intoxication.
3. The third group consists of those who know that death is better than a life passed in error and ignorance; but they live on, because they lack the strength to put a sudden end to the fraud – life.
4. Finally, there are the strong and consistent natures, who grasp the whole stupidity of the farce being played with them, therefore put an end to this silly farce at one stroke. “I could do nothing,” he says, “but think, think of the horrible position I was in. . . .”

“*From this depth of despair he escaped at length.* “Life is all,” he reasoned, “I, my reason itself, are products of this general life. But at the same time Reason is the creator and the final judge of human life proper. How then can reason deny to the latter a meaning without denying itself and calling itself senseless? Hence I am only calling life meaningless, because I do not grasp its meaning.”

Returning to the question of his beliefs, so hard were they gained, H. P. Blavatsky says his argument for the existence of an Infinite Principle is “precisely one of the Theosophist’s arguments for the existence of Kosmic or Universal Mind.” But she adds that due to the influence of his Western habits of emotional feeling “he makes the Universal Mind anthropomorphic” (which it can never be!) thus sows “the seeds of his strained conclusions for practical action.” But HPB considers that his fundamentals were sound although he was thrown off by his “effort to satisfy the demands of his emotional nature” and so fell into a semi-anthropomorphism.

He presents a most poignant picture of the “mental misery that tortures every honest thinker today, and to his pointing out of the road, the only road, by which an escape is possible” and that from his basis one can be led by careful reasoning to the same conclusions as Theosophy’s teachings.

## Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948)

“He read Madame Blavatsky’s *Secret Doctrine* and on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1891, was enrolled as an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge.” (**“Mahatma Gandhi Volume 1: ‘The Early Phase’ by Pyarelal Nayyar, p. 259**)

“It was in November 1889 that Gandhi met H. P. Blavatsky. At that time, he said, he did not join the Theosophical Society because “with my meagre knowledge of my own religion, I did not want to belong to any religious body.” However, a year and a half later, on March 26<sup>th</sup> 1891, he became an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge. Three months later, on June 12<sup>th</sup>, he returned to India.” (**“HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky” by Sylvia Cranston, p. 195, also see “The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi” Volume 1: 1884-1896 by M. K. Gandhi, p. 355**)

This is a foreword Gandhi wrote for a book by Theosophist whom he knew well:

“These essays of Sophia Wadia show at a glance how much similarity there is between the principal faiths of the earth in the fundamentals of life. All our mutual quarrels centre round non-essentials. Sophia Wadia’s labours will be amply rewarded if people belonging to different faiths will study faiths other than their own, with the same reverence that she has exhibited in her essays. An understanding knowledge of and respect for the great faiths of the world is the foundation of true Theosophy.” (**“The Brotherhood of Religions” by Sophia Wadia, foreword by M. K. Gandhi, p. 3**)

Thus Gandhi is shown as being in sympathy with the Second Object of the Theosophical Movement:

“To promote the comparative study of world religions and myths, especially of the Brahminical, Buddhist and Zoroastrian religious philosophies.”

## Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)

On 28<sup>th</sup> August 1963 exactly 135 years after the birth of Leo Tolstoy and 100 years to the day after President Abraham Lincoln had abolished slavery, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his most memorable speech in Washington D.C., a defining moment of the civil rights movement and among the most iconic speeches in American history. Here are some excerpts:

“I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”

“I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

“I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.”

Compare these to the First Object of the Movement, one of the most vital and which alone could have the most wonderfully far-reaching effects on societies that live by it:

“To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.”