

Lotus Vale,  
25 Birch Road,  
Godalming,  
Surrey GU7 3NT  
11 January 2013

Dear Mrs. Burnier,

My lifelong devotion to theosophy is unswerving, however after careful consideration over the past twelve months I have now formally and officially decided to resign from The Theosophical Society after thirty six years membership. I seriously recommend that you too consider following my example. Of course there are still a few fine Sections and excellent people left in the TS. But it would be a farce to put my name any more to a society whose core and many sections of which, in the main, in their present and foreseeable future state, preach interminable platitudes about brotherhood, love and truth, but instead tenders the counterfeit coin of division, autocracy and hypocrisy. That this situation has been *allowed to arise* is an insult to the memories of such like Blavatsky, Olcott, Judge, Besant and others who have worked so tirelessly for the welfare of the TS.

When I supported and voted for you in the last election it was in the hope that you would gracefully engineer a handover. May I then be permitted to dissuade you and all others (as in Europe) who hold office continuously for decades upon decades of the notion that this is all in the name of service and loyalty to theosophy. It is not. It is megalomania, plain and simple. There are no accolades for any TS President dying in office. Because the TS is so strongly President-driven the historical pattern seems to be that the fortunes of the TS follow closely in phase with the capabilities and the health of the President. When the President is strong and effective, the TS grows in strength; when the President declines and dies the TS also declines and all but dies. So then, any new President has the task of taking over from a TS at a baseline trajectory of rock bottom. By contrast, a responsible president would hand over at the *peak* of his or her powers so that the new president can take over from a higher baseline and move the TS to an ever higher orbit. If the TS corpus insists in a policy (and where is it so stated?) of Presidents dying in office then it should consider the constitution of the United Kingdom where we have a Queen and an active Prime Minister and cabinet. With such an arrangement the Queen can serve for as long as she pleases, and to any age. However these days one person cannot be both monarch and prime minister rolled into one, and that too, indefinitely. Delegation, auditing of performance and a fixed term of office are the order of the day.

It is a characteristic of despotic leadership at all levels to extol mediocrity and starve out any up and coming talent that is perceived as being a threat. Henry Ford wisely observed: 'mediocre managers will always appoint mediocre staff'. (Obviously, no low calibre/mentality person wants to be shown up by a subordinate of superior intelligence.) By contrast, note that Bill Gates has been known to say that he would only appoint someone who knows *more than himself* in the area of expertise for which he is being interviewed. An intelligent person has no fear of healthy competition. He in fact welcomes it. Any International President or General Secretary has no more rights to do just what he or she pleases and overturn the decision of the General Council or National Council than President Nixon was permitted to do – on his plea of executive privilege – in the Watergate affair. It is juvenile for anyone, in any profession or role, to regard himself interminably indispensable or irreplaceable. I personally can think of at least two people in India and Australia with all the fine qualities of a future president (also possibly in America for all I know). They should be fully encouraged, not put down. That the TS is now flooded with mediocrity, the very few individuals who have shown leadership, integrity and energy being sidelined, says a great deal about its current leadership.

For a glaring example of inept leadership and archaic governance one need look no further than the once grand English TS, even now after over twenty five years of fruitless debate, caught up in a perpetual motion cycle of indecision over Tekels Park, which has cost literally hundreds of thousands of pounds over legal and administrative expenses and engendered massive divisions and acrimony. Those who like to tell the whole world about how the cosmos operates and 'that such a thing as theosophy exists' might first like to get to know themselves and set a world example of how to manage a little park on planet Earth without deeply divided factions fighting it out through solicitors. Actions speak louder than words: but for that to happen there has to be calibre leadership combined with genuine goodwill – singularly nonexistent and unlikely to change. However the fact that the international leadership and General Council would gladly witness the slow death of a 'beached whale', despite past warnings giving specific details about the disintegration of the English Section smacks of sheer irresponsibility and callous indifference. '*Not one fruit turns rotten without the silent knowledge and approval of the whole tree*' is an old saying worth bearing in mind. One needs to point out that Adyar is not the one and only theosophical centre and the General Council is meant to be the governing body of the world wide theosophical movement and not cater merely to the narrow self-interest of individual members of the Council, or just nod through what the President wishes.

On the same theme, the English Section once attracted world renowned theosophist-scientists. Now, under its self-styled 'spiritual head', there is not one, literally not even one single active member with impeccable qualifications, by which I do not mean someone with an ordinary bachelors degree or diploma in arts, biology or engineering from a provincial university. I mean the likes of Lester Smith, Fellow of the Royal Society of London; Arthur Ellison, Professor at City University and at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Dr Peter Leggett, Vice Chancellor of Surrey University – to name but three from a star studded list of dedicated top quality scientists once active in the TS. Their attitude was in the same spirit as that advocated by the Founders of the modern Theosophical movement towards the teachings they promulgated, namely, that the latter should not be taken as gospel and authority, but rather investigated with openness, impartiality and without dogma. Slowly by degrees this fearless spirit of inquiry gave way to the current situation of a sect of believers and followers

proselytizing the SD in the manner that creationists do with the Bible. High wisdom is poorly served by low mentalities and petty jealousies. One has only to look at the literature and reading lists advocated to see the fossilization and one-track indoctrination that has occurred. (Australia is arguably the only section now with active, quality ‘theo-scientists’; and the leadership of that section – at least during the years I was there – is worth consulting for advice on matters of governance, especially regarding their policies regarding the maximum term of service for the National President and for curbing favouritism. Apropos nepotism, this is something that I have seen at first hand on the Adyar Estate, but Prithi Muthia has gone into all this in detail in her past communications, so there is no need for me to repeat her observations.)

Now it is an old adage that ‘the fish rots from the head downwards.’ It is certainly neither a polite nor a gracious phrase but this is not the time to mince words given the dire state of affairs. The metaphor applies to the highest, lowest and intermediate levels of leadership in any organization. Whilst it is absolutely the case that the responsibility for the current debacle lies not only with the head, internationally or nationally, but also with the General Council and sectional National Councils, plus each single member (diffidence and *cowardice* rife among the membership), yet the prime responsibility must rest with the head; and the history of nations has ever shown that all despots at the highest and local levels of government have an uncanny knack of surrounding themselves with a spineless council of paper-tigers, by whatever name, to rubber stamp what their leader wants, the leader being of course free to overturn, singlehandedly, the collective decision of the ineffective council.

Another saying is ‘when the lions of theosophy fall silent the carrion and hyenas move in and tear away at the once living and noble body’. The ‘carrion and hyenas’ are of two types: the nodding ‘yes-men’ who swear die-hard allegiance to the head, but all in order to gain their own selfish and ambitious ends (am I mistaken in thinking that there are power-and-asset-hungry individuals having a field day taking full advantage of your current physical condition?); and those who like to plagiarize HPB and others wholesale and then put their own name to their books and lectures. And the health of the TS corpus is the worse off for all this.

It would be a sound policy for future leaders of the TS at sectional and international level to be chosen from the ranks of those who possess a twenty-first century consciousness, are of intrinsic goodwill and have a proven track record in modern project management, modern business management and people management. I emphasize with every vehemence: the TS is far better served *nowadays* by a person of basic goodwill who knows how to manage difficult, multi-interface problems, how to delegate, and is professionally trained in conflict resolution, than by an esoteric scholar with a nineteenth century outlook who knows the SD and Gita forwards or backwards by heart, but who is basically clueless in managing an organization, its finances and its membership. The large heartedness, strength of character and benevolence of a person, his universality of outlook and his ability to put the TS over and above his personal agendas and vested interests count vastly more than whether he is a teetotaler, or belongs to an ‘inner circle’, or is able to deliver lofty sermons about brotherhood. An absolute maximum, single term of seven years for an International President and a maximum of two, three year terms for a General Secretary and any committee member is all that should be allowed. Of course this is all hardly likely to happen in a culture where longevity is mistaken for loyalty and apathy and lack of courage abound.

On a different topic, it would be a good idea now to consider closing down the ES (and for that matter, all other kinds of ceremonial regalia having little to do with theosophy). Indeed, at one time the ES served a valuable function. However it has been my close and impartial observation in England for some 30 years, and in Australia for 2 years, that the maximum disharmony and political manoeuvring in the TS are generally caused by ES members. So to imagine that ES membership nowadays automatically endows one with a hotline to the Masters is delusional nonsense – unless of course the Masters are very poor judges of character, which is to be doubted. It is far better to drink the occasional glass of wine or beer and be a basically good and decent person, than to be a vegetarian teetotaler having vaunted aims about close contact with the Masters, and then cause utter mayhem in the TS. Of course there are upright and elevated souls in the ES – John Algeo and Joy Mills are just two wonderful examples of many that spring to my mind – but one does not need an ES to incubate good souls: they can also be found amongst humble, so-called ordinary folk, as in my local newsagent, grocery store and choral society, and they have no pretensions about ‘higher spiritual contact’.

How shall I end? Firstly my stating categorically my debt to the TS for the opportunities that it has provided me for learning. *Secondly, by reinforcing my lifelong love for and commitment to theosophy* (now, of course, as a soloist). Finally by acknowledging quite factually and not with any sense of an apology, my one-time, near-boundless admiration for your energy and commitment to theosophy and the TS. Your crucial role in healing the rift regarding Krishnaji can never be forgotten. I still relish the long conversations we had in Naarden, England and Adyar about the importance of maintaining a universal and balanced perspective and the pivotal importance of the Second Object. We agreed with united voice about the constant need for vigilance; to see the meaning behind words without getting caught up with labels; and that the attempts by a few prominent, but gullible members who chose to clone themselves on *The Secret Doctrine* and then saw fit to inculcate a fundamentalist cult of Blavatsky with a dogmatic attitude to her great teachings particularly regarding the enumeration of the principles of man were at best sincere but misguided, and at worst an affront to the very spirit of Blavatsky’s whole endeavour. But where has all this now gone to?

Wishing you every good health and with regards and best wishes,

Sadly yours,

Edi D. Bilimoria

Copies to Mrs Linda Oliveira and other prominent members of the TS.