HISTORY OF CREATION Theosophical Society (Adyar) November 7, 1875



The Theosophical Society was officially formed in New York City, United States, by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge

# HISTORY of Theosophical Society

Known indicative fact. When registering the Theosophical Society in St. Louis in 1880 in a US court, Judge A. Alexander testified: "The petitioner does not constitute a religious society. It should be noted that in Art. 2 of the Charter of this Society, the word "religion" is used in the plural. Teaching religious teachings is an educational activity, not a religious one. "Fostering the study of religions" in a sense means to contribute to the study of human history. In passing, I note that the Society does not have a religious creed or a special cult."

# FROM CHARTER of Theosophical Society (Adyar)

The three objectives of the Theosophical Society, enshrined in its statute:

1.Establish the core of world fraternity without distinction of race, faith, sex, caste, etc.

2.Encourage a comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science.3.Explore unexplained laws of nature and the hidden forces of man.

Theosophical Society (Adyar) includes historically the first Headquarters created in the XIX century (since its foundation in 1875 and up to 1895) of the united world theosophical movement initiated by Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891).



# Adyar residence main building, 1890



"We are glad to welcome you in the capital of South India! We want to express great respect for you and recognition of invaluable services to our country. We are sure that your arrival will mark further progress in exploring the secrets of nature and the hidden mental forces in man."

#### - The Madras Times, April 24, 1882



Helena Blavatsky (standing in the second row), Henry Olcott (sitting in the center, in front of her) and Damodar Mavalankar (in a white turban, sits on Olcott's left hand)



Hearing that the Theosophical Society is looking for a place for a new residence, on May 31, 1882, the Chetti brothers showed the so-called Huddlestones gardens, an estate on the southern bank of the Adyar River, near the city of Madras, 27 acres with a large colonial-style house, two outbuildings and other buildings. Colonel Olcott wrote in his diary: "at first glance, we realized that we had found our future home."



On November 17, 1882, seven years after the foundation of the Theosophical Society, the final amount of 7,000 rupees was transferred to the former owner in the presence of Judge G. Mutuswami Chetti. From that moment on, the Theosophical Society entered into ownership. The founders surrounded by followers and disciples settled in Adyar on December 19, 1882.



Reconstruction of the old building began in 1883. For the first four years a hall was arranged, where all the important meetings take place. Expansion for the newly created Adyar Library (now the museum of the society).

According to the leaders' plan, the residence in Adyar should have been turned into a real "center" of theosophy, which it became over time. At the time of entry into presidential powers in 1907, Annie Bezant, the land ownership of the company was 27 acres. By the end of 1911, it had been increased to 253 acres, with active donations, generous contributions and the acquisition of neighboring sites.

Besant decides to expand the area of buildings to accommodate listeners coming from all over the world who want to stay here for a year or more. It took to build a special "student quarters"





#### Residence structure of the Adyar Theosophical Society

The table of national offices of the Theosophical Society, located in the Celebration Hall of the Headquarters, Adyar.

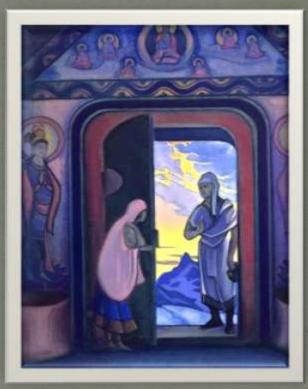
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#### Archives and Museum

The museum and archives are located on the first floor of the headquarters building.

The archive stores theosophical manuscripts, correspondence and other important records, including a copy of Blavatsky's first manuscript of The Secret Doctrine, made by Constance Wachtmeister.

In the Museum you can see the symbolic canvas of Nicholas Roerich "Herald", written in honor of Blavatsky, and donated by him to the Society in 1925



The museum also holds other works of art, as well as objects from the early history of the Society, including a gilded bronze statuette of the Bodhisattva, presented to Olcott by the ambassador of the Dalai Lama.



#### Adyar Library

Was founded in 1886 by Colonel Olcott. As the library's funds grew, it was improved and expanded, and it acquired a new building in 1968 (entrance to the Adyar library, photo). The library began with a small but valuable collection of books that belonged to the founders, but soon Olcott expanded the collection.





Now it includes more than 20,000 manuscripts on palm leaves collected from all over India, paper manuscripts, over 250,000 books on Eastern civilization, religion, theosophy. The library became a research center studying Eastern cultures, Indology and Sanskrit in collaboration with the University of Madras.

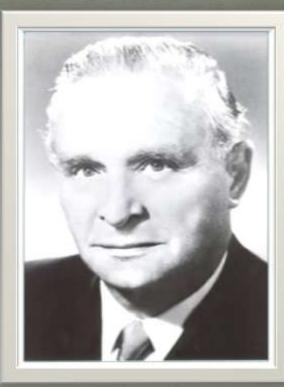


### Publishing "Vasanta Press"

The publishing house "Vasanta Press" (Vasanțā Press) was created in 1909. Prints books, brochures and other publications issued by the Theosophical Publishing House, the Adyar Library, a research center, and friendly organizations

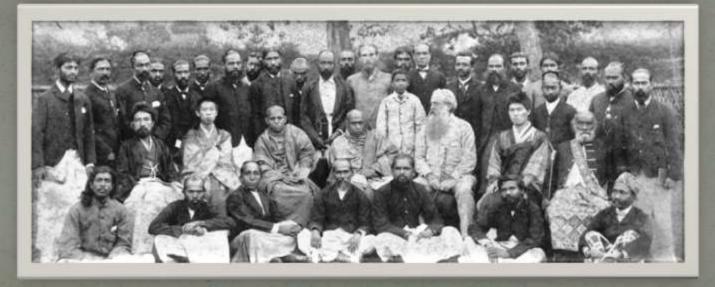


On November 17, 1949, in the building named "Blavatsky's Bungalow" Churuppumulladj Jinarajadas (President of the Society from 1946 to 1953) opened the School of Wisdom. The goals of the school are: to study various aspects of Divine wisdom, to stimulate individual thinking and research spirit, to train the staff of the Theosophical Society, to consolidate the skills of theosophical knowledge in students. Among others, Jeffrey Hodson (1886–1983) taught at the School; He was also one of the leaders of scientific research in Adyar.



### **Olcott Memorial School**

The Memorial School (eng. Olcott Memorial High School / O.M.H.S.) was opened in 1894 near the Bezant Gardens and is donated by members of the Society from around the world



Within the framework of the "Bridge" Project (Project Bridge, O.M.H.S.), 750 children from the poorest people are currently studying at the school. These are children of fishermen from nearby fishing villages, children of day laborers, coolies, auto rickshaw drivers, hawkers of flowers and food on the nearby beaches.

The school provides books, laptops, school uniforms, free two meals, helps in learning English as a second language. There is a free medical clinic. To bridge the digital divide, the school introduces the basics of information technology and provides access to the Internet.



## Famous members of the Theosophical Society

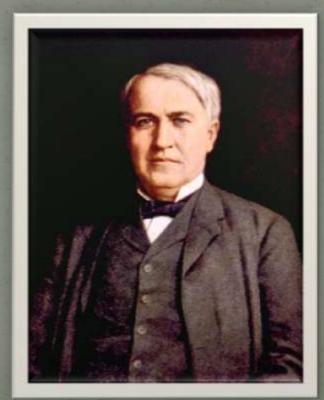
Helena Blavatsky - Russian theosophical religious philosopher, writer, founder of the Theosophical Society.



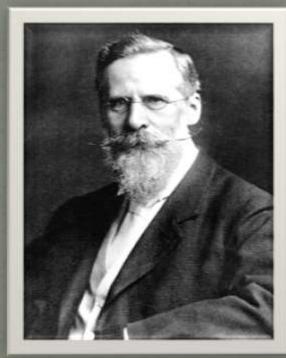
Manly Palmer Hall is a writer, lecturer, philosopher-mystic, creator of the Philosophical Research Society.



#### Томас Эдисон - американский изобретатель и предприниматель.



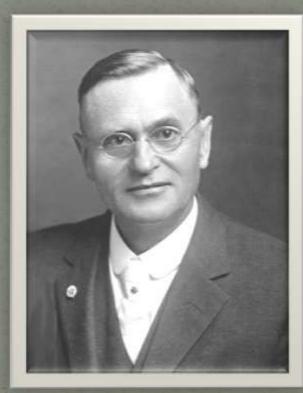
William Crookes - English chemist and physicist, president of the Royal Society of London (1913-1915), was a member of the Theosophical Society from 1907 to 1912.



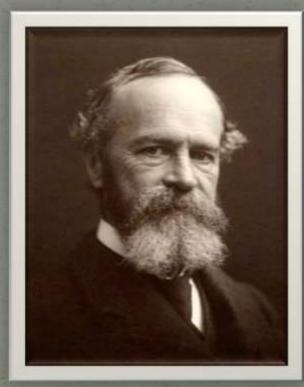
#### Camille Flammarion - the famous French astronomer.



#### Max Handel - American Occultist, Mystic, Astrologer and Writer.



#### William James is an American philosopher and psychologist.



Motilal Nehru is the father of the first prime minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru.



William Butler Yeats - Irish English-speaking poet, playwright. Winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1923.



#### Anna Kingsford is one of the first women in England to receive a degree in medicine.



Francia A. La Dew - a fighter for the rights of the indigenous people of America, the founder of the community "Temple of Humanity".



#### Hilma af Klint - Swedish artist, one of the first representatives of abstract painting.



## **Presidents of the Theosophical Society**

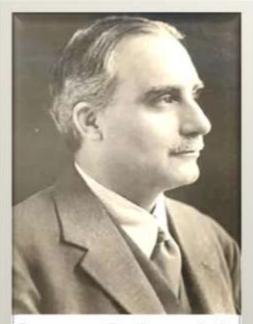
Colonel G.S. Olcott became the first president of the Theosophical Society and headed it from 1875 to 1907.



### Annie Besant led the company from 1907 to 1933.

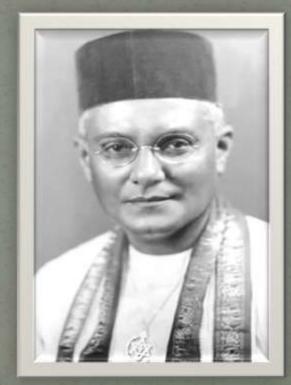


#### George S. Arundale - from 1934 to 1945

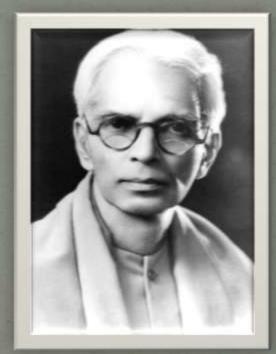


George S Arundale

### Churuppumullaj Jinarajadasa - from 1946 to 1953



#### Nilakantha Sri Ram - from 1953 to 1973



John Coates - from 1973 to 1979



Radha Bernier - from 1980 to 2013



#### Tim Boyd since 2014



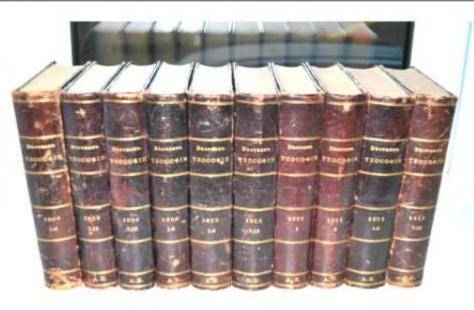
The very first attempt to establish a theosophical society in Russia was not in the capital St. Petersburg, but in the provincial city of Smolensk on June 30, 1907.



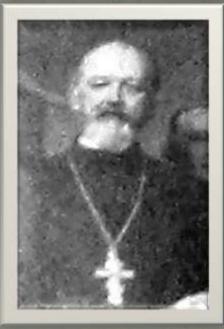


In the same year, Smolensk theosophists began to publish the journal Theosophical Life, which was published until 1909, and in 1910 was published under the title Life of the Spirit.





On July 30, 1907, a group of theosophists from Smolensk founded the Smolensk Theosophical Society. It was organized by V.I. Shtalberg, Von der Raab-Tilen and the prior of the monastery, Archimandrite Father Ignatius.



In 1908, there were nine theosophical circles in Russia: four in St. Petersburg, two in Warsaw, one each in Smolensk, Kiev and Kaluga. On September 20, 1908, these circles united in the Russian Theosophical Society.



On April 21, 1909, the Kaluga Theosophical Society was formed on the basis of the Kaluga Theosophical Circle as a department of the Russian Theosophical Society. It left the most significant and vivid mark in the history of the theosophical movement in Russia.



In the years of pre-revolutionary activity, the Kaluga Theosophical Society conducted extensive educational work. Lectures and debates were held in large audiences (Nobiliary Assembly) with a large gathering of the public. The timing and theme of the event were announced in advance through the Kaluga Courier newspaper.

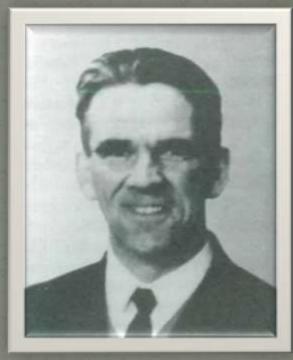


The Kaluga Theosophical Society conducted a large publishing activity through the «Lotos» publishing house and the publishing houses of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga, maintained contacts with other theosophical societies of Russia, participated in international theosophical conferences (for example, Budapest, 1909), had enormous prestige among the theosophists of Russia. Its chairman, H.F. Pisareva, was elected Vice-President of the Theosophical Society of Russia. In 1918, the local authorities dissolved the Kaluga Theosophical Society, and in 1922 H.F. Pisareva left for Italy.



The Kaluga Theosophical Society was revived in 1922. He was headed by a young engineer Valentin Mitrofanovich Laletin.

The activities of the Kaluga Theosophical Society ceased on November 13, 1929 in connection with the arrest of sixteen of its members. In addition, four Muscovites were arrested - a total of 20 members of the theosophical movement.



On February 23, 1930, the Special Meeting of the OGPU College sentenced eight people to three years in prison, and nine people were exiled to the Northern Territory for three years. Three Muscovites were acquitted and released from custody.

Currently, all convicts are rehabilitated.

Nina Konstantinovna Gernet should be considered the first pioneer of theosophy in Russia. She traveled abroad every year, attended most European theosophical congresses, met Annie Bezant, and carried theosophical literature banned in Russia at great risk to herself. The main warehouse of this literature was preserved in St. Petersburg, in the room of her childhood friend Anna Alekseevna Kamenskaya (1867-1952)



N.K. Gernet was a member of the English Theosophical Society and had connections with branches in Germany, Switzerland, France and Italy. With her assistance, A.A. Kamenskaya was admitted in absentia to the English branch of the Theosophical Society, and after personal meetings with A. Besant decided to create the Theosophical Society in Russia.



Gradually, informal Theosophical circles began to appear in various cities of the Russian Empire. N.K.Gernet managed to unite theosophists, to involve in the work H.F. Pisareva from Kaluga, P.N. Batyushkova from Moscow, E. Radzevich from Kiev. It was N.K. Gernet who provided her excellent library of theosophical literature, which served as the basis for the central library of the Russian section.

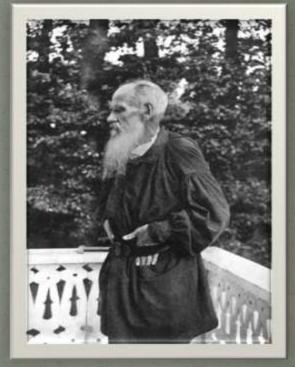
Anna Pavlova Filosofova (1837–1912), leader of the women's movement, founder of the Women's Mutual Charitable Society in St. Petersburg, who took an active part in organizing schools and hospitals for the poor, was no less famous and a prominent figure of the theosophical movement in Russia of that time.



Having united some theosophical groups with her tireless activity, A.A. Kamenskaya eventually organized the Russian Theosophical Society (RTO), registered on September 30, 1908.

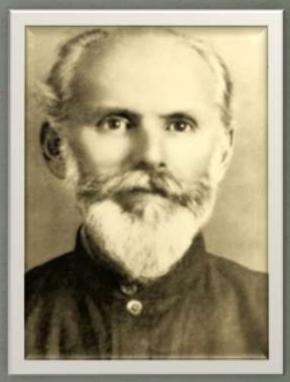
It was extremely difficult to legalize a social movement in those days because the government was very suspicious and disapproving of all initiatives coming from below. Nevertheless, in 1907, three congresses of Theosophists were held in Moscow, Kiev and St. Petersburg, where it was decided that the RTO should be legalized, and A. A. Kamenskaya was unanimously elected General Secretary.

In the summer of 1908, A.A. Kamenskaya, A.V. Unkovskaya, and E.F. Pisareva were visiting L.N. Tolstoy in Yasnaya Polyana. Lev Nikolaevich was aware of the theosophical work and read "The Bulletin of Theosophy" thanks to the constant communication with his daughter-in-law S.N. Tolstoy, who was one of the first to join the RTO and was an active member of the Kaluga Department.



In 1914-1915, Alexander Alexandrovich Usov, a children's writer and traveler (1872-1941), together with his like-minded people, founded a small theosophical ashram in the village of Lazarevskoye (now the microdistrict of Sochi) - a spiritual community where other Theosophists could come to peacefully and spiritually fill themselves. Among the guests was, for example, the famous poet Maximilian Voloshin. A.A. Usov tried to build in the town of Guarek a temple of the Sun in the form of a star, where through a system of mirrors sunlight could be in every room.

After the death of A.A. Lunacharsky, with whom A.A. Usov was friendly, the latter was exiled to Siberia for settlement. In 1941, he left home to die at liberty and never returned.



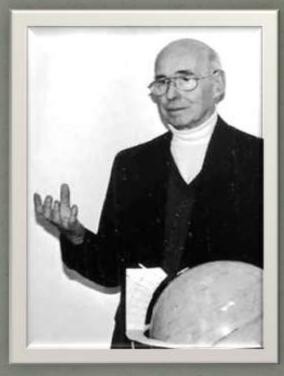
During the civil war, in the early 20's, when hunger and homelessness reigned in the country, a commune school was created by Lydia Maryanovna Armand, a member of the Kaluga branch of the **RTO**.





It was located in the estate Il'ino near the village of Pushkino, Moscow region. Children aged 11–13 y.o. studied here. The school had two classes, in which about 40 children studied. The curriculum along with general subjects taught the basics of Theosophy.

In 1921, the Zhitomir Department of the RTO was formed, the chairman of which was Dr. Viktor Viktorovich Gints. From 1920 to 1922 the Theosophical Society worked in Vladivostok. His secretary was E.F. Maslennikov.



In the Soviet Union, the theosophical movement was in an illegal position and the theosophists could not express their views openly, nevertheless, personal meetings and discussions of the theosophical themes continued.

Thus, in Leningrad, Obnorsky Aleksei Nikolaevich and Olga Borisovna, supported theosophical work, keeping in touch with the theosophists of their city, Moscow and other cities. Alexey Nikolaevich, being a highly educated man and knowing about 5 languages, translated the works of Jiddu Krishnamurti



#### Revival of the official theosophical movement in Russia

In the early 1990s, a surge of interest in everything related to spirituality and self-development was noted across the country. A prominent place in the general process of awakening took Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's literary heritage. Her works began to appear in many publications. Her main work "The Secret Doctrine", translated by Helena Ivanovna Roerich, was reprinted almost every year in 1937 since 1991 and in 2014 has already published more than 20 editions. In addition to the translations and publication of the works of H.P. Blavatsky, permanent seminars appeared, aiming to study and popularize her name and ideas, at various (not only theosophical) conferences the name of the founder of the Theosophical Society sounded, both in the scientific and in the amateur environment began to openly study her works.

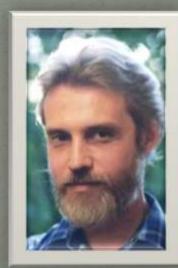
Analyzing the theosophical movement of modern Russia, it should be noted that it (especially at the initial stage) was closely associated with the Roerich movement.

Highly appreciating the role of H.P. Blavatsky, following the instruction of H.I. Roerich, each Roerich association considers it his duty to help bring time closer when "her name will be put to the proper height of reverence" (H.I. Roerich).

In addition to the Roerich movement, which is widespread in Russia, many traditions and teachings, including the newly-formed ones, give a high assessment to the heritage of H.P. Blavatsky. Thus, theosophical ideas, which were originally widely laid by the Mahatmas through Helena Petrovna more than 120 years ago, find a response in modern minds and evoke a lively interest in their non-vanishing relevance.

In 1990, a group of enthusiasts from the Association "Peace through Culture" (R.T. Drozdov, E.S. Lebedeva, D.N. Popov) decided to resume the activities of the Russian Theosophical Society in our country.





In may 1990, the first widely accessible and officially open event was held, which marked the revival of theosophy in Russia. It was the exhibition "Sphinx of the XIX century", dedicated to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

The organizers of the exhibition E.S. Lebedeva and D.N. Popov held it in the Central house of writers of Moscow and timed it to coincide with the arrival in Moscow of the President of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) Radha Bernier (at the invitation of the Association "World through culture").

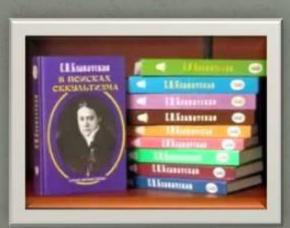




On March 14, 1991, the Charter of the RTO was registered by the RSFSR Ministry of Justice and entered into the state register of charters of public organizations under number 16. (Certificate of Registration of the Charter of the RTO No. 16 dated March 14, 1991). Among the founders were M.F. Drozdov-Chernovolenko, S.Yu. Klyuchnikov, A.V. Gnezdilov, D.N. Popov, E.S. Lebedeva, R.T. Drozdova, L.V. Korovina, K.Yu. Korolkov, G.D. Avrutsky, S.A. Brusilovsky.

D.N.Popov was elected chairman, executive secretary of E.S. Lebedeva.

In August 1992, «Sphere», the publishing house of the RTO, began work in Moscow. Today it is the oldest Russian publishing house of theosophical, scholarly, religious, esoteric literature, although its activity has decreased significantly.





Since the renaissance of the open theosophical movement in Russia, theosophical groups have constantly been formed, often they were circles for the study of theosophy, which in no way advertised their activities.



In this way in Kemerovo, beginning in 1993, a theosophical group began to take shape, the leaders of which were Bakanov Vladimir Anatolyevich and Chervova Larisa Mikhailovna.

A few years later, members of this group formed the "Russian Esoteric School of Theosophy named after H.P. Blavatsky" (REST) under the leadership of V.A. Bakanov, who held regular meetings to study the works of Helena Blavatsky.













REST activities attracted people from different cities, and lecturers from this group were invited to retreats throughout the country, as well as to Ukraine.

V.A. Bakanov visited 18 cities with lectures, in some of which permanent groups for the study of theosophical literature were formed. 5 out of 7 existing at the end of 2014 branches of TO in Russia arose from these theosophical groups.





Since 2000, theosophical sites began to appear on the Internet. One of the first to be created by Konstantin Zaitsev is the site www.theosophy.ru, where information about various theosophical groups and a library of theosophical literature are still being collected.

Now there are several dozens of Russian-language theosophical websites on the global network. Among the most full and informative it is worth noting:

«Delphis» - cultural and educational magazine

«Oriflamma» - information portal of the Donetsk Roerich Bulletin

«Theopedia» - the theosophical encyclopedia, created from quotations and works of various thinkers corresponding to the theosophical worldview of P. Malakhov

«The Theosophist» - Theosophical Group E.A. Logaevoy

Vkontakte «Blavatskaya Elena Petrovna» - the largest community of subscribers 21,968 people - V. Zhuchkova

«Theosophy in Russia» - the theosophical video portal - the largest in the world (Russianspeaking) - D. Kiselev

- Since 2011, the official activities of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) in Russia have resumed. This time, not with the help of foreign Theosophists, but due to the internal activity of TO members in the country - a charter was received for the department «Sofia» (Moscow, Acting President G.E. Polchenko),
- in 2012, charters were received for the departments of «Garuda» (Nizhny Novgorod, President G.V. Blau) and "The Lodge of H.P. Blavatsky" (Kemerovo, President V.V. Bakanov),
- in 2013, the following departments were added: «Adamant» (Zelenogorsk and Borodino, President V.V. Shaburnikov), «OM-Tara» (Omsk, President A. Murashov) and «Satya Vedana» (Yurga, President NP. Tishkov).
- 2014 brought another charter for the second department in Moscow, called «Anahata» (President A.V. Besputin)

Thus, the total number of members increased to 155 with a geography of distribution covering the whole of Russia.

On November 6, 2013, the country received the status of the Presidential Agency, P.N. Malakhov was appointed the representative of the president.

On March 27, 2017, the transfer of authority to the new representative of the president of the Theosophical Society in our country A.V. Besputin, took place in Moscow.

The modern theosophical movement in Russia is going through a stage of active development both in the official form of the departments and members of the Theosophical Society, and in finding common ground among all theosophists, regardless of their age, nationality, membership in organizations and other differences. Finding like-minded people and uniting in different directions characterize the creative tendency in the formation of the Russian theosophical community of our day, trying to respond to the high ethical principles of theosophy.

# HISTORY of the Theosophical Society (Adyar)

