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NICHOLAS AND HELENA ROERICH

MESSENGERS
OF THE NEW ERA
OF LIVING ETHICS

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My talk today deals with the present era of humanity's history - the New Era. It deals with the Teaching given for this period and with the Envoys of the White Brotherhood who were delegated to bring the new Teaching to humanity. As we know, each century a Messenger, or Envoys, are being sent to many countries, to bring indications, counsels, warnings and prophecies, specially and karmically destined for each century.

It is of interest to quote here H. P. Blavatsky's statement from her "Voice of the Silence": "A Messenger is sent to enlighten the world every century, at a certain specified period of the cycle". The great Tibetan Sage, Tzong-Kha-pa, proclaimed this Message of vital importance.

Humanity is never left alone, but, on the contrary, spiritual and practical help is poured constantly from the Great Source of Hierarchy upon our Earth. Literature abounds in examples testifying to the reality of this statement. People, nations, movements, groups, individuals, are not abandoned. The current of ageless Wisdom, applicable to everyday life and to man's self-perfectment is flowing endlessly. If our consciences are open, if our ears and vision are attuned, if the striving for Knowledge, Beauty and Truth are present, the gates are opened. But we must knock ourselves. "And the knocking one will be admitted", says Agni Yoga.

This century with its mental and technical surge toward advancement in the ways and means of material existence, has brought many dangerous complications. Two major world wars and numerous conflicts between the nations based upon political and economic instability, have created ever-growing confusion, ending in periods of chaos succeeding each other. Suspicion, intolerance, fear, have brought about barriers of such dimensions between peoples and nations that they hardly could be surmounted by peaceful means.

When the century was still young, Nicholas and Helena Roerich received the Mission to traverse certain countries of Europe and Asia, summoning men to reverence for culture, for the achievements of human genius, issuing the call for Peace based upon real spiritual values and expansion of consciousness. After meeting with the Masters, during their sojourn in Europe, they were directed first to come to America, to bring to the New World the New Teaching - Agni Yoga.

They arrived in New York in 1921, the occasion being the exhibition of Prof. Roerich's paintings in New York. He, the great, internationally known artist, widely acclaimed in his own country, Russia, and in many other European countries, brought his paintings to America at the invitation of the Chicago Art Institute. After the opening in New York his exhibition toured the United States for almost two years.

After settling in New York, Prof. and Mme. Roerich met a small group of earnest spiritual seekers and followers of his great art. With them, Prof. Roerich founded a school of arts, called Master School of United Arts. Subsequently, there was founded Roerich Museum, Agni Yoga Society, International Art Center, and later the

Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee. Thus was the cornerstone of deeper and greater appreciation of culture laid in the soil of America. This was one of the endeavors of their great Mission.

At the same time the books of the Agni Yoga Teaching were being received by them from the Great Source and transmitted to the Western world. They appeared first in the United States and later were translated into European and Asiatic languages. The consecutive order of the books was indicated and they were published in that order. At the very same time numerous Roerich Societies sprang up in Europe, and the books of the Teaching were in turn translated into the language of these countries and published there. (The books were published in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Latvian and several Asiatic languages.)

In 1923, Prof. and Mme. Roerich, with their two highly gifted young sons, left for Europe, where they had to equip an expedition to proceed through the heart of Asia. For five years the expedition traveled, covering India, Tibet, Little Tibet, Sikkim, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Altai, etc. Twice Prof. Roerich left the expedition for brief periods of time to come to this country for most important decisions to be conveyed to his co-workers here. Plans were laid, and brought into reality, of founding an International Art Center, also combining science and related subjects. Foundations were laid for a number of museums, each dedicated to a special nation. Exchanges of exhibitions, artists, lecturers and scientists were promoted; scholarships were given at the Master Institute of Roerich Museum which taught all arts under one roof.

Three International Conferences dedicated to the Roerich Peace Pact and Banner, a unique plan for peace created and developed by Prof. Roerich, took place, two in Bruges, Belgium, in 1931, 1932 and one in 1933 in Washington. Delegates and representatives of all nations participated in these conferences, proclaiming the undeniable and imperative need of the ratification and adoption of this plan by all nations of the world. This is an international pact for the protection of artistic and scientific institutions, historical monuments, cathedrals, libraries and cultural treasures of man's genius. In April of 1935, twenty-one countries of North, Central and South America, including the United States, ratified the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace. President Franklin D. Roosevelt made at that time an international broadcast marking the significance of the Roerich Pact and Peace Banner, and later it was officially ratified by Congress and proclaimed by the President in the name of the United States. Subsequently, several other countries, including India, also adopted the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace. A number of Committees in Latin America as well as in European countries were organized to work for the furtherance of this noble, humanitarian peace project.

After their return in 1929 from the Central Asiatic Expedition, Prof. and Mme. Roerich chose Naggar in Kulu Valley, India, as their place of residence and as the best site for a scientific institution which was founded by them under the name of Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute. Under their enlightened guidance, the Institute invited Tibetan and Indian scholars, learned lama-doctors, archeologists, botanists and others for participation in its work. Important data was collected on the medical lore of Tibet, China, India, as well as other scientific data based upon the findings which are so rich in that part of India.

A magazine, "Urusvati Journal", many literary publications and articles were published; contacts with leading scientists and European, American and Asiatic univer-

sities were established.

Prof. and Mme. Roerich continued during this time with their great mission, in close contact with the Hierarchy of Light, spreading the Teaching of Agni Yoga in all corners of the world.

Beauty, which opens all gates, opens numerous hearts, as its language is understood universally - far more than are treaties, agreements and diplomatic relations.

The acclaim of Roerich's art in the United States was enthusiastic and far reaching. First the artists, then the lovers of beauty and then the people, young and old of all classes, faiths and molds came to see the majestic past, the great Teachers of humanity, the significant symbols and messages, depicted in pure, glowing colors, breathing joy and serenity. These paintings touched upon the innermost strings of the heart, awakened the dormant dreams and aspirations and called to the future, to the work and service for the Common Good of man. Great art speaks to all - Fra Angelico, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and other great masters awakened spiritual values where religion and church stood helpless and could not arouse man from his selfish and material aims.

But besides the awakening of the sense of beauty and veneration of culture, Prof. Roerich and his wife, Helena Roerich, brought another, even greater gift to mankind: the realization that the Masters of Wisdom are real, that They do exist and do send enlightenment to men, and that through the Teaching of Agni Yoga human beings can come closer to the Hierarchy of Light, to the Blessed Masters, and thus can activate the potential energies existing within themselves.

To save our sick planet and to restore the shaken and disturbed equilibrium of the world is our immediate and sacred duty. Some of you are acquainted with the Teaching of Agni Yoga - from the very first book, "Leaves of Morya's Garden" (or, as it is also known, "The Call"), up to the one which was just published, "Infinity", Vol. I, you are told of the Psychic Energy which is within you, which surrounds you -- in the whole universe. Your awareness, your consciousness of this energy will endow you with new strength, will awaken your spirit to a greater realization of the spiritual forces within yourselves, will enrich your lives and bring the true happiness, that of living in harmony and unity in the universe, not alone on Earth, not only with human beings!

Your inner thirst for knowledge will grow, illumination will come, the spiritual centers will open gradually, the sacred gifts given to men -- clairvoyance, clair-audience, perception and cognition of the subtle forces around you, will be revealed to you in a new light.

Instead of being bowed down by chaos, instead of being blind to the law of karma, man's entire being will strive with the fire of his heart, to the Higher Worlds, of which the Blessed Masters tell us. We must strive to become their helpers and co-workers! Remember, Masters call Themselves the Elder Brothers of humanity, and They want all of us to understand the joy of Labor, as a chain of endless achievements on the path of Knowledge and Beauty.

And from the moment the Teaching of Agni Yoga was transmitted by Prof. and Mme. Roerich to the earnest seekers, it became increasingly clear to their close co-workers that they, our Gurus, were fulfilling a sublime Mission here on Earth.

The Envoys that are sent by the Hierarchy of Light to bring urgent advices, warnings and counsel into various countries, with complete self-abnegation always fully realize the sacrifices, impediments, obstacles and even martyrdom which humanity will strew in their paths. It was so through all the history of humanity. St. Germain came to ward off revolutions, upheavals, catastrophes, and he received derision, refusals to listen, and finally the title of "charlatan".

H. P. Blavatsky brought an "ocean of wisdom" - the great doctrines of Eastern philosophy to the Western minds, and she was hounded, vilified and slandered, not only by strangers and enemies but even by those very close to her. The Roerichs also did not escape this destiny. And yet, in all these examples there remains the fact of invincible achievements - the transmitted Teaching remains, gains more adherents, brings expansion of consciousness to greater and greater numbers of people, and kindles new hearts with love, compassion, tolerance and desire to serve, to help and uplift the spirit of our fellow beings.

Starting with the simple formulae, and leading into the awesomeness of the Infinite, to the cognition of Highest Reason and of the workings of the Cosmic Magnet, into the mysteries of the atom, Agni Yoga brings to you finally the realization of the element of Fire, Fire of Space. Realization of the ineffable beauty and grandeur of the cosmic processes evolving in Space raises your own possibilities, brings you closer to the far-off worlds. And if and when the consciousness absorbs the understanding of becoming a participant in the life of the far-off worlds, then one may say that our life on Earth takes on a new meaning. Co-measurement of the small and the great, the usual and the urgent, verily leaps before our senses. Perception, vigilance, resourcefulness, flexibility - all these qualities become enhanced. The daily activities lose monotony, new interests spring up and the self-imposed discipline of the spirit brings ever-greater possibilities of advancement. These are not mere words of enthusiastic acclaim - these are the steps of discipleship. From the first call, followed by spirit illumination, to the reverence of community, co-operation and its principles, and up to the great luminaries - the far-off worlds - we are led by the Teaching of Agni Yoga, under the guidance of the Hierarchy of Light.

We are living in the Epoch of Lord Maitreya, in the Era of the Mother of the World. And Helena Roerich, she who was proclaimed by the Hierarchy of Light the Mother of Agni Yoga, brought the supreme sacrifice, while being in the physical body and participating in the cosmic work of the Hierarchy. She and her noble life companion, Prof. Roerich, brought new Light and Knowledge to mankind.

New responsibilities of womanhood in the elevating of the human spirit, are to be brought about in this Era. Love and Beauty cannot any longer remain mere slogans, they must be taught in schools, so that the children may understand higher planes of existence. Science, religion, art, should form one unified realm - their unity must bring new aspirations to humanity. This evolution will bring the lofty understanding of Infinity.

The Teaching tells us that man does not die, but changes. Fear of death thus becomes extinct; instead there is manifested the joy of an endless chain of existences which will bring eventually the awareness of many lives. And all this is given with clarity and power of wisdom to those who seek, to those who have faith and live for the future.

Our beloved Teachers and Leaders, Nicholas and Helena Roerich, were the chosen instruments to bring this Teaching to mankind at this period. He through the medium of his great art, his synthesis achieved in numerous lives, she through the supreme achievements here on Earth as the Mother of Agni Yoga. The blending of these two great spirits in this life was in itself a supreme karmic union.

In their many books and writings, "Realm of Light", "Shambhala", "Heart of Asia", "Fiery Stronghold", "Himavat", etc., by Prof. Roerich; in "Foundations of Buddhism", "Eastern Crossroads", "Letters", by Helena Roerich, we learn more about these two Envoys of the White Brotherhood in this Era.

In studying the Agni Yoga we begin our ascent into the Higher Worlds. Verily, it is a Jacob's Ladder, starting on Earth and reaching to the stars, to the far-off worlds beckoning to us. Man can and should become the co-worker of Heavenly Forces.

Sina Fosdick