

# THE INDIAN THEOSOPHIST

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*Editor*

**S. SUNDARAM**

Cover Page : *The Path* to SHANTI KUNJ

## MESSAGE

Dear Brother Sundaram

On the significant occasion of the 125th anniversary of the Indian Section , I send my best wishes to all the programmes planned for its commemoration, particularly the seminar on “Looking Ahead” and your special double issue of *The Indian Theosophist*.

The world in which we are living is in crisis, a crisis created by the inadequate unfoldment of our consciousness. New ways of seeing and interacting with each other are forming and require responsible, stable individuals to bring them into their daily lives in order to create a new world.

It is my hope that in your time together at the seminar and other functions, and also through your journal, you can develop the mind capable of calling forth that “New World” already in our midst.

Peace and blessings,

Tim Boyd  
International President

## MESSAGE

*Surendra Narayan*

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August 21, 2015

My dear Brother Sundaram ji,

I am delighted to receive your kind letter dated 5.8.2015 conveying the beautiful news that this is the 125<sup>th</sup> year of the Indian Section and that you have planned some special programmes this year commemorating the event.

One of them is the publication of a special double issue of The Indian Theosophist. Per your kind request, I am happy to send the following message of greetings for this special issue.

**On the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, I would like to extend my warm greetings to all members. The Indian Section has worked tirelessly over the years to promote Theosophist teachings and has deep roots in the Theosophical world. This is also a good occasion for all of us to reach out to young theosophists and share with them our history and teachings for they are our future.**

**In closing, I would like to share a note by Annie Besant, which reflects the essence of Theosophy:**

*"Work, so that the world may be the better for your living in it. Love all, but love most those who are unloving, for their need is the greatest. Protect the weak, and shelter the homeless, forget not our younger bretheren of the animal kingdom, that they may develop our higher qualities and thus cooperate with the Devas in working for swifter evolution" - Annie Besant, 1932*

**With my best wishes to all.**

**Surendra Narayan**

With my best wishes to you and Manju ji and thank you for taking the initiative to mark the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indian Section.

Fraternally,

*Surendra Narayan*

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*S.SUNDARAM*

## **A STEP FORWARD**

The year 2015 happens to be a significant year as the Indian Section completes its 125 years in coming November. The life and work of the pioneers and leaders of the Theosophical movement; their wisdom, their farsight and their holistic vision have ever been the fountainhead of inspiration and encouragement, as also their unstinted help and guidance so as to enable the members to work towards nurturing the theosophical values and thus fulfilling their sacred duties towards the organization in particular and society in general.

Keeping the present scenario of the society in general in view we have to strengthen ourselves for future in such a way that it may explore avenues for community life and reflect the spirit of brotherhood at its best. When one understandingly decides 'to tread in the present' with an open mind, he can hope and be confident 'to create a better future' not only for himself but also for people around him. A firm adherence to Theosophical values in life is all that is needed to strengthen the present and shape the future.

With our dedication and whole hearted commitment towards this noble mission and working together in harmony and goodwill surely will be strengthening our present and pave the way for the years ahead.

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In this number of the journal three articles have been reprinted. One by Dr. Radha Burnier, the General Secretary of the Indian Section for 18 years (1961 to 1978); One article by Dr. Rohit Mehta, General Secretary of the Indian Section for 15 years (1945 to 1959); and one by Miss Joy Mills, which was published during the Centenary of the Indian Section in 1990.

I express my grateful thanks to Revered Bro. Surendra Narayan ji and our International President Bro. Tim Boyd for having sent their encouraging messages for this Special Number of the journal. I also express my gratitude and am thankful to the five authors for having willingly accepted the invitation to contribute article for this Number. They sent their articles much before the due date given to them.

RADHA BURNIER\*

## PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY\*\*

In the early days of the Theosophical Society, the great adepts who were the inspiration behind the founding of the Society made it clear that they were not interested in the progress of any particular individuals, however intellectual or qualified they considered themselves to be. Letters to A.P. Sinnett point out that the adepts are interested only in humanity as a whole and in individuals only to the extent to which the individuals are willing to subordinate their own interests for the good of humanity. In *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P. B. says that the aims of Theosophy are several; “but the most important are those which are likely to lead to the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical”. Therefore, we might say that the entire purpose of the Theosophical Society is to bring about the upliftment and good of humanity. The purpose is not to help just a few individuals, to gather here and there pleasant groups of like-minded people. The Society exists to disseminate that Wisdom which we call Theosophy, which confers benefit on all people alike.

The adepts also make it clear in a number of letters that the knowledge which is at their disposal can be made available only on certain conditions. They specify that there must be a real hunger for the wisdom in anyone who wishes to receive instruction and knowledge from them. This fact has been known in all ancient traditions. In *At the Feet of the Master*, the qualifications on the path are described as discrimination, desirelessness, good conduct and love, the last of which in ancient days was denoted by the Sanskrit word *mumukshutva*, which means thirst for liberation. Without a real thirst for wisdom, a hunger for it, as the adepts say, it is not possible to obtain or disseminate wisdom.

Members of the Society are perhaps too apt to be satisfied with mere knowledge. The world suffers now from too much knowledge. Knowledge of the external world has led to a variety of problems. The more knowledge of a certain kind man obtains the more complicated his life becomes and there are increasingly complicated situations from which he suffers. The economy of the world has become so complex that no one knows how to solve the global economic problems. Experts who in the last ten years have predicted what would happen in the economic field have all been proved wrong. This was not because they were lacking in knowledge or competence; it is because the problems are immensely complicated. The world

\*\* Was the General Secretary of the Indian Section from 1961 to 1978; and was International President of the TS from 1980 to October 2013.

\*\* Talk published in *The Indian Theosophist*, Vol. 75, No. 11. November 1978, pp.177 - 185.

is so interrelated that what happens in one place quickly affects conditions in other far-away places and even experts are baffled by the number of factors which have to be taken into consideration. Owing to the complications of existence, inevitably many are those who feel a sense of alienation and isolation. Technological knowledge leads to the production of a multitude of things and increased production demands more organization. As the world gets more and more organized, individuals feel lost in it. This is one of the numerous difficulties resulting from one-sided knowledge. Such knowledge has not solved the fundamental problems of man: how to find happiness, live at peace and discover those things whose value will never fade. For this wisdom is required. Members of the Theosophical Society would be failing in their work if they merely seek to acquire knowledge.

Really to fulfil the purpose for which the Society was founded members must have not only the hunger for wisdom but also the love of humanity. In various letters, the adepts speak about this too. On one occasion they wrote that he alone can gain their secrets who has “the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical brotherhood”. Practical Theosophy implies that one must have the capacity to help the world. Knowledge which does not enable one to bring about the upliftment of the world, in the true sense, is not practical Theosophy; it is speculative, theoretical. Perhaps, it is not Theosophy at all, because it is not wisdom. Wisdom is what brings about the good, which draws out the purest, the best in everyone. H.P.B. says that “the only decree of Karma— an eternal and immutable decree—is absolute Harmony in the world of matter, as it is in the world of Spirit”. It “guards the good”. Whenever imbalance is created by human beings, by the human mind, the law which stands for the good puts it right.

In a recent book, *Life After Life*, Dr. Raymond Moody describes the experience of those who, for a temporary period, cross over the threshold of death. The experience includes a review of the incarnation which is past, a fact which has been mentioned in *The Mahatma Letters* and other theosophical books. During that review, the individual begins to understand what it is he has done or failed to do in life. People think of the accomplishments of life in terms of success in a worldly sense- success in relationships, in acquiring knowledge, and perhaps imagined success on the spiritual path. But to those who have “gone across” the review shows that the whole purpose of life is to learn, and to learn one thing only, that is love. This is another way of stating that the individual has to learn what is good, good not only for himself but also for others because one cannot bring about good without learning how to love.

A school child who has to learn his lessons may try to shun the class work which he finds painful. The child may be reluctant to go to the school and escape. But the lessons are not painful they give the child what it needs in order to develop and grow up. But because the child resists the learning, he feels that it is painful.

All of us imagine that we are suffering, we are in pain because of undesirable circumstances, because of certain people and because of things which we do not like. But at no time is anything wrong in circumstances. All circumstances are the result of the forces of karma, which work to bring about the good at every moment of time in every place. This is a divine law. It is our resistance to learning the lesson of karma, be it great or small, which creates the feeling of pain and suffering. So suffering really lies in oneself, in one's own attitude and response to circumstances and to people, and not in anything outside. Wisdom, on the contrary, is in learning to meet those circumstances in the right way and to act in such a way that we work with the law of karma, the great laws of the universe in bringing about the good.

The essence of Wisdom, of Theosophy is to be able, at every moment, in every situation in which one is placed, to do that which is truly beneficial to the life around, to help it to grow and to reveal the goodness which is in it. The entire evolutionary plan is one in which at all times everything which exists is unfolding something of its own goodness, some hidden meaning or significance which is within it. At every point where life manifests itself, it is trying to convey in a greater and greater measure hidden goodness, which one might call beauty or truth or love. By the wisdom which discovers goodness in other things and helps them to reveal the good more fully, one reveals what is best in oneself more fully. The two go together.

All opening out of one's faculties is the perception of what is true and good in another. The average person sees very little. Mostly his eyes perceive only concrete things, but even they are observed very incompletely. If he walks in a park, for example, he is not aware of all that lies there, of the fullness of beauty, of the harmony of colours, of the light and shade in all its glory. We rarely give our attention, our heart to what we look at. When we look at a human being we see only casually what is outside. But there is a great deal besides what is concrete and external in the garden, the river, the mountain, the person in front. There may be underlying beauty, a harmony, many hidden virtues. Being unaware of virtue, we remain partly blind, we fail to see that which it is really trying to reveal. When the observer does realize the hidden harmony, then he is opening something within himself, an area of consciousness which heretofore had not functioned and sensed that harmony. So, at the moment when it senses something other than the concrete, it is also unfolding some faculty within itself which was not functioning before. To perceive the truth, the goodness which is hidden in other things is truly a flowering of the faculties and sensibilities within oneself.

To receive the hidden message is not a matter of doing it once and for all. All that is of real value-goodness, truth, beauty-reveals itself afresh all the time. The sacred word *Om* is said to represent all of manifestation and also that which is unmanifest. That word called *Pranava* in Sanskrit, signifies that which is always extraordinarily new. It suggests that manifestation at any

level is all the time revealing not only qualities which are of eternal value, but, revealing them afresh in new modes and new ways. To illustrate: Watching quietly a beautiful mountain, observing not merely the outer form, at one moment there may be awareness of the great dignity and loftiness it reveals. One may go away and come back another evening to look at the same mountain, to find it reveals something quite different- perhaps a sense of marvelous purity evoked by the whiteness of the snow which lies there. A third time, it may allude to that which is enduring, stable and immutable. So, looking at it on different occasions, sensing the beauty of loftiness great dignity, of indestructibility, of purity, each time that one is open to it, there is the truth of something different. But if the heart is not open, a person who sees the same mountain suffers that misfortune which is called "getting used to it". The consciousness becomes opaque and so what *is*, does not make any impress upon it at all.

Wisdom then is to perceive the truth which is underlying, the essential nature of things which all things are trying to reveal each moment in ever new forms. It is only by perceiving the underlying, essential nature of things, by seeing the truth that one can act rightly. To see the outer forms is only the seeing of the partial, the fragmentary, that which is superficial. Therefore the vision is vitiated, and action is not right. It is important to realize that only by seeing one can act rightly. In the Vedanta philosophy of old, this is explained by an illustration. If a person goes to a dimly lit place and sees an object coiled up which he mistakes for a snake, then he is bound to act in a particular way. If his nature is timid, he will be frightened, he will think of ways of escape, and run away. If his inclinations are different, then instead of feeling frightened, he may react with violence, he searches for an instrument with which to destroy the creature, and he acts. A number of other emotional reactions, thoughts and actions, might arise as a result of seeing the snake. But if greater light falls upon that scene, and the man sees that what he mistook for a snake is really a rope, then can he feel frightened, and run away, or aggressively go forward to destroy the rope? All the actions at the emotional, mental and physical levels which resulted from seeing a snake become impossible and irrelevant as soon as he realizes that the object is not a snake but a rope, when he sees the thing as it is.

We act according to what we see. Those who perceive only the outer form, and that too in a fragmentary and incomplete way, miss what is essential in life- the goodness and the truth which it is revealing from within, which underlies the outward things. Then all their actions are wrong, they are bound to create disharmony, conflict and suffering. Therefore, it is important for a person who searches for wisdom to see rightly. Everyone knows that to see physical objects, we need eyes. If the eyes are defective we do not see things correctly. Because of myopia or some other defect in the eyes, vision becomes limited. But apart from the defects and diseases which may afflict this instrument of perception, the eye suffers an inherent limitation. It cannot see that which is very minute: it does not see atoms, electrons, bacteria which

are floating around. Neither can it see what is vast, because the vastness is outside its range. Similar defects and diseases and inherent limitations affect other organs of sense. Perception always requires the use of the organs of sense and also that of that inner organ which is the mind. If the mind is not “present”, one does not see even when the physical sense organ comes into contact with an object. A person may walk through a garden, and if he is preoccupied with various things- some quarrel with his wife or a problem in his office- and is completely absorbed in them he may not know what is in that garden. Similarly if someone meets a friend on the street and the mind is “absent”, he does not know that the friend has passed by. In what we call absent-mindedness, even though the senses come into contact with things we do not really come into contact with them. It is necessary that the mind be present, the consciousness focused, in order to see.

The mind is therefore an instrument of perception, like the sense-organs which we know. But we do not readily accept the fact that the mind can have defects, diseases and inherent limitations exactly like the physical organs of perception. We are accustomed to thinking of our own minds as flawless instruments, and whatever we see with that mind is taken to be synonymous with truth or actuality. Obviously, when there is any kind of agitation within, the mind becomes incapable of seeing correctly. A jealous individual sees according to his own suspicions. When there is suspicion in the mind, an innocent gesture, word or action on the part of someone else, takes on the appearance of a nefarious happening. When there is anger, everything seems wrong; even an inanimate object like a table or a chair may seem to come deliberately in the way and be in the wrong place. The angry individual may push it as if the piece of furniture has done wrong! Internal commotion and passion prevent the seeing of things as they are. They are comparable to the defects and diseases which affect the physical organ of perception. Apart from them there are many subtle manifestations of the personal nature which obscure the vision and distort relationships, but subtle feelings which do the same have to be noticed. When a situation calls for action to help another, what is the mind’s reaction to that situation? Does it quickly see what needs to be done? Or does it conveniently blind itself to the fact? Theosophy is altruism, first and last. Or noticing a need, it is possible that it says, “This needs to be done, somebody ought to do it”. There is also the possibility that it says, “Yes, I will do it” and derives a sense of satisfaction, of virtue and smugness. Everyone of these manifestation of the personal self, distorts perception of things as they are. It is only by self-observation and self-knowledge that one can be aware of deceptions and limitations.

In *The Mahatma Letters*, when speaking about the hunger for wisdom as an absolutely essential qualification to find the wisdom the word “unselfish” is added. An “unselfish hunger for wisdom” is necessary in order to learn. And as one learns unselfishness, to see quickly where help is needed, in what ways that help is needed, how desire for satisfaction comes in

the way and so on, steps are taken towards that wisdom. Underlying action, if there is the desire to gain a reward, or recognition, it is a form of selfishness. In searching for wisdom, all selfishness and self-motivation must come to an end.

If there is no wisdom in the members of the T.S., how can it help the world? It is easy to think in terms of obtaining more members, getting more publicity, distributing more leaflets and so on and so forth. Clearly, it is not enough just to distribute book and literature; something has to flow from the members themselves, something which has the vitality of truth, of wisdom, the power of an unselfish yearning to bring about the good of all things.

To be practical, it is not enough merely to say we want to do good. One must learn how to do good, and wisdom, as we said in the beginning, is required to know how to do good. The world has seen a great deal of harm done by people who wanted to do good without knowing how. A group of confused and unwise people will only spread their own confusion and conflicts to others if they get organized into a Society. The Theosophical Society can fulfil its task in the world, be of practical benefit, only if at least a proportion of its members are lovers of wisdom. Otherwise we may think that we are doing good, but we may not really do so.

Without that quality of wisdom, the T.S. will become a very ordinary organization. It may survive for several centuries more but it will not be worth much. If we look at the three “declared Objects” each one of them, if interpreted without the perspective of wisdom, is capable of turning the Society into a very ordinary organization. There are numerous organizations now trying to bring about better relationships and goodwill in the world. The Society could become one more organization of that kind, working at the external level but not solving the root problem. As regards the second Object, academicians and university men, the professors and intellectuals who specialize in comparative studies, can surely promote this better than most T.S. members can. Pursuing the third Object, it is possible to do research into psychokinesis, clairvoyance, telepathy, all sorts of things, and leave the world no better for all that. The Theosophical Society’s true value is in the undeclared Object, which is to find *wisdom, theosophy*, the knowledge which teaches how to bring about the real good—not temporary good, not what we think is good, but that good which aids every manifestation of life to unfold in the greatest measure its beauty, its truth and its significance.

ROHIT MEHTA\*

## THE SECRET OF REGENERATION

PHYSICAL science speaks of the principle of entropy which states that everything in the universe is running down steadily toward thermodynamic equilibrium or death and extinction. Further, this running down involves a loss of energy and that it is irreversible. Is there no way out of this grim predicament? Fortunately, there is. A brilliant scientist, still with us, Ilya Prigogine of Belgium, a Nobel laureate, gives in his book *Order out of Chaos* a ray of hope and cheer. Alvin Toffler in his lucid Foreword to it says:

One of the key controversies surrounding this concept has to do with Prigogine's insistence that order and organization *can* actually arise 'spontaneously' out of disorder and chaos through the process of 'self-organization'. [*emphasis supplied*]

Thus the reversal of the flow of energy is possible — only in a self-organizing system and not in a mechanistic system.

A self-organizing system is one that is *living*. A machine cannot get back the energy-loss by itself. Fresh energy has to be given from outside. Left to itself it will become dead. It is only in a living organism that self-organization holds. A wound in a living body can and does heal itself, unlike a machine which needs outside help to restart its operations. A living system is open, not closed. There is a free exchange between itself and the environment, flexibility and no rigidity as in a machine. A living system may and does bend when required — but it soon recovers its original state. It is vulnerable, but it needs no protection from outside. In fact, a living system is extremely fragile — it looks as if it will break, but does not, due to its inherent strength. Life protects it. Thus a living system gets back its lost energy. In fact, it is the living system that contains the secret of regeneration.

J. Krishnamurti says: 'Society is always static, only in the individual can there be a radical revolution.' All organizations — social, philanthropic, idealistic — after a lapse of time lose their initial vitality, and languish. Their members lose interest and enthusiasm. They may whip up a short-lived enthusiasm by reminding themselves of their vows and obligations, their moral responsibility and so on. But these efforts are like flogging a dead horse. Organizations and societies are basically static. Regeneration critically turns on the individual member.

H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy* says:

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\*Mr. Rohit Mehta was the International Secretary of the Theosophical Society from 1941 to 1944. Then, he was the General Secretary of the Indian Section from 1945 to 1959.

Every such effort as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure because sooner or later it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard and fast dogmas of its own, and so last by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart.

Here HPB speaks of the entropy afflicting an organization and how only living truth can reimpart vitality to it.

Living truth is not conceptual or ideational, nor is it belief or conviction, nor even an ideal. All these are products of the mind. A living truth is a direct perception of truth. That which regenerates is not a theory nor a hypothesis. All these at best are just maps, of course, exact and detailed — but then a map is not the territory. But very often the members of degenerate organizations tend to be content with maps. But this is nothing by the side of a direct glimpse of even a little of the territory. For that fills the onlooker with zest and vitality.

In the vast theosophical literature, there are innumerable maps, detailing planes and bodies other than the physical, life after death, the levels and grades of the Path, the occult hierarchy and its functions, the Initiations, the races and rounds and many other subjects. These maps are just informative and no substitute for direct perception.

Whence comes this direct perception? The perceptive instrument we possess — our only instrument at that, is the mind. It is inherently defective. It is a faculty of consciousness which sees things and events successively and not all at once. It has no perception of the WHOLE. It sees only in fragments — it may add up the fragments — but then such adding may enable one to arrive at the total, but then that total is not the whole. HPB says in *The Voice of the Silence* that the mind is the slayer of the Real. The mind forever looks through a veil, through a glass darkly. The gathering of information is all it can do. It can enable us to study maps but cannot see the territory. It sees only its own projections, the shadows. It mistakes the rope for a snake. The snake has no intrinsic existence, being only a projection of the mind. Physicists also admit that they chase only the shadows — their shadows may change — nevertheless they do not know what the substance is — they are playing about with shadows like Plato's cavemen.

*The Voice of the Silence* says: 'The mind gathers dust while it reflects.' Reflection is mind's normal function. The discharge of that function stands primarily vitiated. By no effort of the mind, however enlightened, can one come to the direct perception of things. The mind's perception is always vitiated by the 'perceiver- perceived' duality. J. Krishnamurti defined right perception as the one where there is neither the perceiver nor the perceived. Now the perceived has no existence by itself — it is the product of the perceiver. Patanjali in his Yoga aphorisms says that it is the observer-observed phenomenon that is the cause of man's suffer-

ing. Modern physics too is concerned with the perceiver's intrusion into every act of perception. And surely the perceiver is the mind. In its very functioning the problem of duality inheres. And where duality is, right perception cannot be. Right perception demands non-duality. The non-dual perception is the very core of mysticism. The entire upanishadic teachings are based on the non-dual experience.

Referring to the fragments chosen from the 'Book of the Golden Precepts' for *The Voice of the Silence*, HPB herself says in the Preface: 'It has been thought better to make a judicious selection only from treatises which will best suit the few real mystics in the Theosophical Society, and which are sure to answer their needs'. Evidently HPB gave her last gift to the world, *The Voice of the Silence* only to benefit the few individuals, the real mystics in the Theosophical Society. Surely along the way of mysticism the secret of regeneration lies — not along the path of sensorial knowledge nor along the path of occultism. Neither the visible nor the invisible contain the mystery of regeneration — it is the Intangible that holds the secret.

There are all sorts of notions about mysticism. Some identify it with devotion, others with vague emotionalism. In fact, it is unveiled perception. It is that perception about which HPB speaks in *The Voice of the Silence*: 'A right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent.' Surely the non-existent or the unmanifest is the WHOLE and that which is manifest is partial. The unmanifest cannot be seen either with the visible or with the invisible powers of perception. Its intimations can be experienced. To feel its intimations is to have the experience of the WHOLE. It is of this that William Blake wrote 'To see a world in a grain of sand, and eternity in an hour,' which is not the product of wild fancy or heated imagination but issues from actual experience — but outside mind's ken. Brother C. Jinarajadasa says (*The Nature of Mysticism*) that the mystics are those 'who see man's resurrection in the midst of his crucifixion.'

Mind, needing Time as the field of its operation can only view two things in succession but not together. It knows not the coexistence of opposites. And so it regards a paradox as meaningless. How can, it wonders, resurrection and crucifixion coexist? But life functions in paradox, so says modern physics and mysticism agrees — eastern or western. Mind cannot solve a paradox, try as much as it likes. This is the basis of Zen Buddhism as of Sufism. This is the language of the Upanishads. J. Krishnamurti's approach is replete with paradoxes; for example, he very often used to speak of 'neither acceptance nor rejection'.

HPB says in *The Key to Theosophy*: 'Towards the close of each century, you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality — or call it mysticism, if you prefer — has taken place.' We are near the end of the twentieth century. Who knows if such spiritual or mystical outpouring has taken place? But who will know, who will sense it? Not an organi-

zation nor any institution, but only an individual or a few individuals. The regeneration we are speaking of is not in the nature of a mere variation but a mutation — a psycho-spiritual mutation. Only the individuals afire with living truth can sense the advent of such an impulse. And from them the flame will spread far and wide to the organizations and movements they form. Part of Biologists aver that mutations are never general but isolated and individual. What holds biologically holds psychospiritually as well, in fact, even more. In our times, J. Krishnamurti has time and again spoken of such mutations.

On this subject, the French scientist, Lecomte du Nouy (*Human Destiny*) says:

If we apply the laws of chance to the game of heads and tails, for instance, we know that if we toss our coin often enough, we must ultimately obtain an equal number of heads and tails. However this is only true if chance alone determines the throw — and not if the coin is lopsided, if there is dissymmetry which would favour either heads or tails.

However, life is indeed dissymmetrical — in fact it is symmetry in the midst of dissymmetry. And so it is not the quantity but the quality that will determine the result. What will have to be the quality of the individual who will constitute the focus of regeneration?

Du Nouy answers:

It is not the being best adapted to his environment who contributes to evolution. He survives, but his better adaptation eliminates him from the ascendant progression, and contributes to the number of more or less stagnant species that people the earth.

Psychospiritual mutations can take place only through individuals afire with constructive discontent, and not those who are well adapted to the prevalent environment. It must be a constructive discontent and not impotent dissatisfaction. Only men and women seething with constructive discontent will form the creative minority heralding a new way or dispensation. Only they will be aware of the new spiritual mystical impulse HPB had spoken of. Only they will be able to respond to the mystical call given by *Light on the Path*:

Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence. Listen only to the voice which is soundless. Listen only to that which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense.

These statements speak of neither the visible nor the invisible — they speak of the Intangible, that which is invisible both to the outer as well as the inner sense. While the senses understand the language of the visible, while the mind can understand the language of the invisible — it is mysticism alone that understands and speaks the language of the Intangible.

Where the mind is not, there the Intangible is. Indeed, in the silence of the mind, the voice of the Intangible can be heard. *The Light on the Path* says: 'Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm.' It must follow the storm — the storm of constructive discontent — not before that. And the blooming of the flower is indeed the birth of regeneration. This is the moment of Inspiration.

The moment of inspiration is just a moment — not the moment by the clock nor by chronology but the moment of psychological time. It is time-less. Aurobindo Ghosh says 'The moment sees, the ages toil to express'. The right perception is in the moment, and the time process toils to express what the moment has seen. But so long as the mind's ceaseless chatter continues there is no perception of *what is*. The ending of the storm demands the awareness of mind's limitations. Awareness and not mere intellectual recognition.

The awareness of mind's limitation marks the revolutionary moment. To actually know how far the mind can go, and where it must halt — in this awareness a deep silence descends — and in that silence the flower of regeneration blooms. It is in the ground of constructive discontent that the seeds of regeneration are sown. While the storm of discontent lasts, branches and leaves may appear but 'not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved. . . can the bloom open'.

The personality is the product of the mind, and so with the dissolution of the mind, the personality too is dissolved. Such dissolution is the moment of silence. It may last long or end immediately. Time is not the measure. As *Light on the Path* says: 'The silence may last a moment, or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you.' And it is this strength which will be the regenerative power. It indeed is the strength of inspiration.

Let the members of various organizations seek regeneration in the silence that follows the storm of constructive discontent. Let the creative minority grow. They shall feel the bracing air of the non-dual perception, the glow of the intangible, where the Unknown works — the miracle of regeneration.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, September, 1994)

JOY MILLS\*

## THEOSOPHY: ORTHODOXY OR HERESY?

As the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society commemorates its centenary, looking back upon outstanding members who have contributed to its flowering, and looking forward to an equally glorious future in meeting the challenges of the final decade of this 20<sup>th</sup> century, it may prove useful for its members to consider the question posed in the title of this article. Such an anniversary as a centenary provides us all with an opportunity to examine our beliefs, to renew our commitments, and to determine our future directions. To what extent do we understand the purposes for which the Society itself was founded? What do we consider the great principles of this ageless wisdom we call Theosophy? Are our approaches to the study orthodox or heretical, and what do we mean by these terms?

The following thoughts are therefore offered not as a conclusion which answers those questions, but as a beginning to stimulate thought and discussion. The ideas presented are purposely terse and left undeveloped, in the hope that each reader of the article will fill in the spaces, so to speak, between the thoughts and thus be led to discover anew what is this precious jewel we call Theosophy and how best may that jewel be set in the contemporary frame we call today's world.

The first stage on the eightfold path of the Buddha, a path that would lead to the termination of suffering or our enmeshment in the world of the transitory, has been variously translated as right view, right opinion, right understanding. In Buddhist scripture it is *samma-ditthi*, "samma" also meaning the good or the highest, and therefore the correct or the right manner.

Buddhism, of course, was considered a heresy in Brahmanical India and therefore contrary to the orthodox views of that day. Such has always been the case with any new movement, religious or otherwise, which disturbs in some way the traditional and customary views of a majority. Even movements and established religious ideas may develop that appear heretical to those who would maintain the orthodoxies of the past.

Was the Theosophical Society, at its founding, just another heretical movement? Certainly its views were heresy to the religious fundamentalism against which H.P. Blavatsky so vehemently spoke and wrote. As the Society has aged, some of those drawn within its orbit to the study of the theosophical philosophy have all too often denounced interpretations with which they do not agree as heretical while claiming themselves to represent the true or right view of the lofty principles comprising that philosophy.

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To use a metaphor that may be helpful, we may suggest that the fundamental principles of the theosophical philosophy constitute Himalayan range of spiritual idea. Each idea, as each mountain peak within that range, stands distinct and clear, each to be “ascended,” as it were, through study, meditation and an awakening intuition, which means (as in mountain climbing) through individual effort; at the same time, each idea, as each peak, is related to all the others in the range, the Himalayan range of mountains and the spiritual range of Theosophy. From the valley and even throughout the ascent, the view is always a partial one, never wholly complete; few are those who, standing on the highest peak, have a total vision of the entire range.

These thoughts occurred as consideration of the actual meaning of both orthodoxy and heresy seemed called for. We often forget the meanings of words in favour of the connotations with which they have become surrounded; words, of course, take on a life of their own, sometimes quite independent of their actual origin and early usage. But in this case, it may be useful to be reminded of the original meaning of two such different words which, all too often, have been used in a pejorative sense, for who among us wishes to be called a heretic? And we do not like to think we are really orthodox, if by that our accuser means we are old-fashioned and bound by the past.

So, it may be refreshing to think that orthodox has meaning not dissimilar to the Buddhist *samma ditthi*, right view or right opinion. The word itself comes from the Greek “orthos”, which is usually translated as straight or right, correct; “doxa” can be translated as both opinion and glory, and among Eastern Orthodox Christians pertains to worship or reverence. The twinning of opinion and glory is an interesting one, and would indicate, as one writer on the subject has suggested, that right belief or right teaching (opinion) is a form glory, for it is a manifestation of the radiance of the Godhead. The right view, we may say, is the view obtained from the mountain peak, for only then is the full glory of the mountain range revealed.

And what, then, is heresy? Again we can turn to the Greek original from which the word is derived, “hairesis”, which literally means choice. We all have choices as to the path we may follow up the mountain, to continue with our analogy; we are all heretics to that extent. Yet, as we have been told by those who have ascended to the heights, the only heresy is the thought of separateness, the idea that we are different from all others who are sharing the mountain with us.

As we reflect upon the majestic mountain range of theosophical ideas, the lofty peaks that represent the great principles of this ageless philosophy, we may well consider to what extent our view of those principles is orthodox, the right view, the view that reveals the glory of the creative One, and what choices we may have before us as we undertake the ascent toward those eternal verities of the spirit. Out of such reflection we may discover that Theosophy is

both orthodoxy and heresy, the right teaching permits all choices of approach, except the choice that says our approach, our understanding, our view, is the only correct one. The true glory of the right view lies in the recognition that there is but one life, we are all parts of that one-ness, we with all the multitude of living beings, and we travel together even when we seem to be ascending the mountains of the spirit alone.

Perhaps if Theosophy is both orthodoxy and heresy, comprising both right view and the choice that leads to that fullness of view which is whole and therefore correct, we need to examine our own belief, ourselves, to determine to what extent we are orthodox and to what extent we are heretics. Have we failed to make choices that would lead us to the mountain peaks of wisdom and compassion? Have we been content with lesser view, assuming them to be the only ones? Some who have ascended Everest, when asked why they attempted the climb, replied with the simple statement: "Because it is there". We who aspire to climb the Everests of Theosophy may respond in a similar manner, adding to the fact that it is there (or here, if you prefer), that it is by that ascent alone that we aid all life in its upward climb to Divinity.

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The truth which pertains to life and its expressions can be known in its fullness and experienced within oneself when there is a state of complete receptivity to it, when both mind and heart are open to it.

N. SRI RAM

## THEOSOPHY IN DAILY LIFE

The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society is today 125 years old having been chartered by the Founder President, Col. H. S. Olcott, on 17 November 1890. Several branches (Lodges) of the Indian Section were chartered even earlier. From those initial years there has always been a need to emphasize that theosophical teachings are not merely for studying and preaching to others but for living in our daily lives. Such a need exists even now. Studying theosophy without translating it into our daily lives is like studying the technique of car driving without ever taking the car out from the garage. There is a huge difference between learning car driving from a book or in a classroom and actually learning to drive a car on the road. Theosophy must be lived. It must be reflected in our day-to-day living.

Theosophical ideals are no doubt profound but their practical application in daily life is more important. Theosophy is not mere divine wisdom — it is living wisdom. What we learn from theosophy must be reflected in our day-to-day dealings with our children, spouses, parents, neighbours, people who work with us in our home or offices, business partners, and even with strangers on the road. That is the only way we are going to really learn the lessons of theosophy, not by acquiring book knowledge or by our ability to speak and impress others. It is of no use if we do not live the great theosophical principles that we have been fortunate to learn. Great teachers like Shankaracharya and Krishnamurti have pointed out that if we merely get medicine or food but do not take it, our disease and hunger will not go away.

In a way, daily life is the soil from which spiritual life may flower. It provides us an opportunity to progress. We need water and food to sustain our body. We need moment-to-moment attention to nurture and realize the theosophical principles of One Life and Universal Brotherhood. Our lower self needs to be quiet so that it can hear our higher Self. In our daily life, we are used to a lot of external activities which require effort. We need self-reflection and effortless yet active awareness. Only such awareness can make us realize that in our natural state we are truly spiritual.

Let us look at the practical ways we can begin to apply theosophical tenets in our daily lives. Two different but mutually complimentary ways seem suitable for preparing us to lead a theosophic life. One is the yogic discipline suggested by Patanjali by way of 5 Yamas and 5 Niyamas in the Yoga-sutras<sup>1</sup> and the other is the Buddhist way of the 6 and 10 Paramitas. Both the systems are found in the theosophical literature.

### **Yamas and Niyamas**

At the preparatory stage, a good beginning can be made by practising what we may refer

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to as 10 commandments of Patanjali — 5 Yamas or self-restraints and 5 Niyamas or observances. The first two limbs of Asthanga Yoga are in the form of these 5 dos and 5 don'ts:

<b>Yamas – Self Restraints</b>	<b>Niyamas – Observances</b>
<i>Ahimsa</i> - Non-violence	<i>Shaucha</i> – Purity
<i>Satya</i> - Truth	<i>Santosa</i> – Contentment
<i>Asteya</i> - Honesty	<i>Tapas</i> - Austerity
<i>Brahmachrya</i> - Continence	<i>Swadhyaya</i> - Self-study
<i>Aparigraha</i> – Non-possesiveness	<i>Ishwara Pranidhana</i> – Surrender to God

These elements have been dealt in a small but very popular book by S. S. Varma, *Yogic Practice: Yama and Niyama*<sup>2</sup>, which gives practical hints that are very important from the viewpoint of our daily living.

### **Yamas**

Is living theosophy as simple as driving a car? Yes and no. If we think of living theosophy in a mechanical way in the sense of following a set of rules, perhaps it is not so difficult. For example, let us take the case of non-violence (**Ahimsa**). It is easy to abstain from killing or eating non-vegetarian food. But theosophically, practising Ahimsa or harmlessness involves avoiding careless speech, gossip, and unkind thoughts by which we harm one another. Abstention from violence implies an attitude and mode of behaviour towards all living creatures based on the recognition of the underlying unity of life. Our outer behaviour must follow the principle of One Life. An aspirant practising non-violence has to keep a strict watch over his mind, emotions, words and actions. The practice of the negative ideal of Ahimsa gradually transforms into a positive and dynamic life of love leading to tender love and compassion towards all living creatures, taking the practical form of service.

In the case of telling the truth (**Satya**), perhaps being truthful in words is far easier than telling a lie, as one lie often compels one to tell a series of lies. Theosophically, truth is not a matter of only accurate words, but pertains to thought and action as well. If we hold an opinion without studying the facts, that is a form of untruth. Exaggeration, equivocation, pretence, and the like are not in accordance with what we know as true. Even silence is a form of falsehood when it implies acceptance of untruth or giving a false impression. Untruth in thought is more difficult to recognize. Untrue thought and superstitions are often accepted by us simply because others hold them or they are written. When we think we know the motives for another action, actually it may be untrue as that person may have other reasons which we may not be able to guess. It would be truthful for us to admit that we do not know. Only when we begin to practise truthfulness, the subtler forms of untruthfulness are revealed to us. The Universe and our lives are based on love and truth. Untruth and violence puts us out of harmony with the law of truth and love, which leads us into suffering.

Let us now take the case of **Asteya** - non-stealing. The ordinary meaning of it is not to steal somebody else's possessions. But in a broader sense it would also include not enjoying or misusing somebody else's property or receiving what is not one's own, and taking credit for something which one has not done. Non-stealing has grosser and subtler aspects. How does one practise non-stealing in daily life? The practice has to begin at the mental level: not to covet what belongs to another, not to have greed for what belongs to others, not to be dis-satisfied and jealous, to reduce wants, and to cultivate the attitude of being happy at the well-being of others- such an attitude is known as *Mudita* to the Buddhists.

**Brahmacharya** implies freedom from the domination of the senses and the craving for sensual enjoyment. One cannot avoid a feeling of pleasure when objects are agreeable. It is not the aim to blunt the senses. In fact, an aspirant should be more sensitive. The trouble is not with the feeling, but the desire for repetition of the pleasurable experience.

**Aparigraha**, non-grasping, also involves curbing the tendency to accumulate and be greedy. The problem is not with having a few essential things for the maintenance of the body. The trouble starts when people want luxuries and go on to amassing wealth and objects which serves no other purpose than vanity and appearing superior to others. However, the worries and anxieties of life increase in proportion to the accumulations.

### **Niyamas**

**Shaucha** or purity in relation to our gross and subtle bodies denotes the ability to serve efficiently as instruments of the Divine Life. Purification lies in making our physical body more refined by the right kind of food. Purification of our subtler bodies can be brought about by excluding undesirable emotions and thoughts. Purification helps in bringing an influx of spiritual forces from the higher planes.

**Santosha** or contentment keeps the mind calm, satisfied, and undisturbed irrespective of what happens outside. It is a positive state and not a result of laziness, lack of initiative, or resignation arising out of resentment and helplessness. *Santosha* includes *Uparati* (tolerance) and *Titiksha* (endurance). *Uparati* implies accepting all people as they are, which helps us to act always in harmony with others. If anyone causes us annoyance or injury, let us think he is helping us to pay off on old debt and let us be grateful to him. *Titiksha* implies accepting whatever circumstances we are in. This will help us to cheerfully face the little frictions of daily life as well as the more serious trials.

The last three of the Niyamas— **Tapas, Swadhyaya, and Ishwara Pranidhana**— Austerity, Self-study, and Surrender to God— are collectively named as *Kriya Yoga* by Patanjali. These are very important for daily living. *Tapas* helps us in purifying our physical body, *Swadhyaya* our mental body, and *Ishwara Pranidhana* our astral body. Purification of our lower vehicles makes us perceptive to the higher forces from within and from without us. By denoting these three as *Kriya Yoga*, or preliminary yoga, Patanjali hints at their usefulness in an aspirant's daily life in the preliminary stages.

The three elements of *Kriya Yoga* and, for that matter, 5 Yamas— vows of self-restraint and 5 Niyamas— observances are not for mere study, but for practical living in daily life. These preliminary yoga steps must be put into practice. Patanjali emphasizes *Abhyasa*— practice—and says two important things:-

**तत्र नैकं कालं वा स्थानं वा वाक्यं वा वाक्यं वा वाक्यं वा**

*Jati-desa-kala-samaya-anavacchinna. sarvabhauma-mahavratam* || (Yoga-sutras 2.31)

These vows are not limited to class, place, time, or occasion, they extend to all stages and are great vows. These are important for daily living, wherever we are, whatever time of the day, month, or year it may be. For example, it will not do if one gives up non-vegetarian food only on certain days or only at certain places. Similarly, it is not enough to stick to truth only inside the TS and not outside.

The second important thing Patanjali says is by way of practical tips:

**वितर्कान् विप्रश्नान् विमर्शान् विमर्शान् विमर्शान्**

*vitarka-badhane pratipraksya-bhavanam* || (Yoga-sutras 2.33)

When the mind is disturbed by improper thoughts, constant pondering over the opposite is the solution.

### **Paramitas**

Alternatively, we may choose to practice the 6 Paramitas or Virtues in our daily life. It is said that to live to benefit humanity is the first step; and to practice the Paramitas is the second.

#### **Paramitas**

The Buddhist texts like the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*, the Lotus Sutra, and a large number of other texts list the following six Paramitas:

1. *Dana*: generosity, giving of oneself
2. *Shila* : virtue, morality, discipline, proper conduct
3. *Kshanti*: patience, tolerance, forbearance, acceptance, endurance
4. *Virya* : energy, diligence, vigor, effort
5. *Dhyana* : one-pointed concentration, contemplation
6. *Prajna* : wisdom, insight

In the *Dashabhumika Sutra*, four more Paramitas are listed:

7. *Upaya*: skillful means
8. *Pranidhana*: vow, resolution, aspiration, determination
9. *Bala*: spiritual power
10. *Jnana*: enlightenment, knowledge

The Buddhists call the last four “The Great Perfections”. Some believe that the first 6 paramitas are for the lay disciples but the next four are only for advanced monks. However, in a letter from her Master, Madame H.P. Blavatsky was told, “The six and ten transcendental virtues”, (the Paramitas), are not for full-grown yogis and priests alone, but for all those who would enter the Path” (see *Collected Writings*, vol.12, page 598). Madame Blavatsky herself says in *The Voice of the Silence*<sup>3</sup> “O weaver of thy freedom, thou hast to master these Paramitas of perfection - the virtues transcendental six and ten in number - along the weary path.”

These Paramitas imply much more than their ordinary meanings. For example, the *Dana Paramita* does not mean merely the perfection of giving but, implies the perfection beyond giving. It is not about giving something that we have no need for or something we have in excess and want to get rid of. The perfection beyond giving implies selfless giving, like a mother who feeds a child while remaining hungry, developing an attitude of non-attachment and non-separateness. Once *Dana Paramita* is understood as the perfection beyond giving, it lifts one to a stage where there is sheer joy of giving and an aspirant knows he is on the right path. Incidentally, *Dana Paramita* is not confined to only giving material things but also giving gifts of teaching, fearlessness, and even one’s own life. So is the case with all the other Paramitas.

It is not the case that these Paramitas are to be pursued separately or strictly one after another. Practice of one *Paramita* helps in the practice of another. This is reflected in the Buddhist practice of taking *Panchashila* before giving *Dana*. Even among the Hindus, there is a practice of purification of body, speech and mind on the part of the giver and the receiver before *Dana* is given or received. A small book, *Paramitas of Perfection*, by Muriel Daw, a Buddhist and a Theosophist, is an excellent initial guide to understand the deeper aspects of the Paramitas.<sup>4</sup>

The first three Paramitas. *Dana*, *Shila* and *Kshanti*—form a triad and represent love, harmony, and patience. Love creates harmony, but without patience harmony cannot be sustained. Similarly the last three Paramitas’ *Virya*, *Dhyana* and *Prajna*—form another triad. With dauntless energy, when contemplation is pursued, the result is *Prajna*, or full spiritual perception. To reach and to hold a new position in a higher spiritual world requires spiritual energy, or *virya*.

Between these two triads of six Paramitas, Madame Blavatsky introduces the paramita *virag* (*vairagya*) without which neither the illusion can be conquered nor the truth can be perceived. In more than one sense, the detachment, dispassion, indifference, is the most important of all the virtues. It is important that the mind is detached from desires and the passions without which an aspirant will slide back to square one. Madame Blavatsky reminds us that “stern and exacting is the virtue of viraga”.

### Seven Paramitas in 'The Voice of the Silence'

*Dana* — Charity  
*Shila* — Harmony  
*Kshanti* — Patience  
*Virag* — Indifference to pleasure and pain, passionlessness  
*Virya* — Dauntless courage  
*Dhyana* — Contemplation  
*Prajna* — Intuitive wisdom

There are correspondences between Yamas and Niyamas on the one hand, and some of the Paramitas on the other. For example, we may look at the Pancha Shilas, which echo several of the Yamas:

1. Do not take life – No killing – Respect for life.
2. Do not take what is not given – No stealing – Respect for other's property.
3. Refrain from misuse of the senses – No sexual misconduct – Respect for our pure nature.
4. Do not distort facts – No lying – Respect for honesty.
5. Refrain from self-intoxication through alcohol or drugs – No intoxicants – Respect for a clear mind.

The five elements of the *Shila Paramita* can also be restated as: (1) Harmlessness, (2) Not to take what is not given, and (3, 4, 5) Purification of Body, Speech, and Mind. When we consider the deeper meanings of the terms used for denoting the Yamas, Niyamas, and Paramitas, similarities between the methods recommended for the spiritual aspirants under two different systems become evident. While *Ahimsa*, *Satya*, *Asteya*, *Brahmacharya* have their direct equivalents in the Shila Paramita, one also finds a resonance between *Aparigraha* and *Dana Paramita*, *Santosh* and *Kshanti Paramita* and so on at a deeper level.

As pointed out in the beginning, it is not enough to have an intellectual understanding of the Yamas, Niyamas, and Paramitas, but these restraints, observances, and virtues must be reflected in the way we live. Several important aspects of daily life have also been dealt with in the *Mahatma Letters*, (a summary is available in the book *Teachings on Discipleship* by S. S. Varma<sup>5</sup>), which require to be studied carefully by an aspirant.

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1. *The Science of Yoga* by I.K. Taimni, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.
2. *Yogic Practice: Yama and Niyama* by S. S. Varma, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. (Translations available in several Indian and foreign languages).
3. *The Voice of the Silence* by H. P. Blavatsky, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.
4. 'Paramitas (virtues) of Perfection' by Muriel Daw, 1987 Blavatsky Lecture, TS England. ([www.blavatskytrust.org.uk](http://www.blavatskytrust.org.uk)).
5. *Teachings on Discipleship: As Outlined in the Mahatma Letters* by S. S. Varma, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. (pages 19 - 45 on Daily Life).

PEDRO OLIVEIRA \*

## FOUNDERS' TRAVELS IN INDIA: BEGINNINGS OF THE INDIAN SECTION

From 1879, when they arrived in Bombay, to 1884, before Madame Blavatsky left for Europe in March 1885, the principal co-Founders of the Theosophical Society travelled extensively throughout India. The reason for them choosing India as the international home of the TS was made very clear by them. Writing in *The Theosophist*, July 1882, HPB remarked:

When, in answer to a direct challenge, the author of *The Occult World* wrote to the *Bombay Gazette* (April 4, 1882), he began his letter with the following profession of faith: "I was already sure, when I wrote *The Occult World*, that the Theosophical Society was connected, through Madame Blavatsky, with the great Brotherhood of Adepts I described. I now know this to be the case, with much greater amplitude of knowledge." Little did our loyal friend fancy, when he was penning these lines, that his assertion would one day be capable of corroboration by the testimony of thousands. But such is now the state of the case. Skeptics and prejudiced or interested witnesses in general may scoff as they like, the fact cannot be gainsaid. ...

While at Madras [May, 1882], we were told that a well-known Tamil scholar, a Pandit in the Presidency College, desired to have a private conversation with us. The interview occurred in the presence of Mr Singaravelu, President of the Krishna Theosophical Society, and another trustworthy Theosophist, Mr C. Aravamudu Ayangar, a Sanskritist, of Nellore. We are no more at liberty to repeat here all the questions put to us by the interviewer than we are to divulge certain other facts, which would still more strongly corroborate our repeated assertions that (1) our Society was founded at the direct suggestion of Indian and Tibetan Adepts; and (2) that in coming to this country we but obeyed their wishes. But we shall leave our friends to draw their own inferences from all the facts.

The following passages from Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*<sup>1</sup> (Second Series) gives us a bird's eye view not only of the extent of their travels but, more importantly, of their impact on Indian society and on individuals who were impressed and inspired by their dedication and devotion to India's spiritual ethos and values.

Col. Olcott describes the ambience surrounding the delivery of his first public lecture in

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\*Member of TS in Australia.

India, in Bombay, 1879, and how the occasion caused him to feel overcome with emotion:

Accordingly, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, I gave my first public lecture in India at Framji Cowasji Hall, Dhobitalao (the Washermen's Quarter). For novelty and picturesqueness, the scene was the culmination of delight: the contrast between this sea of multi-coloured turbans, snowy muslin dresses, and keen, onyx eyes looking out of handsome brown faces, and the black-costumed, pale-faced, bare-headed audiences of the West, with no touch of bright colour save in the women's bonnets, was most striking. The crowd was so dense as to pack the hall, balconies, and stairways, until not one more man could have been crowded in, yet as quiet, orderly, and attentive as though each person had had ample room. Our quartette sat on the platform, which was thronged by the leading personages of the different native communities of Bombay, and my discourse was listened to with breathless attention, interrupted from time to time by applause. It was really an historical event that, for the first time in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant, a Western man should uphold the majesty and sufficiency of Eastern Scriptures, and appeal to the sentiment of patriotic loyalty to the memory of their forefathers, to stand by their old religions; giving up nothing until after its worthlessness had been proven by impartial study. The spirit of the occasion possessed alike speakers and hearers, and there was a moment—I recollect—when I could not restrain my emotion, but had to stop because stifled sobs choked my utterance. I felt like a fool in thus losing my self-command, but I could not help it; the pent-up voice of my heart made my lips dumb, despite all I could do. My theme was: "The Theosophical Society and Its Aims", and contained as full explanations as I could give. It should be noted that the view taken then was that the redemption of any nation must come through its own self-evolved leaders, not from without, and that if the downfall of India was to be arrested, the inspired agent must be sought within her boundaries, not in foreign lands, nor among aliens. (pp. 38-40)

In his visit to Benares, in December 1879, his directness of approach was self-evident:

The same afternoon I lectured at the town hall to a crowded audience, Babu Prâmada Dâsa Mitra, one of the most respected and highly-educated Vedântin gentlemen of Benares, occupying the chair and benefiting the assemblage by a luminous discourse at the close of my remarks. My topic was the material and spiritual needs of India, and I illustrated the former by exhibiting a collection of the engraved brassware for which the Holy City is renowned, and pointing out the slovenly workmanship as evidence of the industrial decadence that has set in, and that the dearest interest of the country require to be stopped. (p. 123)

Their visit to Simla, in October 1880, was to be a historical one as it marked the beginning of the correspondence between Mr Sinnett and the Mahatmas, later published as *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*:

On 7<sup>th</sup> October I lectured at the rooms of the United Service Institution on “Spiritualism and Theosophy”. I was introduced by Captain Anderson, Hon. Secretary of the Institution, and the vote of thanks was moved in a very kind speech by the veteran Lieutenant-General Olpherts, C.B., V.C., R.A. The audience was the largest ever gathered together at Simla, I was told. The same evening I attended the Viceroy, Lord Ripon’s ball at Government House and received many congratulations from friends on the lecture and our improved relations with the Indian Government. . . . 16<sup>th</sup> October, Mrs. Gordon had the Sinnetts, Major S., and ourselves on a picnic, and H. P. B. distinguished herself by producing from a handkerchief steeped in a saucer of water a duplicate with Mrs. Sinnett’s Christian name embroidered across one corner. That evening Mr. Hume handed her for transmission his first letter to K. H., the beginning of the highly interesting correspondence about which so much has been said from time to time. (pp. 242-243)

In their visit to Lahore, in November 1880, the Founders expressed a very important principle of the fledgling Society – the TS is not a belief-based organization but an enquiry-based one:

The next day we took train for Lahore, where a warm welcome awaited us. A large delegation of Arya Samajists met us at the railway station and took us to our quarters—a detached bungalow connected with a large Anglo-Indian boarding-house near the Public Garden. They left us to ourselves while they went to their homes for dinner, and, returning at 9 o’clock, sat on the floor along with us and talked metaphysics until a late hour, after which we were both glad to get to our rest. The crux was the nature of Iswara and the personality of God, about which H. P. B. and I entertained beliefs very antagonistic to theirs.

The Anglo-Indian papers were just then full of malevolent writings against us, which made us appreciate all the more the friendliness of the Indians. I lectured to the usual overflowing audience on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> November, and among the Europeans present was Dr. Leitner, the famed Orientalist, then President of the Punjab University College. At the close, the alleged Yoga Sabhâpathy Swami read a rambling complimentary address in which his praises of us were mingled with much self-glorification. He came to our place the next day and favoured us with his company from 9.30 a.m. until 4 p.m., by which time he had pretty thoroughly exhausted our patience. Whatever

good opinion we may have formed of him before was spoilt by a yarn he told us of his exploits as a Yogî. He had, he said, been taken up at Lake Mânsarovara, Tibet, high into the air and been transported two hundred miles along the high level to Mount Kailâs, where he saw Mahadeva! Ingenuous foreigner as H. P. B. and I may have been, we could not digest such a ridiculous falsehood as that. I told him so very plainly. If, I said, he had told us that he had gone anywhere he liked in astral body or clairvoyant vision, we might have believed it possible, but in physical body, from Lake Mânsarovara, in company with two Rishis mentioned in the Mahabharata, and to the non-physical Mount Kailâs—thanks, no: he should tell it to somebody else. (pp. 258-259)

Col. Olcott's visit to Multan, in November 1880, introduced him to more pictorial symbols of the Hindu tradition:

The main street of Multan is broad, paved with bricks, and lined with shops that compare well with those of other Indian cities. There are manufacturers of enamelled silver work, silk goods, cotton and woollen carpets, etc. There was a large local Arya Samaj and also a Branch of our own Society, headed by one of the best men in India, Dr. Jaswant Roy Bhojapatra. I lectured on two successive evenings, and during the day was taken about the town to see the sights, among them one which matches the grave of Adam for pathetic suggestiveness! It is the temple of the Narasinha Avatar of Vishnu, his appearance, to wit, under the form of a man-lion for the purpose of protecting virtue and punishing wicked people. The story (and what "story," to be sure) is that Vishnu split open one of the iron pillars of the bad king's durbar hall, emerged from it, and tore the tyrant into pieces. Well, they actually show the identical Pillar in this Multan, temple. What could one have better than that: unless it be the grave of Adam, over which Mark Twain—to his praise be it said—wept honest tears for the loss of that respectable ancestor, and set an example to the whole regenerate race of mankind! (p. 265)

The Founders, on another visit to Benares, in November 1880, met well-known practitioners of Hindu spirituality:

The erudite Dr. G. Thibaut, Principal of Benares College, came and dined with me, and spent the evening in profitable conversation. I returned his visit the next day, and also called on Raja Sivaprasad and Babu Pramada Dâsâ Mittra. The next day we went to pay our respects to Majji, the female ascetic, or Yogini, and found her very amiable, and communicative about religious questions. Later in the day we visited, in his garden retreat, the naked and lovable old Yogi Bhaskaranda Swami, with whom I

was delighted. At 6 p.m. I lectured on “India” in the town hall to a crowded audience of—as they told me— “all the aristocracy and learning of Benares”. The old Maharajah and his son were present, and Raja Sivaprasad served me as translator with great ability; his knowledge of English having been perfect whatever his demerits may have been. (p. 270)

In their visit to Baroda, in June 1882, the Founders met the aristocracy in Baroda and HPB performed a few phenomena. Col. Olcott had another opportunity to express frank views:

I have seldom faced a more brilliant audience than that which listened to my first Baroda lecture on Theosophy. It was held in the gorgeous Marriage Hall where the members of the Royal Family of Baroda are wedded. The Gaikwar, his Prime Minister, and all the nobles and English-knowing officials of the State, together with the British Resident and staff, were present, and at the close the vote of thanks was moved by a Muslim Durbari, who became subsequently Dewan. His speech struck me as being a gem of pure English rhetoric and polished courtesy. It was at once instructive and amusing to listen to his compliments, for I happened to know that the speaker was a thorough infidel, who believed in no religion whatsoever, except that of “Get on,” had no faith in us, and his performance was a clever feat of carrying water on both shoulders simultaneously!

A second lecture on “Science and Hinduism” followed on the next day, at the same place, before the same resplendent audience. That evening we gained a very valuable colleague in Dr. Balchandra, Chief Medical Officer of Baroda, who is one of the most intellectual and best educated men of India. I think it was for his special benefit that H. P. B., that evening, read the contents of a telegram in its sealed envelope before it was opened. She also rang her atmospheric bells, and the next day complied with the Gaikwar’s request to make some table rappings for him, during the course of a long interview which he sought. (pp. 367-368)

Col. Olcott’s visit to Bhowanipore, in May 1883, also led him to Calcutta on the first Anniversary of the Bengal Theosophical Society:

What his Sunday is to the “slave of toil,” my rare half-days of rest were to me on this 7,000-mile circuit around India in the year 1883. I had one such, I see, on 9th May, and up to the 14<sup>th</sup> I was, at least, settled in Calcutta, but then the ceaseless round had to be taken up again, and I left by steamboat for Midnapore, which transit by the breaking down of a second boat on the Oolobaria-Midnapore Canal lengthened out

to a two-day's journey. There was a lecture on the evening of my arrival, healings of the sick on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and the formation of a local Branch with ten members, after which I returned to Calcutta. A lecture was given at Bhowanipore on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and the next day, at the Calcutta town hall, we celebrated, in presence of a huge audience, the first anniversary of the Bengal T. S. Babu Mohini Mohun Chatterji, Secretary of the Branch, read an interesting report, in which he said that the formation of the Branch was due to my first lecture in the same hall in the preceding year; the President, Babu Norendranath Sen, gave a lengthy and eloquent discourse; Babu Dijendranath Tagore the highly respected and cultured Acharya of the Adi Brahma Samaj, spoke on the subject of Brotherhood; Dr. Leopold Salzar, on Protoplasm and Dr. Jaeger's discoveries in odorant matter; and I wound up the proceedings with a historical retrospect of the doings of Dr. James Esdaile in Mesmeric Anæsthesia, as applied to surgical operations, at Calcutta, in the years 1846, '47, '48, '49, and '50. (pp. 436-437)

Large crowds met Col. Olcott in visit to Trichinopoly, in August 1883:

Popularity, beyond a certain point, is very burdensome—as I found throughout the South Indian Tour of 1883. When, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, I got to the Trichinopoly town hall, where I was to speak, it was practically impossible for me to reach the door; a vast surging crowd occupied every foot of the approaches, and, instead of making room for me, hustled each other into a compact mass of perspiring flesh to get a look at the object of momentary curiosity. In vain my Committee pleaded, scolded, shouted, and pushed; I was brought to a standstill. So, then, I did the most natural thing, by climbing to the solid roof of a palanquin carriage where all could see me. If one wants to manage a crowd, one must never get excited nor precipitate; give the right initial impulse and let it gradually increase of itself. . . . On the same evening I figured in a scene hard to surpass for picturesqueness and impressiveness. A lecture was to be given in one of the large squares of the venerable Vaishnava Srirangam Temple, known to all travellers as the largest religious structure in India. It comprises a central shrine surrounded by five enclosures, each including the next smaller, until the wall of the outer one is nearly a half mile long on each side. This is the place where Râmânujâ, the founder of the Visishtâdvaita school of Brahmanic Philosophy, thought out his system in the eleventh century and began his preaching mission throughout Southern India. The lecturing place assigned me was in the inner square in front of the Hall of the Thousand Columns, a structure of 450 feet by 130 feet in size, and of one storey. Fancy the scene which opened out before me as I turned the angle of the enclosure and came in sight of the giant hall and the open square. Under the canopy of the starlit sky there was a multitude of dark-faced, white-turbaned and white-robed Hindus,

numbering perhaps 5,000, standing and squatting on the ground and covering the front portion of the roof-terrace of the thousand-columned structure. (pp. 453; 455-456)

The President-Founder's visit to Kumbakonam, in August 1883, led to the formation of a new Branch of the TS in that historical city in South India:

Kumbakonam, my next station—the “Oxford of Southern India”—is a famous educational centre, and the Indian professors at the College will compare favourably for learning and intellectual gifts with any in this country. At the same time their mental bias is towards Materialism, and at the time of my first visit they exercised a strong anti-religious influence upon the undergraduates, and, indirectly, on the boys in all the schools. I was warned of this in advance, so when I lectured in the Sarangapani (Vaishnava) Temple, to an audience of 2,000 to 3,000, which filled the Eastern Prakara (side), and which—says the contemporary newspaper report—embraced “Vakils, professors, schoolmasters, mirassidars, ryots, merchants, and schoolboys,” I discussed religion from the view-point of Science. The next day's lecture, at the same place, was of a more popular character, and treated largely of the duty of Hindu parents to their children. The practical results of the visit and discourses were—despite the sceptical professors and teachers—the formation of the now well-known local Branch, the turning of public interest into Hindu religious channels, and the collection of a handsome fund for a local general library. This, let it be remembered, was the year when what is now called the Hindu Revival began to spread all over India, when forty-three new Branches of the Society sprang into Being, and when the backbone of the Indian movement towards Materialism was broken. And that was ten years before the Chicago Parliament of Religions assembled. (pp. 459-460)

Although the Indian Section was chartered only in 1891 the Founders' travels throughout India laid the foundations for the future work: selfless dedication in the dissemination of the Wisdom Teachings and unwavering reverence for the Holy Ones. These have helped the Section to be the strongest Section in the Theosophical Society today, one in which generations of devoted members have kept the Light of Theosophy shining brightly in India.

When Annie Besant took up residence in Benares she chose the name for the accommodation complex there ‘Shanti Kunj’, the Abode of Peace. It is the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that nothing can ruffle. May the Indian Section go from strength to strength in its work for Theosophy and the Great Ones, fearlessly, finding strength in unity of purpose and aspiration, until humanity is free from the malady of selfishness and self-importance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, 1974

## LOOKING AHEAD

### We, in India

The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society stands today, at the threshold of the 126<sup>th</sup> year of carrying out its mission, of passing on the age-old wisdom through to eternity, as a National unit of the Theosophical Society, in India. Establishment of the Theosophical Society in 1875, was not sheer adventurism; the Great Masters, that we believe in, living in subtler bodies in the close adjuncts of our Holy Land, enthused Mdm. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott to found this devout Institution, and set it up, at first in London, and then in this land, which is legendary of its Heritage of profound philosophy and rich culture.

The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society is a constituent of the Theosophical Society founded in New York, USA on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1875. The parent organization was started by Helena Petrova Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott with William Quan Judge and others and was incorporated under the laws of British India on 3 April 1905 with its Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, India. The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society was registered on 31 August 1903 though chartered on 17 November 1890 and taking effective existence from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1891.

We, in India feel high and mighty to have the International Headquarters of the Society set up, here in Adyar, Chennai (India), in 1905. This still is a decoration, for, in truth, the Indian Land was located and acquired for housing the Society at Adyar in the erstwhile Madras City, as early as in the year 1882 considering India as well suited for theosophical movements. This prospect came wrapped with responsibility - of taking the lead of spreading *Divine Wisdom* – not wisdom *about* Gods, but wisdom *possessed by* the gods. Theosophy is squarely concerned with explaining the destiny of Mankind within the marvel of creation that ancient wisdom depicts as being mere delusion. The Land of India that is Bharat, stood above the rest of the world in its splendid thoughts of *secularism and Spirituality*, expounded by the *Rishis of yore*, grounded in *Sanatana Dharma*, accumulated Wisdom of the Ages; not to say however that it was exclusive to this Land.

It is thus, that our great Founders in their wisdom, found the Indian soil, more suited to sow the seeds of *Theosophy*. This turn of events is significant for us in the sense of what I.K. Taimni said of the functioning of a National Section. He has said thus:

‘The first principle of a National Section is to be a reproduction, on a smaller scale, of the International Headquarters. This makes our duty, as making up the Indian Section, doubly important. It is sensible to begin from the beginning.

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\* Vice-President of the Karnataka Federation, Bangalore

## **The origins**

The origins take us back to the times when the various pieces of land on this Earth had no specific geographical identities. The polarian, hyperborean, lemurian, atlantian and Aryan are but identities based on communities of inhabitants, who bear a long-long history of birth and evolution. Pristine wisdom is attributed to the *Devas* of the First and Second Races, who taught it to *Manushis*, the people of the third Race from whereon it was passed down on to the present from Divine Beings to the Occult Hierarchy.

It is delightful to learn from this wisdom of the ages, that as the Masters were given charge of establishing the Society for the resurrection of the Ancient Wisdom, the greatest of world civilizations - the *Atlantian* and the *Aryan* Human Races - were divinely planned to gather and rise in this Land, a larger peninsula in times of yore, than what is now left of it after the great deluge of the Lemurian and the Atlantian landscapes in the South, and the drying up of the waters of the Gobi in the North.

Today, the ‘archaic manuscript’, the ‘old book’, the ‘one primeval universal wisdom’, ‘stanzas from the books of dzyan’ are said to be of the original teachings that passed into the early Christianity through the Kabalists, the Neo-platonic and Gnostic Schools. Christian Mysteries happened to be a materialised version of the Ancient Mysteries, which are said to have been destroyed during the days of Constantine.

## **A great Light Movement**

Amidst this obscurity, Leslie Pielou (*What is Man, 1952; TPH*) maintains that prior to now, the tradition shone brightly again with Buddha and Pythagoras in the latter part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. It is no wild guess nor jingoism, to claim that the Vedas of Indian main land are traced back to the year 5000 B.C and the Upanishads (the substance of the Vedas) pitched on to link with Buddha and the Pythagoras, last said. This is all part of History on record. That which is antecedent to ancient, modern or contemporary history meets its identity in the ‘*Occult*’ - hidden from public cognizance.

We have a striking account of the Theosophical Society in Bro. George S. Arundel’s nirvanic vision (*Nirvana, 1927; TPH*), where it is shown as expression of a great Light movement with no beginning as far as one could see, and no end. This movement, as the *yogi* puts it,

‘... is seen as the light-houses along harbours –now shining in the outer world, now not shining’.

The *yogi* further sees:

‘... many such flashes, presumedly, occurring at the close of each century, temporarily illuminating the darkened world’

And, in trying to dissect such flash he sees:

‘... the Theosophical Society moving more and more in the direction of concentrating its efforts upon the insistence of goodwill in every department’ of human living.

The phrase: ‘the torch of truth, so long extinguished for all but a few’ are important; they convey the idea of a consciousness shining on mankind in phases with the *evolution* of both Earth and Man. The Theosophical Statement made official by the General Council of the Society on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 1925 affirms the truth, above. This is further affirmed in *The Theosophist* (April, 1945). A keener study of *The Secret Doctrine* will help supplement this knowledge in its details.

### **Looking Ahead -What is there to it?**

Are we justified to dig into this past, while we are eagerly seeking to *look ahead*? As a milestone of a century and a quarter of the course is crossed and we, as theosophists, have set on our next step out in the course, naturally, feel the urge to *look ahead*, as Mattie Stepanek says:

‘A man’s delight in looking forward to and hoping for some particular satisfaction is a part of the pleasure flowing out of it...’

We rather seem to find more of corroboration to this, even from other angles such as, of:

- (i) **Katy Perry** is against slighting the present and he says: ‘And my only rule being, if, when I wake in the morning I’m looking forward to the things that I have to do on that day, then I’m on the right track’.
- (ii) **Enya** seems to justify this in another way, when she says: ‘I’m looking forward to the future, and feeling grateful for the past.’
- (iii) **Steve Aoki** speaks of the future in a restorative tone, thus: ‘I like missing someone (*something*) and being missed; I like looking forward to seeing him (*that*) again’
- (iv) **Bro. G.S.Arundale**, in his *Nirvanic* vision describes Theosophy as ‘*a great Light movement with no beginning as far as one could see, and no end*’. (*Supra*)

It thus follows that the task of taking the message of Theosophy through to the pilgrims in progress is perennial, ceaseless and so, unbound by time; and in sum, *Looking Ahead* involves looking back, looking to the present, looking forward and, *all of these together at the same time!*

### **Theosophy, as a movement**

For us in India, there is more to *look ahead*, since Theosophy, as a movement, is concerned with securing to mankind its destiny in accord with the Divine Plan for evolution on this earth; and since we feel sodden in that mission, *looking ahead* means, also, to check and ensure that we are in the right track. It also helps us to count what odd balls do lie ahead to be encountered and overcome.

Of course, we cannot, ignore Gordon Ramsay's word of caution - that Looking Ahead is *not day-dreaming*. Let's hear him:

"I went whale-watching, and I was really looking forward to that; but, when you see it on TV and you see other programs do it, you're seeing close-ups of these massive creatures, and the music that's added gives you a certain feeling. *But in reality, you're stuck on a boat that's bobbing up and down, you feel sick, the whale isn't there on demand.*"

Emphasis is mine; these words mean that we need to be practical even in looking ahead.

**J. C. Watts** adumbrates in contrast, like, 'Men, in fact, are excited and *looking forward* to settling down and having families and being true partners with women in relationships that are full of excitement, unpredictability, adventure, and loyalty'.

Thus, Looking ahead is not just fashioning things in the *mind*. It calls for choosing our track and stepping out, guided from *Budhic* Consciousness. Such effort at fore-seeing cannot escape 'looking backwards' and also 'looking at the present'.

**Deborah Moggach** too, lends a touch of *practicality* to looking ahead; He says: 'I'm looking forward to the day when America will mature to the point that we are a colour-blind society. I'm not so sure that in politics that will ever be reality, because politics has a way of separating us based on skin colour'.

Truly whatever one can hold close to him as a motto ought to be that which goes well with his philosophy of life

**Enya** has more to add to our wisdom; she says:

'You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future'

The *dots*, here, mean the footprints left behind in the course of a journey. They instil conviction and courage that does shape the future course. The *dots* cannot exist in our front, but the feeling of gut and certainty enjoyed will help us to march ahead and connect with them.

We are zealously advised by the line of International Presidents at the helm that Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion. While organization is also important, it is made a secondary concern. Mdm. Blavatsky has put 'Theosophy first, and organization after' to guide us all-through the course.

## **Organization**

Exoterically (organizationally) the Indian Section can unhesitatingly claim to have taken a big leap and developed a sizeable network of Lodges (Branches) in every *tahsil* or a revenue taluk and Centres in areas of thinner membership. The work of these numerous lodges is coordinated by Federations at each State level. There are, today, 16 Federations across the country and about 460 Lodges actively occupied in spreading the wisdom of Theosophy. The

Indian Section is supposed to be one of the largest Sections of the parent Society with more than 11,000 members in following. Efforts at propagation of theosophical doctrine and teachings are continued with vigour with propagation and training units under each Federation. Theosophical literature is brought out in larger volumes with the advent of the Society's own Publishing House at Adyar. Organizing study camps in every nook of the Indian continent bears testimony to the avid activities under taken by the Indian Section, towards achieving the Objectives and carrying the movement forward to a remarkable extent.

We know that from the very beginning, academics and organization have been kept apart, Mdm Blavatsky remaining in charge of former, and organization being left in the hands of Col. Olcott, the second of the two co-founders. His contribution to the growth of the Organization has remained a working model for all time to come.

Though much is left to be said of the quality of membership, the overall picture presents a positive image of the Indian Section's growth as an organization. There is little point in taking quantitative assessments of any sort, if we are to go by the principle of 'Theosophy first and organization after'. The question haunts: is this all that was supposed of us over the century and a quarter? What methods were adopted to turn out a better quality membership and could we not have chosen better and quicker methods? But, we cannot remain ignorant of the factor of the growth of individual consciousness at the level of average.

### **Academics of Theosophy**

Mdm. Blavatsky in her account of the methods adopted by the founders in putting through the original programme points out that the two founders were not told what they had to do, how they had to bring about and quicken the growth of the Society and results desired; *but, were distinctly instructed about what they should never do, what they had to avoid, and what the Society should never become.* She hints at one significant thing expected of them to do, namely, '*to oppose selfishness of any kind*'. In *The Key to Theosophy* it is said of selfishness thus:

'We maintain that all pain and suffering are results of want of harmony, and that the one terrible and only cause of the disturbance of harmony is *selfishness* in some form or the other.'

It is said of Theosophy that its aims are several, but the most important of all are those which are likely to lead to the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical. And we believe the former to be far *more important* than the latter. Theosophy is squarely concerned with explaining the destiny of Mankind within the marvel of creation that ancient wisdom depicts as being mere delusion.

### **Object of Theosophy**

In order to ensure against being speculative or day-dreaming as we look ahead, it is proper that we fall back on the original Programme of the Society, a broader Statement of the

Objectives. This programme, we learn from HPB's account, was given to her by her Master and Teacher in 1875, two years after she was 'sent to U.S of America in 1873 for organizing a group of workers on a psychic plane'. To quote them from Mdm. H.P. Blavatsky:

'the function of Theosophy is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, the attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being'.

And again she said:

'... the Society was founded ... that its only mission is to rekindle the torch of *truth*, so long extinguished for all but the very few, and to keep that truth *alive* by the formation of a fraternal union of mankind, the only soil in which the good seed can grow.'

### **Original Programme and the Objectives**

The original programme of the Society is given to Mdm. Blavatsky by her Master and Teacher as being the objects, broadly, of the nucleus of a regular Society, thus:

1. Universal *Brotherhood*
2. *No distinction* to be made by the member between races, creeds, or social positions, but every member had to be judged and dealt by on his personal merit
3. To *study the philosophies* of the East –those of India chiefly, presenting them gradually to the public in various works that would interpret exoteric religions in the light of esoteric teachings
4. To *oppose materialism and theological dogmatism* in every possible way, by demonstrating the existence of occult forces unknown to science, in nature, and the presence of psychic and spiritual powers in man; .. ... Superstition had to be exposed and avoided; and occult forces, beneficent and maleficent – ever surrounding us and manifesting their presence in various ways- demonstrated to the best of our ability.

The programme is given in its official declaration when the General Council adopted it on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1886 at the formation of the Society, as under:

1. To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. (*1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of the Original Programme put in one*)
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science
3. To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.  
(*4<sup>th</sup> principle – 'to oppose materialism etc.'*, is strikingly not included in the text of the Objectives)

### **Review of Progress - Progress of humanity**

Then, we may turn gainfully to Bro. G.S.Arundel's *occult* vision of the progress of Theosophy (*after about twenty-six years of the Society's formation; the author recalls he had had his first glimpse of the fundamental unities in 1912 at Taormina, Sicily*) recapitulating from his vision writes:

‘The first Object remains the vital Object. The second and the third Objects remain an integral part of the Society’s official principles, but the second Object seems to have to a certain extent fulfilled itself, while the third forms the special objective of the Esoteric School’

We do witness this prophecy showing up in our times, and this much for the *stills* taken from here and there, of the account of our long march towards the infinite goal. Generally and closer home the One Existence has remained a far reality; sense of brotherhood, still ostentatious; comparative study of philosophy and religion, still misty. We do have a touch of occultism, yet not of the language or methods of occult investigation, which has kept man even more dependent on Science. The members of the Theosophical Society, intellectuals and concerned people have a tremendous and trying task before them. It is not scientific theory or temperament that attracts, but the products of science that have made life easy.

I have read with concern Dr. Alexis Carrel’s *Man the Unknown*. Dr. Carrel is a man of Science working with the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research, a laboratory studying living matter, set up by Simon Flexner. It is said of Dr Carrel that owing to the genius of Flexner the study of living things have been undertaken with a broadness of vision so far unequalled and that Dr. Carrel has himself studied the most diverse subjects from surgery to cell physiology and to metaphysics. The message of his work is that there is the need of a better understanding of Man in the circumstances that the science of life (progress of humanity) has progressed more slowly than those of inert matter and he says: this is because the observers of science are behaving as units of the Heard. He observes that the mechanical, physical and chemical sciences have modified the environment in a harmful way *without due consideration to man’s nature*.

#### **The fourth Principle**

Turning back to the original programme of the Society: ‘*To oppose materialism and theological dogmatism in every possible way.. . .*’ had been the 4<sup>th</sup> in order and we noted earlier, that in formulating the objectives this item has been side-lined. As stated by a social philosopher, ‘people in the present day world take interest in nature and man, only if they provide some *personal benefit* to them’.

Dr. Carrel while talking on the advent of science and technology rightly feels that ‘it has *not helped man to develop his own nature* to match with scientific advancement’. This in his opinion ‘has resulted in the growth of *brutal materialism* that stands at the root of all human misery’. He further talks of the world that ‘is *not* made for us, because it is born from an error of reason and from the ignorance of our true self’. ‘The applications of scientific discoveries’, have according to him, ‘transformed the material and mental worlds’.

In our life as a polity, we are today administered by policies of economy, finance, trade and business, industry and commerce that have permeated every walk of human life. In the result, social characteristics as much as human behaviour have tended to be *self-oriented* in

the name of globalization. In truth communities and society in general appear to be ‘mere sums of separate individuals’ and not ‘the totality of living relationships’. Whither, Brotherhood!

Here is an account of modern trends in human relationship rendered by Bro. S. Sundaram, General Secretary of the Indian Section: (*Love and Service: Twin Stars of Brotherhood*, 10-15 July 2010, Rome):

‘Ethical values in the modern world are given less importance as compared to materialistic values. People are so involved in a struggle for survival that they pay little attention to the concept of development. . . . It should elevate not only people’s intellectual level but should also help in inculcating ethical and moral values.

‘However, we find that people in general have taken the easy path to success. Individual interests, primarily economic as well as parochial, are putting people apart day by day. Whether one likes to hear it or not, this is the picture of the modern age, the grim situation of the present day world.’

This, in my view, ought to be the greatest concern for us in the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, today; because it has stood in the path of true progress of mankind throughout the world. We are witness to the greatest horrors brought upon India by *Materialism*; poor have grown poorer and the rich richer, disrupting the state of harmony and the sense of egalitarianism. This appears precisely, what is needed to be addressed, today.

The following lines substantiate my observations:

‘What is required is to create a positive frame of mind i.e., one that is free from fetters and inhibitions *and is not bound by the narrow consideration of interests*’

### **A Vision for the Future**

We are impelled to gather the visions about the Australian Section given in Appendix E to *Nirvana*; G.S, Arundale, 266-277, wherefrom I choose to give a few extracts. Let’s read on:

About the Sections generally:

‘. . . Each Section of the Society represents its own particular country in the smaller League of Nations, itself the heart of the larger League, which is the Society as a whole. Each Section, too, sets an example of perfect harmonisation with the interests of the whole of which it is a part . . . .The Theosophical Society is a world in itself, a living example to the larger world of the future which awaits it.’ (*Page 267*)

About the Lodges generally:

‘Lodges of the Theosophical Society tend to become Community Centres, self-contained, on the outskirts of the towns. In this way the various Lodges become practical examples of Brotherhood, which the world admires, cause a great increase in membership. . .’ (p. 130)

‘Little by little the whole world commits itself to brotherhood, and the Theosophical Society, still existing, becomes a great world-wide organization supplying every brotherhood movement, every Nation, every Faith, with its leaders and most stalwart protagonists. The common membership of them all is the world’s guarantee against disharmony and conflicting aims ...’ (pp. 127-28).

**About Membership of the Society:**

‘Membership of the Society becomes much more valuable and valued than ever before. . . . There seems to be almost a rush to be born of members of the Society, especially with the wonderful ideal of Motherhood which the society does very much foster,’ (pp. 131-32)

**Let us transform**

All this, as at now, may sound like day-dream, *but a dream necessarily to be realised* by all, those who call themselves Theosophists. Bro. Sundaram observes:

‘It is a common observation that society in general is passing through a crisis resulting in confusion and disorder on several fronts. . . . Discontent, disharmony, mistrust, conflict and violence prevailing in society are facts of life. But in order to deal with such a situation we will have to seriously think and ponder over the positive factors and forces which can help and guide us to frame, formulate and systematically work out and plan our ‘law of life’.

A message from a Master of the Wisdom reads:

‘The true theosophist is the Philanthropist who lives ‘not for himself, but for the world’.

The magic wand rests with us, members; who in terms of the Divine Plan need to join the band of workers of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sub-races of the 5<sup>th</sup> Human Race, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Root-Race that is supposed to mark the tip of human development in this Earth-Chain of Evolution. We need to lend coordination to our organization in the Indian Section and help meet the challenge that we as Indians, may keep with the expectations of the world.

So, Let us transform, *here and now!* ... ‘*Na kaschit dukhbhag bhavet*’

The more men of all faiths know the faith of others, the more will they realise the Religious Brotherhood of Man.

**ANNIE BESANT**

*SUSHILA SINGH\**

## **EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY AND PRESENT DAY CHALLENGES**

The Theosophical Society from the very beginning of its arrival in India was devoted to the education of young Indians in the spirit of the motherland. The Founder President Colonel Olcott started the Olcott Harijan Free Schools for the education of the outcastes and country-wide Hindu Schools, Boys' Aryan Leagues and libraries and published a journal for Hindu boys. When Annie Besant came to India in 1893, she was deeply moved by the existing condition of education. The education at that time was driving the young Indians away from their own philosophy and culture. They were being led to agnosticism and materialism. She lectured throughout India to kindle in young minds interest in Hinduism. When in 1898 the Central Hindu College with collegiate school was started, the aims of the new College were clearly stated. The College would be a religious secular college teaching the deep truths of the Hindu religion and sought to unite the best of Hindu culture with the best of Western principles of education: "(a) College and school wherein students shall be taught to live and think as true Hindus while assimilating all that is best and highest in European learning, so that their lives may be moulded from the very beginning ... as only they can be by the Theosophical Society." The successive Presidents of the Theosophical Society have steadily carried forward the work in the educational field in the light of the ideals of education set by Annie Besant.

Annie Besant has very succinctly outlined the principles of education. She emphasizes that these principles are naturally permanently ingrained in the human constitution. But its applications must be local, adapted to the conditions of time and place. She believed following the Natural Law facilitates the evolution of the child into the adult. It requires working with nature, not against nature. Education needs to be recognized as a science, and not a haphazard dragging up of youth, consisting chiefly in forcing into them knowledge from outside, instead of helping them to unfold and utilize the capacities they have brought with them into the world. It is important to note that Happiness increases the life-forces and Pain diminishes them; Love energizes and inspires to Right Action; but Fear paralyzes faculty and inspires Hate. Therefore, Happiness and Love should be the atmosphere inbreathed by the young — in the Home, the School, or the College.

### **The Fourfold Scheme**

A man is a spiritual being, manifesting in the external world as Intelligence, Emotion and

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Activity, the Education of the young must help inspiring Life to unfold itself, and must train the organs of Intelligence, Emotion and Activity; that is, must be *religious, mental, moral* and *physical*. Education is not the training of an isolated individual, but of an individual living within a social order. Hence, education must consider the youth as the embryonic citizen, with social duties and social responsibilities, must see him in relation to his environment – the Home, the School, the College – and from his earliest years must train him, as boy or girl, to feel himself as a part of his country, with his duties and responsibilities to the Motherland; that is, he learns to serve the Motherland in the Home, the School, the College, as a foundation of, and as a preparation for – not as apart from – the wider and fuller service, as men or women, in the larger world.

There are two aspects to education: (i) the evolving life and (2) its environment. The first is evolution of the individual – drawing all he has in him in the rising scale. The second is named Politics in the old Greek sense which includes all relations of a person to his environment which constitutes the Home, the School, the College, the City, the State, the Country, the Race, Humanity, the World. There is continuity in this. The first three are preparatory to the second three and all the six are important for the remaining three.

According to Annie Besant, there are four departments of education:

- 1. Religious Education:** The objective is to remove the obstacles from the path of the natural instincts of the unfolding Life that is Love to God (Life-Side) and Service of Man (Politics-Side).
- 2. Mental Education:** The objective is to develop and train the powers of Intelligence as an aspect of the evolving Life. On its Life-Side it develops and trains those powers, such as observation, memory, co-ordination, reasoning, judgment, the clarity of thought and its lucid expression. Its Politics-Side is knowledge of the evolution of society to its present condition, and a clear vision of the next stage of its progress.
- 3. Moral Education:** The objective is to develop and train the powers of Emotion as an aspect of the evolving Life. Morality is “the science of harmonious relations,” and on its Life-Side it is Truth, harmony between the smaller and the larger Self in Will, Emotion and Action, showing itself in the virtues of accuracy and honesty in intellectual matters. On its Politics-Side, it is Love, and includes all the social virtues, the sense of duty and responsibility.
- 4. Physical Education:** The objective is to develop, train and co-ordinate the nervous, muscular and glandular elements into digestive, respiratory, circulatory, reproductive and nervous systems, with their special organs of action as an aspect of the evolving Life. The

Life-Side is to provide a sound and well-balanced and well-controlled body, as the physical basis for religious, mental and moral activities. The Politics-Side is service in the nine stages as embraced in the individual consciousness.

Annie Besant describes that early evolution of the human being falls into three natural periods of seven years each, ending at the ages of 7, 14 and 21. Pupilage and Studentship ought to cover these, and at 21 the young man and woman should be fit to face and profit by the Education of the outer world.

First Period, Birth 1 to 7: Chiefly Physical.

Second Period, 7 to 14: Chiefly Emotional.

Third Period, 14 to 21: Chiefly Mental.

### **Present day Challenges**

Because of historical, political, cultural and other diverse complex reasons knowledge creation in India has taken a back seat. Ironically, in spite of having immediate access to a large body of knowledge, Indians are largely consumers rather than producers of knowledge. Indian Universities do not figure in 200 top Universities of the world. Either the parameters of evaluation are misplaced or education in India is totally in a confused state. Unemployable graduates in huge numbers are being churned out of educational institutions without any scope for building up thinking capabilities. Cramming is encouraged to pass examinations mechanically. As soon as the students come out of examinations they forget what they have memorized. Then ever proliferating coaching centres and professionalization of education further add to the woes.

Those heading the educational institutions are usually the favourites of those in power (political or money). They largely implement the agenda of their masters and, therefore, do not feel the need to be accountable to the academic community.

There is urgent need for reform in the higher education sector. The distressing issues range from the politicization of public institutions, a perceived lack of regulation of faculty and the desirability of creating knowledge as opposed to disseminating it. Governance and regulation both are involved here. As the institutions concerned vary in terms of scope and intent, it would make little sense to specify one governance structure and mechanism for all. However, there is only one regulatory body for the universities, the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The UGC has framed some regulation for college lecturers who are required to teach for around 16 hours a week. This is at least three times the global average. It is anybody's guess what the quality of these lectures is, given that young teachers have no time to prepare for

them. This type of content delivery encourages passive attendance by students. Tutorials need to be instituted to complement lectures. This is a way to ensure that students have a second chance to comprehend difficult ideas and to encourage them to actually communicate what they have learnt.

There is a strong perception of the lack of faculty accountability, especially in relation to high salaries following adoption of the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission. The surest way of inculcating accountability would be to institute student evaluation of courses and publicly displaying it.

In the realm of creation of knowledge, the practice is to be largely consumers rather than producers of knowledge. The long-standing practice in India had been to have research peer-reviewed and these reports considered by a committee of experts. There should be a return to this practice as it is superior to the points-based system which prejudices content and quality. Finally, in issuing a guideline for assessing research, the UGC must focus exclusively on the researcher's contribution to knowledge and cease privileging "foreign" publications over "Indian" ones and "international" conferences over "national" ones.

In the interactive multiloop, non-linear feedback systems such as our social system, there is usually a conflict between the goals of a subsystem and the welfare of the broader system, and when the state of a subsystem is changed, changes in other subsystem follow. Any policy programme, therefore, must take into account the eventual shifts that will occur in other parts of the system. Since education is a subsystem of the larger social system, and since it primarily involves a very susceptible age group, it does have the capability of inducing a desirable social change, provided its goal is continually tuned to the welfare of the whole system.

The needs and goals of a society change and consequently goals and functions of its various subsystems vary in time. Our education system which has been more or less a legacy of the British imperialism and which has mainly fostered the white-collar job culture in our country needs to be radically revised. As one step, skill based credit transfer system is being envisaged by the Government of India – the implementation and its results will, however, take a long time to assess.

Education cannot be considered only as a tool for resource development. Ideally education should promote cultivation and development of natural powers and the mind of an individual to prepare him to lead an honest useful life and to meet the challenge of the hour of his existence. The main aim of education, therefore, is to inculcate in the recipient the value of society and tradition, to distinguish between good and evil, and to be innovative and contributive to the societal welfare. Education is a dynamic process. It cannot be limited to high tech-

nology only. And it cannot be severed from quest for knowledge. Therefore, academic activity requires freedom and congenial atmosphere. Also, education is not to be confused with training. Training may constitute a part of education, but it cannot be the whole of it. Therefore, thinkers, philosophers, social reformers emphasized that real object of modern education should be to cultivate and develop the mind in the right direction and inculcate higher human values. But education today has been converted into just passing examinations. As a result, as Madame Blavatsky believed, it breeds jealousy, envy, hatred in young people who lead a life of ferocious selfishness and competition, devoid of all kindly feelings. Educational institutions turn into hotbeds for creating selfish individuals.

There are glaring anomalies in the present day education system in India. The central role of education in India brings out and highlights the contrast between the country's neglect of school education and the massive expansion of higher education. On one hand expansion of higher education has resulted in extraordinary flowering of information technology and related developments in the country. On the other, underdevelopment of Indian school systems, particularly among the disadvantaged groups and socially backward regions has had devastating effects. The child who is deprived of schooling or goes to a school with dismal facilities (including the high incidence of absentee teachers) not only deprives him or her of the opportunity but adds to the massive waste of talent in the country.

### **Some Solutions**

The principles of education laid down in theosophy offer solutions to face the present day challenges. Some essential ameliorative measures are ingrained in Annie Besant Thought. She emphasized that education must be founded on knowledge of the past of the country as well as of its present; it must be designed in accordance with the ancient traditions and national habits, and adapted to modern necessities, to meet at every point the growing needs of an ever-increasing nation. Thus, education of the young is an ever evolving phenomenon and process.

Annie Besant came out with revolutionary ideas and said that education is not a matter chiefly for those who are called educational experts. The matter of education ought not to be exclusively guided and directed by those who are concerned in the carrying out of the work of teaching — those who form a part either of the Educational Departments or of the educational staff of the various collegiate and scholastic institutions in the country. There is always a danger of too much narrowing the lines of activity by the technical specialized lines of work. A man who has been a teacher all his life will give knowledge in a definite groove. He will give too much consideration to the minutiae of the appointed subjects and too little to the principles of education. He will think too much of the question of examination and too little of the real

Education. Real education turns out men developed on all sides who are able to take up the work of men in the world. Because of this specialist and dogmatic narrow thinking, we need to take into account the intelligent and popular opinion — the opinions of statesmen, of patriots, of officials, of men of business, of fathers, of guardians of the young. Only then, with their experience of the world, their knowledge of the country, and their insight into the needs and possibilities of the country, an inclusive and wide scheme of education can be drawn and effectively carried out. These men and women, she believed, should formulate a correct theory of education and then it should be given to the professional educationists for implementation.

Annie Besant called education a national duty. The first and foremost requirement is to understand what kind of men and women our country needs. Then it becomes easy to frame a scheme of education which in turn will create men and women to meet the necessities of the nation. For this, the basic requirement is that every thoughtful man and woman should study the question of education and form a definite and rational idea of education.

As Annie Besant was convinced, education is not so much a matter for the Government as for the nation. In our country education is too much of the Government affair. Government in fact ought to have nothing to do with universities. When universities grow out of private endowments, and rest on donations of philanthropists, they grow like Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and other Ivy League universities of America. She helped Mahamana to found one such University, the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya established BHU solely from the donations of kings, industrialists, patriots and people of India. That is why she said, “the country should build its universities and support its schools.”

### **Reading and References**

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T.K. NAIR\*

## THE TOS IN INDIA

HPB said in the Editorial in *Lucifer* :

He who does not practice altruism, he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself, he who neglects to help his brother man of whatever race, nation, or creed wherever or whenever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of humanity, he who hears an innocent person slandered, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own, is no Theosophist.<sup>1</sup>

This explains the relation between Theosophy and altruism.

So, Dr. Annie Besant, in 1908, declared as follows:

### *“The TS Order of Service*

A number of members of the TS feeling the wish to organize themselves for various lines of service, to actively promote the first object of the Society, I hereby constitute an order, to be called “The TS Order of Service”, under the constitution of which Leagues may be formed for any special purpose on which a group of members is agreed, the objects and bye-laws of such Leagues to become valid, as constituted under the order, after approved by the Central Council. The following constitution is tentative.

The Central Council shall consist of Fellows of the TS only, and shall have its seat at Adyar. It shall have as its chief officer the President of the TS; or someone appointed by him.<sup>2</sup>

TOS is a philanthropic institution, established to serve without any distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, nay, to serve all living beings.

In 1936, at the Geneva World Congress, Mr. Jefferey Williams was appointed the first International Organizer of TOS. The first Leagues of Order were formed in India for such objects as Social Brotherhood, National Education and abolition of child parentage, but in 1919 many of them became dormant.

Before independence, Bro. Jamshed Nusserwarji from Karachi was the chief brother for India. In 1941, the Order was suspended in India.

In 1947, after Independence, the Order was revived in India at the International Convention in Varanasi, under the Presidentship of Bro. C. Jinarajadasa. During the annual convention, in the general meeting of the TOS, when Radhaji was the General Secretary of the Indian Section, it was decided to reorganize the order all over India and bring all activities of philanthropic, social and altruistic types carried on by individual members and by Lodges

\* Secretary, TOS, India ; Secretary, Besant Education Fellowship.

under the banner of the Theosophical Order of Service and take-up new activities.

The President of the Theosophical Society is ex-officio President of TOS. The National Directors are appointed by the TOS President in consultation with the leader of the TS in the country concerned. TOS gives utmost importance on a harmonious working relationship with the Theosophical Society. In India there are instances where TOS members have formed T S Lodges. One such was inaugurated by our then Acting President. It was also decided that TOS works should be according to the needs of the Region or place. It is not necessary that a big work should be started, but what is required is the sincerity and compassionate feeling behind it. The individuals and groups are expected to give their best. It was also decided in the General Body Meeting that we should stress on group work in which several members join hands and enter the field of activity because the individual work, however big, is not lasting, but a group work, carried on, on the ideal of the organization and dedication remains for long. Thus after 1965, the TOS work was reorganized very strongly. With the passage of time, TOS became popular among people whether they are members of TS or not.

In India, the Theosophical Order of Service was formally established in 1976 and registered in 1977--78 as a charitable society with its Headquarter at The Theosophical Society, Indian Section, Kamachha, Varanasi-221010, with definite objects, which were further expanded:

- 1) To minimize the sum of total misery in the world.
- 2) To forget self in working for others.
- 3) To eliminate selfishness and greed and Law of market and substitute love and mutual aid as the rule of the world.
- 4) To live to the highest that is within us.

“The Theosophical Order of Service in India (1908), Varanasi is registered under The Registration of Societies Act 1860; vide Registration No. 803/1977-78 dt. 16.08.77, by the Assistant Registrar of Societies, Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi. The registration has been renewed up to 16.8.2015 vide their letter No. 2985 dt. 24.8.12, renewal No. 1011/2012-13 of 2012, file No. I - 38800.”

The National Committee of TOS comprises of National Director; The General Secretary, Indian Section as Ex officio member; Secretary TOS India; Treasurer, TOS India; Asst. Secretary, TOS India; and four members, all appointed by the National Director.

The national units of the TOS are divided into 20 regional units and each regional unit is further divided into groups. Both the region and group have an executive committee with a president, secretary, treasurer and at least two members, elected by the general body once in every three years.

The registered office of the TOS in India is at the Indian Section HQ of the Theosophical Society, Kamachha, Varanasi – 221010. The membership is open to all people who subscribe to the objects of the order and are in sympathy with its ideals. There are three types of

membership. Patron membership for those who pay Rs.1000/=, Life membership for those who pay Rs.500/= and General membership for those who pay Rs.25/= annually.

Service before self is the ideal of TOS. Money is no problem; the only thing that we lack is appreciation of our responsibilities to our fellowmen. We cannot make all men good, but we can make them happy. Let us, therefore, serve the people as best as we can, of course, within our limitations.

How can we make this real? Only by daily acts of renunciation in the little things of life, only by learning in every thought, word and action, to live and love the unity; and not only to speak it, but to practice it on every occasion, by putting ourselves last and others first, by always seeing the need of others and trying to supply it, by learning to be indifferent to the claim of our own lower nature and refusing to listen to it.

We talk of the great renunciation. It is not done in one day. They were made over and over again in the hundreds of lives. We can also make Great Renunciations if we begin “in daily life, in our hourly dealings with our fellows. . . . It is not a single deed that strikes the world with wonder which makes true discipleship. . . . The life of the disciple is lived in the home, is lived in the town, is lived in the office, and is lived in the market place amid the common lives of man.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus it is seen that only by service, the activity of the TOS in the Theosophical world, one can rise morally and spiritually, and thereby realize the Truth, that He is in everything and everything is in Him.

The TOS India had rendered assistance to the victims of *Aila* in West Bengal, Sikkim flood victims. In Uttarakhand, we had constructed a hall, which was destroyed due to flood in 2003. It has been decided to construct a Hall for a school in Jammu.

Some of the activities undertaken by the TOS in India through the Regions and Groups are as follows:

### **Medical**

Heart Surgeries for Children, Eye Surgeries, Cataract –Miscellaneous Eye Problems,  
*Spectacles*: Free spectacles were provided to needy persons including children identified during the free eye check-up camps.

*Artificial Limbs/Jaipur Foot*: Besides regular prosthesis were coordinated for economically weaker section, a very special activity of providing Myoelectric arm for a girl student of BA Pt II, daughter of a landless labourer at a cost of Rs 2,00,000 sponsored by TOS through donations.

*Wheelchair*: Three persons were presented wheelchairs.

Dental Treatment at TOS Deepti Lodge Dental Centre. The Dental Centre conducted

Dental Check-up Camps in Schools & provided free treatment to a large number of children for Caries & Root canal treatments.

Hearing Aids: Hearing Aids are sponsored for needy persons on regular basis.

*Pranic Healing:*

*Free Pranic Healing Camps:* Occasional Free Healing Camps were organized together with the Organizational Free Medical/Health Check-up camps.

*Pranic Healing Training Courses:* Basic/Advanced Pranic Healing Training Courses are conducted at various locations.

Healing Rituals & Earth Healing Meditation: Weekly TOS Healing Rituals & Earth Healing Meditation were carried out regularly on every Thursday, jointly attended by members of TOS & Pranic Healers.

Running a charitable dispensary.

Project 'Save a Thalassaemia child' is continuing and 60 poor Thalassaemia children (35 from Khurda district and 25 from Sambalpur district) are being given free blood transfusion throughout the year.

Maintaining Mineral Water Plants in Civil Hospital in children and maternity ward.

Patients of Civil Hospital were provided with Tiffin in Gopi Annakeshtra

Awareness programme against 'Dengue' and 'Malaria' were organized.

Runs a charitable Homeopathic clinic treating on the average 30 patients a day.

### **Educational**

Individual. Identified economically disadvantaged children are provided support by: Sponsoring School Expenses, Personalized Home Tutorials.

Schools Actively Supported. Following schools are being supported by TOS, Delhi Region :

Sanatan Primary School : This School is being run by the Members of TOS Noida Sanatan Group. Free nutrition, uniform, books & stationery is supplied to the students. There are other schools run by TOS in West Bengal and Odisha regions.

SD Baal Vidya Mandir: A new branch of Sanatan Primary School, to cater for more rurally based students, was initiated in a newly constructed School Building at Village Khora.

Om Foundation School: This School is being run under the aegis of Om Foundation. Noida, actively supported by TOS.

New Loyal School Ismailpur, Sikendrabad: The School was running in a makeshift building without Doors & Windows. So, doors & windows were sponsored by TOS, and a Generator was also donated.

Sanatan Noida TOS group is providing support in terms of extracurricular activities, Medical support, Personality Development etc to these schools.

Running a school at Aila affected Sundarban with 75 students.

Running a hostel cum orphanage.

Running a Balwadi at Narayantala, 24 Pgs.(North)

A school is being run at Mahesh Nagar, Kachhibasti, where poor students are taught free.

Running of New Disha Primary School for children from underprivileged communities in villages

Arranging lectures on diverse topics of theosophy

Colloquium – Educational Training Camp

Educational Excursion

Runs a Montessori School in the Theosophical Society's campus.

Runs a blind school and orphanage.

At most all the Regions are providing free notebooks, uniforms, instrument boxes, scholarships, etc. Annie Besant Day, 1st October, is celebrated with varieties of programmes for both school and college students throughout the country.

### **Social**

Vocational Training Centres: Following vocational training centres for rural women titled as “Brahm Shakti Mahila Prashikshan Kendras” are being run by Sanatan Noida TOS Group:

More such Centres are under consideration. Theosophical literature in vernacular are made available to the students. Besides, lectures of visiting dignitaries are organized. TOS Certificates are awarded to the students qualifying the Training. Employment assistance is also provided in the Local Entrepreneurial Units. Running a tailoring centre which helps the poor villagers to earn a living.

Community Support: Due to Ground Water contamination, large number of deaths took place in Kasna Area of GB Nagar. Two commercial Water Purifiers were installed in these areas for availability of safe drinking water.

Gifts to Rural Women: Sewing Machines, Electric Irons & Table Fans were given as Marriage Gifts to women who were economically very poor.

Support to Old Age Home: Rs 11,000 were donated to Guru Vishram Vridh Ashram, a unique old age home for wayside unsupported aged persons.

Support to Genuine NGOs:

Goonj: Regular donation of Clothes & other utility items are being made by members of all TOS Groups. In addition Rs 21,000 were contributed towards Flood Relief Expenses for J&K.

Nav Prerna. Customized support by way of visits as also commercial support by members of the TOS Groups to this very special organization working for the Physically Challenged persons.

Rotary Blood Bank. A large number of Blood Donation Camps have been organized by Sanatan Noida TOS Group together with Rotary Blood Bank.

Regular visit to Hostel for blinds & handicapped “Prgaya Niketan” at Jodhpur, orphanage “Bal Shobha Grih” at Jodhpur, old age home “Anubandh” and “Aastha” at Jodhpur wherein group members offered services and distributed items as per the requirements including clothes, grocery, medicines

A camp for registration of Aadhar card was organized.

Sensitization & awareness programme on Naturopathy, health issues and hygiene were conducted.

Helping the Mission Ashra, a home for destitute, abused and mentally ill women.

Workshops were organized on gender equality.

Billboards have been installed in the twin city of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack having appropriate image and captions to create awareness to stop violence against women and to promote gender equality.

Distributed woollen rugs, blankets & clothes to needy poor persons.

Donated materials for the funeral ceremony of a poor person.

Legal guidance is given to retired persons by an advocate who is a member of the TOS Group.

Donated three sewing machines to poor and one to a handicapped lady.

Supply of Auto wheelchair, Artificial limbs/Jaipur foot, wheelchairs, crutches, tri-cycle, hearing aids etc to the differently enabled people, Kiosks for the settlement of physically challenged persons,

### **Spiritual**

Distribution of Theosophical Literature: World Book Fair at Delhi as also active display of Theosophical literature for Public Sale through numerous bookstalls established for creating awareness among public at large.

Global Synchronized Meditation: Select members do this individually at the synchronized time every day.

Summary of Special Major Activities:

Ladies wing of Bangalore City Lodge and Sanmarga TS Lodge of Huliya are conducting spiritual healing every week under the guidance of TOS.

Yoga, Meditation and Reiki classes were organized.

Carrier counselling and awareness against diseases were conducted.

Cold water is provided during summer.  
Heating arrangements are made at several places during winter.  
56 blankets were distributed to poor and handicapped persons.

The following articles were distributed.

1. Artificial limbs	39
2. Polio Callipers	28
3. Hearing Aids	39
4. Crutches	30
5. Walking Sticks	23.

### **Care of animals and plants**

Livestock camp conducted in collaboration with Dr. Pranjeet Barua and field staff of local Veterinary Hospital.

Birds and animals were given food grains like Jawar- Chana- Water Grass etc.

Vaccination camp was conducted for animals on 18 November 2013 in collaboration with Karnataka Veterinary Department. In this camp 250 cattle were vaccinated.

Feed abandoned and stray animals as also the birds.

Provided potable water drinking facility (water tank) for animals.

Tree plantation in and around city.

These are the activities undertaken by the TOS Groups and Regions in India. Apart from all these the TOS India is giving financial assistance to the Regions which are running permanent projects, provided they meet 50% of the total expenditure. TOS India has come to their help whenever there was any natural calamities like flood in West Bengal, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Philippines and earthquake in Nepal. In Uttarakhand we have constructed/ repaired a school building which was damaged by the flood. In J & K and in Nepal we are looking for a similar school to construct /repair the damaged school building. We are also intending to provide them with recurring assistance if the school/building is named after TOS/ Radhaji.

There is a proverb, "If there is a will, there is a way". And as Gandhi mentioned in one of his letters: "Personal service when it merges into universal service is the only service worth doing".

### **Referance**

1. Editorial in *Lucifer*, Vol. I, Nov.1887, p.169.
2. Supplement to *The Theosophist*, 1908, page xxiv.
3. *Ibid*

S.SUNDARAM\*

## EMPOWERING THE VISION

*“Self-preparation is an important aspect of theosophical work”<sup>1</sup>*

It is a significant year in the history of the Indian Section as it celebrates the completion of 125 years. It is a common observation that with the passage of time materialistic values are being given more and more importance and priorities by the people in general. Emphasis on personal promotion in career has put people apart. So, under the prevailing atmosphere, a long march of 125 years is no mean achievement for an organization which has been emphasizing on moral and spiritual regeneration of mankind, of society, and is concerned about the welfare of all living beings. It is because of the sincere effort on the part of the dedicated and devoted members that we are celebrating this occasion today. But this is not a terminus or an end of a journey. From time to time we must have an honest retrospective glance at things and work in order to know what we have gained and what we have missed; what has enriched us in many ways and what has been left undone. So, if the initiative taken and the effort made by the visionaries, the dedication and devotion shown by the theosophical leaders for the cause of the mission, have to be kept alive then the prevailing situation of the society in general demands that we the members will have to voluntarily take up responsibilities to promote the work of the TS in order to proceed in the direction shown by our pioneers.

It is a great privilege to be a member of the TS and if understood in right perspective, if felt and realized rightly and deeply, then the word *membership* implies and suggests an activity in which knowledge is deeply linked with action, in which knowledge and action are closely related. So, as a former General Secretary of the Indian Section once mentioned: “Let us not be mere members of the TS- let us be active agents for the cause of Universal Brotherhood”. In other words, it implies ceaseless effort of the members till all the Theosophical Lodges throb and live in tune with the theosophical values and ideas, till the self-evident truth and unity are approximated to the maximum possible extent. This is a task which cannot be the sole responsibility of the office bearers of the Lodge, Federation or the Section. This is, no doubt, a very difficult responsibility to be taken up, but it can't be avoided.

So, the question arises as to what to be done in the prevailing situation? The pioneers and scholars of Theosophy have laid great emphasis on change within. Then only one can think, work and generate an understanding in terms of Human Regeneration. Unless one is aware of

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and realizes his accountability and responsibility towards the organization, active cooperation and positive contribution cannot be expected. It is only when the sense of accountability for the work of lodge, community and society would sprout and develop from within, one will be able to fulfil his responsibilities with care and concern. In this regard we must try to awaken and generate the sense of responsibility in the members so that they may utilize and channelize their inherent resources and capabilities in the positive and right direction, and thus may unitedly get engaged in the work of the organization. And in this regard, the Motto of the TS, the Three Declared Objects and Principles of Theosophy show *the Path*. The deeper one reflects and thinks on these lines greater will be the possibilities of working for one's own evolution, for the welfare of society and for the Human Regeneration at large.

What is of essence is the direction in which we want to move. The Theosophical literature provide very wide scope to the members in order to expand their mental horizon and elevate their intellectual, moral and spiritual level. They show the direction in which one has to proceed. The pioneers and leaders of the Theosophical Movement have suggested that every member of the TS should study, ponder and meditate upon with great care and concern the thoughts given to us in the form of theosophical literature. In this regard, Dr. Annie Besant strongly recommends that the students of Theosophy "must equip themselves with their glorious work by mastering the principles, expounded in their philosophy and by learning to apply them to the circumstances of individual, social and national life".<sup>2</sup> So, we will have to question ourselves: To what extent have we understood and comprehended the Motto, Three Objects of the TS and the Basic Principles of Theosophy? To what extent have we contributed in promoting their cause? All these merit serious consideration and need to be pondered over, implemented by us, so that we may be able to put in all the effort, energy and power at our command for the work of the TS and the upliftment of the society in general.

However, it is necessary to prepare oneself for it. For transformation in one's psyche, for change in one's whole being, preparation within us is an essential prerequisite. This will come with constant pondering over and as J. Krishnamurti used to say for this one has to have a questioning mind, an enquiring mind. Because it is only when one feels *that* sense of urgency and the will to explore, discover and find out by thinking over these lines, when there is space within, when there is that void within, there is spontaneous receptivity and that space comes when one's whole being is unprejudiced and unconditioned. This space, this void is a state which is completely free of conditioning, prejudice and preconceived notions. So the preparation is a must.<sup>3</sup> In the words of Radhaji: "Transformation depends on unconditioning the mind of its habitual ways of thinking and reacting... Human beings.... must cleanse and harmonize their own consciousness"<sup>4</sup>

The essence of change lies in the transformation of values. So, in order to replace and establish the existing values by the values which may be/are useful for our society or our perception of society is the most vital part of process of transformation. The point which merits consideration is what human values *we* seek to preserve in our progress towards social advancement.

The two things of great relevance in such noble adventure are – who are involved in this great mission and what are they concerned about? The strength and success of organization depends on the clarity, ‘intensity of purpose’ and the inner strength of its members and the way in which they present themselves to the ‘wider world’. The challenging task or situation is faced by the members when they have to answer the queries posed by those who measure success of a movement or a mission by the achievements at the materialistic level only. And at such moments people of great conviction and deeper understanding alone are able to stand the test.<sup>5</sup>

In order to question and test ourselves, we need not compare ourselves with others. The progress, the inner depth, evolution and transformation have to be seen, fathomed and judged by our own selves in our way of thinking and living. To what extent have we become disciplined and have control on our thoughts and actions? How are we able to insist on truth under the challenging and adverse situations? What has been our contribution in promoting the cause of the Theosophical Movement? Have we tried to kindle within ourselves the sense of commitment, intensity and urgency which a movement constantly demands?<sup>6</sup>

Every individual member will have to seriously think and will have to have a dialogue with one’s own conscience. He will have to listen to and heed his ‘inner voice’. It will then enhance the intensity of his commitment and involvement and will also expand his area of theosophical activities. Nothing that has been said or written may be new, as has often been remarked, but, then, can *we* not look at it afresh? Can *we* not learn from them anew? It is for us to take them as constant reminders, lest complacency and slackness take hold of us. The sincere individual efforts of the members through continuous dialogues, discussions and deep study will then generate a collective strength – which in the process is sure to manifest in their daily life and make theosophy a living, dynamic force.<sup>7</sup>

Let us labour hard and put in our best efforts so that *we* become the very meaning. Then, the innate harmony, wisdom and truth, on their own will unfold themselves through us.

In the present situation it is essential to discover the possibility of change in which the individual and society may be interdependent in the profound and genuine sense of the term. So, can we turn crisis into opportunity? Can we accept problems as a challenge? Can we take

privilege as our responsibility? Let us prepare ourselves and ‘enter the Path’, and help our fellow pilgrims in their preparation to enable them to tread *the Path*. It is extremely necessary to understand that the inner must be strong enough to be visible as the outer. Our intentions must manifest as actions. Our thoughts must be powerful enough to generate forces of transformation.

In this ongoing journey let us keep asking ourselves whether we have been able to enrich our knowledge, understanding, and deepen our wisdom and whether these reflect in our day to day dealings and activities? The progress, the inner depth, evolution and transformation have to be seen fathomed and judged by ourselves in our way of thinking and living. We have to enrich and enliven ourselves. All our endeavours, our thoughts and actions towards the regeneration and towards bringing about sane society have to be spontaneous expression of moral force emerging from the depths of our being. The stronger the members are from within the stronger will be the organization and greater will be its impact.

#### **References:**

1. Radha Burnier, “The Essential Work of TS”, *Theosophy and The Theosophical Society*, Indian Section, TS, Varanasi- 1991, p. 119.
2. Annie Besant, “The work of the Theosophical Society, *Theosophy and The Theosophical Society*, Indian Section, TS, Varanasi- 1991, p. 81.  
(Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, August, 1897)
3. S.Sundaram, “The Essence of Revolution”, *The Indian Theosophist*, September, 2004, p.274.
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6. S. Sundaram, “Annual Report of the General Secretary: 2003-2004”.
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## NEWS AND NOTES

### Assam

A symposium on 'Service to human being is a way to reality of life' was held at Abhayapuri L.N. Academy on 3 July, 2015. Dr. Shiv Prasad Tiwari, Principal of the Academy chaired it. About 500 persons including students, teachers, people interested in spiritual subjects and members of ATF from Guwahati attended it. Bro. J.M. Patowary, R.C. Devsarma, Dwijendra Mohan Das and the Vice-Principal of the Academy spoke at length on the theme of the symposium. The chairperson, in his concluding remarks, appreciated the theme chosen for the symposium. Dr. C.P. Bhuyan distributed Diplomas to the new members on this occasion.

### Bombay

Asala Purnima Meeting: Members gathered in the Green Room of Blavatsky Lodge on 31 July 2015. Sis. Kashmira Khambatta had prepared a table near Lord Buddha's statue. Bro. Keki Palkhiwalla in his talk said, one should live Theosophy with Inner & Outer Life. The atomic structure of all human vehicles should be pure. There should be a centre of gravity within so that joy and sorrow of outer life cannot topple one. A person has to be awakened to lose one's outer-self to find Inner-self united with the ultimate Reality. He explained the Asala Ceremony, Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. He urged that one should realize what one is, to start the journey towards Divinity with 'Abhyas' and 'Vairagya'. The meeting ended with the Buddhist prayer.

### Delhi

Dr. Chittaranjan Satapathy, Vice-President, Theosophical Society, conducted study class at Delhi Federation on 4 & 5 September. The themes studied were 'Theosophy in daily life with special reference to Yama, Niyama & Parmitas'; 'Why and how to study *The Secret Doctrine*'; and 'Where Theosophy meets Krishnamurti'. Thirty members attended it on the first day and there were 40 members on the second day.

Bro. M.P. Singhal was invited by India Habitat Centre, Delhi, to deliver a talk on 18 April. The subject of the talk was 'Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge'. The talk was followed by Question & Answer in which the focus was on TS and also on the ill effects of the change in climate.

Prof. C.A. Shinde, National Lecturer, gave a talk at Indraprastha Lodge on 10 May. He spoke on 'Unity is the key to Theosophy'.

Swami Aaron delivered a talk at Shankar Lodge on 'Pure Consciousness' in the first

week of June. Bro. P. Chaudhury spoke at the same venue on Mediation. It was held on 18 July.

DTF's President Dr. D.K. Satsangi gave a talk on 'Yoga Darshan' and 'Vivek Chudamani' respectively at the Lodge in Kanpur. He actively participated in a discussion at a theosophical Lodge in Bombay.

Six members of Besant Lodge discussed, about "Blending of Physical Nature with Spiritual Nature." The conclusion was that the ultimate object of all our spiritual endeavours is to "Bring about a Fundamental change in our Character and ultimately our Behaviour." In all spiritual pursuits we need to first prepare and purify ourselves by Sadhna-Study, Meditation and Service, Ashtang Yoga and so on.

The members of Besant Lodge discussed: "Human Potential and Propensities" on 24 September. The conclusion was that on the path of Evolution, constant awareness is essential to develop and use human capacities like wisdom, tolerance, one pointedness, cheerfulness, self-control in thought and action, faith, proper utilization of time and universal outlook.

The Annual Convention of Delhi Federation was held on 04 October 2015 under the chairmanship of Bro Narendra Kumar. After universal invocation, President Dr D.K. Satsangi delivered a brief talk highlighting the precepts of Theosophy & role of Founders in conveying Theosophical teachings to masses. After the talk, Minutes of the last Annual Business Meeting was approved & Annual Report for current year was presented by the Secretary. After this Treasurer's Report was placed before the General Body and was approved unanimously. This was followed by the election of the office bearers.

## **Gujarat**

Gujarat Theosophical Federation organized a day-long Youth Shibir on 9 August 2015 and study class from 13-15 August, 2015, at Bhavnagar.

In the Youth Shibir the following subjects were covered; the introduction of the founders, presidents & leaders of the Theosophical Society and their work; what is Theosophy and The Theosophical Society; The Three Objects and the Motto of the Theosophical Society, what should be done for the propagation of Theosophy and Theosophical Society. It provided basic knowledge to young members of T.S. All the lectures were given by young members and they were appreciated by the senior members. Young members from 9 Lodges of the Federation participated in the programme. The guest speaker was Mr. Unmesh Bhai Mehta, who is C.A. and auditor of Gujarat Federation.

This Youth Shibir was fruitful and encouraging for the future of Theosophical Society in Gujarat. It was decided that every year such Youth Programme should be held.

The Gujarat Theosophical Federation holds study classes every year, mostly at Bhavnagar. This year the class was held there from 13 August to 15 August 2015 which was attended by as many as 60 participants from 10 Theosophical Lodges of Gujarat. The book selected for study was a Gujarati classic *VICHAR SHAKTI, TENO NIGHAH ANE VIKAAAS (THOUGHT POWER, ITS CONTROL & CULTURE)*. The class was conducted by Mrs. AVANTIKA MEHTA- National Lecturer, former President of G.T.F. She covered the essence of the subject dealt with in the book.

Former President of GTF, Bro. Yogendra P. Desai, present President Mr. Naresh Trivedi, Secretary Mr. Darshan Modi, Former International Treasurer, Miss Keshwar Dastur, Editor of GTF Gujarati journal “Jyoti” Mr. Harshvadan Sheth and many other senior and new members attended the sessions. The venue was newly built spacious Chandreshwar Mahadev Temple, having all modern facilities and comforts.

### **Kerala**

Anantha Theosophical Society (ATS) Thiruvananthapuram, organized an Inter Lodge Meeting and celebrated their 132<sup>nd</sup> Annual Day on 2 August 2015 at the Lodge. The programme started with Bharat Samaj Pooja. The inaugural session commenced at 9.30 am with the Universal Prayer.

Brother S Rajesh, Vice President, ATS, welcomed the delegates and Brother B Hariharan, President, ATS, presided over the meeting. The chief guest Dr. C.G. Ramachandran Nair, former chairman, Kerala State Committee of Science, spoke mainly on the now emerging relationship and closeness of ideas between modern science and Ancient Wisdom. He also underscored the limitations of modern science in delving into the Wholeness of Nature and into the depth of Human Consciousness.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Bro. M Natarajan, Secretary, Tamil Federation. He spoke on the theme of the meeting- ‘Relevance of Theosophy in the Modern World’. He narrated a whole series of day-to-day issues to highlight the relevance of *Brahmavidya* to re-establish the value systems in our society that are being eroded every second at an alarming rate.

Brother S Sivadas, President, KTF, spoke on the subject “Theosophy- the Perennial Wisdom”. In the afternoon session Bro. K. Dinakaran spoke on “Yoga for modern world” and Bro. Bhaskaran Nair spoke on ‘Universal Brotherhood’. There was an interactive session in which the members participated with many relevant questions and a panel answered them.

Nearly 40 members attended it. The meeting came to a close at 4 pm with vote of thanks given by Brother R Karthikeyan, Secretary, ATS.

A book publication ceremony was conducted at Annapoorni Lodge Alleppey on 19 August. A collection of 13 short stories, *SNEHAMAPINI*, written by one of their members, Sister Jayasree, published by Paridhi Publishers, Trivandrum, was released by Sri. Kallelil Raghavan Pillai, an eminent citizen and Theosophist of Alleppey. Many members and friends attended the function.

Regular classes are conducted on every Wednesday at Trichur Lodge and currently the members have started studying *The Key to Theosophy* by H.P. Blavatsky. Brother P.S. Krishnamurthy, Vice President, Trichur Lodge, conducts the study.

### **M.P. & Rajasthan**

A study camp at Vikram Lodge, Ujjain, was held from 19 to 21 September 2015. The book for the study was *The Technique of the Spiritual Life* by Clara M. Codd. Presentation of the subject was in Hindi. Bro. Ashok Kaul, Bro. S.C. Kori, Bro. O.P. Garg, and Bro. A.C. Gulhati were the resource persons. Bro. H.S. Dwivedi, Secretary of M.P. and Rajasthan Federation, presided over the meeting and summarized the talk. The study was conducted in two sessions.

Morning Session: 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and  
10.45 a.m. to 11.45 a.m.

Afternoon Session: 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p. m.  
5.15 p.m. to 6.15 p.m.

Morning session started with the universal invocation. The afternoon session was followed by question and answer session. This was appreciated by all the participants, they were of the view that this helped them to understand the Theosophical view much better. There were 31 participants belonging to different lodges such as Gwalior, Bhopal, Ratlam, Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Ujjain. The board and lodging arrangement for out station members were made in the Lodge campus.

### **Rayalameema**

A meeting was organized by the Theosophical Lodge, Bellary, to celebrate Col. H.S. Olcott's birthday on 2 August. After the prayers, Bro. S. Rangaiah Setty, Federation Lecturer, spoke on 'The significance of Spiritual Masters'. Bro. Medehal Basavaraj spoke in brief about Guru and Theosophy.

The TOS & TS jointly conducted a programme on 8 August at Sree Bala Anjaneya Temple at Bellary. Fifty cows of *Gowshala* were fed with grass rice, juggary and banana. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Bro. A.I. Basavaraj Reddy, President, and Bro. Medel Basavaraj, TOS Secretary. Federation Lecturer Bro. K. Raamakanatha and other 30 members were present on the occasion.

A meeting was organized by Sanmarga Theosophical Lodge, Bellary, on the occasion of Madam Blavatsky's birthday, 12 August. The meeting started with the prayers of all faiths. It was followed by a talk given by Bro. S. Rangaiah Settee, Secretary of the Lodge. He spoke in brief about the life and significant contribution of HPB.

### **Utkal**

A study camp was conducted by Bro. Shyam Singh Gautam, National Lecturer at Bhuvanewar from 12 to 14 August 2015. The book selected for the study was, *the Technique of the Spiritual Life* by Clara Codd. Brother Pradip Mahapatra and the office bearers of Bhuvanewar Lodge organized the camp as Sister Pournamasi Patanayak, the Federation Secretary, was out of country during this period.

Power point presentations in Hindi were prepared for this study. The book contains identification of self, development of will power, purification of body, purification of emotions, purification of mind, introduction to Path, outline of methods that are used for treading the Path.

While dealing with the subject, the author of the book has presented complete scientific analysis of various components of the human personality, soul and Spirit. The common characteristics of the various components have also been described. Before dealing with the purification of various bodies, a chapter on culture of will power has been dealt as without adequate will power no efforts in right direction is possible. The common weaknesses and methods by which characteristics are to be replaced by the brighter natures have been given in a scientific way. The entry into the path depends upon the preparedness of the aspirant. The qualifications for entry into the Path as laid down in various faiths and as great teachers have discussed have been presented. It has been emphasized that the techniques of treading the Path includes one major component i.e. meditation about which the author has dealt with in detail.

Utkal Federation organized Shyama Prasad Memorial Lecture on 15 August 2015 in which a talk on 'Self Purification' was delivered by Bro. S.S. Gautam. Bro. Pradip Mahapatra introduced the speaker which was followed by the talk with the help of power point projector. As per the suggestion of the audience the lecture was delivered in Hindi. The speech covered an introduction to various components of human beings and the planes being shared by man. Presentations were aimed at showing clearly the temporary, comparatively permanent and permanent component of the humane existence. Thereafter the common weaknesses of human bodies and method of their eradication were discussed.

Various Theosophical Lodges are having regular study classes on Theosophical books/themes.

Sanat Kumar Lodge celebrated its Annual Day on 9 August. Bro. Pradip Kumar Mahapatra was the chief guest. He spoke on 'What is clean life?'

TOS

Sister Deepa Padhi has edited the book entitled 'Yes, She Can'. It was released by Dr. Chandrabhanu Satapathy in a meetings organized by Mahabhart Group TOS at Idcol Hall, Bhubaneswar on 26 August.

TOS Cuttack Group distributed study material to 95 deaf dumb children of Rama Devi Shishu Vihar in Cuttack.

### **Uttar Pradesh**

The following talks were held at Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, in August: 'The challenge of Theosophical Movement' by Bro. A.P. Capoor, 'The Theosophical Life' by Bro. B.P. Shukla, 'The Theosophical Life- Karma' by Bro. U.S. Pandey, 'What is Theosophy' by Bro. Rajesh Gupta.

Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered there talks at Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, in August. The subjects he spoke on were 'Deivine Plan', 'Death & After' and 'Cheerfulness & Spiritual Progress'.

Bro. U.S. Pandey conducted a meditation session for a group of doctors and housewives on 1 August at Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute in Lucknow.

The following talks were organized under the auspices of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow in September: 'The Mysterious journey', and two talks on 'Samkhya, Vedanta and Theosophy'. These three talks were delivered by Bro. U.S. Pandey.

Prof. C.A. Shinde, National Lecturer, delivered a public lecture on 25 September at Lucknow on the theme 'The Spirit of Theosophy'.

Bro. B.D.Tendulkar National Lecturer, delivered two talks on 24 September: one on 'Thought Power' to a group of students in Ambedkar University and second on 'Science and Occultism' to a group of students in Engineering College. He also spoke on 'Human Regeneration' during a meeting of the members of local lodges on 25 September.

Sri Shyam Kumar Sharma spoke on 'Tulsi: A saviour of downtrodden' at Nirvan Lodge, Agra, on 6 August. The other two talks held in August were on 'At the Feet of the Master' by Bro. Gyanesh Chaturvedi and Shyam Kapoor; Smt. & Dr. Dorabji memorial lecture was delivered by Bro. B.D. Rajoriya on 27 August. The subject of the talk was 'The God & The Man'. Besides, a symposium on 'Theosophy & Science' was organized by the Lodge on 13 August in which the speakers were Bro. Harish Sharma, Prof. Bhadoriya, Dr. Sandip Agrawal, Bro. Qamar Iqbal, Dr. Malhotra and Bro. Devendra Bajpayee.

Dr. Ram Gopal Tandon, President of Kashi Tattva Sabha, spoke on 'Interrelation between Religion, Philosophy & Science' on 11 September. It was followed by interaction with scholars of Sanskrit, Philosophy and medical practioners.

Dr. Shanta Chatterjee, Head of Department of Sanskrit in the Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, delivered a talk on 'Lord Krishna' which was based on well known *Krishna Mahimana Stotra*. The talk was very much liked and appreciated by the members of the KTS as well as the guests and the students of the college.

Study camp at Gorakhpur: U.P Federation organized a study camp on 26 and 28 September on *At the Feet of the Master*. Prof. C.A. Shinde directed the study. About 50 persons including members from different lodges of U.P. Federation and two members from Dharwar Lodge (Karnataka Federation) attend it. The camp started on 26 September with recitation of Universal Prayer. Bro. S.B.R. Mishra, President of Sarvahitakari Lodge, Gorakhpur, welcomed the speaker and the participants. Bro. U.S. Pandey, Fed. Secretary, introduced the speaker and also the theme of the book. After Prof. Shinde had covered a portion of the book, three groups of participants were formed and each group after deliberating on certain designated themes/sentences from the book, presented its observations/comments in the afternoon session. Bro. S.K. Pandey National Lecturer, spoke on 'discrimination'. The remaining portion of the book was covered on 28 September and three groups of participants again deliberated on another set of sentences/themes and presented their comments.

On 26 September a devotional meet was organized in the evening. A session of group meditation guided by Prof. Shinde was held on 27 September and a group meditation session guided by Bro. Suneel Sharma was held on 28 September.

The study camp concluded on 28 September. During the concluding session some participants expressed their views appreciating the programme and the arrangements made by Gorakhpur Lodge. Bro. K.K. Srivastava proposed vote of thanks on behalf of the Federation and Bro. R.K. Singh on behalf of Sarvahitakari Lodge. Bro. L.S. Senger, presiding over the session made concluding remarks.

The Annual General Meeting of U.P. Federation was held at Gorakhpur on 27 September. The programme started with the 'prayers of all religions' followed by Universal Prayer. Bro. S.B.R. Mishra, President of Gorakhpur Sarvahitakari Lodge, welcomed the delegates. Bro. U.S. Pandey offered his greetings and read out greetings received from International H.Q. and the Indian Section and some others. The representatives of participating lodges then offered their greetings. Prof. C.A. Shinde inaugurated the annual conference. During his inaugural address Prof. Shinde appreciated the theme of the conference 'Look upon all circumstances with the gratitude of a pupil' and elaborated upon its importance. He mentioned about stages of Probationary, pupil, disciple, son of the Master and Master, saying further that all those who are living the theosophical teachings are pupil and disciple. He said that we should be grateful to all, realizing the interconnectedness of all. If we live our life with reverence and gratitude then that is the real giving back the life to God. Bro. K.N. Singh, Joint Secretary of the lodge, proposed vote of thanks.

During the business session, the General Body meeting was held. This session was presided over by Bro. Dhyan Singh, the senior most member of local Lodge. Homage was paid to the members who passed to peace during the preceding year. Bro. U.S. Pandey presented the annual report of the activities for the year 2014-15 which was adopted by the general body. Bro. K.K. Srivastava, Joint Secretary of the Federation, presented annual statement of receipts and payments for the financial year 2014-15 and Bro. S.K. Pandey presented the annual statement of receipts and payments for the Federation's Hindi Journal "Dharm Path" for the financial year 2014-15. These statements were adopted by the general body. Some members made observations expressing their appreciation about the activities undertaken during the year.

In the afternoon, a seminar was organized on the theme of the conference. This session was presided over by Bro. S.B.R. Mishra. The speakers: Dr. Ranjana Bagchi, Km. Preeti Tewari, Smt. Sudershan Aneja, Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma and Bro. Suneel Sharma made presentations on the theme from different angles. Bro. U.S. Pandey then highlighted certain thoughts on the theme as given in important theosophical writings and their significance in human life. Bro. S.B.R. Mishra made valuable supplementary comments before concluding the seminar.

Shri M.M. Mathur (Diploma No. 94925) of Besant lodge, Ghaziabad, Shri Anand Kumar (Diploma No.63553) of Sitapur Lodge and Shri K.L. Chhabra ( Diploma No. 95046) of NOIDA Lodge passed to peace on 11 February, 6 July and 6 September respectively.

Prof. Krishnanath (Diploma No. 76178), a Life Member of the Indian Section, passed to peace on 6 September. A retired professor of economics, a scholar of Boudha Darshan, a member of the governing body of Tibetan Institute of Higher Studies, Krishnamurti Foundation India and Besant Education Fellowship, was in close contact of His Holiness Dalai Lama, J. Krishnamurti, Achyut Patwardhan and Radhaji. During the Centenary Convention of the Indian Section in 1990, Prof. Krishnanath was invited to speak on 'What India need today in the field of Social Reconstruction'. He was one of the speakers at the Indian Section HQ on the occasion of the completion of 100 yrs of Dr. Annie Besant's arrival in India; and also spoke in the seminar on "Peace & Conflict" in 2010. He conducted the School of the Wisdom a few years ago at the International HQ, Adyar.

### **Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali**

The Himalayas with imposing mountain peaks are an endless source of myths, legends and mysteries. In the caves and snowclad banks of streams, numberless Saints always search within themselves to unravel the mysteries of life.

At the foot of the Himalayas, on the southern side is **Bhowali**, a small town surrounded by rich green mountains. Overlooking the panoramic view, there is a spot which has been, for

about a Century, a centre of quite but serious Theosophical Studies. The ingeniously and aesthetically designed cluster of buildings there, christened **The Himalayan Study Centre** was the venue of the newly envisaged School of the Wisdom.

Seekers from the U.S, Brazil, Spain, Australia and India converged there on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 to attend the first course based on *Ancient Wisdom – Modern Insight* by Sheirley Nicholson. Dr. Chittaranjan Satapathy, the International Vice-President, TS, inaugurated the Course and traced the evolution of the Schools of Wisdom in Germany from 1921.

Twelve days of deep study and reflection followed in a salubrious weather. The juxtaposition of the basic Truths of Ancient Wisdom and Modern Thoughts provided deep insight into Theosophical Principles.

Prof. R.C. Tampi directed the studies. Mr. V. Narayanan and Mr. P.S. Panchakshari from Indian Section, Varanasi, coordinated arrangements for very comfortable stay and delectable food by Mr. Ganga Singh and Ms. Sushma were much appreciated by all participants.

The new programme conceived by Mr. Tim Boyd, the International President and Dr. Satapathy had an auspicious beginning.

#### **Indian Section Headquarters**

The 168th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Annie Besant was celebrated at the Section Headquarters, Varanasi, on 1 October, 2015. Professor Harikesh Singh, Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, was the guest speaker on the occasion. The Lecture was attended by a large number of members of the Theosophical Society, citizens of Varanasi and students. The programme began with 'Sarva Dharma Prarthana'. In his welcome address, Bro. S. Sundaram, General Secretary, Theosophical Society paid warm tribute to the visionary thinker and philosopher Dr. Besant and said that Dr Besant lived by Truth. She devoted her life in understanding Truth and experimented with it in all her actions. Bro. C. Jinarajadasa aptly described her that 'she was a creator of men', Annie Besant dedicated herself to disseminate Indian ethical values worldwide. This and this only could serve the humanity, she was convinced. She chose the city of Varanasi to practice her philosophy of education which was aimed at character building of young men and women. Major educational institutions in Varanasi are the living monuments of her unforgettable service to humanity. Introducing the Speaker, Sri Sundaram highlighted Professor Singh's close association with the Theosophical Society and recalled his valued contribution to the various seminars and conferences organized at Gandhi Vidya Sansthan at Rajghat.

Professor Harikesh Singh in his over an hour long scholarly and engaging discourse on Annie Besant and Theosophy highlighted the idea of universal brotherhood – '*Vishwa Bandhutva*'. Analyzing the pervading consciousness and presence of the Masters in the scheme of things, he sought connection at the consciousness level between the emergence

of the realized Beings like Baba ji, Yuktेशwar ji Maharaj, Lahiri Mahashay and Annie Besant. Peace, Forgiveness and Service are the fundamentals of Theosophy, he exhorted. He referred to the socialist Philosopher Edward Carpenter's book *Civilization, Its Cause and Cure* in the context of the modern affluent but ailing human societies – suffering from isolation, megalomania and alienation. He talked of Annie Besant in connection with education for harmonization and called her Educator of educators who championed the cause of women's education in Varanasi. Thus, she emerged as the radical Besant. Every individual is a cultural continuity and education is a process of socialization, the Speaker emphasized. The question is how to keep purity intact and undefiled in this continuity and perenniality. Dr Besant believed in the presence of divinity in every individual, animate and inanimate beings and articles. Therein lies the usefulness of education – in optimization of divinity. The hallmark of the philosopher educationist Annie Besant is advancing the spiritual essence. She worked tirelessly towards human conscientization because Truth has voice, Truth has a message to give and ultimately Truth has light – takes us to light. Unification of conscience with divinity is the purpose of Annie Besant's philosophy of education, Professor Harikesh Singh concluded.

Smt. Manju Sundaram proposed a vote of thanks to the Speaker. She said that the Lecture was a dialogue with one's own self taking us to a higher plane of consciousness. Dr Annie Besant exemplifies that voluntary commitment to a noble cause to serve the humanity which we all, the young generation in particular, need to emulate, she said.

**Sushila Singh**

**THE 140TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**  
**Theme: Compassion and Universal Responsibility**

The 140th International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, **from 31 December 2015 to 5 January 2016**. All members of the Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates.

For details, see page 281-283 of *The Indian Theosophist*, September, 2015.