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Editor

S. SUNDARAM

A STEP FORWARD

Every individual has, by nature, a tendency to do something for which he has the inherent competence and capability. This he can do provided he takes up the job voluntarily and does it in a responsible manner. The greater the sense of responsibility the greater will be his involvement in the work which he has undertaken. The question and concern of responsibility is towards 'others' more than towards 'one's own self'. The absence or the lack of feeling and realization of responsibility create division and generate tension and conflict, which ultimately leads to disorder and destruction. Giving up of harmful and unnecessary thought and action manifests and expresses itself in the form of responsible commitment. So, it is very necessary to understandingly realize as to what one should not do and also what one cannot do. In a broader perspective responsibility is related with the welfare of others and this leads to the strengthening of mutual relationship and unity.

As most people are ignorant about the real purpose and goal in their life they consider the result of their endeavour and responsibilities as their personal achievements. Actually speaking the meaningfulness and relevance of material competence and capacities lies in channelizing of all these for the benefit and welfare of all living beings. Service is the source of love and sacrifice and thus commitment to one's responsibility brings about completeness in one's life.

Humility and sacrifice are the essential prerequisites for the proper utilization of situations. Every situation consists of a little bit of favourable or pleasant and some adverse or unpleasant elements. The utilization of favourable elements is inherent in humility and that of unpleasant ones in sacrifice. Humility means to become compassionate by seeing the sufferers and to become glad by seeing people in happy condition. Sacrifice means the elimination of "I ness" and "ego". Compassion and happiness make one free from the bondage of congeniality and the elimination of ego makes one completely fearless. And these two, i.e. freedom from the bondage and complete fearlessness root out the contradictory, conflicting and dialectic situations and the sense and awareness of equality dawns upon which leads to progress and development.

All these result in what we call in Theosophical parlance as "dispassionate attachment".

Any responsibility undertaken with a self-centred, self-projecting attitude, any work motivated by greed or craving for reward or recognition eventually ends up in frustration, depression and state of utter helplessness. One falls victim to the limitations of one's own ignorance and little ego. So, it is only by effacing the false ego, by freeing oneself of these fetters that *seva* in its fullest, deepest and widest sense can be performed. Then every act of service has in it a great sanctity, humility and a feeling of sacred fulfilment.

In the life of a committed worker there is no scope for laziness, idleness, worry, fear and insensitivity. It is the laziness which imprisons man in inertness and idleness that leads one to useless and unnecessary worry which reduces one's energy. In contrast to this, the commitment to responsibility results in the sprouting and blossoming of awareness and then one fulfills one's duty in a natural, spontaneous and beautiful manner. The feeling for the welfare of all should always be there behind every work we take up. Then only one will get motivated to tread and proceed on the path of truth otherwise the forces which will crop up will lead us to our own destruction and down fall.

Let us prepare ourselves to '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. As mentioned by Prof. Asghar Ali Engineer in his Besant Memorial Lecture in the year 2005:

It is the duty of all those who believe in certain values to use the intellect to promote those values, and that will be wisdom.

ON THE WATCH-TOWER

Future of The Theosophical Society

The past of the Theosophical Society is history and is relevant for learning some lessons. This history is perceived in the beauty of Adyar as an Ashram. It is also visible in the architecture and grandeur of buildings, the Adyar library, the museum the archives and the rich literature. Present is more important, because what we do today will shape the future. The declining membership, the lessening of reading, writing and communication skills and inability to inspire and induct young members are the three major challenges before us.

‘Think’ Theosophical Society: A great Institution

We should take pride in calling the Theosophical Society a Great Institution. A clarity of purpose is essential for an institution. Its great vision is ‘Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam’. Its mission is ‘To Live to Benefit Mankind’. Its purpose is Human Regeneration and Transformation of humanity, for its holistic development and welfare. And its core value of truths is enshrined in its motto. ‘There is no Religion higher than Truth’. Its ethics is, ‘Return good for evil; love those who hate you’. The three declared objects are the three pillars and the guiding principles for daily action. The resolution on Freedom of Thought is the basis of behaviour within the Society. Can we become capable of institutional thinking in which the institution and the work are far more important than any individual and with purpose? Also workers are the greatest asset with self motivation as a characteristic.

Information to Comprehension

Comprehension leads to inner awakening that gives the delight of knowing something deeply, creating desire to learn more. But without strong aspiration this is not possible. Perfect attention, continuous reflection, frequent imagination and abstract thinking as well as visualization followed by constant practice are the tools leading from information to comprehension.

Five steps to Promote Theosophy

In *The Key to Theosophy*, HPB exhorted us first to study and comprehend the theosophical doctrines so that they may teach others, especially the young people — second, by taking every opportunity of talking to others and explaining to them what Theosophy is and what it is not — third by removing misconceptions spreading an interest in the subject by assisting in circulating our literature by buying books when they have means, by lending and giving them and by inducing their friends to do so. Fourth by defending the Society from the unjust aspersions cast upon it by every legitimate device in their power — fifth and most important of all, by example of their own lives. Are we aware that we are required to do so?

Theosophy and the Theosophical Society

As the Theosophical Society was taking roots, its co-founders decided to have distinct roles between themselves. HPB would discover and present theosophical doctrines, while Col. Olcott would develop the Theosophical Society as a vehicle for its propagation. The Society soon had rich literature for Human Regeneration. Colonel Olcott, Mrs Besant, Bishop Leadbeater and others travelled widely contacting and inspiring people. Thus the membership grew rapidly; Theosophical centres sprang up worldwide. At present we feel shy in reaching out to others, perhaps due to our little comprehension of theosophy. Theosophy is discussed inside our lodges. For even in the city of Chennai, many do not know the location of International Headquarters which exists since 1882.

Empowering Youth

The youth of today, who are to be the torch-bearers of the future, are facing challenges, personally, and socially, aggravated by the imbalance between the technological and the psychological progress. Our youth nurture a scientific zeal for truth, a contempt for sham and superstition. We have a choice between, what is truly good and what gives us pleasure. The material development has to be matched by spiritual growth for true progress, and human survival. For the youth to be so inspired, the elders have a major responsibility. Therefore, at least a few leaders should emerge, among the elders and the youth, to serve as role models for human transformation. For the Youth to be attracted the emphasis should be on yoga, meditation, participation in discourses on truly spiri-

tual matters and select areas of service in which they have expertise. The participants need to meet on a regular basis under the guidance of knowledgeable person. Yoga and meditation will promote holistic health, service will subdue the ego, spiritual discourses will purify, nourish and enrich the soul. Weekly question and answer sessions may be programmed to clarify doubts. If youth are attracted, declining trend in membership will be reversed.

HPB's view of TS in Future

In *The Key to Theosophy*, answering questions on the future of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, HPB said: If you speak of Theosophy, I answer that as it has existed eternally throughout the endless cycles upon cycles of the past, so it will exist throughout the infinities of Future, because Theosophy is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH.

In the case of the Theosophical Society she said, its future will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion and last but not the least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by the members of the Society on whom it will fall to carry on the work and to direct the Society after the death of the founders. She included knowledge and wisdom, because knowledge and wisdom provide unbiased and clear judgement, for clarity is the state of seeing clearly. Tools like meditation, journal writing, personal coaching help to understand deeply; the lessons need to be repeated regularly until comprehension is achieved.

The Big Challenges

The three challenges, mentioned earlier started emerging from 1980's more conspicuously in diminishing membership, difficulty in inducting youth and insufficient propagational activity.

Comprehension, Communication and Propagation

For propagation we need comprehension as well as skill in communication with good knowledge of language. Good comprehension is a prerequisite for good communication. If there is comprehension the person would like to communicate and develop communication skills easily. In a communications seminar organized by Mudra Institute of Communications Ahmedabad (MICA), February 12-14, 2014 this view

was reinforced. For Propagation of Theosophy, it will be useful to integrate study of Religion, Philosophy and Science for man's balanced growth. For effective propagation, we have to reach out to non-members personally at the grass root level. Let each member bring one new member by personal contacts each year.

Forgiveness, Justice, Gratitude and Modern Science

As one of the Masters of Wisdom said, 'Injustice and ingratitude are not among our vices'. This gives a clue for just action and expressing gratitude to all noble ones. Being grateful, dispels mental confusion. As anger corrodes its vessel, ingratitude eats up its container. Justice means equality. We will feel taller and happier if we are grateful. Be grateful to those who betrayed you for they helped you to become independent. Being grateful, lessens our burden; it connects us to another soul with great depth of feelings. Let us recall, what Christ uttered when he was being nailed to the cross. 'Oh lord forgive them for they know not what they do.'

A Master of Wisdom said, Modern Science is our best ally. So we should modernize our methods, adopting new technologies in our work. We need definiteness of purpose and deliberateness of action. The Theosophical Society will become vibrant, with sizeable strength of youth, if we are sincere to our vision, the mission, the core values and the purpose.

Conclusion:

The Mahachohan as reported by Master KH once said, 'The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity.' So, we should think that this society is a great institution with a clear vision, a definite mission and a useful purpose. We need to work diligently remembering HPB's Caution: 'theosophy is not for the lazy and the obtuse . . .'

For attracting the youth, emphasis need to shift from the present theoretical approach, to doing things. We should present theosophy in ways that are more interesting by incorporating life size stories and experiences. Youth Academies for their training should be opened at select places with trained faculty members having comprehension and communication skills. Information creates awareness; education

provides knowledge; using that knowledge in daily life leads to wisdom, and in turn to humility and a sense of oneness. Personal contacts at the grass root level are indispensable to induct new members after intelligent understanding and conviction.

Existing literature of *Theosophic Life*, *At the Feet of the Master*, *Human Regeneration* and *I Promise* should be combined and printed in book size. Similarly *Practical Occultism*, *Light on the Path*, *The Voice of the Silence* and *The Universal Law of Life* should be combined and printed in book size. A special compilation of *The Laws of Karma*, Three Great Truths, *Reincarnation*, Meditation, with yoga and character building be prepared with a view to educate the youth specially. These books in new form can be given appropriate titles and included in the curriculum of proposed Youth Academies. These measures most likely help reverse the trend of declining membership and attracting youth. The Theosophical Society in the distant future is assured of its place as told by the Mahachohan. In the short term it will be, what we do unitedly, earnestly, selflessly and mindfully with wisdom. So press on to overcome the three challenges. Let us ask ourselves, 'What each one of us can do for propagation of theosophy?' His holiness the Dalai Lama was once asked 'Sir, what is the purpose of life?' And he replied, 'The purpose of life is to spread a warm heart. And if that is not possible, then at least do not spread the cold heart.'

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, March 2014)

There are persons who would like to see the Society's membership grow fast and its popularity increase. They want to please the public with psychologically comforting things which have little or nothing to do with the universal brotherhood which is the main Object of the Society, or the common search and aspiration for truth which binds the far-flung Sections and members together spiritually in an affectionate bond of union. They regard it as a weakness in the Society that it does not cater to the wants of the public and change its aims to gain popularity.

The Society's clear policy is not to entertain the world with what it wants, but to aid people to discover the source of wisdom within themselves.

Radha Burnier

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U.S. PANDEY*

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE AN OVERVIEW

The Voice of the Silence is the last of the four books written by HPB, the other three being *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy*. This book was first published in 1889. The book is dedicated to the 'few' who are interested in acquiring inner knowledge of the Self. In the preface of the book, HPB mentions that the matter is derived from *The Book of the Golden Precepts* and forms a part of the same series as that from which the Stanzas of *The Book of Dzyan* were taken, on which *The Secret Doctrine* is based. It is further mentioned that the Book of the Golden Precepts contain about ninety distinct little treatises of which HPB learned 39 by heart and these contain exalted ethics. A judiciously selected matter only from those treatises which best suits the few real mystics in the Theosophical Society, and which are sure to answer their needs are, after translation, brought out in this book *The Voice of the Silence*. This book consists of really three treatises of the thirty nine which HPB had learned by heart and she has described these as three Fragments.

Three Fragments

The Book consists of three parts subtitled Fragment I - The Voice of the Silence, Fragment II - The Two Paths, and Fragment III - The Seven Portals.

Fragment I is about answering and asking about 'Who am I'. It is for integrating 'me' with 'I' (The lower self with Higher Self). It consists of 100 verses. The fragment starts with verse 1 which says "These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of lower iddhi." The Pali word 'iddhi' is synonym of Sanskrit 'siddhi' or psychic faculties. There are two kinds of siddhis, one group embracing the lower course, psychic and mental energies and the other exacting the highest training of spiritual powers. In this verse the caution is made against

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acquiring lower psychic powers like seeing in distance, walking on water, swimming on land etc. without purifying one's self. Lower siddhis are just illusion and the real seeker should not get distracted by these. The book *The Voice of the Silence* is for higher siddhis i.e. spiritual powers. For this purpose one should not focus his objective on acquiring the lower siddhis.

Other verses in this fragment mention about

- Learning the nature of Dharana, making the mind indifferent to objects of perception. Slaying the mind which is great slayer of the Real, discerning the One among many, attaining the harmony within, being deaf to external noises, uniting the lower self with the higher self and thereby become able to remember one's real nature and to hear and speak the voice of the silence which is inner spiritual voice (v. 2-13).
- How to judge the nature of the one's soul (self) by observing its own reaction to the events, acquiring knowledge of the Self by giving up self and then to become knower of all SELF, giving up life of physical personality for living in spirit (v.14-21).
- Three Halls – the Hall of ignorance, the Hall of learning and the Hall of wisdom. These three halls correspond to the three states of awareness/consciousness and planes/faculties as indicated in the following table

Hall of Ignorance	Hall of Learning	Hall of Wisdom
Waking	Dreaming	Deep sleep
Outer	Inner	Higher
Conscious	Unconscious	Super conscious
Public	Private	Transcendent
Physical	Kama Manas	Buddhi Manas
Sensory	Psychic	Spiritual

Thus the three halls indicate experiences of three stages in physical world, astro-mental world and Buddhi-manas world. The danger of experience in the hall of learning is indicated because of its temptations and illusive nature (v. 22-37).

- Listening of seven kinds of mystic sounds before hearing the and cleaning the lower mental body (v. 41-55).
- Listening to every cry of pain of humanity and making sincere, utmost and prompt effort of removing that pain and also the cause of the pain, killing love or desire for life, desiring nothing, not grudging against karma and helping Nature by working in accordance with its laws (v. 59-66).

This fragment also mentions about various stages of yoga like; Killing the memory of the past, re-becoming the bud, regaining the child state which corresponds to Yama the first stage of yoga (v.77-79); Hear and See i.e. doing positive things, which correspond to Niyama stage (v.82-83); Becoming indifferent to objects of perception and eliminating all thoughts which correspond to Pratyahara stage (v. 3 & 85); Dharana where perfect concentration on some inner object is to be achieved (v 87).; Dhyana when the difference in trinity are not perceived but only unity which is reaching the level of Buddhi, upadhi of Atma (v. 88) and Samadhi- self getting lost in the Self, becoming doer and witness both, getting acquainted with five impediments and conquering them, and becoming Teacher- deliverer of the four modes of truth (v 90-93); Becoming master of Samadhi- the state of faultless vision when the candidate becomes object of his own search (v.98-99).. The four modes of the truth mentioned in the note are: suffering or misery, assembling of temptations, their destructions and the 'Path'- which refers to the Eightfold Path as described by Buddha. HPB omits the two stages Asana and Pranayama because these are supposed to encourage development of lower psychic powers.

The Fragment concludes with the phrase 'Om-Tat-Sat.'

Fragment II is about choosing between two divergent paths; one path leading to personal salvation and the second path leading to Bodhisattva way i.e. dedicating one's life to help others. This is integrating 'I' and 'You' or Inner and Outer. This fragment consists of 95 verses numbered 101 to 195.

A question is asked whether the Master of thine own mercy will reveal the Doctrine of the Heart or refuse to lead others on to the Path of Liberation. (v.102)

Other verses mention about,

- The two paths named as Doctrine of Heart and Doctrine of Eye. Other names assigned to the Doctrine of Heart are The Secret Heart, Soul Wisdom, True knowledge, Dharma of Heart- embodiment of Bodhi, the permanent and everlasting, Secret Path. Other names assigned to the Doctrine of Eye are Head Learning, False knowledge, Dharma of the Eye- embodiment of the external and the non-existing (v.103,106,111,122,127,128,143,146).
 - Viveka i.e. discernment between real and false is required on both the paths. Then separating Head Learning from Soul Wisdom is also to be learned. (v. 111).
 - The Doctrine of the Eye being for the crowd and the Doctrine of the Heart is for the elect. (v. 119). Here the Doctrine of the Eye is referred to the exoteric teachings and the Doctrine of the Heart to esoteric ones. Heart Doctrine is also described as 'Great Sifter.' (v 120)
 - Severe penance, seclusion from the world will not lead to the goal of final liberation. Only conquering of sins of the gross form are not enough. (v. 132-133).
 - Sowing kindly acts, inaction in a deed of mercy becoming an action in a deadly sin. Further to reach Nirvana one must reach self knowledge and self knowledge is of loving deeds. (v. 135-136)
 - Patience without fearing failure and courting success, perseverance (v 137-138).
 - Three vestures i.e. Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya and Dharmakaya. (v. 141). The Dharmakaya refers to attaining Nirvana, stopping re-birth but inability to help salvation of other men. It is also mentioned as 'open path', the way to selfish 'bliss' which is shunned by Bodhisattvas of 'Secret Heart, the Buddhas of Compassion. (v. 142, 143) Donning Nirmanakaya, the humble robe is to forego eternal bliss for self, to help other men's salvation. This stage refers to attaining Nirvana but to renounce it which is mentioned as the supreme final step – the highest on Renunciation Path. This is mentioned as the 'Secret Path' selected by Buddhas of Perfection who sacrificed the SELF to the weaker selves. (v. 145-146)

- Caution if Doctrine of Heart is too high then one should remain content with the Eye Doctrine. For such persons if the Secret Path is unattainable today, it may be reached in future. The man should however do as much meritorious work as possible and be of good cheer and rest content with fate. (v. 147-149).
- The importance of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe as following wheel of life but mind has to be indifferent to pleasure or pain experienced in performing such duties. (v. 154).
- Giving light and comfort to toiling humanity and seeking out persons who know still less than oneself and to give bread of wisdom to them. (v. 158).
- Being humble while attaining wisdom and being humbler when wisdom has been mastered (v 161-162).
- The way to final freedom being within oneself and that way begins and ends outside the self i.e. one has to make effort himself. (v.169-170).
- Importance of pain, failure and fall in the life. Falling is not in vain because those obstacles will not return again and some lesson is learnt. (v. 176).

The one path is described as twofold in the end marked by four stages and seven portals. Four stage path refers to yoga involving Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi which leads to bliss immediately. This is the Open path. The other is the path of bliss deferred and leads to self immolation which is the Secret path. The first path is liberation and the second path is renunciation and therefore called the 'Path of Woe', 'woe for the living dead' (v.179-184). The Secret Way leads to Paranirvanic bliss but at the close of Kalpas without number (v 187). Samyaka Sambuddha the teacher of Perfection gave up his Self for the salvation of the world by stopping at the threshold of Nirvana and he became the greatest (v.188). The fruits of rest and liberation are mentioned as Sweet but the fruits of long and bitter duty i.e. renunciation for the sake of others are mentioned being Sweeter still (v.190). The stage where a person opts for self liberation is mentioned as Pratyeka-Buddha and he stands at the level of Buddha but his work for the world has nothing to do with its teaching. The stage where the person has won the battle i.e. attained Nirvana and renounces that great reward for others is mentioned as Bodhisattvas, a savior of the world (v. 191-192). The aspirant can choose either.

The Fragment ends with the phrase *Om Vajrapani Hum*.

Fragment III is about opening the door which leads to something beyond i.e. integrating humanity with The Divine. It consists of 121 verses numbered 196 to 316.

The opening v. 196 indicates the disciple telling the teacher that his choice is made and he thirsts for wisdom. The teacher in turn asks the disciple as to which the path out of the two i.e. Eye Doctrine of four fold Dhyana (Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi) or the path through six Paramitas (Perfect, charity, morality, truth, energy, kindness, wisdom.) leading to seventh step of wisdom, he chooses (v.198). It is also mentioned that rugged path of fourfold Dhyana winds on uphill and Paramitas heights are crossed by still steeper path through seven portals held by cruel, crafty powers – passions incarnate (v.199-200).

Other verses mention about,

- Each of the seven portals having a golden key that opens the gate and these keys are mentioned as; Dana, Shila, Kshanti, Viraga, Virya, Dhyana, Prajna (v.206-213). The Paramitas have to be mastered before approaching the last portal i.e. Prajna. (v. 215).
- Learning to separate the body from the mind, to dissipate the astral and to live in the eternal being necessary before approaching the portals. For this one has to feel living in all things and all things in Self. (v. 217). All separations have to cease. One has to live in the Universal Soul as well as in all the fellows. Personal self has to be sacrificed to the SELF and thereby *antahkarana* to be destroyed. Heart and mind have to be attuned to the great mind and heart of all mankind. (v. 225, 228).
- Each of the seven portals narrowing one after another in that order and having requirements and difficulties to be met (v 230-293).
- The middle portal i.e. Viraga is mentioned as ‘Gate of Balance’ and also as the gate of woe with its ten thousand snares. But it is also stated that by mastering body and mind it is safe to cross this gate (v. 250, 252).
- The pitfalls and risk of falling are mentioned at every gate before Dhyana i.e. sixth portal which is mentioned as Bodhi

portal and then it is said that saint is safe. (v. 280).

After crossing the seventh portal the nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued and a mysterious whisper calls out that a Master of the Day (whole manvantara) has arisen (v. 281). Such a person now becomes a white pillar, his mind becomes calm like a boundless ocean and he becomes holder of life and death. He becomes a mighty force and above the great Brahma and Indra (v. 281-283). The person having attained this stage follows the step of holy Tathagata (Buddha) and gives his powers and Prajna for benefit of humanity. He has won the super human knowledge and Deva wisdom. He becomes a channel of Alaya. He becomes like fixed star in the heaven giving light to all but taking from none (v.285, 289, 291). He also becomes like pure snow in the mountain unaffected by all external happenings but protecting the seeds of wisdom under it (v.292). He gets wedged as a stone with countless other stones to form the ‘Guardian Wall’ for protecting humanity (v.293). The Shrotapatti crave for the Dhyana path the goal of which is Nirvana (v.298). But on the Arhata path roots of Tanha are torn out and he follows the Law of Laws eternal harmony, the law of love eternal. He himself becomes compassion absolute (v. 300-301). This is also mentioned as Arya path, the path of Buddhas of Perfection (v. 302). On this path the person is no more Shrotapatti but becomes a Bodhisattva and builds a Nirmanakaya for himself. He remains unselfish till the endless end like Buddha (v.306, 309)

After crossing the seventh portal, the heaven and earth unite to sing his praise, from the fourfold manifested powers of nature i.e. fire, water, earth and wind a chant of love arises and the wordless voice of ALL NATURE in thousand tones proclaims joy to all men of the earth because a pilgrim has returned back from the other shore to help the humanity and that a new Arhat is born (V.311).

The Fragment ends with the phrase “Peace to all Beings”.

Conclusion

The mystic book of *The Voice of the Silence* gives in beautiful poetic language the stages of Yoga, fourfold Truth, path of six Paramitas, being practiced through seven portals of virtues and leading to perfection. Though the path is one but two distinct ends are mentioned i.e. of path of Nirvana and path of Bodhisattva. The latter path involves great renunciation of Nirvana and returning to the humanity for the purpose of uplifting it. This is considered nobler and greater goal.

NEWS AND NOTES

Bengal

Bro. Salil Deb of Bharadwaja Lodge organized a Yoga Training Camp on 23 January, 2014, in which 50 persons participated.

Bro. Mosaraf Hussain of Azad Lodge opened a stall to sell Theosophical books during Ganga Sagar Mela.

Mrs. Manju Sundaram spoke on the 'Teachings of Saint Poet Kabir' at Bharadwaja Lodge and Mayfair Lodge on 27 February and 4 March respectively.

Study classes are regularly held at Bharadwaja Lodge, Mayfair Lodge, Behala Lodge, Bally Lodge, Azad Lodge Sundarban Lodge and Besant Study Centre.

Bombay

Centenary Lodge: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". In this spirit Sis. Rafia Abdul Ali, Sis. Razia Ali and Sis. Sujata Pandit Gathered on 15th January 2014 to reactivate Centenary Lodge. In the initial discussion they observed that media should report the good which is happening, instead of highlighting crimes which create negativity in the atmosphere. They started the study of the book 'At the Feet of the Master' by sharing how & why the book was written.

Visit of International Vice-President Mr. M.P. Singhal on 21st January 2014: This visit was specially made to see the Presidential Bungalow at Juhu Theosophical colony, constructed as per the last wish of Dr. Radha Burnier. Mr. Singhal was pleased to see it and at that premises he met & addressed 25 members of Ananda, Vasanta & Blavatsky Lodge.

Vimadalal Bilvia Lodge, after painting their premises had a Zoroastrian Jashan Ceremony on 22nd January 2015 to invoke Divine Grace. There was *Hum Bandagi* (Congregational Prayer) and the Officiating Priest Ervard Zarolia explained the significance of the ceremony. Brethren of Blavatsky & Shanti Lodge also attended the Jashan and partook of *Chashni* (Prasad).

A talk on 'Music of Soul' by Mrs. Previn K. Surty was held at Shanti Lodge on 2 January. Speaking on Esoteric Teachings of Zoroastrian Religion she said: "We have come from The Light and after purifi-

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cation we will return to The Light". There is the Teachings and the Laws of that religion for his spiritual advancement. She ended her talk with signing a song "music of soul" composed by her.

Kerala

Adayar Day was observed in almost all the Lodges on 17 February. Our Founder President, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, Giordano Bruno, Charles W Leadbeater and J Krishnamurti were remembered on this occasion. Gouthama Lodge, Kannur, collected and remitted Rs.1,400/- (Adayar Day collections) to the Indian Bank Account No.439620551 through the Kannur Branch of Indian Bank.

Bro. S. Shivadas, President K.T.F., conducted study classes at Anantha Lodge, Thiruvananthapuram on "Light on the Path" on 5, 12, 19 and 26 of February. At Sree Sankara Lodge, Ernakulam, he conducted study classes on "In the Outer Court" on 14, 21 and 28 February. He also talked on "Laws of Manu in the Light of Theosophy" at Annapoorni Lodge, Alleppey, on 23 February. He participated in the Executive Committee's Meeting of KTF and TOS at Ernakulam on 16 February.

Annapoorni Lodge, Alleppey, organized talks on "Divine Feminine" by Dr. V.P. Viswakumar, "Bharatha Dardanam" by Madhu Alappuzha, "Inner Government of the World" by Vaikom Sreeram and "Laws of Manu in the light of Theosophy" by Bro. S. Sivadas. Trichur Lodge conducted regular classes on every Wednesday on "Letters from the Masters."

The second meeting of the Executive Committee of KTF was held on Sunday, 16 February 2014, at Sree Sankara TS Lodge, Ernakulam. Bro. S. Shivadas, G Ramanathan, P.T. Krishnadas, S Madhusudhanan Pillai, A V Seethalakshmi and M. A. Raveendran attended the meeting. It was decided to organize a series of talks of Sri. P.K. Jayaswal, National Lecturer, from March 11 to 16 at the Theosophical Lodge of Ernakulam, Alleppey and Trichur Lodge and also to attend the South India Conference to be held at Adayar from 18 to 20 April.

Marathi

The Poona Lodge completed 132 years on 25 January 2014. So a

function was organized on 26 Janaury. Bro. S.D. Burse, President of the Lodge, gave introductory speech. About 13-15 members of the Lodge shared their views. They mainly told about how they came first time in Lodge, what they have gained from the Lodge in particular and from theosophy in general, what are thier responsibilities towards the Lodge etc.

A meeting was organized by the Theosophical Lodge at Thane to observe Adyar Day. After the Universal Prayer, Bro. C.H. Bhise explained the significance of the day. It was followed by a talk on 'The Numerical significance of 17 according to astrology'. This talk was delivered by Bro. Anil Kumar Deshpande. He also spoke about J. Krishnamurti and his association with Adyar. The talks were followed by questions & answers.

Dr. Shalinitai Verma (Diploma No. 81594), former President of Akola Lodge passed to peace on 30-1-2014 at Amaravati.

Royalaseema

Adyar day was celebrated at Hospet Theosophical Lodge on 17 February 2014. The programme was jointly organized by Hospet Theosophical Lodge and Theosophical College of Management. Bro. Ashok Jere, Secretary, was the chief guest. Members of the Society, Bro. T. Rammurthy and Sis. Meenakshi Devi, were present and Bro. Hanumantha Rao presided over the Function. BBM students were the audience. The programme started with reciting Theosophical prayer by Rahul Bhatt and Kapil Rawal (BBM 1 year). Saddam Hussain (BBM Final Year) presented a paper on the importance of Adyar Day. Sri. U Raghavendra Rao, Retd. Principal of Theosophical Women's College, was the main speaker. He spoke on the importance of Theosophical principles for Management Graduates in their career and job. Sri. Ashok Jere and Sri. Hanumatha Rao also enumerated the principles of Theosophy to the students. Kumari Ayesha of previous batch got 9th rank in the university exams for the year 2012-13. So, she along with five students who were recently selected for Tata Consultancy Services Bangalore on 14.2.14 at Hubli were given mementoes on this occasion. They are Anish Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar, Farida Banu, Prithiv Kulkarni, Soorthi B.M. of BBM 6th Sem. Vote of Thanks was given by Sawan of BBM 6th Sem.

C.W. Leadbeater's *punyatithi* was observed on March 1 by the members of Bellary Sanmarga Theosophical Lodge. The programme started with Bharat Samaj Pooja followed by Prayers of All Faiths. Sri H.P. Raghavendra Achar of Koppal explained the significance of the day.

Telugu

Adyar Day was observed on 17 February by the members of the Theosophical Lodge at Vijayawada. Bro. D.S. R. Anjaneyulu, President of the Lodge, explained the importance of Adyar Day and also read out an article on it published in the February issue of 'The Theosophist'.

Uttar Pradesh

The following talks were held at Nirvana Lodge, Agara, in February: "Spiritualism through Mathematics" by Dr. H.V. Pandey, R.L. Tiwari memorial lecturer on 'Significance of Sundar Kand' by Bro. Bhagawan Sharma, 'Teachings of Koran' by Bro. Kamar Iqbal and 'Iswar' by Bro. Brijesh Rajput. In a meeting organized on the occasion of Adyar Day, a CD on 'Adyar through lens' was shown.

Bro. U.S. Pandey, Federation Secretary, delivered the following talks at Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, in February: 'God without and God within' and 'Mind, Mental Body & Self in Yoga'. Bro. B.L Dube's talk on 'Evolution of Man' was held on 26 February. Life and work of Col. H.S. Olcott was discussed on the occasion of Adyar Day and homage was paid to him.

Bro. U. S. Pandey addressed the participants in a Social Animating programme organized by National Association for the Blind U.P. State Chapter at Lucknow on the theme 'Strengthening and use of thought power to help the disabled'. It was held on 11 February.

A day-long seminar for central U.P. region of U.P. Federation was organized at Lucknow on 23.02.14 on the theme "Theosophy and the Theosophist". The programme commenced with recitation of Universal prayer. Bro. U.S. Pandey, Fed. Secretary, introduced the theme and inaugurated it. Sister Basumati Agnihotri, Bro. J.N. Sharma, Bro. K.K. Srivastava and Bro. U.S Pandey spoke on the occasion. Bro. R.U. Shukla made the concluding remarks. Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri conducted the proceedings. The participants expressed their appreciation for the content presented in the talks.

A one-day seminar for eastern Region of U.P. Federation was organized at Sarvhitakari Lodge, Gorakhpur on 02.03.14 on the theme "Practical Occultism". The programme commenced with recitation of Universal Prayer followed by welcome of participants by Bro. Ajai Kumar, Secretary of Sarvhitakari Lodge. Bro. U. S. Pandey, Fed. Secretary, introduced the topic giving background of the booklet titled 'Practical Occultism' which includes two articles written by H.P.B. and originally published in "The Lucifer" journal. He, while inaugurating the seminar mentioned about the nature and object of contents of the booklet and its importance for students and seekers of the Divine Wisdom. Bro. Ajai Kumar in his talk covered the first part of the booklet sub-titled 'Important to Students'. Bro. U.S. Pandey covered second part sub-titled 'Occultism versus the Occult Arts' and also a portion of third part sub-titled 'Some Practical Suggestions for Daily Life'. Bro. S.B.R. Mishra, Vice-President of the Lodge, covered remaining portion of the third part and gave concluding remarks. There was lively interaction between the audience and the speakers.

Shri Gyan Prakash Saxena, a member of Satyamarg Lodge, Lucknow, passed to peace on 20.12.2013.

National Lecturer

Bro. N.C. Krishna visited Utkal Federation from 7 to 18 February. He attended the 49th Annual Conference of the Federation on 8-9 February and delivered a talk on 'The Theosophical Order of Service'. He directed the study of HPB's book *The Key to Theosophy* from 10 to 11 February. The same book was taken up for study at Sambalpur from 13 to 15 February where Bro. N.C. Krishna gave a talk as well on 'Original programme of the Theosophical Society'. He delivered a talk on 'The significance of Adyar Day & the Role of T.S. members' at Cuttack on 17 February.

Bro. B.D. Tendulkar directed the study of *The Key to Theosophy* at Nagpur Lodge, Dhantoli, from 21-23 February. He also attended a meeting at Maitreya Lodge (Nagpur) and delivered a talk there on 'Relevance of Theosophy today'.

Indian Section Headquarters

Bro. B.D. Tendulkar, National Lecturer, highlighted the various contributions of Col. H.S. Olcott in a public meeting organized at the Section HQ on the occasion of Adyar Day. The meeting was attended by the members, students, guests and the members of the National Executive Committee of the Section. The meeting started with the Prayers of All Faiths. Welcoming the gathering the General Secretary mentioned how this day was chosen in 1922 to pay homage and to remember those who followed Truth.

General Secretary's Visits

The 131st Anniversary of Bengal Theosophical Society was held on 28 February, 2014, at the BTS Hall, Kolkata. The Eastern Zonal Conference was held on March 1. The General Secretary was the Chief Guest and he delivered a talk on the theme of the Anniversary 'Wisdom and Service' and a public lecturer on 'From Individual to Indivisible'. Besides, the General Secretary visited the Theosophical Lodges at Barackpore and Sundarvan where he addressed the members on 'Motives of service'. The General Secretary was the Chief Guest on the occasion of the 9th Anniversary of the Siddharth Group of TOS, Kolkata, on 4 March. He delivered a short talk there on 'To Love is to Serve'.

The General Secretary had been to Krishnagiri (Tamil Federation) on 6-7 March in connection with property matters there. Besides, he met the members of the Theosophical Lodge there. Some members of the TOS Group of Dharmapuri came to meet the G.S. at Krishnagiri. He had informal dialogue with the members of both the places separately. Bro. S. Harihararaghavan (General Manager, International HQ), Bro. M.V. Rengarajan (President of Tamil Federation) and Bro. V.K. Murugesan of Vellore also participated in these informal meetings.

Theosophical Order of Service

Bro. Debabrata Dutta organized a TOS camp at Khardah where study materials and winter uniform were distributed among the needy persons.

Bro. Arun Mirdha and Bro. Nandulal Sardar of Mathurapur organized a programme at Jayanagar Town Hall for the distribution of Mobility Aids and Winter uniforms among hundreds of needy persons.

Study Camp by the Indian Section at Bhowali

11 May to	17	Rs. 4550/-	30 persons
28 May 2014	days	per person	can register
+1+1 prior	+after		upto 30th April 2014

**For details see the 3rd cover page of
The Indian Theosophist, March 2014,**

BOOK OF INTEREST

INVISIBLE WORLDS: ANNIE BESANT ON PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

Annie Besant's essays compiled by Kurt Leland. Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 2013. 411 + xii pages, paper.

Annie Besant was a grande dame of Theosophy, second only to that grandest of all Theosophical dames, H. P. Blavatsky, the Mother of us all. A listing of Besant's oeuvre would require far more space than this review can accommodate. The volume under review consists of sixteen of her many publications originally appearing between 1896 and 1914.

The excellent chronology on pages 21- 27 of the book under review records that Besant's life stretched from 1847, when she was born as Annie Wood in the central London district of Clapham, to 1933, when she died at Adyar after a life of distinguished service, both political to India and Theosophical to the world, having spent eighty-six years doing the Masters' work on the physical plane. The *Theosophical Encyclopedia* (edited by Philip S. Harris, Vicente R. Hao Chin, Jr., and Richard W. Brooks; Quezon City, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 2006) includes a detailed and illustrated biography of Besant by Catherine Wessinger.

During her lifetime, Annie Besant went through a series of striking psychological changes that were associated with several men. Although Besant was a remarkably independent woman, she seems to have depended on men to trigger those changes. She was raised in a traditional family and married an Anglican vicar but became disillusioned with orthodox Christianity when she tried to combine the various gospel accounts of the life of Jesus into a single coherent sequence.

Subsequently she formed an alliance with Charles Bradlaugh, a noted freethinker of the time and with him published a notorious pamphlet, 'Why I Do Not Believe In God' (1887), which long remained popular, being reprinted, for example, more than a century later in *American Atheist: A Journal of Atheist News and Thought* 35.3 (Summer 1997) and 35.4 (Fall 1997). She also collaborated with Bradlaugh in reprinting and selling a pamphlet on birth control, which today would seem tame (and which in fact advocated inadequate techniques to avoid

conception), but at the time her role in distributing that publication resulted in her losing control over her children as she was deemed to be an unfit mother.

From her early days, Besant felt called to be an orator. During her marriage to the Anglican vicar, she would go into the closed and empty church, mount into the pulpit, and preach to a nonexistent congregation. That anticipated a lifetime of oratory. After her alliance with Bradlaugh, she became an advocate for union activities, including support for an 1888 strike of London matchgirls, who worked under miserable and dangerous conditions producing matches with which 'gentlemen' of the time lit their cigars.

In 1889, Besant was invited to review a new book for the *Pall Mall Gazette* periodical. It was Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* (1888). Besant was inspired by that book to meet its author; upon doing so, she was immediately converted to Theosophy, which brought to an end her association with Bradlaugh but opened doors to a new life. She became Blavatsky's favourite disciple. On Blavatsky's death in 1891, Besant became the leading female member of the Society. In 1894, Besant met fellow Theosophist Charles Webster Leadbeater, who became her closest collaborator for the rest of her life. Leadbeater was clairvoyant and helped Besant become so also. In 1902 Besant accompanied Francesca Arundale to Paris, where she became a Co-Freemason and eventually the Order's Most Puissant Grand Commander. After the 1907 death of Henry Steel Olcott, the founder and lifetime president of the Theosophical Society, Besant succeeded him as president.

The title of this book is a guide to significant topics covered by the contents. One concept of Theosophy that Besant especially elaborated is that the physical world available to our senses is only one of a series in the cosmos. The non-physical worlds, which are 'invisible' to our senses, are nevertheless perceptible by the non-physical 'powers latent' in all human beings. The book title's phrase 'Psychic and Spiritual Development' is also significant. We are both psychic and spiritual (referred to as personality and individuality). Although the human constitution has many aspects, the traditional number being seven, we are not just a congeries of those aspects, but a unified wholeness of which those aspects are facets.

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