

THE INDIAN THEOSOPHIST

**Revised Annual Dues for 2017-18
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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

Cover Page : **Statues of the Founders, Headquarters Hall, Adyar.**

The Indian Section (I.S.) Council has revised the dues and amended the constitution at its meeting on 29/12/2017. The President has approved the same. All Lodge and Federation (Fed.) Secretaries should note the new dues that are applicable from October 1, 2017 as shown below:

1. Entrance Fee (one time)..... Rs. 100 (Rs. 60 to I.S., Rs. 40 to Fed.)
2. Annual Membership Dues..... Rs. 150 (Rs. 86 to I.S., Rs. 64 to Fed.)
3. Annual Married Couple Dues..... Rs. Rs. 225 (Rs. 129 to I.S., Rs. 96 to Fed.)
4. Annual Dues for members below 25 yrs..... Rs. 75 (Rs. 43 to I.S. Rs. 32 to Fed.)
5. Annual Dues of Unattached members..... Rs. 150 (Rs. 150 to I.S.)
6. Dues for Life membership..... Rs. 3000 (commuted Dues to I.S.)
7. Annual Subscription of Indian Theosophist (I.T.)
 - a) For members..... Rs. 30.
 - b) For non-membersRs. 50.
8. a) Long Term (15 yrs) Subscription of I.T....Rs. 300 (for members)
b) Long Term (15 yrs) Subscription of I.T....Rs.500 (for non-members)
9. Lodges will have discretion to fix the Lodge fees.

Please note that only those members who will pay the annual subscription of "The Indian Theosophist" in addition to the annual dues will be entitled to receive the journal. Also members, whose annual dues for the next year have not been received by the Section in advance by 30th September, shall be deemed to be in arrears and not in good standing from one year after the following 1st October, till their dues are paid.

Pradip K. Mahapatra
Jt. Gen. Secretary, Indian Section.

A STEP FORWARD

The law of *Karma* is mentioned in Theosophical literature like “Introductory Studies in Theosophy” by Adelaide Gardner as well as in the religious books of various religions. Here the word Karma has been used to indicate the law by which the exact result of every action, feeling and thought is in the end returned to the individual who first went about taking such action, producing some feeling or creating a thought in the mind. Let us see how the law can explain perfect divine justice and show one how to avoid the anxieties in life.

Newton’s third law of Motion states that “For every action (force) in nature, there is an equal and opposite reaction”. As an engineering student, it is one part of education that is always remembered. In Theosophical teachings the interplay of action and reaction is considered to be universal, and an expression of the great pairs of opposites that are created by the polarization of the one divine life. The result is a duality that gives rise to all the pairs of opposites like good and evil, attraction and repulsion, sound and silence, male and female, etc. There is a third balancing factor in the one divine life which is the field of interaction between the opposites. It is through this third factor that the apparent disharmony of the opposing pairs is continually resolved. For example, our conscience is an example of this third factor which helps us to resolve between the good and the evil.

It is interesting to see how the law of Karma helps every individual on the Path of evolution. When one finds that a certain reaction is painful, the one who suffers tends to avoid the mistake next time. If he believes it to be pleasant, he will repeat the experience and find out more about it. Karmic waves created by several lives, enlarging in each cycle by sympathetic responses can be absorbed only by swallowing the pill of poison of our own creation without disturbing the balance of one’s own mind. Digesting the pill of old karmic waves and creating none is

the only tool to peace and eternal harmony. So in the end one can learn a way of behaviour that brings abiding satisfaction and develop capacity to lift the heavy Karma of the world.

In practice, it is sometimes very hard to define good and bad Karma. For example Krishna asked Arjun to shoot an arrow on Karna when he had got down from the chariot and was trying to free the wheel of his chariot, even though that was against the right practice!! Was it right action? Was it bad Karma or good Karma? Even after considerable reflection in the mind, it is difficult to answer the question. One can always say that it is bad karma because it was wrong action as per norms of the war. The argument against it is that it is done against someone who had done wrong action and supported the evil. The important thing for us as Theosophists is not the correct answers to the questions posed but the fact that they must be deliberated to make the mind sensitive enough to listen to one’s conscience and understand the laws governing human consciousness. Through such knowledge and understanding, one can evoke from his spiritual centre, latent faculties not even dreamt by most people.

The deeper one penetrates into the study of the working of the Law of Karma, the more one sees that it is well adapted to the needs and processes of human growth. In the earlier stages, for example, much can be learned and suffered as group experience. The benefits at that time may come that are not yet personally earned. Then, as individual members of the group become independent and stand out from the mass, they create far more individual impact upon their environment. In the end, one learns that all life is ONE and gladly offers oneself as the servant of the whole, so that whatever merit one may develop shall benefit one’s fellows.

This is the path of nature to evolution through karmic law and certainly a step forward in the life of the person.

COMING TO WISDOM AND THE PROCESS OF AGING

Let us consider something that we all have *some* interest in — the process of aging, inherent in Nature. Everything has an apparent beginning when it appears in this world, a process through which it goes, and then it seemingly disappears from this world. It is one of the great mysteries that faces humanity in our thinking about our place in this universe. It is also one of the subjects to which the great minds throughout history have given their attention. It is central to an understanding of the deeper subject of wisdom.

We are all engaged in this process. There are many popular sayings comparing youth with age, but it seems that one of the distinguishing features between the person who is young and one who is deemed older, is the factor of experience. Activity is the hallmark of youth, but experience comes with age. This seems to be a distinguishing factor.

There is a humorous expression that “good judgment comes from experience, but experience comes from bad judgment”. One of the facts of life is that the nature of youth is, being uninformed about the ways of the world. That level of experience is what is generally regarded as the separating factor between the youthful mind, and that which has matured. If we examine more closely, we realize that the experiences we accumulate over the course of a lifetime tend to be of certain types. There are sensations that affect our bodies, which are repeated over and over again during the course of a lifetime. We “gain experience” in the world of sensations. We also have all sorts of emotional encounters over the course of a lifetime and our emotional nature becomes experienced in the ways of that world of feelings. Then there is the constant stream and cycling of thoughts through our minds.

Our interaction with this world of sensation, emotion, and thought builds up the body of our experience, which we then point to as “knowledge”. In normal terms the person who is said to be “knowledgeable” is

experienced in the ways of these three worlds of the personality. This level of experience has great value. In *At the Feet of the Master* there are four qualifications, the first of which is discrimination. The body of experience and knowledge which comes with age is the basis for our recognition of that which is good, better, and best. The discriminatory capacities of the mind draw from this body of knowledge.

When we talk about wisdom — and “Theosophy” is the Ageless Wisdom — is that the same as knowledge of any kind? This is a question that we should come back to again and again, to ask ourselves: What is real knowledge, and what is wisdom? The traditions that have attempted to enlighten us on this subject describe wisdom in different ways. A valid teacher who is experienced in the realm of wisdom will always offer the caveat that the best that can be done is for some words to be given. The attempt has been made over time to use language and symbol to dress up that which is beyond sensation, beyond emotion, beyond thought, and necessarily beyond words, so that we can perceive something of the outline of this profound, yet invisible wisdom.

There are many words that have been used to describe wisdom. In contemporary English language we might call wisdom “the perception of reality” — a reality which extends beyond our five senses and encompasses the soul nature. In our traditional Theosophical literature we think in terms of *buddhi*, and the vehicle capable of experiencing *buddhi* we speak of as *buddhi-manas* — *the illumined mind*, or wisdom-mind.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, and in Buddhist practice, there is the concept of perfections, or *pâramitâ*-s. In Buddhist teachings there are six or ten *pâramitâ*-s. In *The Voice of the Silence* H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) enumerated seven. The final one that is listed is the perfection of wisdom, *prajñâ*. In the attempts to communicate what *prajñâ* is, it is referred to in different ways. In Tibetan Buddhism there is a long mantra, or sutra, that is recommended to be recited and meditated upon, called the *Prajñâ-pâramitâ Sutra*, or the sutra on the wisdom perfection. That sutra is a description given by Avalokitesvara, who had the experience of the wisdom-mind, trying to communicate it to ³âriputra — another disciple of the Buddha.

Avalokitesvara attempts a description of wisdom in this mantra,

which is both fascinating and powerful in its potential for realization. The way in which wisdom is described is completely in terms of negation, that is, only described as what it is *not*. The view of the *Prajñâ-pâramitâ Sutra* is that wisdom cannot be defined or named, it can only be indicated by stripping away that which it is not. In the Sutra there is a masterful stripping away of everything that would hide a true perception of wisdom from us.

In speaking to Sâriputra, Avalokitesvara says: “This is the original character of everything. It is not born, it is not annihilated, it is not tainted, it is not pure. It does not increase, it does not decrease. . . . In wisdom there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no body, no mind, no ignorance, also no ending of ignorance.” If this does not strain our mind, what does? Everything that our normal perception can grasp is not wisdom. This is one approach to try to communicate the nature, the value, and to bring about the experience of wisdom. This is the *via negativa*, the path that leads to wisdom through negation.

There are other ways of describing wisdom. Socrates was regarded as the wisest man alive in his time. Although he was exceedingly knowledgeable, and highly sought after for his knowledge, he was recognized as wise because he would tell whoever would ask that “I know one thing, that I know nothing”. His perception that wisdom is composed of nothing — no-thing — made him a wise man.

There is a book in the Bible called “The Book of Wisdom” or “The Wisdom of Solomon”. In that short book King Solomon describes his view of wisdom and how he came to it. It is an often overlooked esoteric description. It is a very different description from the *via negativa* approach of the *Prajñâ-pâramitâ Sutra*. It is given in positive, or assertive, terms and personifies wisdom as feminine, as “she” or “her”. One of the reasons Solomon was regarded as the wisest of men was that when he became king of his people he was told by God to make any wish, and it would be granted. A normal king would have wished to extend his kingdom, or to have riches beyond any man who had lived. Instead, his wish was: “Grant me wisdom and understanding.” He recognized that all other virtues followed from these two.

In this book Solomon describes wisdom in beautiful and poetic ways. He says we should seek her like people seek after silver and gold,

and search for her as a hidden treasure. He says that wisdom is “more moving than motion”, and “she passes through all things because of her purity”. He added that wisdom, being One, undivided, can do all things, and “resting in herself she makes all things new”. This is poetry, but also beauty, truth, and power. In Oneness, she is everywhere present. As he expressed it: “She mightily goes from one end of the universe to the other, and sweetly orders all things.” This is wisdom from the perspective of Solomon, a presentation of the *via positiva*. Neither the *via negativa* nor the *via positiva* is correct. Each is partial, but both of them are attempts to point us in the direction of what is described as a hidden treasure within each one of us. If we had to travel to distant lands to find these particular treasures, the teachings would be pointless.

There are countless sayings that repeat some aspect of the idea that “with age, comes wisdom”. It is a very popular expression that we might have even said ourselves: “Youth for activity, age for wisdom.” But is that saying true? Does the process of adding another year add some increment of wisdom? I doubt it! One of the things we notice is that when the wise describe this wisdom, it is as something which is hidden; it is veiled. It is not discovered. We do not find it, and we certainly do not create it. It is ever present, but unseen, although its activity and potential are constantly available.

What is the veiling process that hides wisdom from our perception and our experience? In our present human stage of development, the greatest veiling agent to our perception of Truth or Wisdom is desire, and our deep involvement in the desiring process. HPB and others described the major focus of the human mind at our stage as the mind of desire, *kâma-manas*. We are in a continual process of repeating desires.

The capacity for our senses to pursue the many desires of the senses — taste, sight, touch, smell, and hearing — diminishes with time, with age. In a sense, the capacity to give expression to the desiring mind diminishes just by virtue of living in this world long enough. Of course, there is nothing virtuous in that process; it is just a fact. One may appear to be virtuous simply because with age our capacity to express our desires diminishes. But this is appearance only, not reality.

Part I of *Light on the Path* gives three different classes of instruc-

tions. If these three are pursued, it leads to experiencing the wisdom-mind. In the words of this booklet, we will then be able to look for and see the blooming of the flower of the soul, which takes place when the storm has become silent. But attention to these three classes of instructions comes first, beginning with killing out certain ranges of desire — ambition, desire for sensation, for growth, for life, and so on. The next set of instructions are about cultivating desire — for things that are intangible, inexpressible in normal ways. Then come the instructions about seeking out the way. But “kill out” is the first category.

In the process of aging, the death of some of the things that *Light on the Path* advises us to kill out occurs in the natural course of things. They die out naturally from the death of one’s capacity to engage. So ambition, desire for sensation, and so on, die out with old age. But, again, to “die out” is not the same as to “kill out”. One involves the effect of the focused will, the other is simply due to the passage of time. The will that is focused over the course of many lifetimes has the capacity to kill out, to kill the root of the various kinds of desires that bloom life after life. In the case of any plant that dies in the autumn, its roots become strengthened during the winter, and it comes back with renewed fervor in the spring. “Kill out” is an admonition to one who would be a disciple.

We have the three Theosophical classics: *At the Feet of the Master*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and *Light on the Path*. The last one is spoken of as the advanced course in the sense that it is not written for those who are trying to find their way to the Path, nor for those who are trying to cultivate certain qualities along the Path. Plainly written at the beginning, it is intended for all disciples who find themselves firmly rooted, committed in this way, then it will be a book that can speak to them. In the absence of that commitment it might be interesting, informative, but not useful.

Damodar Mavalankar, in some of his writings during the course of his brief time here with us, put the nature of the spiritual path in very succinct terms. He said that a complete description of spiritual progress is this: “Check your desires, learn to control your mind. This is the foundation of *all* spiritual progress. In the Mahatma Letters much profound knowledge and many indications toward wisdom are given. They are so numerous that it is easy to overlook many of them. One of those

indications that can actually be a practice for us to the extent that we can remember it and try to apply it, is: “It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world.” This advice was being given in a letter to A. O. Hume, advising him not to allow the mind to become disturbed. That is part of the work, and it occurs through checking the emotions, learning to control the mind.

Another quote to close with, and to ponder over, relates to the unruffled mind— the capacity for it to be impressed from the invisible, and be expressed in the visible: “It is in the dead of night that Krishna is born.”

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, July, 2017).

**There lives a Master in the hearts of men
[who] Maketh their deeds by subtle pulling-strings,
Dance to what tune HE will. With all thy soul
Trust Him, and take Him for thy succour. . . !**

Bhagavadgita

Chapter 18, verses 61–62

COLONEL OLCOTT, HIS LIFE, AND ITS LESSONS*

We have gathered in this hall this afternoon, many of us old members of the Theosophical Society, and others who are not members, to commemorate the life of Colonel Olcott, the work he has done for India, for religion, and for the world.

Colonel Olcott was an American by birth, and his early life was spent in the service of his native country. One great lesson his life has to teach is that a man, by public service to his own race and people, may qualify himself in the eyes of those who guide humanity, for service in a great spiritual movement for the regeneration of mankind.

Especially in this country is it important to realize that the spirituality of a life does not depend on what a man does, but on what he is; it does not necessarily mean prayer, retirement from the world, meditation, reading of the scriptures, and so on; it means the recognition of the oneness of humanity, of the unity of all things, the harmony that renders concordant all discords, that inner realization of the ONE that is not marred by the presence of the many. Therefore Sri Krishna, speaking of the spiritual man, declared that the one who saw Him in all things, and all things in Him, that man lives in God, whatever may be his mode of living. It is far too much the habit here to think of the religious life as a life of forms, of garb, of appearance, instead of as a life of the realization of the one Self that lives in the hearts of all; and one lesson this life should bear to us is that, whatever the fashion of the outer living, that man is worthy to lead a spiritual movement who sees the unity of all things, who is indifferent to varieties of forms, who transcends the limitations of the separated appearances.

The life of Colonel Olcott falls very easily into three chief parts; the first of these has as characteristic his scientific work, beginning as

* Lecture given in Benares (Varanasi), in March 1907.

soon as he left college. Even at that time he devoted himself to the interests of his country, along the line of scientific agriculture. And so clever did he show himself in that work that while he was still a young man, about twenty-four, he was invited by the Government of Greece to take up the Chair of Scientific Agriculture in Athens. He did not care to accept the offer, but preferred to remain in his own land and to devote himself to its welfare. During this period, he introduced two or three valuable additions to American agriculture, one of which was sorghum; it was he who first drew the attention of Americans to its cultivation in the East, and pointed out that it might well be translated to the United States, and form an important article of consumption, which it now is.

He was not long allowed to live a peaceful life; but his friends like sometimes to think of him as giving himself to the study of agriculture, one of the foundations of national wealth; and men here of education and of good social standing might well follow his lead in this, and devote themselves to the same study in this country, in order to improve the quality of the soil and introduce new forms of vegetable life, thus showing that agriculture is not a thing only for the ignorant peasant, but that there is no nobler means of livelihood than the scientific study and practice of agriculture, with a view to its improvement, thus rendering famine impossible and increasing the national wealth. The value of the profession of agriculture for an active intelligent young man is therefore the first lesson of this life, showing how form labour for the supply of the material needs of the land may grow opportunities of greater service for the good of man.

The second period of Colonel Olcott's life is a striking contrast to the first. It was spent on the battlefield, and in struggling to check official corruption in the Army and Navy departments of the state, putting an end to the career of men who were profiting by the misery of their country. It is a strange thing that in almost every civilized country a great war is made an opportunity of the accumulation of large fortunes through fraud, practiced in connection with the supply of necessaries to the men who are giving their lives to save their land. Young Olcott went first as a volunteer, and fought through the Burnside campaign in Virginia; at the conclusion of this he was invalided home; and, as he was

starting again for the war, the Government chose him for a greater battlefield. It sent him to a battlefield where a courage greater than physical courage was demanded, where energy, keenness, justice, integrity, were all to be brought into play, and physical courage also. I once asked him whether he thought that he had really escaped the chance of physical death by this change in his position, his answer was: 'I was warned at this time that I had better not go out after dark, or a bullet might be the answer of the criminals'. For years he fought that battle, and when the ringleader was sent to prison for the swindles perpetrated on the army, Colonel Olcott was told that he had done as much for his country as if he had won a great victory on the battlefield. When finally that period of his life came to an end, he received from the Heads of the various Departments, the Ministers of the United States, a series of testimonials that any man might well have been proud to possess. When I was going through his papers after his death, I came on all these old records, and saw there what was the manner of man chosen to be the leader of a great spiritual movement.

Many would think that this stormy political life, this punishing of evil-doers, was a strange preparation for the leadership of a spiritual movement, yet it was the very best possible one, and the lesson I would draw from this second part of Colonel Olcott's life is that, in the eyes of Those who are the Guardians of the race, patriotic service is the best credential by which to obtain still further service and trust. The men who are to lead the great movements of the world must first prove themselves to be fit for leadership. Not among the slothful, the idle, the careless, or the indifferent, are the leaders of great causes to be found; and when young men come to me and say they desire to take some part in the spiritual movements of the time, my answer to them always is: 'What have you already done to make you worthy of greater trust?' For true ambition is the ambition that labours and not that which only dreams. Daydreams have their place in a lad's life, they are the materials for Ideals; but those only become leaders in the future whose daydreams are translated into workaday actualities, and whose hopes of personal distinction are justified by the acceptance of drudgery, by the spirit of sacrifice and renunciation, without which no great action can be done. These were the qualities shown by this young man; these were his credentials of higher service.

At the close of this second period, he took up the profession of the Law for a very short time; cases flowed in upon him rapidly, and he began to be a wealthy man. He was also a very clever journalist; he excelled in newspaper work, and he was employed on some of the American newspapers for work which needed keen ability. One thing entrusted to him was the investigation of the manifestations which were then taking place at the Eddy farmhouse, where some of the most remarkable spiritualistic phenomena that have ever occurred were in full swing. Here it was that he first met HPB, and he has described their first interview. He says he went into a room in the place, and saw her sitting there, queerly dressed smoking a cigarette. They began to talk, and found that they both knew a great deal about spiritualistic phenomena; and they observed together the series of phenomena that convinced so many that the beings who manifested there were visitors from the other side of death. When I tell you that the paper for which he was writing, which was usually sold for an anna, often fetched three rupees per copy during the time he wrote for it on these manifestations, you will understand how great was the public interest in the subject. He himself has written a book on the matter, and he remained all his life keenly interested in these and allied phenomena.

The woman whom Colonel Olcott met for the first time under these circumstances was to be his guide along a path, surer, more satisfactory, than the one upon which he had entered. In New York he became a constant visitor at her house, and she gradually unfolded to him some of the wonderful truths she had learned from her Eastern teacher, her Guru. Step by step she led him on amidst many difficulties. She was not well acquainted with the language, and between that and his ignorance of the matters they were dealing with, the progress of the pupil was not very rapid. But he learned a great deal, and at about this time a new method of teaching was developed. HPB possessed the power of stepping out of her body at will, and she would sometimes leave her body empty in order that someone else might come into it; it would then at times be utilized, by some of the great Indian Yogi-s who had trained it, as a medium whereby they could teach this pupil. In that house in New York, many strange things took place, ignorantly called 'phenomena', but in reality the results of astral and mental laws, reacting on the physical plane; and the students were thus shown how a system of occult science could be proven.

The Colonel was a scientific man, and nothing less than a solid foundation of stubborn material facts could have started him along the road which led to the study of Eastern religions. It was a most remarkable point about this teaching, that an Eastern teacher should be speaking through the lips of HPB to a Western pupil. The best proof of the fact that it was so was that HPB herself did not always know what was taught through her lips, but would afterwards read it over with keen interest and delight, and she learned in that way many facts with which she herself was not previously acquainted. In later life she would often talk of those days of peaceful study in America.

In this way Colonel Olcott was trained by the Masters to become the Head of the Society that was soon to be born, a Society which was to give to the world truths that the West did not possess and that the East had forgotten, truths which lie at the basis of every religion; and to give them with authority, as learned directly from Those who were Masters of knowledge. We may read in his first address to the TS, which had just been published, how far he foresaw the work of the Society, and where he was in error: right in the larger part, mistaken in one thing which he thought was to form a portion of that work, but which fell into the background- the public working of phenomena to convince the sceptical. When he asked HPB to demonstrate to the crowd the powers she possessed, she sternly refused. To a few pupils she was always willing to prove the reality of the laws by which she produced so many results; but she would not allow the work to become that of a showman, in a public hall where trickery would go as far as knowledge, and where no real demonstration could be given. Great was his disappointment, but he saw that she was right.

After a few years of TS work in America, they came to India together and here built up the strong foundations of the Theosophical Society, which has since spread through every land. Many of the Indians had, at this time, become very much materialized, and while studying Western philosophy, they knew nothing of the wonders of Indian thought, were ignorant of the great Vedantic writers, and of the treasures of Sanskrit learning.

It was only when Western voices spoke in reverence of the Eastern wisdom, that young Indians were willing to listen. How bitter were

the reproaches she launched against the Indian graduates of her own day! How she mocked at the long line of letters after their names, and taunted them with their ignorance of all that constituted their ancient glory, at their imitation of European clothing and customs- striving, as they would not be led, to scourge them into the recognition of India's degradation! Colonel Olcott travelled through the country, teaching the old doctrines, and he was gradually listened to. He came with his past behind him; it was known that he was thoroughly trained in Western methods, and yet he praised the Eastern learning, and bade them turn back to it; and India awoke to the sense of her heritage, and began to realize what she had to teach from the treasures of the past.

At first this American and this Russian were regarded with grave suspicion. There were at that time great fears of Russian aggression; of course she was a Russian spy; it was clear she could have no other object here, she, a descendant of princes, accustomed to luxury, why should she come and lead a simple Indian life, unless there were some secret plot? So they were watched by the police, who dogged their footsteps and made themselves a nuisance. At last Colonel Olcott wrote about it to the American Government, who made a complaint to the Indian Government; witness was borne to his own birth and standing, and to the high rank of his companion in her own land, and the matter was not allowed to drop, until the Indian Government wrote, declaring themselves satisfied, and there was no more trouble.

Strange things happened during the Indian tours; the Colonel developed a wonderful power of healing with a touch or a word, and hundreds flocked around him to be healed. For eighteen months this continued; then the power was withdrawn, and his great work as a healer came to an end, although he always retained his own natural magnetic power.

The two after a while went to Ceylon, and there they publicly became Buddhists, taking *Pansil*. Some have blamed them for this step, as being against the broad basis of the TS; but both were, in fact, Buddhists by mental constitution, indifferent to forms, impatient of restraint, with a tendency towards the Advaita philosophy and the teachings of Buddhism in general. So it was quite natural and right that they should

enter that religion, and by so doing they publicly marked the fact that India was the mother of religions. Buddhism, unlike her mother, Hinduism, welcomes into her fold all who will enter; moreover, they were constitutionally Buddhists rather than Hindus; they embraced that faith in order to show in the most public and striking way their love for the land and their identification with eastern teaching. Colonel Olcott cared little for metaphysics, but very much for common sense. He would often quote the words of the Buddha:

Do not believe a thing because another tells it, nor because Sages have written it, nor even on the authority of your own teachers. But believe it when it is corroborated by your own consciousness; and, when you believe of your own consciousness, then act accordingly.

You have there his philosophy in a nutshell.

But he was none the less, as a Buddhist, the servant of every great religion. To Hindus he talked as Hindu, and it was he who began the religious education of Hindu boys. He could not found Hindu schools, so he formed Hindu Boys' Associations in every great town he visited, and when he had formed them, he coaxed and scolded the leading wealthy men of the place into buying books for the boys who could not afford to get them for themselves. These Associations paved the way for our own educational movement, and he was the pioneer of the revival of religious education amongst the Hindus. In Ceylon, he founded two Buddhist Colleges and hundreds of schools. Before he went there, there was not a single Buddhist School on the island, but before he had been there many years, many of the missionary schools found it hard to keep open, for the boys would attend the schools where they had the advantage of learning their own religion. Not only did he found schools, but he fought for Buddhism both here and in London. There was a law in Ceylon which prevented the founding of any school within a certain number of miles of one already existing, and as there were missionary schools in every centre, monopolizing all the good sites, it meant that Buddhist schools could either not be founded at all, or only on out-of-the way sites. So he went to London, and there pointed out the iniquity of a law which denied to nation the education of its own children in its own religion. The Government gave way to the cry for justice; the law

was repealed in spite of all the efforts of the missionaries to prevent it, and Buddhists were set free to build their own schools in their own villages. Nor was this his only work for the Buddhist faith: he travelled to Japan, and there met the leading Buddhist priests in that country, and discussed with them their own faith. Knowing already the Buddhism of Ceylon, Siam, and Burma, he was able to talk over the differences between the Southern Church and the Northern, and he worked so tactfully and so effectively, that the result was the drawing up of the 'fourteen fundamental propositions of Buddhism' in a form which could be accepted not only in Japan and China, but also in Burma, Siam, and Ceylon; thus the two great Buddhist communities were for the first time knit together into one. When he was lying dead in his Adyar home, the flag which he had devised and which had been accepted by the Buddhist nations covered his corpse, and was carried with it to the burning-place.

Of his services to Hinduism I have already spoken. The religion of Zoroaster also vibrated to his teaching and he stirred its followers into activity, showing them the lines of research that would justify their faith to the world, and a Parsee voiced the thanks of the Parsee community when he had passed away. For Islam also he laboured, though not to the same extent. This was no fault of his; the difficulty lay with the Muslims themselves, who for the most part keep aloof from the TS, and resent the coming of a foreigner to preach their faith. Yet one of their own Moulvis begged him to enter the faith, for none, he declared, could preach it with more power than he. Some of them also became members of the Society, For Christianity, perhaps, he did least of all; but for that there was good reason. His work lay very little in the West, and in the East, where he chiefly laboured, Christianity was, and is, an aggressive religion, and he made it his business to defend the faiths which it attacked. Yet he did some service of Christianity also. Thus general was his work for the religions of the world.

It may be asked: 'Why did he make the Headquarters of the Society in India?' Because both he and HPB felt that it was in India that the religious problem of the world must be solved, and the race problem also. Here alone, amongst all the continents of the world, you find every great religion. There is no doubt at all about the immense time that both

Hinduism and Buddhism have existed in this land; nor is there any question as to the thirteen centuries since the followers of Zoroaster found an asylum here, or about the period when Islam entered conquering. You may think Christianity is more modern, but this is not so; in southern India there are Christian colonies that have been in existence at least since the third century of the Christian era, if not still earlier, so Christianity itself has Indian followers born for seventeen centuries upon India soil. Thus all the great religions are represented here, and if peace can be made between them here, it will be made everywhere. If Indians, living side by side, can so realize the oneness of their own faith, that the outer diversities can be transcended by the recognition of that inner unity, then may the religious peace of India spread to every other part of the globe, and in all countries may all religions be recognized as one, and religious hatreds cease.

We hear with delight of proposals to build in London a Hindu temple, a Buddhist temple, a Zoroastrian temple, a mosque; for when the metropolis of the Empire thus recognizes all faith as equal under one imperial sceptre, then the peace of God shall triumph in the world. This was the great work for which Colonel Olcott laboured, this the goal at which he aimed.

Theosophy is the declaration of the one religion- the Knowledge of God and the Love of man; this is the great unifier, the peacemaker, and Colonel Olcott with his dying lips spoke the message of the brotherhood of all Religions. It was by his wish that the sacred books of all these faiths were placed at his head when he lay dead, and that the representatives of the religions gathered round, and spoke their own scriptures in their own tongues. The Brahmana-s and the Buddhists forgot their narrowness and their differences, and together bore his body to the funeral pyre- the body that was not eastern in its birth. Where in India has that ever before been done? Where have Buddhists and Brahmana-s joined together to carry a white body to the burning? But they felt that this man belonged not to any in separation, but to all.

This Society to which he devoted his life on earth, to which he has pledged his life on the other side of death, to work for which he has promised to return, to which no greater devotion than his can ever be given- this Society incorporates the spirit that moved him in life and in

death, the recognition of the unity of all faiths, no distinction between the white men and the coloured, no hatred based on religious differences; and if you would make one united India, this is the greatest lesson you must learn from his life. While the religions of the land are regarded as rivals, India will be divided, and a united India will remain a dream; but when all men see these religions as branches of one Truth, as forming but one great Religion- when that is recognized, then, and then only, will India become one. That religious unity is what we call Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, the Knowledge of God- the basis of all religions, and the Love of Man- the Brotherhood of all races and classes. Amongst the workers for Indian nationality, Colonel Olcott is one of the greatest, because he struck at the root of separateness, the hatreds between religions, races, and classes. People are talking of memorials to be raised in his honour; to me his memorial is found wherever men of different religions meet together in love, wherever white men and coloured men meet as brothers, where Muslim clasps the hand of Hindu, and Buddhist, Parsee and Christian link hands with them, there is Olcott's true memorial, there, and there only, have been learned the lessons of his life.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, February 2007)

If Theosophy did not make men better, purer, wiser, more useful to themselves and to society, then this organization of ours had better never have been born. That it lives, and is respected even by those who cannot sympathize with its ideas, is evidence of its beneficent character.

H.S. Olcott

HPB-A WHITE LOTUS

There are no ancient symbols without a deep and philosophical meaning attached to them, their importance and significance increasing with their antiquity. Such is the Lotus. It is the flower sacred to Nature and her Gods, and represents the Abstract and the Concrete Universe, standing as the emblem of the productive powers of both Spiritual and Physical Nature. It was held as sacred from the remotest antiquity by the Aryan Hindus, the Egyptians, and by the Buddhists after them. It was revered in China and Japan and adopted as a Christian emblem by the Greek and Latin Churches, who made of it a messenger, as do now the Christians, who have replaced it with the water-lily.

*The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 406**.*

The Lotus, or Padma, is, moreover, a very ancient and favourite symbol for the Cosmos itself, and also for man. The popular reasons given are, firstly, the fact just mentioned, that the Lotus-seed contains within itself a perfect miniature of the future plant, which typifies the fact that the spiritual prototypes of all things exist in the immaterial world, before these things become materialized on earth. Secondly, the fact that the Lotus –plant grows up through the water, having its root in the Ilus, or mud, and spreading its flower in the air above. The Lotus thus typifies the life of man and also that of the Cosmos; for the Secret Doctrine teaches that the elements of both are the same, and that both are developing in the same direction. The root of the Lotus sunk in the mud represents material life, the stalk passing up through the water typifies existence in the astral world and the flower floating on the water and opening to the sky is emblematical of spiritual being.

*The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 88**.*

* President of Kashi Tattva Sabha, Varanasi.

** Taken from “White Lotus Day’ by C. Jinarajadasa, p.1

‘Our teacher’ HPB was a white lotus in real sense. Her entire life exhibits how her life started from the worldly mud of crisis and grew ‘through intermediary region, which is the waters’ – existence in the astral world until finally blossomed out in the air expressing its mysterious beauty in the higher regions of human consciousness.¹ She expressed the realized perfection of things and fully manifested the Divine thought embodied in her form. HPB was an extraordinary person, a detached soul like lotus who presented the ancient timeless wisdom claiming no authority or power. She was endowed with indomitable courage, conviction and divine abilities. Her purity and nature of self-sacrifice has been summarized in one of the earliest letters from one of the Mahatmas as under:²

“Chaste and pure soul shut inside an outwardly coarse nature... anyone might well be dazzled by the divine Light concealed under such a bark. Devoted to the great cause of Truth, she sacrificed for it her very heart’s blood”.

Madam Blavatsky, born in a Russian royal family was extremely kind hearted and deeply compassionate. Though brought up in an aristocratic family, her empathy and compassion for those who were poor and lower in status than her was visible in her right from childhood and remained throughout her life. As a child, she always preferred to play with the servants’ children rather than with her equals. She never nursed a grievance or carried a malice in her heart against any one even though that person might have wronged her grievously. When someone asked her why she was allowing persons who looked bad and undesirable to come to her, her answer was “As my friend, a person’s cloudy forbidding aura may fill me with misgivings but here is always the divine spark I see within him. Who am I to refuse anyone the chance of profiting by the truths I can teach him... and thereby entering upon the Path... It does not matter that I personally risk the consequences of deception, hatred, vengeance while there is a hope for the others’ redemption”. This only reflects her unshakable faith on oneness of all life and self-less service to others. Madam Blavatsky adds. “For every flower of love and charity, he plants in his neighbours’ garden, a loathsome weed will disappear from his own and in this garden of gods - Humanity- shall blossom as a rose”.

William Kingsland, one of her contemporaries and also her student provides us the clue about the special message she brought to the world

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that was fast turning to rank materialism- “The keynote of her teachings, the keynote of her life was- self-sacrifice”. All great teachers live what they teach. It was true to the core in HPB’s life. Her life was an epitome of self-sacrifice. When *The Secret Doctrine* was being written, she had one time become quite sick and doctors had no hope. Kingsland tells us, she herself knew she was dying and rejoiced greatly but Master came to her and showed her the work still to be done and gave her the choice – the bliss of dying or the cross of living, she chose the cross. It was a huge sacrifice to embrace suffering for continuing the work for her students, for all the members of the Theosophical Society all over the world and for the humanity at large. She lived on not only to complete *The Secret Doctrine* but *The Key to Theosophy* and *The Voice of the Silence* as well. HPB chose to sacrifice ‘a life of ease and comfort to tread the path of woe’ at a very young age and had travelled all over the world for over 20 years including places not easily accessible to gain occult knowledge not for herself but for the service of humanity. Another striking aspect of her personality was that she led her life with free will and freedom of action. From her life, we all can learn the greatest lesson to our hearts is need to be absolutely free in our thoughts and in our devotion to the Truth. If we are convinced in our unbiased judgement based on wisdom of a useful course of action, we should boldly pursue it. In that way, she was a heroic person.

HPB was a very unusual child and was psychic from early childhood. Her sister Madame Vera Zhelikjovsky mentions that there was dual nature in her, that made one think there were two beings in one body; one mischievous, combative and obstinate, the other mystical and metaphysically inclined. No old scholar could be more assiduous in his study of books on alchemy magic and occult Science. “I had read them with the keenest of interest at the age of fifteen” writes madam Blavatsky. Later “I have always lived a double existence mysterious incomprehensible even to myself until I met my still more mysterious Indian in Tibet in 1885 which changed the course of my life”.

“At a very early period of her life Helena was aware of a Protector, invisible to all but herself, a man of imposing appearance whose features never changed and whom she met in after life as a living man and knew as though she had been brought up in his presence”.³ The relationship between that Protector and HPB for years was, of course a

very vague thing, indefinite, it was a matter of vision and general feelings, intuition and so forth, protective guidance until 1851 which was the first time when HPB, then in London, met that individual in Hyde Park, whom she had known in her psycho-spiritual visions from childhood unseen to others except herself- a guiding and guarding presence. He told her that he was on an important mission at London and he wished to have her co-operation in a work which he was about to undertake. He then gave her some information about the work which she would be called upon to perform and told her that she would have many difficulties and troubles to face and also that she would have to spend three years in Tibet to prepare her for her work. “She met the same Teacher in 1854, again in London. But it was not until 1867-68 that she actually penetrated into Tibet and cemented her profound and abiding relations with her teachers”.⁴ She received her main and severe training in Tibet in those days before being ready for her official work in forming of the Theosophical Society.

HPB acted as a conduit for the liberated masters. They showered the Wisdom of ages preserved carefully by them through her for the benefit of humanity. In the opinion of the Mahatmas, she was the best available instrument for the work they had in mind namely to offer to the world a new presentation, though only in brief outline, of age-old Theosophia. “The accumulated wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generation of seers....” that body of Truth of which religions, great and small, are but as branches of the parent tree. Her task was to challenge on one hand the entrenched beliefs and dogmas of Christian Theology and on the other the equally dogmatic materialistic view of the science of her day. To quote Blavatsky’s own words “I was sent to prove phenomena and their reality and to show the fallacy of the spiritualistic theory of spirits.”

On 7th Sept. 1875, three leading figures- HPB, Col. H.S. Olcott, with whom Madam Blavatsky had a chance meeting in Vermont State in North East U.S. which grew into close friendship and William Quan Judge, a young Irish lawyer along with several others founded a society which they chose to call Theosophical Society as promulgating the ancient teachings or Wisdom concerning the Divine.⁵ Col. H.S. Olcott was appointed as its life member and for 32 years he filled that office with dignity winning the love of thousands by the sterling qualities of his

heart and the noble work for humanity. His inaugural address was delivered in New- York on 17 Nov. 1875, the official date of founding the Society. The original objective was “to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe”. This was elaborated with seven rules and later refined into three clearly defined objectives of the Theosophical Society as they stand today.⁶

To understand HPB’s position in the world of modern thought, we must see what was the position of the intellectual world when she began writing. In brief the world had lost its synthesis. Three approaches which humanity has developed i.e. the religious, the philosophical and the scientific to understand life and universe, were falling apart. Here in ancient India, thousands of years ago, the Ancient Wisdom was recognized as including not only religious thought and feeling but also activities of the mundane world; not only was the science of yoga, an expression of the wisdom but also was the science of war for the warrior, of law for the jurist, of commerce for the merchant. But as centuries passed, the spiritual world was divided up into compartments and became dissociated from the world of ordinary affairs. Similarly also in the West, in the days of Greece, there was an intellectual synthesis of all life activities but this was lost slowly till it disappeared completely in the Dark Ages. When at the Renaissance, once again learning began and with it also modern science, the world of thought was sharply divided into the religious and the scientific worlds and both stood in sharp distinction to the world of ordinary secular action. Men, though keenly alive to the interests of religion, science and material progress but could not connect them into one synthetic whole.⁷ As a result of this, human understanding became fragmented and generated flawed view of life either based on irrational faith, blind materialism or skeptic intellectualism.

HPB in her writings gave to the world once more the synthesis; she showed what is the common fundamental basis of every department of knowledge and emotion and that religion and science, morality and art and all our activities are linked in one great system of life. Future centuries will date the beginning of a new world with her work; for steadily the synthesis she showed is being more and more accepted and presently it will be the dominating ideal of the most advanced of our humanity.

What this synthesis of science, religion and philosophy indicate is to provide a system in which three disciplines are integrated. This syn-

thetic view however cannot be attained through the mutually exclusive approaches of modern science, religion and philosophy. Their common ground can be perceived only through the occult science, the wisdom religion and the esoteric philosophy; the three aspects of that single world view presented by Madam Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

The Theosophical literature in general aims at helping the student in three different ways –(a) by offering a different perspective of life so that he or she can gain an understanding that supports and inspires spiritual living (b) by teaching how to tread the spiritual path and (c) by serving as a path of yoga (specifically, of Jnana Yoga) through which the student can raise his or her consciousness to realize the spiritual Truths.

In Blavatsky’s words, she simply tried to “bring some peace on earth to the hearts of those who suffer by lifting for them a corner of the veil which hides from them divine Truth”. She was a great Theosophist because of two facts of her inner life; she knew the unity and tried to live it. With pen and with voice, she proclaimed to men that unity as reflected in Divine Wisdom is to be lived with renunciation, humility and reverence for all life. With total devotion and service HPB lived it. In modern world, she was the first to grasp the great unity and to live it in the ordinary world of duties. We render homage to HPB as the greatest occultist and mother of Theosophy.

References:

1. N. Sri Ram, “White Lotus Day”, *The Indian Theosophist*, May 2017, p.187.
2. *Ibid*.
3. Herbert Whyte, *H.P. Blavatsky: An Outline of Her Life*, (The Lotus Journal, 42, Craven Road, Paddington, W., Percy Lund, Humphires & Co. Ltd., Amen Corner, E.C., London, 1909, pp. 18-19.
4. Boris M. De Zirkoff, “The Life of HPB-I”, *The Theosophist*, TPH, Nov. 2016, p.17.
5. A.P. Sinnett, “Incidents in the Life of Madam Blavatsky”, p.170.
6. Countess Westmeister, “Reminiscences of Madam Blavatsky”, p.5.
7. C. Jinarajadasa “White Lotus Day”, p.3. (Lecture delivered on 8th May 1917 at Adyar).

NEWS AND NOTES

Assam

The Annual General Meeting of Assam Theosophical Federation (ATF) was held in the Pensioners' Hall at Chandamari, Guwahati, on 14 December 2016. The President of the Federation, Bro. D.N. Chakravorty, hoisted ATF's flag. The morning session started with the Universal Prayer followed by one minute's silence praying for the peaceful onward journey of the departed souls. In the meeting of the Subject Committee Bro. A.K. Baruah presented the Secretary's Report and Bro. P.N. Das presented the Treasurer's Report. Both the reports were duly approved by the members after discussion.

The open session started after the lunch-break. About 100 members and guests attended it. Bro. D.N. Chakravorty presided over this session in which Dr. Ahmed- a scholar of Koran and Professor of Guwahati University was the chief guest. He spoke on "Comparative study of Religions & Theosophy". He explained the content of all great religions of the world, and especially of Islam, Hinduism and Christianity and then compared their inner meaning with the teachings of Theosophy.

A new Executive Committee was formed for three years with Bro. Nagendra Chandra Dutta as President and Dr. Chandra Prava Bhuyan as Secretary of ATF. The annual bi-lingual magazine *Jnana Jeuti* was released and distributed on this occasion.

Several members as well as some non-members gave suggestions for improving the working of the Lodges and the Federation. Then the meeting came to a close with prayers and vote of thanks.

The newly formed Executive Committee of ATF met under the chairmanship of the new President Bro. N.C. Dutta. Some of the Lodges had not had their annual meetings regularly. So, in the aforesaid meeting it was opined that such Lodges must hold annual meetings and the dormant Lodges should try to revive their activities. Necessary help and visits shall have to be rendered by the members of Federation's Executive Committee and the Co-ordination Committee at Nalbari and Jorhat. Besides, Federation Lecturers were appointed and a few members were co-opted in the Executive Committee.

Adyar Day (on 17 February), White Lotus Day (on 8 May) and Buddha Poonima (on 10 May) were duly observed by almost all the Lodges of the Federation. ATF's President Bro. N.C. Dutta presided over the meetings held in the Federation's Office. The donation collected for Adyar Day was sent to the International Headquarters, Adyar.

The Vice-President of ATF Bro. G.C. Deka invited Dr. A Rehman of Bangladesh to visit two-three Lodges of Assam. Dr. Rehman visited the Lodges of Nalbari and Guwahati from 14 to 17 May. He addressed the members of the Lodge at Nalbari and then the general public, followed by a meeting of the students. He visited Pragjyotishpur Lodge at Guwahati and addressed the students, public bodies and the members of Panjabari. He spoke on how to control anger. Bro. N.C. Dutta presided over the meeting. The students and teachers of Alkashim Academy were very much impressed by Dr. Rehman's deliberations.

Sreecharan Baruah Memorial Lecture is organized every year on 30 March. This year it was delivered by a Sanskrit scholar Prof. (Retd.) Pandit Uma Kanta Sarmah. The subject of his talk was "Religion, Society and Literature".

The Nagendra Narayan Choudhury Memorial Lecture was organized on 26 May. This year it was delivered by the National Lecturer Dr. Bipul Sarmah of Jorhat. The theme of his talk was 'Life and its Significance'.

The District Coordination Committee of Nalbari and Jorhat are in touch with all the Lodges in their respective regions. Observing of significant theosophical days, study classes etc. are regularly organized by them.

ATF organized workshop at Guwahati, Nalbari and Jorhat in which the members of each Lodge discussed about the difficulties faced by them in connection with the work of the Lodge and suggested ways to improve the conducting of study classes, etc. Accordingly, efforts are being made to increase the number of members attending the study class and the meetings organized by the Lodge.

A newly formed coordination committee is making efforts to revive the activities of the dormant Lodges.

Sis. Jayasri Kalika Das is the Secretary of Kumarapara Theosophical Lodge. She has given a well-furnished room in the ground floor of her

house to the Lodge. This she has done in memory of her late father Sri Harindra Nath Kalika. The aforesaid room was duly inaugurated by Federation's President Bro. N.C. Dutta on 25 February. The President thanked the donor and wished that with this the activities of the Lodge will increase and soon a library too can be started there.

The annual general meeting of Bhaskar Jyoti Lodge was held on 29 January. Bro. R.N. Chowdhury presided over the meeting. Bro. N.C. Dutta, Secretary, presented the reports. The Chief Guest Dr. Maina Sarmah, Professor & Head of Philosophy in R. Baruah College of Guwahati, delivered talk on this occasion on 'Bliss'. Dr. Kunja Medhi too spoke on the theme.

The 27th annual general meeting of Sundarpur Lodge was held on 25 May. The Lodge's President Bro. Robin Kalika presided over the meeting. Bro. Narendra Baruah presented the reports and the chief guest Bro. Bipul Sarmah delivered a talk on 'Concept of Theosophy and its application in daily life'. ATF's President Bro. N.C. Dutta and members from other Lodges too attended the function.

The following members have passed to peace: Dr. Kunja Medhi of Sundarpur Lodge, Dr. J.M. Chowdhury of Pragjyotishpur Lodge (on 1 June), Dr. Arun Baruah of Pragjyotishpur Lodge (25 May) and Bro. Krishna Goswami Sastri of Pragati Lodge (on 6 June).

Bombay

A meeting to observe White Lotus Day was organized by Anand Lodge on 8 May. BTF's President Bro. Vinayak Pandya explained the importance of White Lotus Day. Dr. Ajay Hora shared a story of his mother's life. Bro. Misty Karla read a poetic verse. The youngest attendee of the meeting, Nimit Mehta read a passage from the book *The Divine* which had an impact on him. A guest speaker Mr. Savant, who is a Tai chi Master shared some beautiful thoughts from the Gita. The meeting concluded with Farida and the members decided that the next month's topic would be 'Theosophy & Karma'.

Bro. Zinoo Master informs that a day earlier some of the members of Blavatsky Lodge met in Green Room near HPB's photo to offer flowers and for the readings. Sis. Thrity Dalal read from *The Light of Asia* and *The Voice of the Silence*. Bro. Zinoo Master and Sis. Manjula Kanabar read a few portions from Bhagavadgita.

The meeting on 8 May started at Blavatsky Lodge with the Prayers of All Religions and the Universal Prayer. Bro. Arni Narendran explained the White Lotus Day as under: May 8 1891 was the day when the 19th Century's most outstanding occultist HPB left the body, which strode like Colossus in the world of spiritual search for 60 years. HPB, co-founder of the TS was cremated in London and her ashes were preserved in Pasadena, London and Adyar. Years later the ashes were brought to India from London and sprinkled across the Gangess at Varanasi. The White Lotus, profusely blossoming in unusual numbers on the day of the Anniversary at the Adyar pond, is a symbol of her death anniversary celebrated by Theosophists all over the world as 'White Lotus Day'. In a covenant registered at the High Court of Madras, Col. Olcott defined the ceremony in all its dimensions, such as reading from the Bhagavadgita and *The Light of Asia*, to which much later *The Voice of the Silence* was included. The idea is to avoid empty rhetoric and adulation of HPB and instead to rededicate our lives to Theosophy, both in theory and practice. Blavatsky strived to collate this Ancient Divine Wisdom, described as Theosophy for posterity not with the intent of individual self-realization, but of the entire world for which all members of the TS should be a facilitator. This macro consciousness is bound to take the human civilization to the next level of evolution. Truths, Compassion and Brotherhood are the hallmarks. May each member of Blavatsky Lodge rededicate oneself in this sacred mission and make the day's celebration meaningful. This is the best homage we can pay to the selfless soul.

The Three readings: Vice-President Bro. Navin Kumar recited shlokas of the 'Bhagavadgita' and explained their meanings. Sis. Ketayaun Irani & Sis. Zeena Rustomji read passages from *The Voice of the Silence*. Bro. Rustom Cooper read passages from *The Light of Asia*.

The verses of 'The Golden Stairs' authored by HPB were recited by Sis. Kashmira Khambatta. The frame of HPB was adorned with a beautiful garland where members paid their respect.

The members of Blavatsky Lodge observed Wesak Poornima on May 10. They gathered in Green Room near Lord Buddha's statue. Near the Alter Table Sis. Kashmira Khambatta had done beautiful *Rangoli* of Lord Buddha underneath the Bodhisattva Tree with shining full moon. The meeting was opened with all reciting the Buddhist Prayer together. Bro. Navin Kumar read extracts of the First Sermon from *The Light of Asia* and the Buddhist catechism by HSO. Bro. Keki Palkhiwalla spoke

about the Wesak Ceremony and propounded on Lord Buddha's Teachings to school boy Chatta and the *Mahamangla Sutta* – The Greatest Blessing. His message was, today man lives in outer circle concerned with the outer world. Realization should dawn that he has to take guidance from his inner voice and should try to follow the Truth. At the end, members partook water as the blessings of Lord Buddha.

Utkal

The 52nd Annual Conference of UTF was held on 11-12 Feb. 2017 at UTF Hall, Gautam Nagar, Bhubaneswar. The theme of the conference was "Unity in Diversity". Prof. C.A. Shinde, Chief Librarian, Adyar Library & Research Centre, Theosophical Society, was invited as the Chief Guest and he delivered the inaugural address.

Prof. Sahadev Patro, Prof. K. P. Padhi, Prof. P.S.P. Sarangi and Bro. R. C. Pattnaik delivered short talks on "Is Diversity an illusion or Fact in Nature?". A symposium was conducted in the afternoon on 'Theosophy: An approach to life' wherein Bro. Ashok Kumar Mohapatra, Bro. Ashutosh Pati, Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra and Bro. Satyabrath Rath spoke on the subject.

A Theosophy-Science lecture was also organized. Prof. F. M. Sahoo, Xavier Institute of Management, BBSR, delivered an illuminative lecture on 'Alchemy of Happiness'. The meeting was presided over by Bro. B. B. Palai, President, T.S.R.A. In the evening Prof. C.A. Shinde, delivered a public lecture on "Unity is a Fact of Nature". The meeting was presided over by Bro. B. B. Palai, Vice-President, UTF. The meeting ended with bhajans rendered by the inmates of Omm Hostel.

On 12 February, a seminar was organized on "Fundamental Unity of All Existence". The speakers were Bro. B. S. Mohanty, Bro. Ashok Pattnaik and Bro. S. S. Pati. In the youth seminar, Bro. A. S. Mohanty, Sis. Pratikshya Pattnaik, Sis. Sushree Sucheta Rath, Sis. Swastisikha Mohapatra and Sis. Tapaswini Samantaray spoke on the life history of great personalities of Theosophical Society such as H. S. Olcott, Radha Burnier, C. W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant & HPB respectively. The meeting was presided over by Bro. Ashutosh Pati, Secy. of Cuttack Lodge.

In the afternoon Prof. R. K. Mishra delivered the TOS lecture on "Peace begins with a smile" and Prof. Sahadev Patro delivered a lecture on "Vippasana". Dr. A. K. Mishra, a renowned Homeopath, was felic-

tated with "Selfless Service Award" by the TOS, Odisha Region. Bro. R. C. Pattnaik, Vice-President of TOS, Odisha, presided over the meeting.

In the evening, Prof. C. A. Shinde delivered an inspiring talk on "Hidden Love that embraces all in ONE" The meeting was presided over by Prof. Sahadev Patro, President UTF. The conference concluded with the vote of thanks offered by Prof. K. P. Padhi, Vice-President, Bhubaneswar.

Dr. R. C. Rath Memorial Study Class was conducted by Prof. C. A. Shinde from 13-15 February. The book studied was "Narad Bhaktisutra" based on the book *Self Realization through Love* written by I. K. Taimni. The study class was very inspiring and there was lively interaction with the participants.

Bro. P. K. Mapapatra, Joint Gen. Secy. Indian Sec. delivered a talk on "MAHATMA" and Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra delivered a talk on "Importance of Lodge Meeting". These talks were held in a joint meeting of all the Lodges at Cuttack on February 4.

ADYAR DAY was observed on 17 February in the UTF Hall. Bro. Ashok Kumar Mohapatra, Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra, Bro. Ashok Pattnaik, Bro. Satyabrata Rath and Sis. Swastisikha Mohapatra spoke about the significance of "Adyar Day". Prof. Sahadev Patro presided over the meeting and summed up the talks in his Presidential Address.

On 30.1.2017 and 6.2.2017, Bro. B. S. Mohanty delivered talks on "Kathopanishad". The discussion was mainly based on the question raised by Nachiketa to Yamaraj and answer given by Yamaraj.

On 17 February, the members of Cuttack Lodge and Barabati Lodge observed "Adyar Day". Bro. P. K. Prusty and Bro. Ashutosh Pati delivered talks on this occasion and Bro. B. S. Mohanty presided over the meeting.

On 27 February, the members of Barabati Lodge observed two minutes' silence for the departed soul of Sis. Devaki Manjari Mahapatra of Siddhartha Lodge & Bro. Pranabandhu Sahoo of Cuttack Lodge. A peace meeting was held in their memory on March 5.

A day-long study class was conducted at UTF Hall, Gautam Nagar,

on the book “*OLD DIARY LEAVES- Vol. -II*” on 19 March. Prof. Sahadev Patro, President of UTF, gave introductory address as well as delivered talk in the concluding session. Besides, Bro. Ashok Kumar Mohapatra, Bro. Satyabrata Rath, Bro. Ashok Pattnaik, Sis. Purnamasi Pattnaik, Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra, Bro. R. C. Pattnaik & Sis. Swarnalata Das delivered talks on different chapters of the book and narrated various incidents, journey to different places of India made by H.S. Olcott & HPB as well as their visit to Ceylon to propagate theosophy. The study class was well appreciated by the members.

In the joint lodge meeting held at Cuttack Lodge on March 4. Prof. Sahadev Patro delivered a lecture on “Change is the only constant”. The meeting was presided by Bro. B.S. Mohanty.

Dr. L.P. Singh, Retd. Prof. of Utkal University, delivered an inspiring lecture on “Some thoughts on Literature, Philosophy and Science.” It was held at Federation Hall on 9 April.

Teachers’ Self-Development Training Programme was conducted from 24 to 28 April at UTF Hall. Seven teachers and principle of the TOS Annie Besant Model School, Rayagada, attended it. The training programme was organized by Dr. Deepa Padhi, President of TOS Odisha Region. The programme was conducted jointly by UTF and TOS Odisha Region and was hosted by Mahabharat TOS Group, BBSR. The teachers were given training on various subjects like Yoga, Meditation and First Aid. Besides, training on Teaching Methodology was given by the Trainer, KISS, spoken English by President UTF and evening lectures on various Theosophical subjects by the members of T.S. & TOS.

Prof. Sahadev Patro conducted study classes on the book *Light on the Path* at Barabati Lodge, Cuttack. These were held every Monday in April.

White Lotus Day was observed in the Federation Hall, BBSR on 8 May. Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra read out the second chapter of the ‘Bhagabat Geeta’, Sis. Purnamasi Pattnaik read out a chapter from *‘The Light of Asia’* & Bro. Satyabrata Rath read out a chapter from the book *‘The Voice of the Silence’*. “The Vesak Festival” (Buddha Poornima) was celebrated at the same venue. Mr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Former G.M. (H.R) IMFA delivered a lecture on “ABHIDHAMMA OF BHAGAVAN BUDDHA”.

The “Foundation Day” of the UTF was celebrated on 16 May. On this occasion Dr. Deepa Padhi, Int. Vice-President, Theosophical Society, delivered a talk on “Relevance of Theosophy in the Present Context”.

Barabati Lodge of Cuttack observed White Lotus Day on 8 May. Bro. Sahadev Patro, L. R. Satpathy and A. Pati spoke about this auspicious day – some stanzas from the Bhagavadgita, *The Voice of the Silence* and *The Light of Asia* were read out. ‘Buddha Poornima’ was celebrated jointly with Cuttack Lodge on 10 May. The President of UTF delivered talk on Buddha Poornima on the magic, music & mystic point of view. Bro. Chittaranjan Satapathy, former International Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, spoke on “The Significance of the Day”, with some mystic facts. Bro. S. S. Pati explained the “Philosophy of Buddha Poornima”

Bro. Kalyan Kumar Bose, Jt. Secy. of Barabati Lodge, delivered three talks on “Spirituality in Daily Life”. These were held on 15, 22 and 29 May respectively.

Uttar Pradesh

The following talks were organized by Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, in July: ‘Open and Free Mind’ by Bro. B.B. Lal; “Evolutionary Order’ by Bro. K.M. Srivastava; “Looking for each other’ by Bro. Ashok Gupta; and ‘Living from the still centre’ by Bro. B.P. Shukla.

Bro. U.S. Pandey received an invitation through Sister Isis Resende, President Inter-American Federation of T.S., to deliver a talk on the theme “The World is a Family” on June 21 in the Indian Embassy, Brasilia. Bro. Marcos L.B de Resende, President of Brazilian Theosophical Society and Sister Isis Resende and many other members of T.S. in Brazil attended it.

Mr. Sunil Lal, the Indian Ambassador to Brazil, presided over the function. He welcomed the participants and the speakers and introduced the subject.

During his talk Bro. Pandey covered the idea of a family and extension of this concept for entire humanity, interconnectedness and interdependence of all beings, commonality of human problems and their solutions, need of uniqueness and diversity with underlying unity, meaning and purpose of religion, sayings of the *Upanishads*, Jesus and an Adept

regarding oneness and the universal brotherhood, and the task needed to realize the concept of the world being one whole family (*Vasudheva Kutumbakam*). Bro. Marcos also spoke on the subject and gave concluding remarks. This was followed by an interactive session with the audience.

Bro. Pandey delivered a talk in the Rising Sun Lodge, Brasilia, on “The Viveka Chudamani” on June 23. He gave a public talk on ‘Spirituality in Daily Life’ on June 24. This talk by him in English along with its simultaneous translation in Portuguese by Br. Ricardo was recorded by a TV channel for telecasting in Brazil.

The talks delivered by him in Jinarajadasa Lodge, Rio de Janeiro were; Public talks on “Yoga” and “Meditation” in two sessions on June 26. Talks in the lodge on “Insight into nature of the SELF in the *Upanishads*” and “The Art of Living”- in two sessions were held on June 27. All his talks in English were simultaneously translated into Portuguese by Sister Isis Resende, except the public talk on June 24 which was translated by Bro. Ricardo.

Study Camp at Bhowali on the book *At the Feet of the Master*

A study camp was organized at Bhowali on 10-11 June 2017. The study was to be conducted by Bro. S.K. Pandey, National Lecturer, but due to health reasons he was not able to attend the camp. So, Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri, National Lecturer, conducted it.

It was held at the Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali and the delegates were from the Theosophical lodges of Varanasi, Lucknow, Bhowali, Rampur, Almora, Nainital and Haldwani. In all, there were 34 participants.

During the opening session, the director discussed the plan of study to be undertaken during the course. The camp was started with the Universal Prayer followed by a short speech by the Treasurer of the Indian Section Bro. V. Narayanan, Bro. Sanit Joshi, the TS coordinator for Uttarakhand and Bro. Deepak Balani, President of the Bhowali Lodge. Bro. V. Narayanan conveyed the best wishes of Bro. Pradeep Gohil, the General Secretary of the Indian Section.

The study course included five study sessions (Three on June 10 and two on June 11), One introductory session (evening of 10th June 2017) included introduction of the delegates and sharing of their thoughts

about how theosophy brought change in their lives and how theosophy came to them; and One meditation session (Evening of the 10th June). The active, interaction during the whole study was encouraged and all the delegates took part in it enthusiastically. The daily routine included Bharat Samaj Pooja in the mornings conducted by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri.

The diploma certificates for the new members were given to them.

The concluding session was addressed by the director followed by a short speech by Bro. V. Narayanan and Bro. Sanit Joshi. It was followed by a prayer for the well-being of all sentient beings.

Workers’ Training Camp at Bhowali

T.O.S. Workers’ Training Camp was organized by the Theosophical Order of Service at Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali, from 4 June to 6 June 2017 under the direction of Bro. B.L. Bhattacharya, National Director, T.O.S. India. Thirty-five members from various parts of the country representing their respective regions participated in it.

The purpose of holding the camp was to provide guidance and training to the members of TOS so that they may render selfless service to the poor and the downtrodden of their region. Bharat Samaj Pooja was performed each day which spread spiritual vibration during the camp. Beginning the session with Universal Prayer, the National Director welcomed the members and highlighted the purpose of holding this camp. The inaugural session was addressed by the joint General Secretary, Indian Section, Bro. Pradip Mahapatra who gave a brief background of the venue i.e. Himalayan Study Centre at Bhowali. He emphasized on the need to be compassionate to not only to human beings but to animals as well. He pointed out that we are expected to show the path to those who are weak and also we should endeavour to reach to our ultimate goal.

Bro. B.L. Bhattacharya in his inaugural talk elaborated the meaning of Theosophy- the Wisdom of God. Quoting HPB, he brought out that one who does not practice altruism, does not share with his fellow-beings and who indulges in criticism of others, is not a Theosophist. He emphasized that members of T.O.S. should dedicate themselves in ameliorating the sufferings of the underprivileged and weak. He further clarified that through study, members are expected to become a better human-being and thus he becomes eligible to serve the poor in an effective and better way. He stressed that T.S. and T.O.S. members should work

in harmony so that wisdom gained could be applied for the welfare of society. Clarifying the main objective of T.S., he pointed out that members can alleviate the suffering in two ways i.e. first by knowing who we are and then serving the poor, establishing basic current of oneness with the sufferer.

All the participants shared their experiences as members of TOS. It was encouraging to see the participation of some young girls and boys in the camp and more inspiring was to learn the reason for their joining TOS. They revealed their strong desire for self-growth. Certainly without self-evolvement, service is not of much consequence.

Bro. T.K. Nair, a member of the National Committee, TOS, spoke in detail about TOS administration and reporting of various activities held in their region to the HQ for reflecting the same in TOS Annual Report. He further clarified that purpose of such reporting is to encourage others to participate in selfless service and undertake welfare measures to ameliorate the sufferings of mankind. Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya, Jt. Secretary, TOS, India, highlighted the importance of having actual data of total members and maintained that updation of membership record is pending for the last so many years. She thanked the members for their close co-operation whom she approached directly and informed the gathering that with their active support, membership data of 16 regions out of 22 regions have since been updated. She also indicated the simple exercise which they need to undertake for updating the membership list. She expressed hope that with quick response from the remaining regions, the task of updation of membership record may be completed soon. On finance management in T.O.S. Bro. V. Narayanan, Treasurer T.S., and T.O.S. delivered an elaborate and fruitful talk. While clarifying important aspects of finance management he pointed out that no cash money should be received without issuing a receipt for the same. Therefore all groups and regions are required to keep receipt books with them. Highlighting the current policy of Govt. he informed that Rs. 2 lakhs and above cannot be accepted in cash and such transactions have to be made through cheques. He stressed on the need to submit audited half-yearly accounts to Indian Section HQ by 30 June every year. He mooted an idea for consideration of publishing quarterly newsletter on activities and also launching a separate website for TOS India. He emphasized that all regions should ask the groups to submit

activity report by 30 Sept. each year and regions in turn should submit report to Indian Section HQ. by 15 Oct., so as to facilitate timely publication of Annual Report.

Bro. K. Sivaprasad, National Secretary, TOS India, elaborated as to why we need to have TOS and outlined the future plan of TOS. He informed the members that streamlining of educational institutions under TOS will be his priority this year. This will involve the task of surveying all such schools, their location, number of such schools and how are they being managed presently. After collecting entire data and complete information, TOS India will be in a position to assess actual requirement of these schools and can support them accordingly. Secondly, now that instead of mobility aid we have decided to concentrate on skill development, an effort will be made to have skill development programme in the educational institutions under TOS which will take care of unemployment problem of the country. The second project of this year will be to complete the task of updation of membership data which the joint Secretary TOS is presently handling. The third future project, he pointed out is the revival of the dormant groups which will be pursued vigorously. Lastly, he pointed out that some permanent projects will be undertaken under which health projects, educational projects, awareness camp, project on naturopathy will be included. Since, so much traditional wisdom is available in the villages and we have gone away from natural living to artificial living, it is worthwhile to include naturopathy in our future project.

An entire session was devoted to naturopathy during which a very fruitful and interesting presentation was given by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri, National Lecturer. He revealed how his experience in a naturopathy camp at Bhopal helped him and his mother in removing toxins from the body and restoring good health. Huge emphasis is laid on fasting during this naturopathy camp and he enumerated the steps one needs to take during this period. The participants showed great enthusiasm in the presentation by raising number of questions which was addressed by Bro. Agnihotri to their satisfaction. On the advice of National Director TOS, representatives from different regions presented detailed report highlighting various measures undertaken by them in their region like planting trees by the students, free medical check-ups, & eye-camps, helping the needy students with particular attention to physically-challenged persons, widow-remarriage, establishing tailoring Institute for women etc. Amongst them notable project was from Bro. Gangaram Hazra,

Secretary of TOS region, West Bengal, who brought to the notice of participants, the initiative taken at Sundar Ban area of cultivating mushroom in the wet-land which is a profitable venture and provides livelihood to the villagers of that area. It was also proposed by him to launch a separate TOS Website for TOS India which was appreciated by the participants and the National Secretary took a note of it.

Bro. A. P. Lokhande, member of National Committee presented an innovative proposal of bringing some members from management of Govt. aided school into TOS fold, so that through these members information about very poor and needy students can be obtained and necessary help can be rendered to them which was appreciated by the National Director TOS. Members spoke eloquently about the need of value – based education. Specific mention was made about the initiative taken by Dr. Deepa Padhi, President of TOS Odisha region and International Vice-President by organizing National Conference on Theosophical education in Sept. 16 which was attended by the teachers from schools under TOS. Bro. Vicente Hoa Chin Jr. of Philippines was the chief speaker and facilitator of the programme. Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya further brought to the notice of participants about the recent initiative taken by Dr. Deepa Padhi in April, this year to organize Teachers' Self-development Training programme for the teachers of TOS Rayagada School. Smt. Bhattacharyya emphasized on the need of hiring quality teachers who would be equipped to mould every child's personality to blossom to the fullest extent possible.

Study on *At the Feet of the Master* and *The Key to Theosophy* was conducted by the National Director, TOS, India which was highly effective and participants were greatly benefitted by the knowledge they gained through vivid and concise gist of the aforesaid books presented by Bro. Bhattacharya during the study. He elaborated the key points like discrimination, desirelessness, good conduct and love as laid down in *At the Feet of the Master* for evolvement. While directing the study, on *The Key to Theosophy* by HPB he explained in detail about the "Law of Karma". He further emphasized on the importance of selfless service, charity and duty.

Every day the National Director held meditation session in the evening which helped the participants in internalizing the wisdom obtained throughout the day with peaceful and calm mind.

On the concluding day, which was chaired by the General Secretary, Indian Section, Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil, all participants shared their experiences of the camp. They mentioned that during the camp, they gained new ideas and the desire and drive to serve the humanity which they already have inside, got further strengthened by participation in the camp. Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya presented a brief account of all the activities held and the key points presented in the camp.

The session ended with concluding remarks by the General Secretary Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil who highly appreciated the positive energy and efforts of the National Director TOS Bro. Bhattacharya to organize this camp so successfully. He applauded the National Director who is a great motivator for his able guidance and vision under whose direction TOS India is moving fast in the right direction. About the future projects of TOS India like streamlining the educational institutions under TOS, he greatly appreciated it and pointed out that this project is very close to the heart of our International President Bro. Tim Boyd. He wished all the success for the mission of TOS India.

Uma Bhattacharyya

NOTE

A combined issue of The Indian Theosophist for the months of September and October will be released in October 2017.

NORTH INDIA STUDY CAMP

The North India Study Camp at the Section Headquarters, Varanasi, will be held from 6 to 8 October, 2017. Bro. Tim Boyd, International President of the TS, will direct the study on **THE PROCESS OF UNFOLDMENT: AN EDUCATION OF THE SOUL.**

Members are requested to remit the following on or before 20th September 2017:

Deluxe Room Rs. 1250/-; Special Room Rs. 1050; Ordinary Room Rs. 950/-

The accommodation will be provided from the evening on 5 October to the evening of 9 October 2017.

The aforesaid amounts include Registration Fee, Accommodation charges and Meal charges.

The accommodation is limited to 29 in Deluxe Rooms; 22 in Special Rooms and 44 in Ordinary Rooms. Accommodation will be provided on first come first serve basis.

On cancellation before 20 September 2017 Rs. 100/- will be deducted and refunds will be made after 15 October 2017.

For the members of Varanasi and those who do not require accommodation or food, there will be a registration charge of Rs.150.

Remittances are to be made to Vijaya Bank, Kamachha, Varanasi A/c No. 718301010005045 IFSC Code VIJB0007183 in the name of the Indian Section, The Theosophical Society. Remittances can be paid in cash or by draft as well.

Give details of arrival, departure, Phone/Mobile No./E-mail.

Email: theosophyvns@gmail.com
theosophy_vns@yahoo.com

Pradeep H. Gohil
General Secretary