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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

AN APPEAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I had requested in April that we should not conduct Lodge meetings or any other T.S. and related meetings in the premises of our lodge until the end of June 2020. At that time, it was not known how long the COVID-19 Pandemic would last.

At present, the situation is probably worse than what it was in April. The government has specifically not allowed for our kind of groups to meet. We are told that the meetings conducted indoors pose a big risk of COVID transmission. Hence, I request you all not to organize meetings in the premises of the Lodge unless you have a specific approval in writing from the municipal commissioner or district collector of your area.

I look forward to your co-operation in the matter as it is our duty to support the rules laid down by the Government. You can always conduct on-line meetings as the same are approved in the Indian Section as well as internationally.

With warm regards to all.

Pradeep H. Gohil

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

A STEP FORWARD

The word ‘death’ is something that very often brings thoughts of horror, fear and mystery to many people. This should not be so for anyone – at least not for the members of the Theosophical Society. We have all been exposed to the theory of reincarnation and to the law of Karma. We understand that death is nothing unusual and a totally natural incident during the course of our life. It is something that is a necessity in the process of one’s evolution.

Death is defined as a permanent cessation of all vital functions of the body. So the physical body perishes at the time of death. However, the astral body will very much be there. Life in the astral plane is very smooth because there is no pain or fatigue. Beyond the astral plane is the Devachanic Plane – the place where one can experience the heavenly life. In reality, it is not a place but a state of consciousness. It is the plane of the Divine mind where we can find infinite fullness which can open its limitless affluence to anyone in proportion to the qualification to receive.

Bishop, C.W. Leadbeater writes in his book ‘*The Life After Death*’ that “on this plane (Heaven-World or Devachanic Plane), then, we find existing the infinite fullness of the Divine Mind, open in all its limitless affluence to every soul, ...but each draws from it and cognizes only so much as he has by previous effort prepared himself to take. Different individuals bring very different capabilities; as the eastern simile has it, each man brings his own cup, and some of the cups are large and some are small, but, small or large, every cup is filled to its utmost capacity; the sea of bliss holds far more than enough for all”.

In the Devachanic Plane, the good news is that even though it is seen as a time of the much needed rest for the body, it is not necessarily a period

of inactivity for the true man within. However, there are six qualifications required for this work. Firstly, one must be one-pointed and the work of helping others must be the first and highest duty for him or her. Secondly, one must have excellent self-control over his temper, anger, nerves and fear. One must never allow his emotions to interfere with his work even to a small extent. Thirdly, he must be perfectly joyous, calm and peaceful. Men subject to anger, worry and depression are really of no use because their main work is to calm and soothe others which cannot be done while they are worrying or excited. Fourthly, one must be knowledgeable. He must have learnt most all that he can do for others in this plane because he cannot expect others to waste their valuable time in teaching him. Fifthly, he must not have a tinge of selfishness. He must not have wounded feelings and must think of the work he has to do by gladly taking the humblest duty or the greatest duty without discontentment in someone else's possession or having pride in one's ability. Sixthly, he must not be sentimental but have a heart filled with love and an intense desire to serve. Everyone knows about someone in distress or sorrow among the living or the dead. When one gets ready to sleep, one can resolve to go to that person and try to comfort him as soon as one is free from the body. Even though you may not remember it the next morning or know the result, your efforts will not go in vain. You will find evidence someday that you have been successful. Always remember that as we help we can be helped and that from the lowest to the highest we are bound together by a long chain of mutual service and that although we stand on the lower steps of the ladder, it reaches up where the light of God is always shining. A step up on the ladder by helping others will certainly be a step forward in our life.

TIM BOYD

THE TEACHER

I WOULD like to give some consideration to a central idea which is, for many, also a central experience in the theosophical life. In the process of our spiritual unfoldment the Teacher plays an unparalleled role. He/she is that person we encounter during the course of our spiritual growth, who seems to have the ability to spur our understanding and hasten our development.

Everyone has had a relationship with someone who has served in the role of a Teacher. It is a common experience in the university, at school, in our home, or in our spiritual life, to encounter someone in whose presence we find difficult things becoming clear, and who, when they speak we find ourselves elevated. In those moments when we are in their presence we feel as though we understand.

On a number of occasions I have had the opportunity to be around His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When he speaks, whether it is a small group or an audience of ten or twenty thousand people, there is a presence that he generates in which the sense of the possibility of compassion, which is his universal message, seems to be something very real. I have known people who have attended a talk by His Holiness, then left their job and gone out to attempt great works of compassion, only to find that away from his presence, the profound understanding that they thought was theirs somehow slips away.

From time to time I used to be in the presence of quantum physicist and theosophist Amit Goswami. Quantum physics is a difficult field to grasp, even for quantum physicists themselves. But somehow I would find that when I was sitting around him, listening to him talk, his ideas all seemed so clear, only to walk away and wonder what it was I thought I had grasped at that moment. The process is very much like placing a bar of iron, a cold

piece of metal, in front of a fire. Iron has the capacity to respond to heat, so the metal heats up when it is in that presence. When it is removed, it cools once again.

If we examine ourselves, we find that there are aspects of our make-up that are composed in various ways. So there are some aspects that respond very easily to high thought, to profound and pure emotion. In the presence of elevated thought and emotion they become quickened, just like the metal becomes quickened in the presence of fire. Because of the uneven nature of our development, we find that there are elements of our being that respond more readily and others that do not. It is much like standing in front of a fire and the metal on our belt and buttons becomes hot, but our clothing, hair, and skin do not.

So the advice we are given by the Great Teachers is that we need to repeatedly expose ourselves to elevated thought and emotion, so that we can become accustomed to vibrating at a higher frequency or responding regularly to an elevated energy. Later we can translate this into a presence to which we can then connect ourselves. They say things like, “Think on these things — What is it that is good? What is it that is true? What is the nature of beauty?”

How are these things expressed in a life? Think on these things: Bring our mental capacity into this higher level of vibration — force it to vibrate in that manner. Because it is out of our reach, initially it is a matter of effort. The poet says that our “reach should exceed our grasp, or what’s a Heaven for?” That toward which we reach, toward which we aspire, necessarily exceeds what we are capable of immediately grasping. That is the description of the practice. Repeatedly we call upon the mind to respond, the heart to be quiet, and to be acted upon. In that process, it becomes a custom.

For those of us who have been involved in athletics we are familiar with the process of training for building muscle. When the muscles are used strenuously, when they are pushed to their limits, some damage is done resulting in micro-tears to the muscle fibres. The body responds to

this damage by repairing, renewing, and adding to that muscle tissue. Because a demand is made upon it to perform at its highest levels, it responds by growing in size and strength.

The same advice is given with our mental and emotional natures. The process calls for utilizing them at the highest levels to which we are presently capable. Initially the process may be demanding and uncomfortable, but they respond by drawing in more matter of a similar type that can vibrate at this heightened level, and by expelling the matter that is unable to vibrate in that way. So we become more and more pure, awake, aware.

In the theosophical teachings we are very much aware of a hierarchy of Teachers. Most of us have some idea about the Mahatmas, or Masters of the Wisdom, and the hierarchy that exists among them. But They do not really function in this world. They are not the people that we walk, chat, and interact with in our normal way. What they tend to do, it seems, is that They work through their own close students, their “chelas”, through whom the Mahatma’s influence can be radiated. Sometimes we are in contact with those chelas, mostly unknowingly.

So we engage in a process of trying to become sensitive to the Mahatmas’ influence in the world and around us. We have become accustomed to some very dull sensations. The noises which surround us are the things that we hear most clearly. The sounds of the birds, the wind, the honking horns of cars and two wheelers are what attract our attention. Yet always there are subtler sounds, but it takes a certain attunement for us to become aware of these. So we are encouraged to point our attention in certain directions, particularly during times of meditation. Various forms of advice and hints are given as to how we can hear and see at increasingly subtle levels.

The beautiful poem that closes J. Krishnamurti’s little book, *At the Feet of the Master*, talks about hearing and seeing in this way: “Waiting the Word of the Master,/ Watching the Hidden Light;/ Listening to catch his orders/ In the very midst of the fight.” Waiting is the process of suspending our outer and internal activities in order to wait on the word of the Master.

Although we call it the “word”, it is not assured that it will be “heard” as a verbal expression; we do not know when it will come or *how* it will come. “Watching the Hidden Light”: How do we watch a light that is hidden? Just the process of trying to consider this requires that we move beyond our normal sense of seeing and hearing.

Listening to catch his orders in the very midst of the fight: in the midst of the round of daily activity, which in this poem the author equates to a fight, like warring kingdoms doing battle. Few of us have been in the battles of war. So for most it requires some imagination to envisage the surging movement, the constant need to judge, act, strike, move, and the continual din of warring adversaries in combat. But in the midst of it all, a quiet space in consciousness is retained, attuned to hear orders from on high. It is a difficult process for us, who have trained ourselves so differently. Not just in this lifetime, but in many lifetimes, we habitually turn our attention outward, focusing on the fight, and not on the inner directions.

There is a Sufi story about a garbage collector who found himself in the middle of the perfume bazaar in Istanbul. Engulfed in an atmosphere of pure fragrances he suddenly collapsed, and no one could bring him back to consciousness. A wise man who was passing by found something that was rotting and filthy, and put it underneath the collapsed man’s nose. When the man smelled it, he immediately awakened and the wise man was able to escort him out of the perfume bazaar. The story, of course, is about us and our attraction to lower levels of vibration. The tendency is so engrained that in the absence of the coarseness to which we have accustomed ourselves we become insensitive — in the story the man swoons into unconsciousness.

So we wait, watch, listen. The second part of that short poem says: “Seeing his slightest signal/ Across the heads of the throng;/ Hearing his faintest whisper/ Above Earth’s loudest song.” This is a training in which we engage that we generally think of as a meditative practice, but it has to carry across into the moment-to-moment, day-to-day life at our desk or home.

In meditation we often focus on the breath, and the breath leads us to an awareness of pulsations within the body. We start to become aware of subtle sounds that surround us: the sound of the breath coming in and out of the body, the sounds of the pulsing heart, internal electrical sounds. These are *always* present, yet we seldom hear them. These are the kinds of advice given on connecting and engaging with the Teacher.

There is a story about one of the great North-Indian Buddhist Masters, Asanga, who lived in the 4th century CE. He went into a meditation retreat in a cave for twelve years, with a formula he thought would not fail, to establish some sort of connection with the Buddha Maitreya. He meditated for three years and nothing happened. At that point he was ready to give up. He left his cave and as he was walking he saw a crow coming out of its nesting place in the side of a mountain. He noticed that where the crow was flying in and out, the stone around the nest had been worn away slightly by its feathers. So he thought to himself: If this bird can wear away a stone with just the repeated touch of his feathers, I can return to my meditation with confidence.

So he meditated for three more years and still had no experience of any connection with the Lord Maitreya, so he left the cave again. This time he sees water dripping, and where the water drips he notices the stone has been worn away by the softest of all elements in Nature, and he determines he would go back to meditate. A similar experience happened after nine years. So now twelve years had passed since the start of the retreat, but still no vision of the Master. At this point Asanga determines that his practice is fruitless and hopeless and walks away for good.

On the side of the road he encounters a dog so badly injured that his flesh was starting to be eaten away by maggots. When Asanga sees the dog he wants to heal it, but also does not want to hurt the maggots feeding on the dog, seeing them as other living beings who also value their lives, so he tries to take them away one by one. He finds that trying to do it with a stick harms them. Then he tries to do it with his fingers and that also harms them.

Ultimately, one by one he lifts the maggots away with his tongue. But in that moment, what he had thought to be an injured dog suddenly appears as the Buddha Maitreya, and the response given to Asanga was: “All this time you sat and meditated, but there were still things blocking your vision. Your personal karmic obstructions prevented this connection. It was only in this moment of extreme compassion, when you were not thinking about your personal agenda of meeting Maitreya Buddha, in your extreme compassion to this animal, you are finally able to see and experience what had eluded you for twelve years.”

Each one of us is at a different stage of unfoldment and is continuously in the presence of the highest consciousness, yet mostly unaware; but we try! There are certain efforts we engage in, not with the goal in mind of meeting and seeing these Masters, but with the goal in mind of doing a work that draws us closer to them. Determining that work and committing to it is how we spend a lifetime. If we approach it properly, there are breakthrough moments, just as occurred with Asanga.

Geoffrey Hodson wrote a beautiful small book, *Thus Have I Heard*. In it he includes a prayer, or really a meditation, quoted from another source. He calls it an unfailing method to connect ourselves with the Master in the heart. He does not focus our attention on meeting a physical individual, but to connect ourselves with the Master in the centre of our being. The prayer begins: “Oh, gracious Lord, I enter your radiance and approach your presence bearing with me the service done in your name and for you.”

It is customary that when we go to visit someone special we bring a gift—we offer something. When we go to visit the Highest, we have to determine what is the highest gift that we can bring. In this meditation our gift is “the *service* that I have done in your name and for you”. And it goes on: “I seek to become a more efficient server.”

The point of our meeting, the point of the offering is that I may become a more efficient server — more efficient in magnifying what we have to give to the Highest. Then: “And I open my heart and mind to the power of your love, of your joy, and of your peace.”

In the opening of the prayer a direction is given for three specific internal actions that set the stage for our meeting the Master: that we identify and present a precious offering; that we clarify and state our intention to become more efficient in service to the Master; and we lay open the depths of our being to the presence and influence of the Teacher. We remove the barriers that block us from what this Teacher has to give.

In Buddhism there is a teaching related to these opening lines of Hodson’s prayer. It addresses the question of: “How do we behave when we are in the presence of the Teacher? What are the qualities of our being that we bring to this special moment?” They present this teaching using the example of a vessel, a pot. And they say that there are three things that can be impediments to our connection with the Teacher.

The first example is a pot turned upside down. Even in the presence of one who has pure nectar to share, this pot cannot be filled. Pour and pour as they might, our hearts and minds are closed and no wisdom is retained. J. Krishnamurti, in *At the Feet of the Master*, says: “Unless there is perfect trust, there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power.”

The second example is the leaky pot. It receives water, but it retains nothing. Our habits of inattention and distraction regularly cultivated in our daily mundane activities, do not suddenly leave us when we are in the presence of something sublime.

The third example is a pot that is dirty inside. One may pour the purest nectar into such a vessel, but it gets mixed with the dirt. What is pure becomes impure in a consciousness steeped in wrong ideas, negative emotions, incorrect avenues of thought, the harmfulness that we direct toward others, the gossip that we carry with us. And, of course, we are the ones who suffer, because the teaching is wasted.

In this teaching the idea is not to be closed, to plug the leaks by being attentive. In Krishnamurti’s example of “waiting” and “watching”, we are attentive; we *attend* to that which is before us. In that state we have the capacity to actually receive and respond.

So: “Oh, gracious Lord, I enter thy radiance and approach thy presence, bearing with me the service done in your name and for you./I seek to become a more efficient server.” And I *open* myself, the vessel is open, intact, purified, and turned toward you, that you may fill it with “the power of your love, your joy, and your peace”.

The meditation goes on to focus individually on joy, peace, and particularly love. “In thy presence thy love enfolds me.” And then the prayer speaks about the quality of the love, and that, having received, I must necessarily be a presence of love in the world. It ends: “Lead me, oh gracious Lord, through thy inimitable love, to union with you and the heart of eternity.” And the final words of the meditation are: “In your love I rest forevermore.”

Whenever we have some level of experience of the nature of the “Love, embracing all in Oneness” (as expressed in Annie Besant’s Universal Prayer), the response is necessarily “to rest”; it brings rest; it stops the world. So we rest in that love. This is the focus of the meditation, that in the experience of this sublime rest, we come to realize a measure of the nature of the fragrance within the cave of the heart. And we repeat it, then we approach it again, but always when the experience dawns upon us, we rest.

This is just some advice shared by those whose experience gives it value. The work, as always, is ours, but the guidance, clues, and hints along the way are full of power.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, July, 2020)

DEEPA PADHI*

THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF SILENCE**

At present we are living in a loud world which is becoming increasingly noisy with the sounds of traffic, cell phones, TVs, electronic home appliances, and so on, making life quite uneasy. Today, noise pollution has become a serious problem for both physical and mental human health. Noise beyond a limit produces many diseases such as hypertension, stress, forgetfulness, depression, and insomnia. In addition to the outward noise, there is mental noise — the constant chatter of the mind. It is a kind of inner monologue that goes on constantly in the mind. Too often these are negative thoughts about others that intensify worries, anger, frustration, hatred, and jealousy.

This is a manifestation of the habit of human beings spending maximum time with anything — friends, relatives, colleagues, pets, TVs, computers, or mobile phones to achieve some kind of happiness. We mostly try to avoid being with ourselves. That is because most of us are ignorant of the fact that there is true happiness and peace in the silence within.

Beneath the noise, outer and inner, there is a vast ocean of silence where one can feel relaxed, calm, and peaceful. Noise is only the periphery, silence is the centre, all pervading. All sounds and noise arise from silence.

Some years ago I had an inexplicable experience of silence. One fine morning our next door neighbour on the right side decided to demolish

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their old house, build a multistory apartment complex, and start the work without delay. During the same time, our left-side neighbor felt like renovating his house by adding two more rooms. The family living opposite our house started celebrating a religious function lasting ten days, with chanting played through a loudspeaker without any break. With noise from all around I felt very uncomfortable. In addition, my negative emotions like irritation, anger, and restlessness became quite bothersome.

Leaving my work unfinished, I went into my room and locked the door. I sat down with the intention of getting rid of the noise outside and quietening the mind. I was, in fact, fighting the noise outside and the thoughts within. But it was of no use. The noise still haunted me from all sides. With much determination and patience, I continued to sit there with my eyes closed and tried to go beyond the noise. After some time I felt the outside noise fading away and inner emotions calming down. I could feel a gentle flow of energy throughout my body. Then a moment came when there was absolutely no noise, either from outside or inside. There was no irritation, no impatience. I experienced silence with its vastness, which was extremely rejuvenating and peaceful. It was a joyful experience, difficult to express in words.

Silence can be categorized into five types: of speech, of the eyes, ears, mind, and Self. Let us understand the different modes of silence:

Silence of Speech - Mahatma Gandhi used to say, and I also believe, that by abstaining from speaking one can become a better listener. When we are forced to be silent, we are forced to listen. Most of us do not know how to listen, as there is always something going on in the back of our mind, some judgment or thoughts relating to ourselves or to others. We almost never fully listen and take in what another person is trying to say. But when we remain in silence, we can really listen: we can hear the cry of an abandoned baby lying outside the closed door of a home; we can hear the helpless cry of a molested teenager; we can hear the groans of the hungry for days on end.

Unless we are in silence, we cannot be a better listener. Unless we are a better listener, how can we reach out to people who need our help? According to Saint Haridas of India, we talk only by exhalation. The more we talk, the more we have to exhale and the more life energy we lose. He says: “A day’s silence means an additional week of life, and a day’s speech means one fewer week of life. When we talk we use tremendous energy, which can be preserved for meditation.” Swami Nirmalananda, who remained in silence for eleven years, said: “Wisdom to me is not an asset of words, but freshness and emptiness of mind.” Mahatma Gandhi used to observe silence every Monday, communicating on that day only through writing notes.

In Japan people value silence as an essential form of non-verbal communication and believe that “it is better to keep many things unsaid”. Silence in speech conveys emotions, respect, and personal distance. In silence of speech we can find what we are looking for — whether it is a misplaced car key or a challenging mathematical problem.

Silence of the eyes - Our physical eyes are the main doors to the outer world. There are sometimes disturbing sights in the outer world which are avoidable by silencing the physical eyes. But one can open them to the beauty and goodness around us. Silencing the physical eyes may mean remaining in silence with eyes closed. On the other hand, some Buddhists believe in sitting in silence with eyes open so that one would not feel dull or sleepy, and that the vision “itself becomes more expansive, there being more peace and compassion in one’s gaze”. By keeping the eyes open, we can see, with practice, everything with its vastness and the beauty of Nature all around, experiencing the “present”, being fully awake. The banks of rivers and streams, gardens with flowers and foliage, and hilltops are some of the best places where one can practise silence with eyes open.

Usually when we sit in silence, automatically the eyes get closed. We can visualize with our mental eyes Nature’s beauty like the rising sun

over the horizon, the full moon, the lovely sight of the waterfall, and so on, and get absorbed in any of them. Those visions are soothing and in harmony with our inner self. One can be seated with both physical and mental eyes closed to be in deeper silence, where there are no longer any images — physical or mental. This is what is really meant by “silence of the eyes”.

Silence of the ears - Silence of the ears can be observed by keeping away from outer noise. Sound is reverberation of energy and noise is unwanted, undesirable energy. One should try to avoid noise as much as one can. Nature makes sound, not noise. Early in the morning one can hear the birds chirp, the wind blowing when taking a stroll. Standing on the beach one can hear the waves crashing on the shore. The sounds of Nature are very soothing, as they are in tune with our inner peace and therefore help us to transcend more deeply into the silence.

It reminds me of Mahatma Gandhi, who used to keep an idol of three monkeys on his table — one covering the eyes, another covering the ears, and the third covering the mouth. This depicts silencing the eyes, ears, and speech. However, all these three are based on silencing thoughts in the mind. Outer silence is simply a means to help us find the inner silence.

Silence of the mind - As food is required for the physical body, silence is needed for the nourishment of the mind. Mind is the source of all noise, all turbulence. Madame H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) describes the mind as the “slayer of the Real”. The mind distorts facts by its projections, which have their roots in unconscious motives or desires. Therefore, she says “slay the slayer”. All the voices of the mind must be silenced so that the seeker can hear the inner voice. And when one comes to experience such a state, one can be united with all.

Though it appears to be passive, silence is dynamic because it is powerful. Everything good comes out of silence. J. Krishnamurti speaks of the dynamic silence of the mind, which is at the level of psychospiritual experience. To him, “an active mind is silent, aware, and choiceless.”

Krishnamurti says: “There is the silence of the mind which is never touched by any noise, by any thought, or by the passing wind of experience. It is the silence that is innocent and therefore endless. When there is this silence of the mind, action springs from it, and this action does not cause any confusion or misery.”

Silencing the mind means becoming witness of the thoughts that go through our mind, and trying to find out the source of these thoughts. This is where silence becomes meditation. Silence can also be said to be a unified state of existence where all questions, minor or major, are answered, all doubts are dissolved, all creative solutions are found, all decisions are made. It is my personal experience that, in silence, one can let go one’s painful experiences of the past and release repressed emotions. It gives strength to deal with difficult challenges in life and shows the way out of them as well. It is the place where you can forgive those who hurt you the most. It helps to control emotions such as anger, greed, worry, stress, and so forth, and fills the heart with abundant joy. Scientific researches show that experiencing at least two hours of silence every day increases the production of brain cells, which reduce the risk of dementia and insomnia. They say that silence strengthens the hippocampus, a part of the brain responsible for short- and long-term memory.

Silence of the Self - Most of the major religions of the world consider silence as a place to experience the Ultimate Reality, Truth. The word *mauna* in Sanskrit means “silence” and is derived from the word “*muni*”, which refers to the enlightened one who is intensely silent, calm, and awakened. The Buddha is considered a great “*muni*”. Buddhists believe that enlightenment can be achieved only through silence, and teachings can be understood with silent meditation and contemplation.

Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavadgītā* (X.38): “Of all things secret, I am Silence.” The knowledge of the Self is described in Indian scriptures as “the secret of all secrets”, which is experienced only in the deep inner silence. In Hindu philosophy, including the teachings of Advaita Vedānta

and the many paths of Yoga, silence is given much importance for integral spiritual growth and transformation. In Jainism speech is considered great but silence is greater still. “Silence is the holy temple of our divine thoughts.” Lord Mahavira observed silence for twelve-and-a-half years before he became a *kevalin* (enlightened).

The Jewish sages claim that “a safety fence for wisdom is silence”. In Christianity it is said: “For God alone my soul waits in silence.” (Psalms 62:1) “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalms 46:10) Mother Theresa says: “We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how Nature—trees, flowers, grass—grow in silence. See the stars, the moon, and the sun—how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch souls.”

The Sufi saint Rumi teaches: “Silence is the language of God, all else is poor translation.” Silence in Islam is simply Salvation. For them, wisdom consists in keeping silent, and those who practise it are few. The Baha’i religion believes that “the sign of the intellect is contemplation and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at a time—he cannot both speak and meditate.”

For more sincere spiritual seekers, practice of meditation is necessary to go deeper into silence and for a longer period. “The deeper one goes into silence, the closer one becomes part of the All. There is no “other” in silence. Silence is oneness, all pervasive. Beneath the loud and noisy world, there is stillness and peace that can be directly experienced. All the techniques of meditation are meant to bring us to the deepest state of inner silence. In the words of HPB: “He who would hear the voice of *nâda*, ‘the soundless Sound’, and comprehend it, has to learn the nature of *dhâranâ*, or the ability to focus steadfastly.”

Sound and silence are not two opposite concepts. It is said that both sound and silence represent two forms of sound: audible, which is sound of the Known, and silence that represents non-audible sound, which is sound

of the Unknown. When we meditate trying to immerse ourselves in silence, we try to listen to a unique sound—the vibrating sound of the Universe, which is that of our inner soul. It is that which HPB refers to as *nâda*, the soundless, non-audible sound. This is a voice inside all of us and out in the whole cosmos that is hidden and subtle. Our purpose on Earth is “to reconnect ourselves with that Voice—which is the voice of our inner self”, says HPB. That is the voice of the silence. No ears are required for the voice of the silence.

In the Nâsadiya Sukta of the *RigVeda*, it is mentioned that before creation of the Universe, there was no time, no space, no being, no non-being. There was total silence, pure consciousness, or Absolute Consciousness, which is called Nirguna Brahman in Vedantic terminology. This Pure Consciousness was manifested as Universal Consciousness, or Saguna Brahman, along with the resonating vibrational *nâda*, the sound of “Om”. It is the primordial sound of the macrocosm and the microcosm.

In this context I would like to mention the experience of Eben Alexander, an American neurologist. He narrated in an interview about his near-death experience that when he was clinically declared dead and was out of the body, he heard an unusual sound—“Om”. Earlier, he had no idea of either this word or the sound. This sound can be heard when there is no body-consciousness but only consciousness.

Silence is awareness. The *Mundaka Upanishad* mentions that “Silence is Atman (the Self)”. In fact, silence is the genuine teaching about the ultimate Reality because the Absolute is beyond the scope of speech and thought. Ramana Maharshi used to teach his followers through silence. To him, silence in the absolute sense is the culmination of *jñâna*—self-realization.

In one of the Upanishads, the disciple says to the teacher, “Master, tell me the nature of the Self, or Atman.” The teacher remained silent. Again the question was asked and again the answer was silence. By his silence, the

teacher indicated that as the nature of Self, or Atman, is indescribable in words, Self is Silence. It is directly experienced through consciousness. Silence is both a journey and the destination.

Today life has become more chaotic and loud because we have lost the art of being silent, which is so essential and powerful for our peaceful existence. If children over six years of age could be taught to meditate or remain in silence for twenty minutes every day, they would be transformed into highly developed and flourishing human beings. Silence has incredible power.

Now people are prepared to pay heavily to go to retreat centres for the joyful experience of silence. In fact, this is not needed, as silence is ever within us. What we really need is a simple, holistic lifestyle that requires healthy food for the body, mental silence for reflection, and deeper silence (meditation) for the transformation of the self. Let us enrich and transform our life by increasing the role of silence in our day-to-day existence.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, June 2020)

**Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy
Master whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou
feelest.**

H.P. Blavatsky

The Voice of the Silence

OLANDE ANANDA*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ASALA IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION

It was on the full moon of Asala, two months after the Buddha's Enlightenment, that the Enlightened One arrived at the Deer Park (*Meghalaya*) in Saranath, about 5 kms from Varanasi. The Buddha had especially gone there in search of his five companions with whom he had been practicing *Tapas* for nearly six years, intensive self-mortification in search of '***Mind over Matter***' and ***Moksha***.

When Prince Siddhartha nearly fainted from malnutrition while crossing the Niranjara River at Bodhgaya, he decided that he had overdone the ascetic path and ***needed to come to a Middle Path***, neither the luxury of the palatial life of a Prince, nor the Asceticism of the yogis.

While sitting in meditation near the River close to Sujathagram, a young lady, called Sujatha, daughter of the Village Chieftain, and her servant came to do a Pooja of the tree. Seeing Prince sitting in meditation, she asked him whether he was the *Vruksha Davata* (*Tree God*), to which the Prince replied 'No'; 'Well, are you a Human Being? To which Siddhartha replied 'No'. Then 'What are you? She asked.

'I am A-wake', the Buddha-to-be replied.

Sujatha offered the *Kheer* (milk rice) and the Prince started eating small portions of it to regain his strength.

After his Enlightenment in Bodhgaya, the Buddha wondered whether there were any, who would be able to understand the subtle discoveries that he had made. He wanted to share this knowledge with his meditation teachers, Alara Kalama and Ramaputra, but he realized with his supernatural power that they had already passed away. Then he thought about his spiritual com-

*Of Pagoda Meditation Centre, Nugedoda, Colombo, Sri Lanka

rades who had been in search of the Truth together with him for many years. He realized that they were now dwelling in the Deer Park in Saranath.

Approaching them, they did not feel like getting up for him, as they thought he had fallen off the path, by eating again. But, as *they perceived a special Aura around Him, they knew something fundamental had happened to Him. They rose and invited The Buddha to take a seat and to teach them what he had discovered.*

The Buddha then taught them the Middle Path, neither extreme wealth and sensuality, nor extreme self-mortification. His speech is now known as the “*Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*” – ‘*The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dharma*’.

The original text in English translation goes like this: I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Varanasi in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There he addressed the group of five monks:

“There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the *Tathagata* — *producing vision, producing knowledge* — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.

“And what is the middle way realized by the Tathagata that — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding? **Precisely this Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.** This is the middle way realized by the Tathagata that — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.

“Now this, monks, is **the noble truth of stress (Dukkha)**: Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress & despair are stressful; association with the unloved is stress-

ful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.

“And this, monks, is **the noble truth of the origination of stress**: the craving that makes for further becoming — accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there — i.e., craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.

“And this, monks, is **the noble truth of the cessation of stress**: the remainder less fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, and letting go of that very craving.

“And this, monks, is **the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path** — right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘*This is the noble truth of stress.*’

Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘*This noble truth of stress is to be comprehended.*’

Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘*This noble truth of stress has been comprehended.*’

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘*This is the noble truth of the origination of stress*’... ‘This noble truth of the origination of stress is to be abandoned’ [2] ... ‘*This noble truth of the origination of stress has been abandoned.*’

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard be-

fore: ‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of stress’... **‘This noble truth of the cessation of stress (Dukkha) is to be directly experienced’**... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of stress has been directly experienced.’

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: ‘This is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress’... ‘This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress is to be developed’... **‘This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress has been developed.’**”

“And, monks, as long as this — my three-round, twelve-permutation knowledge & vision concerning these four noble truths as they have come to be — was not pure, I did not claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos with its deities, Maras, & Brahmas, with its contemplatives & Brahmanas, its royalty & common folk. But as soon as this — my three-round, twelve-permutation knowledge & vision concerning these four noble truths as they have come to be — was truly pure, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos with its deities, Maras & Brahmas, with its contemplatives & Brahmanas, its royalty & common folk. **Knowledge & vision arose in me: ‘Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.’**”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the group of five monks delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, there arose to Ven. Kondañña the dustless, stainless Dhamma eye: Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.

And when the Blessed One had set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion, the earth devas cried out: **“At Varanasi, in the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma that cannot be stopped by Brahma or any contemplative, deva, Mara or**

God or anyone in the cosmos.” On hearing the earth devas’ cry, **the devas of the Four Kings’ Heaven took up the cry**... the devas of the Thirty-three... the Yama devas... the Tusita devas... the Nimmanarati devas... the Paranimmita-vasavatti devas... the devas of Brahma’s retinue took up the cry: “At Varanasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma that cannot be stopped by Brahma or contemplative, deva, Mara, or God or anyone at all in the cosmos.”

So in that moment, that instant, the cry shot right up to the Brahma worlds. And this ten-thousand-fold cosmos shivered and quivered and quaked, while a great, measureless radiance appeared in the cosmos, surpassing the effulgence of the devas.

Then the Blessed One exclaimed: “So you really know, Kondañña? So you really know?” And that is how Ven. Kondañña acquired the name **Añña-Kondañña — Kondañña who knows.**

This is accepted as the first Teachings of the Buddha. In certain Buddha statues we see the Buddha preaching with his hands in a wheel/chakra posture and the Wheel of the Dhamma below which denotes the First Preaching. In yet other Buddha statues we see the Buddha holding his right hand down and touching **the Earth as Witness to his Enlightenment (Bhumisparsha Mudra).**

From that time onwards more and more young men started following the Buddha and became Bhikkhus/monks, some attaining Arahathood. When there were 60 Arahats, the Buddha sent them in 60 different directions, for the welfare and happiness of the many **“bahujana hitaya, bahujana sukhaya”**.

Soon after the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, the Buddha went to visit his relatives in Kapilavastu. His son Rahula was now nearly 7 years old. Buddha’s wife Yashodara asked for their son’s Inheritance. Buddha replied he will give his inheritance to little Rahula, by making him a monk.

Soon a “Women’s Liberation Movement” started among the Noble
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Ladies of Kapilavastu. Five hundred of them came to the Buddha, asking Him for Ordination as Bhikkhunis (ordained Buddhist nuns). At first the Buddha refused twice, but with some persuasion of his chief Disciple, Ananda, the Buddha gave in to the request and started the Bhikkhuni Order, five years after the order of monks. This is claimed by Buddhists to be the first Women's Religious Order. Although, the Jains also had Bhikkhunis, which may have preceded Buddha's Order of Nuns.

It is thus, that the Full Moon of July, Asala Poornima, is such an important event in the Buddha's history. It is also the beginning of a 3-months retreat for the Bhikkhus / Bhikkhunis in the Theravada tradition, which ends between the Full Moon of October and November.

In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, the 3-months' Retreat starts around Waisakha Buddha Poornima in May and ends with Asala in July or August.

May the Teachings of the Buddha of "Setting the Wheel of the Dharma in motion" inspire you to find your own Middle Path to Liberation!

(Courtsy: *The Bombay Theosophical Bulletin*, July 2020)

**Having tasted the sweetness of solitude and of tranquility,
one becomes free from fear and sin while drinking the
sweetness of the joy of the Law.**

Dhammapada

NEWS AND NOTES

Bombay

Blavatsky Lodge Virtual Meetings under COVID-19 Lockdown: Blavatsky Lodge has started experimenting with holding Virtual Meeting on Zoom Hosted by Bro. Navin Kumar and Sis. Kashmira Khambatta. On every Tuesday Bro. Arni Narendran conducts study of P. Pavri's book *Theosophy Explained in Questions & Answers* and on Fridays Sis. Aban Patel conducts study of CWL's book *Inner Life*, from 6.00 to 7.00 pm. Gradually Zoom Meeting will be opened to more participants.

BTF Brethren care for Bro. Khosrav Pavri: It is very kind of Brethren to give spontaneous help to Bro. Khosrav in his time of need. Bro. Ram Kalra went to meet Khosrav at his place to enquire about him and to cheer him. Many thanks Brethren for your Theosophical spirit.

Kerala

Sri. T.S. Divakaran, a member of Ernakulam Lodge, passed to peace on 27 June 2020. He became a Life Member (LMC 1925) on 22 September 2009.

Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand

A meeting to celebrate the Foundation Day of Nirvan Lodge, Agra, was organized on 5 March. Dr. S.N. Malhotra Memorial Lecture was held on 12 March in which Dr. Keshav Malhotra spoke on 'Role Playing'.

Meetings were not held in the months of April and May due to COVID-19 followed by lockdown. So, the following talks were organized by Nirvan Lodge in June through Audio Conference : 'Ramcharit Manas' by Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma, 'Sufi Manovigyan' by Bro. R.P. Sharma and 'Navadha Bhakti' by Sis. Pratibha Sharma.

On-Line Theosophical study and talks in Hindi: On-line theosophical study and talks in Hindi thrice/twice in every week continued to be organized.

The themes covered during such on-line study and talks held during June, 2020 were: Practical Theosophy, Who is Theosophist?, GOD, Gods, Universal Message of Koran, Foundation of Yoga, Devotion and Cheerfulness. Bro. Ashok Pratap Lokhande and Sis. Suvralina Mohanty spoke on “Devotion” and “Cheerfulness” respectively. Bro. U.S. Pandey spoke on rest of the topics.

Besides members of this Federation, some members from other Federations of the Indian Section like those of M.P. & Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, Marathi, Bombay, Bihar, Utakal and Telugu Federation also joined in this on-line programme.

Healing meditation: Some members are practicing healing meditation three times a day, sending thoughts for healing of Corona virus affected persons all over the world.

Guided Meditation: An on-line group meditation guided by Bro. U.S. Pandey was practiced on 14 June in which members from several federations joined.

National Lecturer

International Seminars: ‘Adamant’ Lodge, Moscow of the Theosophical Society in Russia, organized on-line international seminar on the theme “Practice of Theosophy” on 14 June, and on the theme “Meditation-Scientific and Practical Understanding” on 28 June, 2020. On invitation from this Russian lodge, Bro. U.S. Pandey joined as one of the speakers and panelists in these seminars. Several members from countries like Russia, Finland, Greece, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore and India participated in the programme.

Public Talk in a webinar on ‘Thought Power’: Bro. U.S. Pandey was invited to address students and faculty members during a webinar on the theme “Thought Power and its uses” organized by Technical Campus Noida of Guru Govind Singh Indra Prastha University, Delhi. It was held on 30 June, 2020. Dr. Divya Mishra, the coordinating faculty member of the institute, introduced the speaker. About 65 persons including students and

faculty members of the institute, some members of theosophical society and others also participated in it. Bro. Pandey in his address dealt with nature of thought; process of creation of thoughts-waves and forms; kind of thoughts; mutual relation between thoughts and feelings; to make thoughts effective by concentration and close observation; use of thought power to build self-character; helping others in distress, in getting rid of bad habits, making public opinion on important issues etc. He also cited some experiments done on the effectiveness of thought power in improving physical performance, telepathy etc. It was followed by an interactive session in which the questions raised by the participants were answered by the speaker.

This programme also helped in introducing some basic information about theosophy and theosophical society to general public.

Obituary

Bro. A.M. Vatcha (Diploma No 46783) passed to peace on 21 June 2020. He was a dedicated member and motivator for Hyderabad Theosophical Society. His grandfather donated the Lodge building which is heritage building of unique Theosophical Significance. Bro. A.M. Vatcha, a Retd. English Teacher, always believed in living theosophy. Many members knew him as he had been regularly attending international convention at Adyar and also the conferences in India as well as abroad. May his soul rest in peace.

GOALS FOR — 2019-2020

Indian Section Headquarters

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| 1. To conduct a goal setting meet at Varanasi for the Presidents and Secretaries of all the Federations. | 100 |
| 2. To organize the 144 th International Convention from Dec. 31 to Jan.5. | 100 |
| 3. To organize five workers' training camps in the North, East, South, West and Central India. | |
| 4. To conduct three-day Youth Camp at Varanasi from 04 to 06, September, 2020, with free board & lodging. Rs 500 for food and Transportation will be borne by the Federation. Every Federation will send at least three youth for this camp. | |
| 5. To reprint at least ten more Theosophical Books after the six done last year. | |
| 6. To construct Amphitheatre with a capacity of 1200 for our four educational institutions. | 100 |
| 7. To increase the rate of generation of a surplus from Rs 1 Crore to Rs 1.5 Crore by October, 2020. | |
| 8. To organize to translate the book " <i>The Hidden Side of Lodge Meetings</i> " by C.W. Leadbeater in Hindi and Kannada. Get 200 copies printed in each language for the functioning of lodges as requested by the Federations. | |
| 9. To organize a day-long National Level Orientation Seminar on Theosophy – Science and Occultism for the Presidents and Secretaries of all the Federations, just before the goal setting meet. | |

Assam Theosophical Federation

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| 1. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge. | |
| 2. To arrange visit to 15 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges. | |
| 3. To conduct a study camp at Bhowali with about 15 members from the Federation. | |

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| 4. To arrange visits of good speakers to four schools & four colleges. | |
| 5. To organize 12 essay competitions at school and college level. | |
| 6. To organize two one-day orientation camps for new members. | |
| 7. To conduct 15 study camps at Federation & Lodge level for the better understanding of Theosophy. | |
| 8. To organize five public talks for exposure of general public to Theosophy. | |
| 9. To translate and publish two Theosophical books in Assamese. | |
| 10. To increase the NET membership by 10 members. | |
| 11. To organize a National Conference on 15-16 February 2020. | |

Bengal Theosophical Federation

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| 1. To increase the NET membership by 10 members. | 50 |
| 2. To open one new lodge during this year. | |
| 3. To increase number of members attending our weekly study classes by 30 to 40. | |
| 4. To translate, publish and distribute two theosophical books in Bengali. | 50 |
| 5. To conduct 4 study classes by National Lecturers. | |
| 6. To activate one dormant Lodge/Centre by visiting and motivating workers & old members. | 50 |
| 7. To send at least 15 members for Bhowali study camp to be conducted by Bengal Theosophical Federation. | 50 |
| 8. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge. | 100 |
| 9. To arrange visit to 15 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges. | |

Bihar Theosophical Federation

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| 1. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge. | |
| 2. To participate in Theosophical meet in Assam with at least 10 members. | |

3. To arrange visit to 11 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.
4. To conduct a four-day study class at Bhowali in the last week of May-2020 with at least 20 members.
5. To conduct at least two public meetings to introduce theosophy to the people in order to attract new members.
6. To revive and activate at least two dormant Lodges.
7. To conduct 4 study classes of two or three days at the Federation & Lodge level.
8. To publish & distribute 500 copies of pamphlets on two Theosophical subjects in Hindi.
9. To publish a book in simple Hindi on basic Theosophy for the non-members & new members.
10. To increase the **NET** membership by 15 members.

Bombay Theosophical Federation

1. To increase the **NET** membership by 5 members.
2. To create and commission an E-Lodge network through efforts by Bro. Taral Munshi.
3. To ensure that Ananda Lodge will meet at least once in a month.
4. To encourage 20 Young & New Members to speak on Red Letter Days, Annual Session. 40
5. To conduct two “reach out programmes” on Theosophical themes, with students of schools and colleges. 100
6. To groom three second line workers. 100
7. To raise Rs 15 lakhs for TS activities from CSR funds.
8. To send at least ten members for the study camp at Bhowali, along with Gujarat Federation.
9. To organize one Study Camp by National Lecturer.
10. To arrange visit to 8 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.

Delhi Theosophical Federation

1. To publish 1000 pamphlets on introduction to Theosophy in Hindi for general public.

2. To arrange at least 6 lectures on Theosophical subjects at various schools and colleges of Delhi.
3. To increase the **NET** membership by **10** members.
4. To organize two study classes of two days’ duration at the Lodge and Federation level.
5. To arrange a visit to 4 Lodges separately by Dr. N.C. Ramanujachary and Bro. U.S. Pandey.
6. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
7. To conduct a 3-day study camp at Bhowali in the month of June, 2020, with at least 10 members.

Gujarat Theosophical Federation

1. To organize one Workers’ Training Camp where delegates from lodges in western part of India (Marathi, Bombay and Gujarat) will participate.
2. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
3. To organize one 3-day study camp for at least 70 members at one location in order to activate members of the Lodge.
4. To reactivate two dormant lodges/centres by visiting and motivating workers and old members.
5. To publish one thousand pamphlets and two books each on five Theosophical subjects in Gujarati and distribute them to lodges and members.
6. To organize one youth camp, one elocution competition and three essay competitions to encourage youth activities.
7. To arrange visit to 15 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.
8. To increase the **NET** membership by **10** members.
9. To conduct a three-day study camp at Bhowali in the last week of May, 2020, with at least 35 members.

Karnataka Theosophical Federation

1. To popularize Theosophy amongst students through members who

are in Teaching line; organize one 4-day teachers' training camp according to syllabus relevant to students.

2. To organize ten lectures on Theosophical themes in schools and colleges.
3. To organize two 3-day Youth Camps at different places.
4. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
5. To organize 2- day Workers' Training Camp for the President and Secretary of all the Lodges in order to conduct uniform activities in their respective Lodges.
6. To activate two dormant Lodges.
7. To set-up libraries in five lodges and provide them books published by the Federation, free of cost.
8. To visit 25 Lodges individually by the President, Secretary and EC Members in order to strengthen the activities of the Lodge.
9. To conduct 8-day study camp at Adyar with 50 members.
10. To establish a Rs 2 lakhs Lodge Activity & Development Fund made out of voluntary donations.
11. To reprint and publish three Theosophical books in Kannada.
12. To sort out all discrepancies between the membership records of the Indian Section and Karnataka Federation by 15.01.2020.

Kerala Theosophical Federation

1. To organize one 'Wake Up India Youth Camp' in January 2020 with at least thirty students.
2. To organize two 'Reach Out Programmes' on Theosophical themes for interaction with the teachers and students.
3. To organize one Workers' Training Camp with at least thirty members.
4. To organize two Theosophical book exhibitions for 10 days each with the co-operation of public libraries & academies.
5. To publish one Theosophical book in Malayalam during this year.
6. To organize two Retreats/Study Camps in Kerala and Bhowali with at least 30 members in a camp.
7. To celebrate the 125th Birth Anniversary of J. Krishnamurti at two

places in Kerala by exhibiting books on J.K. and Theosophy.

8. To publish one pamphlet on J. Krishnamurti and Theosophical Society in English.
9. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
10. To arrange visit to 10 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.
11. To increase the **NET** membership by **10** members.

M.P. & Rajasthan Theosophical Federation

1. To increase the **NET** membership by 25 members.
2. To arrange at least 4 orientation sessions for NSS and Scout students at the Lodge level.
3. To arrange at least 6 "Yoga and Meditation Camps" at different lodges.
4. To conduct one study camp at Bhowali.
5. To conduct 5 Study Camps/Seminar at different lodges (for 1 day or 2 days as the case may be).
6. To form at least two youth groups.
7. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
8. To Create a Website of M.P. & Rajasthan Federation.

Madras Theosophical Federation

1. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
2. To organize two study camps on Theosophy at Adyar.
3. Increase the **NET** membership by 25 members.
4. To organize visits to 5 colleges by good speakers in order to attract young generation towards Theosophy.
5. To form two new Theosophical Lodge.
6. To organize one Workers' Training Camp in Adyar.
7. Dissemination of information in the print media about TS and Theosophy. (Two Special Days like Annie Besant's Birthday.)
8. To arrange visit to 10 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or

a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.

9. Guided tour to International Headquarters at Adyar for all the members of all the Affiliated Lodges, in a phased manner.

Marathi Theosophical Federation

1. To organize 5 one-day seminars on Theosophical Subjects.
2. To conduct 5 essay competitions /debate competitions/ book reviews based on Theosophical books for Higher Secondary and College level students.
3. To publish 5000 copies of leaflets on two topics of Theosophy in Marathi and distribute them to lodges, schools and general public.
4. To introduce one 3-day vacation study camp on Theosophical subject for at least 20 students of schools and colleges.
5. To increase the **NET** membership by 10 members.
6. To conduct two 1-day introductory camp or workshop for new members.
7. To establish Theosophical Study Resource Centre in Federation and to prepare at least 5 trainers (resource persons) to propagate Theosophy in the society.
8. To conduct a 3-day study camp at Bhowali in the third week of May 2020, with at least 20 members.
9. To conduct goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
10. To promote Inter-Federation Theosophical Study Meetings by organizing one-day seminar either at Belgaum or at Mumbai.
11. To arrange visit to 10 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.

Rayalaseema Theosophical Federation

1. To arrange visit to 15 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.
2. To activate 4 dormant lodges.
3. To form one study centre and 3 new lodges.
4. To increase the **NET** membership by 25 members.

5. To conduct a study camp at Bhowali during the last week of April, 2020, with participation of 30 members.
6. To visit 2 colleges/schools at least once in every two months for popularizing Theosophy.
7. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
8. To start Theosophical Libraries in 4 lodges of the federation.
9. To conduct 3 training camps in order to train members to become federation lecturers and resource persons.
10. To print and distribute 4 Theosophical books (500 copies) and 6 Theosophical pamphlets (1000 copies), each in Telugu.

Tamil Theosophical Federation

1. To organize 6 study classes in different lodges.
2. To publish 500 copies each of 10 pamphlets in Tamil on Theosophical subjects for lodges and general public.
3. To increase the **NET** membership by **10** members.
4. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.
5. To organize 10 debate/essay competitions at school and college level.
6. To conduct a study camp at Bhowali with at least 10 members.
7. To organize at least six Lectures by Tamil speakers on Theosophical subjects in six schools/colleges.
8. To arrange visit to 10 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.

Telugu Theosophical Federation

1. To increase the **NET** membership by 20 members (including women and youth).
2. To revive and activate two dormant lodges.
3. To arrange visit to 20 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.
4. To popularize Theosophical literature in 4 colleges and 1 University.

5. To conduct two study camps.	50
6. To conduct a study camp at Bhowali with about 25 members from the Federation.	
7. To conduct at least two public meetings to introduce Theosophy among the people in order to attract new members.	
8. To publish the book “ <i>Invisible Helpers</i> ” by C.W. Leadbeater in Telugu language.	
9. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.	100
10. To create a new website for Telugu Federation.	

Utkal Theosophical Federation

1. To form one new lodge and one new centre and revitalize two dormant lodges.	
2. To increase the NET membership by 15 members.	100
3. To invite four National Lecturers for conducting study camps of three days’ duration.	25
4. To impart Theosophical education once in a month in two different schools.	
5. To publish one translated Theosophical book and two reprints in Odia.	
6. To participate in the National Book Fair in Bhubaneswar for 7 days to sell books and distribute 500 Odia pamphlets on Theosophy.	100
7. Three public propagation meetings will be held in school/college and in a University in order to popularize Theosophy through lectures, books and handouts.	100
8. To arrange visit to 7 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.	
9. To conduct a 5-day study camp at Bhowali in June 2020 with 15 members.	
10. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.	70

U.P. & Uttarakhand Theosophical Federation

1. To develop a website for U.P. & Uttarakhand Federation.	100
2. To arrange visit to 15 Lodges either by the President, Secretary, or a knowledgeable member for the better functioning of Lodges.	86
3. To organize five programmes/talks on Theosophy for students/youths.	100
4. To organize ten public talks/sessions for exposing general public to Theosophical teachings.	100
5. To conduct six study camps of 2-3days’ duration.	80
6. To organize seven 1-day Study Camp/Seminar.	43
7. To organize five sessions on Guided Meditation.	80
8. To organize a 5-day study camp in Bhowali in June 2020 (Jointly with M.P./ Rajasthan Federation) with participation of 20 members.	0
9. To publish two books on Theosophy in Hindi.	100
10. To conduct a goal setting meet for the President & Secretary of every Lodge.	100
11. To distribute 100 books & 500 pamphlets on Theosophy among the students, youth and general public.	100
12. To increase the NET membership by 5 members.	0

The first necessity for obtaining self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance; to feel with every fibre of the heart that one is “ceaselessly” self-deceived. The second requisite is the still deeper conviction that such knowledge—such intuitive and certain knowledge—can be obtained by effort. The third and most important is an indomitable determination to obtain and face that knowledge. Self-knowledge of this kind is unobtainable by what men usually call “self-analysis”. It is not reached by reasoning or any brain process; for it is the awakening to consciousness of the Divine Nature of man. To obtain this knowledge is a greater achievement than to command the elements or to know the future.

H.P. Blavatsky