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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

A STEP FORWARD

I normally start a subject with its definition. I would like to write about “devotion”- many people experience devotional feelings but they do not necessarily call them “devotion”. Feelings are experiential by definition. We cannot define them but we make attempts to describe them. Literary writing is all about the description of feelings. Devotion is experiential. Hence, there is no academic definition of it.

Among the intellectuals “devotion” is a foreign concept. Intellectuals rarely talk about devotion. Among the religious fundamentalists, devotion is a misunderstood word. Fundamentalists emphasize the fear of God. Devotion is never produced from fear. It has nothing to do with guilt either. In theosophy we do not normally use the word God. It is so sad that in modern times intellectuals hesitate to say ‘God’ because of the overuse and abuse of the word by organized religions. It is true that when we name the Cosmic Consciousness, we limit the unfathomable but we have to use a word to refer to the ultimate reality, the ocean. The important point here is that the infinite ocean is full consciousness. It is also full of love.

Since consciousness and Love are synonymous, this infinite ocean of love is Absolute Consciousness. Our souls are mysterious internal reflections of the Absolute Consciousness. Whenever one reflects on the infinite ocean of consciousness, one’s mind experiences a special feeling. This is devotion. The intensity of the devotional feeling varies. Sometimes it is a pleasant sentiment and sometimes it is an overflowing blissful feeling.

“*Bhakti Rupa Setu*” says “The Supreme Consciousness will give knowledge and the technique of doing the work. It is not the devotees’ headache. Surrender everything to the Lord. If one requires something from God, one must ask only for absolute devotion. When devotion is attained, God is attained. If God is attained, everything is attained”.

In “*Astitva and Shivatva*” the devotee says, “Oh, my Lord, I love you because in loving You, I get pleasure. I want nothing from You”. But this is not the highest form of devotion. In the highest form of devotion, the devotee says, “Oh Lord, I love You. I want to love You because I want

that my love should give You pleasure”. By means of this type of devotion, the person comes in close contact with the Supreme Self and becomes one with the Supreme Self.

In “*Man and His God*” it is said :

“The microcosmic nucleus approaches the macrocosmic nucleus not through *Jnana* (Knowledge) and *Karma* (Action) but through *Bhakti* or devotion. Then why should people cultivate *Jnana* and *Karma*? They do so in order that their devotion may become more intense, not for any other reason. People don’t eat pickle to fill the stomach but to whet their appetite so that they can enjoy their food more. Similarly, devotees cultivate *Jnana* and *Karma* not for their physical growth but to gather the strength to move on the path of devotion with greater acceleration. This movement towards *Parama Prusha* is *Bhakti* or devotion. *Jnana* and *Karma* are aids and therefore *Jnana* and *Karma* should both be cultivated”.

The general purpose of devotion is to encourage spiritual growth. Not all spiritual journeys are the same, so different devotions serve different purposes. Individual devotion, group devotion and family devotion.

The Power of Devotion is tremendous as Devotion to a higher power reduces our egocentric self-preoccupation and fosters a sense of humility. When we understand that the divine resides within all of us, we remember we are not better than anyone else. Instead of focusing on differences, we focus on similarities.

There are four forms of devotion.

1. *Atma-Bhakti*: Devotion to one’s *atma* or the Supreme Self.
2. *Ishvara-Bhakti*: Devotion to a formless being (The Cosmic Lord or God)
3. *Ishta Devata-Bhakti*: Devotion to a personal God or Goddess.
4. *Guru-Bhakti*: Devotion to Guru.

Annie Besant writes in the foreword of her book ‘*The Doctrine of the Heart*’:

“The word ‘devotion’ is the key to all true progress in the spiritual life. If in working we seek the growth of the spiritual movement and not gratifying success, the service of the Masters and not our own self-gratulation, we cannot be discouraged by temporary failures, nor by the clouds and deadness that we may experience in

our own inner life.

“To serve for the sake of service, and not for the pleasure we take in serving, is to make a distinct step forward, for we then begin to gain that balance, that equilibrium, which enables us to serve as contentedly in failure as in success, in inner darkness as in inner light. When we have succeeded in dominating the personality so far as to feel real *pleasure* in doing work for the Master, which is painful to the lower nature, the next step is to do it as heartily and fully when this pleasure disappears and all the joy and light are clouded over. Otherwise in serving the Holy Ones we may be serving self—serving for what we get from Them, instead of for pure love’s sake”.

The divine silence is profound. This is the greatest mystery. Entire Cosmos is the loudest expression of the divine love; yet in our personal lives we hear nothing explicitly divine. But there are glimpses. In those fleeting moments we feel the divine love. That is all the proof we need. We then start doing the things that bring us closer to that feeling and stop those that push us away from the feeling. We learn devotion by trial and error.

There are spiritual teachings on how to cultivate the feeling of devotion but ultimately, we learn by trial and error. We can consult books and read everything there is to learn about religions, philosophies and spiritual practices. But learning alone is no help. Even if you possess all the knowledge you can make fundamental mistakes. One can learn only by trial and error. There is no destination in this journey. It is a continuous process. Devotion takes you to the ultimate truth. Practicing devotion to the divine will be a step forward in the right direction.

“The power to know does not come from book-study nor from philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word and thought”.

H.P. BLAVATSKY

TIMBOYD

THE CHOICE TO BE WHOLE

(Based on a Public Lecture given during the 147th International Convention of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, formerly Madras, India, 4 January 2023)

I WOULD like to talk about Choice and Wholeness, and, of course, we cannot discuss wholeness without discussing fragmentation. Recently I found myself in a conversation with a highly educated and accomplished person. She was talking about how our lives are controlled by our genetics. Her point was that lurking in our genes are all sorts of conditions such as cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and so on, and that in many ways these conditions dictate the course and direction of our lives.

It was an interesting point of view. I asked her: “Do you really believe that?” The answer was “Yes”. Although we did not pursue it much further, my response was: “Well, if this is in fact what controls our lives, we should hope that nothing is hiding in our genetics.” “Ignorance is bliss” was the response.

One of the reasons that the Theosophical Society (TS) came into existence has been to plant certain powerful and necessary seed thoughts in the consciousness of humanity — so they may grow, spread, and take life in our shared mind atmosphere. These are ideas like the unity of all life, the multi-dimensional nature of the Universe and of ourselves, that there is no such thing as empty space — a thought that could also be expressed as “omnipresent intelligence”.

We dwell not only among the forms of consciousness that continually surround us, but also within a greater consciousness, a greater whole, within whose “body” we participate. The biblical statement is “we live, move, and have our being” within that greater whole. Spiritual evolution is another idea that was absent from popular discourse, but is now present because of the work of pioneering minds in the Theosophical Movement.

Today one of those key seeds that I would like for us to go into is the concept of Self-Responsibility. Near the conclusion of the excellent little story book *The Idyll of the White Lotus* by Mabel Collins, there is the enunciation of Three Truths. The last one addresses the idea of self-responsibility. It’s a strong statement: “Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his

life, his reward, his punishment.” The idea of self-responsibility is that each one of us is responsible for our self-unfoldment and our self-awareness.

An obvious objection to this point of view would be that we really do not have control over many of the circumstances in our lives. People do in fact get cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. People find themselves engulfed in wars and violence of various types. At the moment the global focus is mostly on Ukraine and Russia, but there are 40 other wars going on as we sit here now. So the circumstances in which we find ourselves are not necessarily under our control. So then, what justifies this idea of being our own “absolute law giver”?

There was a man who lived through World War II. He was a Jewish psychiatrist in Austria who along with his family was swept up by the Nazis and sent to the concentration camps. His name was Viktor Frankl. Prior to the war he had been doing a great deal of research and had a theory of human behaviour that he was trying to flesh out. When he was taken from his home to the concentration camp, the one thing that he brought with him was the thesis that he had been working so hard to complete. Of course, when he arrived at the camp everything that he brought was taken from him, and the next three years he spent in concentration camps — a witness to an environment of cruelty, limitation, and brutal degradation.

After the war Frankl wrote a book that many people regard as the greatest book written during the 20th century titled *Man’s Search for Meaning*. In the book he distilled his ideas about choice — ideas tested in the difficult environment of the concentration camp. His central idea was that the most important thing that we have in our lives is a sense of meaning, and he designated three specific areas from which this meaning is derived.

The first is purposeful work — the work we do in the world, our employment, our jobs. Our connection to a work gives us a sense of meaning. We mean something to others and the work we do gives meaning to us. I have known many people who on losing a job somehow lose direction. Something about their purpose for being here seems to be taken away.

The second source of meaning Frankl talks about is love and relationships. It is one of the most powerful sources of meaning for all of us.

I can remember 25 or 30 years ago, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. My father and I were in the hospital while she waited to be taken to surgery. He was keeping up an appearance of strength, but when my mother was taken away for her surgery, he turned to me and said: “Son, if anything happens to your mother, I won’t last long!” It is not a sad story, she made it through and just celebrated her 104th birthday, but it was an example to me of the importance of loved ones and relationships as a source of meaning.

The third source of meaning is of the utmost importance, not only because it specifically applied to his situation in the concentration camps in Germany. This source of meaning can be described as one’s attitude in the face of suffering. The point Frankl made was that “Everything can be taken away from someone except one thing, the last of the human freedoms — the capacity to choose our attitude in any set of circumstances.” This is what was tested and proven in his concentration camp experience. Every one of us faces challenges during the course of our life. But this capacity to derive meaning regardless of circumstances defines the expanse of our power to choose, and of each person to be their own “absolute lawgiver”. Ultimately, no matter how dark it may seem, no matter how difficult it may be, choice remains.

I have known people who have been in the highly negative environment of prison, who while there developed their desire and capacity to help others, who chose to do great work in this most difficult setting. Self-responsibility places the conditions that we generate into our own hands.

Now, what do we mean when we speak of Wholeness? From the perspective of the Ageless Wisdom, it is rooted in the idea that there is a universal consciousness. In the case of the human being, Spirit, or this universal consciousness, becomes progressively shrouded and filtered until we get to the point that we sit here now, firmly convinced of our individuality and separation. Convinced for the very good reason that everything that we see and do appears to confirm it.

So we let ourselves become fragmented. Many of us here this evening come from different countries and communities. We are divided into genders, religions, races, castes, and so forth — all of those differing aspects that have been impressed on us, that we have learned to cling to, express through, and claim to be our own. It is the problem of *identity*. At our

core is the undivided universal consciousness, but we find ourselves fragmented into a multiplicity of competing identities that blind us to this core reality.

Not only are we self-divided along lines of nationality, and so on, somehow we have managed to alienate ourselves from the natural world. It is a fact that since 2009, we are living on an urban planet. Since then more people live in cities than in rural settings, so we have become quite cut off from the natural world. This has effects. Some years ago there was a study done at the University of Michigan in the USA. It got a lot of attention, I believe, because of its catchy title: “How the city hurts your brain.” The way that the study was set up, it confirmed some things that we probably already know.

For the study there were two groups, and each was administered a number of psychological and memory tests. After some time both groups were told to take a break and then return to continue the testing. One group was instructed to take a walk down Main Street. So they had to deal with the stop lights, the city buses, shops, restaurants, pedestrians, and so forth. The other group was told to take a walk in the nearby park — a quiet space filled with trees and flowers.

When the two groups returned to do the testing, they found that the test results and cognitive abilities of the “Main Street” group had diminished substantially. When the “Walk in the Park” group came back, their test scores increased greatly. In another study it was found that for people living in urban low income housing projects, even something as simple as having a view of a tree from the window affected the level of domestic violence in various apartments in the building. The fact that Nature is healing and restorative, and that cities are less so, was one of the things that was confirmed in this study.

In addition to the stable energy patterns of the natural world, from time to time we can feel it as inhabited by greater intelligences. I can remember a number of years ago, a group of us from the TS in America went on a tour to Tibet. One of the ideas that was normal and accepted in that part of the world was that the mountain tops were special, even sacred, because they were inhabited by great beings. Anytime we would be driving near one of the mountain tops, prayer flags would be everywhere, and our Tibetan guides encouraged us to greet the beings of the mountain called Lhas.

Each time we would come over the top of a mountain ridge we

would all shout “*ki ki sol sol lha gelo*”, which simply means “happiness, happiness, blessings, blessings from the Lhas” — the devas of the mountain. This idea that Nature is inhabited and filled with intelligence is prevalent throughout the world. That contemporary humanity has chosen to cut itself off from this experience is another cause of our fragmentation.

This journey that we have undertaken from undivided, Universal Consciousness to our present state has been described as the Pilgrimage of Necessity — an out-going path, or in Sanskrit, *pravttimârga*. On that path, we find ourselves moving ever more deeply into our association with matter, ever more deeply convinced of the genuineness of the limitations of material reality.

There are a number of beautiful stories that speak to this “pilgrimage” in the scriptures of the world. One of my favourites is the story of the Prodigal Son, who has everything living in his father’s house but who leaves in order to make his own way. It is the story of the soul, the son who leaves the house of the father, goes to a faraway land, and along the path squanders all of his wealth.

This is *our* story. We (the Spiritual Self) leave the house of undivided consciousness and begin a journey of “descent”, becoming clothed in layer after layer of ever more dense material — not by any conscious choice, it is the pilgrimage of necessity, a sacred journey. We wander and ultimately find ourselves far, far away from that undivided state that was a home to us. We feel as if we are far away, even though always, it is fully present within and around us.

There comes a point when the son, or the soul, who has wandered so far, has an awakening moment. In the Bible story he has wandered so very far, and now finds himself in what, in Biblical times, was the most degraded employment. He has to feed the swine. To further complicate matters, and to drive home the point, the story says that there is a famine in the land, and the son becomes so hungry that he would eat the food that he was feeding to the swine. It is really just a description of our condition, living in material bodies, feeding ourselves on a material food, and feeling ourselves as separated.

But there comes a moment when we awaken, and when we do what was once an outgoing journey becomes a journey back home. We begin the *nivrtti mârگا*, the journey of return. This is the most important part.

With our awakening comes the awareness that we have the capacity to take these matters into our own hands. In HPB's Three Fundamental Propositions, found in her *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine*, she describes that what begins as us being pushed, impelled by Nature, with the dawning of awareness transforms "to self-induced and self-devised efforts". We choose to become proactive in our own unfoldment.

The other night Dr James Tepfer talked to us about three great people and the profound influence they exerted on humanity: Abraham Lincoln, Dwig Eisenhower, and Nelson Mandela. They exemplified a powerful quality of consciousness that exuded from them, affecting their environment and time. His term for it was "Human Magic". We have all experienced this at some level. All of us have had the experience of being with a cheerful person and feeling uplifted, or with someone who is depressed and feeling drained.

A number of years ago I attended a conference called "The Soul of Service". It was a gathering of spiritually oriented service organizations. Some truly powerful people from a variety of service fields came together for this meeting, and some of the more prominent ones gave talks. One of the featured speakers was the doctor responsible for bringing into being the legal structure that made hospice, end of life care, universally available in the United States — a truly monumental accomplishment.

She was not involved in the political world, but the value of the hospice movement forced her to interact in that sphere. In her talk, she spoke little about politics. She told a few stories about the winding path that brought hospice to prominence. Mostly she described herself as a person who believed in the power of prayer. She said that her constant prayer was: "Lord, put your hand in mine, so that when I touch others it may be your hand that touches them."

We met and spoke a little, and for reasons known only to her, she asked me to accompany her in what turned out to be a round of discussions with doctors' and nurses' groups. During those meetings various health professionals would ask her hospice-related questions and suggest ideas for administering the process. On multiple occasions she turned to me and asked my opinion. I felt distinctly out of my depth, but would offer up my view.

The Soul of Service conference was a very busy event. The planners had set aside a little meditation room — slightly dark, with plants and

trickling water sounds. At one point during the course of the conference I felt I needed to check into this room to sit down and relax for a few minutes. When I walked in, the room was empty except for the doctor, who was sitting with her eyes half closed, I assumed in meditation or prayer. I sat down on the other side of the room with the intention to simply breathe and relax. Hardly had I closed my eyes than I found myself transported into a deep stillness, and a most exalted experience came over me. I do not know how long I sat there, but eventually I rose and left the now empty room.

When the conference came to an end I asked the doctor if I could take a photo of her. She said, "No, come over here and take a picture with me." Standing side by side for the photo she leaned over and said: "Tim, when we were in the meditation room I was praying for you. Did you feel it?" It was only then that I realized the nature of my meditation room experience. I share this as an example of the "human magic" Dr Tepfer spoke of. From time to time we experience this magic with others. It is magnified when we find it within ourselves and commit to it.

As people who are involved in a spiritual approach, sometimes we feel ourselves, if not at odds with contemporary science, at least somewhat intimidated by the force and apparent certainty of scientific theory and revelations. What we need to remember is that true science is not based on the conclusions of its current practitioners, but on the Scientific Method. In the Scientific Method theories are tested and validated, or not, according to empirical data. What is observed in experimentation either confirms a theory, points to the need to refine it, or demonstrates that the theory is invalid.

The great difficulty for anyone who views Consciousness as a primary component of reality is that the scientific community chooses to ignore, dilute, or materialize it. The great successes of contemporary science come from its exacting and precise examination of the material world — the world that can be examined through the five senses and the tools that extend the reach of those senses. Reductionism is the term that is often applied to this limiting view within the scientific community. Scientism is another term for the almost religious confinement of reality to the material realm.

In the world of spiritual traditions, the same scientific language and approach has been applied throughout time. Take the example of His Ho-

liness the Dalai Lama, he is fond of saying that each one of us has access to the greatest laboratory possible, better than any we will find at the Indian Institute of Technology or Harvard University, the laboratory of our own consciousness. HPB, when describing what is Theosophy, said that “it is the accumulated wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of seers.”

This is pure scientific language. It is tested, empirical data is derived, and it is verified. The difference is that the science that we know today is based on the five senses. And those five senses are limited to the examination of the material world. The science of the Ageless Wisdom traditions was brilliant in that it included an additional sense, a sixth one. It is not based on solely the conventional organs of knowledge — the ear (hearing), nose (smell), tongue (taste), skin (touch), and eye (sight). The seers and sages of old added the mind as a sixth organ of knowledge, or sensation. With the addition of the sixth sense of human consciousness the capacity for experimentation increases enormously, as does the reality that this level of science can explore.

In this expanded field of a science which includes consciousness, great theories have been put forward. Take one. In the first verse of the Dhammapada, the sayings of the Buddha, a theory is presented. It says: “All that we are is the result of our thoughts. It is founded on our thoughts. It is made up of our thoughts.” This is a theoretical statement intended to be confirmed or denied by experimentation. In this theorem thoughts are described as the substance involved in the experiment — like the chemicals, or molecules of material science.

The next part of that same verse outlines the experiment for us to undertake. The experiment is described in this way: “If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, sorrow follows him like the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the cart.” To the extent that we can isolate and observe our angry, evil, unkind thoughts, is this something that is provable? If it is, then the theory can be accepted and factored in to the way we live our lives. If not, then the theory needs to be refined or rejected.

A second experiment described in this verse is: “If a person speaks or acts with a good thought, then happiness follows, like a never departing shadow.” These statements involve a different order of science, but in keeping with the Scientific Method, they are testable. It is the science of the intuition and of the mind, but science nonetheless.

These are just some ideas — choice, wholeness, our responsibility to experiment and find truth for ourselves. Ultimately, we do have a responsibility. If we had to name it, the responsibility might be called something like: we are responsible to know, and to know deeply.

The great sage, Kabir, who is beloved by Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs made the statement: “What Kabir talks of is only what he has lived through. If you have not lived through something, it is not true.” We are quick to quote the truths and the expressions of others. But until it becomes something that is rooted in consciousness through our own personal experience, then it is a second-hand truth, lacking vitality. We have a responsibility to know deeply. We have a responsibility to ignite. For each one of us who has any association with these truth teachings, the idea is that we draw in ever closer to them. We warm ourselves at the hearth of these teachings. And ultimately, we commit and become inflamed by them. This is the only way that the world changes. And with that, we have a hope for our shared future.

One of the great things we gain from moments such as this is the harmony that we occasionally experience together. In these moments we have the opportunity to be of use to those Great Ones who can only work through a harmonious body. Through us their blessings can reach into the world in ways that we do not know and that we do not need to know.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, Feb. 2023)

Study Camp

A study camp on the book “**At the Feet of The Master**” will be held at Jaipur Lodge on 24-25 March 2023. The study will be directed by the National Lecturer and Secretary of U.P. & Uttarakhand Federation Bro. Shiv Kumar Pandey. For further details please contact Dr Divyarth Dubey, Secretary, MP & Rajasthan Federation, on Mob. No.8890969696 and email- Divyarth.Dubey@ril.com

Correction

The Mob. No. of Bro. K. Dinakaran, Secretary of Kerala Federation, is 8078516178

U. S. PANDEY *

SPIRIT, SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUAL**

General: When we talk of spirituality, we generally consider it in parallel with religious practice. But this is not so. Similarly when we talk of a spiritual and material life -again in reality there can be neither a pure spiritual life nor a pure material life. What we actually mean by highly spiritual life is that we reflect maximum spiritual attributes in our material or worldly life. When we describe a philosophy as spiritual or we speak of spiritual living, what do we mean by the word spirit? In order to understand spirituality we should know what Spirit is.

What is Spirit?

There are such phrases as ‘Holy Spirit’, ‘the spirit of the age’, ‘the spirit of the dead’, ‘spirit of the thing’, ‘the spiritual values of ‘ceremonies’ and so on. The word ‘spirit’ is thus used in various contexts, with different associations.

When we talk of Spirit and Matter- These two, Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter; Subject and Object are the two aspects or facets of the Absolute (*Parabrahman*) and these constitute the basis of all manifestation. These are two opposite but complimentary poles of manifestation and we find that there cannot be any pure spirit or any pure matter. There cannot be any spirit without matter or matter without spirit- only degree or proportion of each of these two may vary. The Spirit expresses as motion- life and consciousness and matter makes all forms through which the Spirit expresses. There is only One Life and One Consciousness throughout the cosmos-both visible and invisible.

The human spirit is an expression of the One Life-One Consciousness that supports and maintains our universe; when perfected it is in fact the most complete expression of that Life within our system, for it can become fully conscious and creative. Man is not a creature, a created being; he is a spirit, a direct emanation of the Divine Word or Logos or *Shabda-Brahman*.

* National Lecturer and President of U.P. & Uttrakhand Federation

**Matter of two on-line talks delivered by U. S. Pandey on the same theme during the programme for Asia region of the ‘Third World Parliament on Spirituality’ on 21 December, 2020; and also during a meeting of The Theosophical Society in Russia on 24 April 2021.

Spirit (*Atma*) is the highest principle of man, and it is one with Universal Spirit (*Brahman*). But Spirit by itself cannot perform any action whether mental, emotional or physical. To use a classical analogy: Spirit has vision, but is lame; the body-mind (matter) is blind but it can carry and move. Together they can constitute an integrated and whole person—with both the vision to see what needs to be done and the ability to carry the corresponding action. Spirit unifies towards the whole, and matter divides.

Spirituality: There are always two ideas associated with the word spiritual or spirituality: (1) life, (2) certain values or qualities, which distinguish both objects and ideas— not just any quality, but qualities of a certain class or order- truth, beauty and goodness as in Greece; *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* or existence, consciousness and bliss as in India. Such specific qualities must be inherent in nature of things, and especially in nature of man who perceives these attributes. Spiritual living must then be the life that shows those attributes at every level of the processes that constitute a human being- thought, feeling and will, as well as their expression, conduct and action. It follows, then, that what a man is and does, constitutes the measure of his spirituality, and not his conformity to any outer pattern or religious form.

That course of conduct is spirituality which is in accord with the nature of Spirit. There are basically two natures of man-we call these, Lower and Higher. The lower nature is of selfishness, division, greed, hatred, prejudice, injustice, etc., constricted and limited. On the other hand, higher nature is of unselfishness, unitary, charity, unconditioned love, compassion, justice towards all, etc. To attune the lower nature to the higher one is the spirituality.

Spirituality in the highest sense of the word is possible only after the individual has realized the Oneness of all life. It is this Oneness, as a living power in his life, which must be the aim of a person intending to tread the spiritual path. In manifold activities in which such a person engages, he must take care never to lose the vision ‘from the centre.’ He must train himself to realize the Oneness which is the ultimate goal of every true system of yoga. This is also called Self-realization which reveals the unity of life which underlies all living creatures and also things. From the experience of this unity is born a tremendous love for them and the desire to see human beings free from the illusion and limitations of the lower worlds in which the common man is involved.

Higher philosophy like theosophy proclaims that the Divine and man

are one. This is also the message in *The Upanishad* which says—*Aham Brahmasmi, Tat Tvam Asi*, or Brahman is all, and scriptures like The Bhagavad Gita- Krishna is all, Bible- I and my Father are one, and Koran-Allah is all. However this Oneness is little realized now.

Man and whole process of evolution, in which he is one factor, are also one. In other words Man, Universe and God are one. In fact it is rightly said that whole problem of man's life arose since when he started treating these three as separate. So in real and pure spirituality this Oneness of all these three has to be realized not only intellectually but in feelings, thought and actions.

The knowledge of our divine ancestry and the brotherhood of all life brings with it responsibilities. Those of this persuasion can no longer go through life impulsively and unthinkingly, for we have put our feet on a path, and the first step on this path is to live not for ourselves, but to benefit mankind.

The great scientist Albert Einstein was well aware of the unity behind the many and the liberating power of that conviction. He wrote:

‘A human being is part of the whole called by us “the universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest—a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free from this prison by widening our circle of understanding and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty’.
‘Albert Einstein His Human Side’ - Swami Tathagatananda

True Religion is a binding or union, and nothing can be more natural union than obtains when that which is within finds its own natural and spontaneous expression in some manner without. All of us have departed from the reality of ourselves—which is that state and the experience of that state—because of the consciousness which is free to move in any direction.

As to materialism we all know what it is, because we are all materialists, to a certain extent. We need to daily examine our motives dispassionately before we deny this.

We can safely name three qualities required for a life of spirituality, expressed as a *Triad of A's*: Acceptance, Action and Altruism. This means

Acceptance of the situation of life station in which we find ourselves, take right Action in right manner to overcome limitations without harming anybody else as the duty, and being always Altruistic in our thoughts, feelings and actions.

The Spirituality is universal, non-sectarian, not limited by geographical, historical or sectarian divisions. It does not have to do with a belief system or doctrine, theological arguments or proofs, or enthusiastic evangelism. It is primarily a quality of being, reflected in bodily stillness, in emotional generosity and compassion, no less than in mental clarity and serenity, a quality that represents a further evolution of human being. Spirituality has to do with a new birth, transformation of consciousness, or a raising of the level of awareness—all this leading to a different person who is born into and manifests a new mode of being, almost a different species. In every aspect of human being like in the sphere of intellectual capacity, physical health etc, there is a wide range of variation of quality. In the sphere of spirituality, the variations are more subtle. Spiritual profundity is not a matter of particular accomplishment; it is concerned with the quality of the whole of the person and with nearness to the Spirit.

Annie Besant defines spirituality as the “intuitive perception of the unity of all life.” Dr. Radhakrishnan described it as the recognition of the fact that God is Life.

Spiritual Life and Spiritual Person: Spiritual living is living as we inwardly are, in harmony therewith, true to inmost being of ourselves. The whole of one's life is then reformed to express the inner harmony.

All the passing shows of life, whether fraught with disaster or full of fame and glory, are teachers; he who neglects them, neglects opportunities which seldom the gods repeat. And the only way to learn from them is through the heart's resignation. The outside situations come often to test our inner nature and response. It is said in *Light on the Path*, ‘No man is your enemy; no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers.’

The root cause of suffering is that we are only concerned about ourselves, while the purpose of life is welfare of all, since all are but aspects of One Self. Concern for the suffering of mankind must be the background of the seeker's life. That suffering is not just physical. The greatest suffering is ignorance of right values.

Altruism is essential basis of a spiritual life. The purpose for which we are here can be served only by altruism.

Aphorism 5 of *Light on the Path* tells us to 'kill out all sense of separateness', and it goes on to say: 'Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man. ... Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame.'

Only a recognition of the relatedness and interdependence of all that is in the universe, expressed in all our simple actions, only a perception inclusive enough to encourage the highest level of atonement of which we are capable, can bring the individual or our world to a prevailing peace.

If we recognize the complete identity of the individual and the universal order then all the activities in our life, whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual, become smaller parts of this entire whole. Application of this principle in daily life tasks makes such tasks spiritual. The spiritual life is a life of vigour and virility—not the shoving of responsibility from one's shoulders on to shoulders of another.

Some more attributes: The spiritual state for a man is the state in which -

The mind is restored to Buddhi reunited with it as an active agent thereof, then Buddhi itself flashes out into intuitions of Truth and Beauty;

Goal becomes self-sacrifice, not the *Moksha* or liberation- the unselfish love of mankind and also of all creation. Mind, emotions and our physical actions should be trained- so that our actions reflect the will of self-sacrifice, he becomes a healer of the world.

Living happens as a conscious entity in the Eternity- to see Life in all its possibilities, in the beauty of its fulfillment, being tolerant to all life, universal love and compassion for all, no contempt for those below him, recognizing each in its place as an expression of the Perfect Life.

One supremely must make 'a living factor in his life' of rising above the distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste and colour. Sages look equally on a Brahmana adorned with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, and even a dog and an outcaste. (*BG.* ch. v, sl.18)

One performs duty or dharma in accordance with one's innate nature and in obedience to one's inner voice- and always applying *viveka* (discernment) and *vairagya* (dispassion). Should forget himself -by giving himself to a cause to serve or to another person to love- the more human he is and starts living in Eternal.

There is feeling of gratitude to all circumstances, even to enemy because enemy helps him in developing tolerance and patience so necessary for spiritual path, a recognition that we could not be 'who are we or where we are in life' without the contribution of others. The Path of gratitude is the path of Spiritual Holiness.

One is practicing always Let go- It is when everything which the psycho-mental consciousness holds is let go, then consciousness becomes pure and can express reality. This is termed 'Freedom from the Known' by J. Krishnamurti. Its condition then is a condition of real humility, in which alone there is the possibility of wisdom.

One is pursuing a clean life, an open mind and pure heart constantly. For this one has to become natural or childlike or what is called to realize one's "*swarupa*". Oracle of Delphic, "Man, Know Thyself" is for this purpose.

One is not concerned with worldly things like possessions, success, power, position etc. for himself, knowing that these things are like flickering shadows in the cave described by Plato.

One remains in a state of inward serenity in the midst of all the circumstances of life, depending entirely on our attitude, our state of unselfishness and of one-pointedness. A spiritual person abides in peace. He is *Sthitpajna*, mentioned in Gita. Peacefulness in the spiritual sense comes when there are no demands of worldly things.

The implication of all this must be understood through deep thinking, meditation and practice in daily life. It is also said that ultimately, to become spiritually whole, one has to fuse two polarities, male and female, which means synthesizing the noble characteristics in each gender. A perfectly spiritual man has the qualities of- the wisdom, the purity, the love, the serenity, the compassion and peacefulness.

There is only one thing that can be retained permanently and that is the spiritual nature.

Some actions required on the spiritual path: A habit for regular study of serious philosophy of life, contemplate on passage, sentence and words, trying to grasp and absorb their inner meaning helps in development of intuition which is so necessary for a spiritual person.

Emotionalism is not spirituality; rest, repose, calmness are necessary. A calm and stable mind is a foundation for a spiritual life. For this

regular practice of meditation is necessary. Mind should be focused on a high thought. By this high effort, the object of meditation affects the mind and the latter starts to become in likeness of the object of meditation. A meditation of awareness and mindfulness is most helpful on spiritual path.

To practise virtues, to meditate, to practise forbearance or patience, we need energy. We have unlimited energy but it gets dissipated in useless activities. We need spiritual energy in effecting the transition from being good people to spiritual people. Energy is not only needed to start new things, but is also required for sustaining what we have started. In spiritual discipline, we have to be prepared to try again even when we fail because otherwise advance cannot be made.

Selfless Service- Putting ‘without delay, your good intentions into practice, never leaving a single one to remain only an intention’—expecting, meanwhile, neither reward nor even acknowledgement for the good you may have done. An enlightened heart, a compassionate head are the marks of the Spiritual-Man, higher, greater and nobler than the good man of intelligent mind and sympathetic heart.

One should not only try to develop perfect gentleness and patience, but all the qualities which go to the making of the spiritual man—the love for all you meet, whether attractive or unattractive; the patience which becomes more patient face to face with ignorance and stupidity...the heart that feels and understands when misery is before it, and that keeps nothing back when it has aught to give. Selfless service at all levels is essential.

This is one of the most important factors in the development of man, the recognition—profound and complete recognition—of the law of universal unity and coherence. All separation which exists between individuals, between worlds, between the different poles of universe and of life, the mental and physical fantasy called space, is heresy and a nightmare of the human imagination.

The basic existence of the spiritual self has to do with attention, sensitivity, mindfulness, intention and insight—the very qualities which make us truly human and truly free. But these are not the qualities which are automatically acquired in nature; they will require effort, right education, work, and, in general, a spiritual path involving an enormous struggle with the worldly forces within oneself, which are fueled by fear, ambition, and egocentricity.

Do not let things upset you. Remain cool, collected, calm—three

C’s produce the fourth, Conquest. We conquer error, decay, disease and even death by the three C’s.

In the calm of the Soul lies real knowledge. Experience of holy, celestial Joy is the real sign of true spiritual life.

The “Spirit” means highest state of the One substance. “Hell” means the lowest state of the One Substance. “Desire” means an intermediate state of the One Substance. “Intelligence” means the next state to Spirit—but it is all the One Substance. Our senses have not the intelligence that our desires have. Our desires have not the intelligence that our reason has. Our reason has not the intelligence that our moral sense, our spiritual sense—our intuition—has. If there is but One Substance then a spiritual being is a being who dwells in amity with the whole of Nature because he knows he is identical with it; who dwells in unity with the One Life regardless of the forms that the One Life may inhabit. Result is that such a being may have a body, but all his actions on earth are spiritual actions. He has senses, but the use of his senses is a spiritual use. He has a mind, but the use of his mind is a spiritual one.

The true life is the life which is spent as part of the Divine Life, pouring itself out for others; and no life is true, no life real, no life spiritual, save when the very idea from the separated life is entirely transcended and all the thought of the being, all the energies of the life, are poured forth as part of the One Self and no distinction is recognized. Service is then the natural expression of the life, helping is that in which the true existence is felt.

When a man becomes real occultist he becomes only a force for good in the world... There is no true spiritual life, there is no real occultism, until the man at least recognizes that the goal of his living is to become a force for good and that only in the world. He is no longer to seek his own progress, no longer to seek his own life, no longer to seek his own development—no longer to ask aught that heaven or earth or any of the other worlds can give him for himself. There is only one thing left within him, the longing to be of service; only one thing the motive of his being, to be a channel for the great life of God, to enable that life to be scattered more effectively over the world of man and over all worlds where that life exist.

True service is spiritual service which seeks to elevate the minds and hearts of people, helping them to change their mode of thinking and living so that peace and harmony may reign supreme in the world.

NEWS AND NOTES

BOMBAY

New Year Message of BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya:

I wish happy, healthy, cheerful, exciting, insightful and prosperous 2023 to all our members, their family, and friends. May Master's blessings shower on all creatures. Masters gave us enough guidance and inspiration to implement and share Ancient Wisdom and work for humanity and all creatures of world during pandemic. We were fortunate that during pandemic our Theosophical activities and our participation had increased immensely. We participated in many talks delivered by different speakers. Now we have started physical meetings but still members want to have on-line meetings. I take this opportunity to thank all our members in guiding, admiring, inspiring, helping, praying for our members and humanity I pray to almighty for those members/relatives/friends who passed to peace during the year.

Foundation Day Celebration

Jointly Conducted by BTF & Blavatsky Lodge on 17 November 2022 at Besant Hall, Blavatsky Lodge -

The Foundation Day (17 November) was the First Red Letter day Hybrid programme of BTF & Blavatsky Lodge, thanks to Bro. Taral and Sis. Archana Munshi. Brethren of Vadodara, Surat, Adyar and of Mumbai joined the programme on Zoom. A special table decorated by Sis. Navaz Dhalla beckoned members for blessings of The Light Bringers and the Founders of Theosophical Society Madam H. P. Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott.

The programme started with the recitation of the Prayers of All Religions and the Universal Prayer. BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya welcomed all and said that on this very day in 1875 the principle founders HPB and HSO, along with a few 'like minded seekers', formed the Theosophical Society in New York. HPB and HSO were directed by the Masters to go to India. They landed in Bombay on February 16, 1879 'after a visit to London en route' and established the Headquarter of TS in Bombay. But it was spiritual oasis in Adyar, which became the HQ and *The Masters' Home*'. The Three Objects of TS show us the way for pursuit of Divine Wisdom. Today TS has beautiful inspiring complexes in USA, Brazil,

The term "Spiritual Development", if examined in the light of Esoteric Science appears to be a misnomer. Mankind is a stage in an immense journey, the pilgrimage of Many to the Everlasting One. The object of the journey is the realization of the essential unity of life, the experience of the One consciousness which pervades the whole. The development is in effect the increase in the responsiveness of living instruments, so that the consciousness of the individual becomes identified eventually with, or merged into, that of the other units of humanity who have transcended the limitations of purely personal existence.

The spiritual perfection and spiritual knowledge can only be reached on the spiritual plane; in other words, only in that state in which all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of the unity of Humankind.

Life is everywhere; it is to be discovered in all things and no part of the universe can be conceived without it, if that universe is regarded as a coherent whole.

Conclusion: The words spirit, spiritual and spirituality refer to a Reality which is everywhere and is realizable within oneself. By deeper study of the Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, the super-science and art of life we get glimpse of true knowledge; by meditation and contemplation in light of this knowledge a man moves towards realization of Reality and thus gets transformed. By selfless service he realizes the same Self in all.

And then the question of Spirit, Spirituality and Spiritual ceases because man has become One with it.

The spirituality is not the prerogative of, one nation, one race, a superior caste, and a particular religion. It is the right as well as duty of each man and woman at every place in the world.

References:

1. *The Secret Doctrine*
2. *The Human Interest*- N. Sri Ram
3. *Living the Life*- B. P. Wadia
4. *Deity, Cosmos and Man*-Geoffrey A Farling
5. *The Pathway to Perfection* -Geoffrey Hodson
6. *Occultism, Semi-Occultism and Pseudo Occultism*-Annie Besant
7. The Theosophical Movement, November 2020 and March 2021
8. *Science and the Sacred*-Ravi Ravindra
9. *The Ageless Wisdom of Life*- Clara M. Codd

Netherland and Australia. The work done by us for TS is not our work. It is the work done through us by The Great Ones!

Bro. Taral and Sis. Archana Munshi presented a novel way to understand how to live Theosophy. Brethren were asked to pick up a chit and to sing song mentioned on the chit. Blavatsky Lodge President Sis. Kashmira Khambatta thanked Bro. Taral & Sis. Archana Munshi for Theosophical inspiration through songs with eternal messages.

Sis. Freny Paghdiwala shared extracts of Noshir Dadrewala's article 'Celebrate Love of Wisdom with Happiness' which was published in *Parsi Times* of 12 November 2022.

In Greek '*Philo*' means Love and '*Sophia*' means Wisdom. Philosophy is considered as an academic discipline – a study of the fundamental nature of reality, knowledge and existence. In daily life it helps a person to think on correct path with a good mind. In 6 BC Greeks started with Thales the First Philosopher. But later they turned to Philosophy of Asho Zarthushtira which they considered "The most famous and the most useful" which we find echoed in the Wise Words of Aristotle, Plato and Socrates.

Philosophy of Zarthushtira is love of wisdom through good mind then philosophy is simple, yet profound and eternal. If supreme divinity is the Creator, Ahura Mazda the Lord of Wisdom, then in a sense, love of wisdom is Love of the Divine.

Bro. Aani Narendran was invited to Moscow :

After much appreciated talk on "*The Luminous Life of Madam Blavatsky - The Bombay SAGA* " in Kiev, Ukraine, two months ago, Bro Arni Narendran was invited to deliver a talk in Moscow organized by The Theosophical Society in Russia (Adyar). The talk received tremendous response with as many as sixty attendees from eleven countries. Bro Alexey Basputin welcomed the gathering and Sr. Elena introduced the speaker. The translation into Russian was brilliantly done by Bro Svetoslav Lipsky. There was a very lively interaction for over forty-five minutes from many who have been studying the life of HPB. The talk provided new insights and information on the formation of Blavatsky Lodge Mumbai and the challenges faced on the way. Bro Arni thanked the Lodge President for the technical support and the archival photos which the participants were curious to see. The meeting ended with message of Love and Peace to all.

Maitreya Round Table 'Christmas Ceremony' in Besant Hall decked

up with Christmas trimmings by Sis. Navaz Dhalla was Inspiring Christmas morning.

JAMSHED MEHTA LODGE Meeting of 5th January 2023 had the Guest Speaker Mr. Kiran Doshi, who spoke on 'Experienced Wisdom as Ambassador to various Countries'. The meeting was hosted by Bro. Noor Baig in his home with Tea and Light Dinner.

Shri Narendra Shah, General Secretary of East & Central Africa TS Section and Prof. Aniel Missier of Amsterdam were the distinguished visitors at Blavatsky Lodge Meeting held on Friday 6th January 2023: It was an evening to share thoughts in continuation of spirit of the 147th International Convention Theme 'Our Responsibility in the Interconnected World'. Blavatsky Lodge Vice-President Bro. Navin Kumar opened the meeting with the Universal Prayer and welcome to all. BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya spoke about how with the grace of Invisible Helpers two distinguished visitors passing through Mumbai after the Convention were at Blavatsky Lodge and how Jamshed Mehta & Ghatkopar Lodges were revived, and Centenary Lodge was made vibrant. Shri Narendra Sah spoke about Inner Spiritual Growth. He added that to join Theosophical Society is a Landmark of One's Life. TS is like a school with exposure to understanding of all Religions, Philosophy and Science. Theosophical Society gives Freedom for individual's thinking. One has to start the change within from one's own level.

Prof. Aniel Missier said Theosophy gives knowledge to elevate our soul. To reject or imbibe knowledge is one's own choice. One has to come out of programmed and pre-conditioned minds. The beginning has to be made with Young Minds of children & young in spirit.

Interactive thoughts of Members with the Speakers conveyed that like Adyar Theosophical Academy School there should be no punishment and competition for children. Their minds and feelings should be opened up to sensitivity, sharing compassionate feelings should be opened up to sensitivity, sharing, compassion with all Creations – Mineral to Human Kingdoms. The meeting ended with recitation of Sanskrit Prayer by Bro. Navin Kumar.

Utkal

Barabati Lodge conducted a meeting on 9 January in which the subject of discussion was 'World Parliament of Religions held at Chicago and the lecture of Swami Vivekanand'. The Vice-President of the Lodge Dr Patanjali Tripathi spoke about the contribution of Swami Vivekanand

in that conference. The main speaker was Prof. Sahdeb Patro who mentioned about two sides of life- external world of form & matter and the other is internal life of thought. The basis of all morality is unselfishness which is the gnosis of service and sacrifice. Prof. C.A. Shinde and Sis. Arunima Baruha also emphasized on service and sacrifice as the divine quality of man. Bro. B.S. Mohanty said that religion is manifestation of divinity and then explained about the vedantic ideas as explained by Swami Vivekanand.

U.P. & Uttarakhand

In the weekly meeting of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, held on 07 December, a talk was delivered by Bro. U. S. Pandey on the topic 'Universal Brotherhood-Our Dharma', Study of the book "*Meditation-its Practice and Result*" by Clara M. Codd was conducted by Bro. B.K. Pandey on 14, 21 and 28 December 2022. Besides, a group study of the book "*An Outline of Theosophy*" was conducted by Bro. U. S. Pandey on 10 and 11 December. Members of Dharma Lodge and Pragya Lodge of Lucknow participated in this study.

Study of the book "*Man- Whence, How, and Whither*" was completed on 11 December at Pragya Lodge, Lucknow.

Talks were delivered at Nirvan Lodge, Agra, on the topics '*Navdha Bhakti*' by Bro. B.K. Sharma, '*The Ageless Wisdom*' by Bro. Praveen Mehrotra, and '*Mystery of Consciousness*' by Bro. Harish Sharma. These talks were held in the meeting conducted on 01,15 and 22 December respectively. Besides, two symposiums were organized on 08 and 29 December on the themes '*Atm-Prabandhan*' and '*Scope of the Theosophy*' respectively.

Bro. A.P. Singh delivered a talk on 7 December at Sarvahitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, in which he explained the content of '*Manusmriti*'. The subject of talks delivered by Bro. S. B. R. Mishra and Bro. Ajai Rai were '*Law of Karma*' and '*Christ- Consciousness*' which were held on 18 and 25 December respectively.

The Annual Day of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad, was celebrated on 04 December, in which Bro. B. K. Kailash and Sis Vibha Saxena from Noida Lodge delivered short talks on '*Theosophic Teachings and Daily Life.*' And then, Sis. Suvralina Mohanty delivered a talk on '*Prayers of All Religions*'. Besides, she spoke on '*Meditation*' in the meeting held on 11 December.

Bro. Sharad Chandra conducted study of "*The Bhagavad Gita- Ch. 8*" at Nodia Lodge on 4 and 18 December.

Talks were delivered by Bro. Shiv Baran Singh on the topics, '*Resist without Resisting*' and '*Atma-Buddhi-Manas*' in the meetings of Chohan Lodge, Kanpur, held on 04 and 11 December respectively.

Bro. S. S. Gautam's subject of talk held on 18 December was '*A Clean Life*'. Christmas was observed at the Lodge on 25 December.

An on-line group study of the book "*Talks on the Path of Occultism*"-vol. III was conducted by Bro. S. S. Gautam on 02, 03, 09, 10, 16 and 17 December. Members of Kanpur Lodge and few other lodges also joined in this study.

Study camp was organized at Anand Lodge, Prayag Raj, from 02 to 04 December when study of the book '*Light on the Path.*' was conducted jointly by Bro. U.S Pandey and Bro. S.K. Pandey. On 02 December, after recitation of Prayers of all Religions and the Universal Prayer, Sis. Sushma Srivastava, Secretary of the Lodge, welcomed the participants and gave an outline of the programme of study camp. Then Bro. K. K. Jaiswal, President of the Lodge, welcomed the speakers and the participants. The entire content of the book was covered in nine sessions. A meditation session was also held in morning of 03 December. During the study sessions and also during the concluding session held on 04 December there was close interaction between the audience and the speakers. Members from Anand Lodge and Mahila Dharma Lodge, Prayagraj, and also of Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, participated in this study camp. The study camp concluded on 04 December with vote of thanks given by Bro. Jaiswal.

A talk on the theme "*Origin of Islamic Sufism*" was delivered by Sis. Sushma Srivastava in the meeting of Anand Lodge held on 11 December. Bro. K. K. Jaiswal conducted study in which the topics were '*Desirelessness*' and '*Good Conduct*' from the book "*At the Feet of the Master*".

Contribution to the Indian Section Work/ Programme

Bro. S. S. Gautam translated the Section's journal "*The Indian Theosophist*" of January 2023 in Hindi.

Bro. S.B.R. Mishra delivered a talk on '*Life of Adi Shankaracharya and Theosophy*' on 03 December and also gave a talk on '*Viveka Chudamani*' in two sessions held on 17 and 24 December.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty moderated two sessions on “Master of the Wisdom (1881-88)” held on 03 and 23 December.

Sister Archana Pandey of Anand Lodge, Prayagraj, delivered an on-line talk on the topic “Condemnation in light of Theosophy”. It was held on 10 December.

Sis. Kritika Goel moderated two sessions on “Viveka Chudamani” held on 17 and 24 December.

National Lecturer

Utkal Federation: Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered an on-line talk on the theme “Mystery of Buddha and Shankara”. It was held on 16 December.

Karnataka Federation: Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered a talk on the topic “Shiva in The Secret Doctrine” at Bangalore City Lodge on 25 December and another talk on the topic “Idolatry and Animated Statues” which was organized by Malleswaram Lodge on 26 December.

Asha Foundation: Sis. Vibha Sexena delivered an on-line talk on the topic “Connecting to the Higher Self”. It was held on 19 December.

Indian Section Headquarters

The Indian Section, the Theosophical Society, celebrated 147th Foundation Day function through on-line mode on 17.11.2022 at 4:30 P.M. Chief Speakers were Sister Uma Bhattacharyya of Kashi Tattva Sabha, Varanasi and Brother Solomon Babu of Gauthwami Lodge of Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

Sister Uma Bhattacharyya spoke on the topic *Foundation for future of Humanity*. She in her talk discussed how the strength of an organization depends on its foundation. Pervasiveness of the Theosophical Society and its worldwide influence reflect how deep and strong are the roots on which the magnificent structure of this society has been established. She further explained that the Theosophical Society is the world organization dedicated to the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. Its objective has huge relevance in the context of modern day world which is torn by hatred, violence and terror. She emphasized the importance of bringing change in our inner world which would only lead us to the real understanding of Universal Brotherhood. She further added that having a pure and awakened mind is of immense value as it bestows on us the highest blessing that is illumined state of being which would lead humanity to an evolved future. Explaining the motto of the T.S., she explained

that the Theosophical Society specifies that the truth is the ultimate goal which we should always strive hard to attain.

Brother Solomon Babu spoke on *Importance of Foundation Day for TS Members*. In his talk he discussed that the two core values of Theosophical Society are truth and oneness. Theosophical Society not only speaks of oneness of humanity but also oneness of methods to know the ultimate truth. He further said that the Theosophical Society is the only colourless platform in the entire world from where any seeker of any belief at any stage of the spiritual journey can seek truth from anybody from any part of the world.

Views were expressed by Bro. Raghu Rama Rao, Secretary of Telugu Federation, regarding the motto of the Theosophical Society and eternal search of truth by religions. Brother V.Narayanan, Treasurer, Indian Section explained the practical side of theosophy, which means how much we are contributing through our own consciousness. The objectives of oneness can be achieved by understanding one’s self by realizing the *Purusha Prakriti*, which is the doorway to self.

In the Vote of Thanks extended by Prof. C.A. Shinde, he expressed his thoughts on oneness of life. He also thanked the speakers for sharing their valuable views on the occasion of Foundation Day.

99th EASTER CONFERENCE 2023

The 99th Easter Conference will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, Chennai from 7 to 9 April 2023.

The theme of the conference will be “*The World Around Us*”. Members of the Theosophical Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates, and are requested to study the following book:

THE WORLD AROUND US is a compilation by Prof. C.A. Shinde, of “On the Watch-Tower” articles from *The Theosophist* of 1980-2007 by Dr Radha Burnier.

Venue: Blavatsky Bungalow, Ground floor, TS Adyar

Registration Starts on 15th Feb 2023 (Registration link will be activated at 9.00AM on 15th Feb 2023)

Last date for cancellation: 20th March 2023.

Cancellation: Rs.100 will be deducted and the remaining amount will be refunded if cancellation is done up to 20th March. No refund will be

done after 20th March. Last date of registration 27th March 2023

First come first serve basis. Limited Ground floor beds.

Accommodation only for members.

For any queries, kindly send email to the Conference Officer, Mr. Shikhar Agnihotri: easterconference2023@gmail.com Or Whatsapp on 8840926268

Package options for registration for the Easter Conference The package starts from 6th Apr Dinner to 10th Apr Breakfast. The rates are as follows:

A. Leadbeater Chambers with A/C package - Rs. 4,300 per person (includes the registration fee, accommodation and meals)

B. Leadbeater Chambers without A/C package - Rs. 3,400 per person (includes the registration fee, accommodation and meals)

C. Non-LBC accommodation package - Rs. 1,750 per person (includes the registration fee, accommodation other than at the Leadbeater Chambers, and meals)

D. Registration for attendance only - Rs. 100 per person (includes the registration fee required for attending the Conference, without accommodation or prepaid meals - meals can be bought on the spot with prior intimation to kitchen)

IF YOU ARE FACING ISSUES COMPLETING YOUR PAYMENT ON-LINE, PLEASE EMAIL US AT TREASURY.HQ@TS-ADYAR.ORG

Allotments:

Accommodations will be decided by the Conference Committee during the first week of April 2023.

REGISTRATION PROCESS:

Complete Registration and Payment process is ON-LINE. Following is the link for Payment cum Registration. The form can be filled for ONLY ONE DELEGATE at a time. So, if you wish to stay with family or a group, DO NOT FORGET to mention the names of Family/Group in the SPECIAL REQUEST FIELD of the form at the end and ALSO FILL THE REGISTRATION FORM FOR EACH OF THEM SEPARATELY. Link will be activated at 9 a.m. on 15th Feb 2023. Following is the registration cum payment link. <https://rzp.io/l/h2fmEfAqvN>

The Theosophical Workers' Training Camp The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai-600 020

Prof. C.A. Shinde
Convener

27 January 2023

Circular

Dear Brothers,

The President, The Theosophical Society, Adyar has constituted the following as members of the committee:

Ms Marja Artamma, International Secretary

Mr. S. Raman, Member

Prof. C.A. Shinde, Course Director

Mr. U.S. Pandey, Joint Director

The committee has decided to organize the Workers' Training Camp, 2023 at Adyar from Tuesday, 11.04.2023 to Saturday 15.04.2023 (both days inclusive). The Camp will be directed by Prof. C.A. Shinde and Sri U.S. Pandey.

The Federations in the Indian Section are requested to depute two candidates from their jurisdiction to attend the Camp and derive the benefit of the studies. The candidates must have working knowledge of English, as the proceedings and transactions will be in English. They must have studied the basics of theosophical knowledge and working. Five copies of the application form are enclosed. The candidate's applications need be countersigned and endorsed by a Federation Officer and sent to Prof. C.A. Shinde, "UPASIKA". The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020 before 1st March 2023. The confirmation of admission will be sent to the applicants and Federations by 15th March 2023 to facilitate their travel arrangements.

The Federations can also send 1 or 2 candidates in addition, if they feel the need for it, but the cost and stay for such candidates will have to be met by the sponsoring Federations.

The candidates (two of each Federation) will be reimbursed the cost of their travel from the station of their stay to Chennai, by second class sleeper train and back once they complete the course. Their BOARD AND LODGING during the dates of the camp (one day before and one day after- 10.04.2023 and 16.04.2023) will be free and will be met by the Trust of the Camp Committee.

It is hoped that the Federations will avail this opportunity so that the work of the Federations/Lodges of the Society will be revitalized and strengthened.

Prof. C.A. Shinde
Convener

List of books recommended for study:

The Key to Theosophy by HPB

Text Book of Theosophy by CWL

Principles of Theosophical Works by I.K. Taimini

The World Around US by Radha Burnier

**APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO
The Theosophical Workers' Training Camp
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai-600 020**

1. Name (in block letters)

2. Address

3. T.S. Diploma No.

Age.....

Date of payment of last dues of Indian Section

4. Name of (i) Lodge – with place and address and

(ii) Federation to which attached

5. Please list a few Theosophical Books you have studied

6. State the work done by you for the T.S. Lodge

7. Have you attended any previous camp?

If so, when?

8. Have you availed of any cash assistance;

If so in which years?

I have sent the notification regarding the camp and accept what is stated.

Station.....

Date.....

Signature of applicant

Recommendation of the Lodge or Federation

President/Secretary with signature

designation and date