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Editor

S. SUNDARAM

ON FEAR

One of the core concepts of the Ageless Wisdom tradition relates to the multidimensional nature of the universe and of ourselves as individuals — the fact is that we function on many levels simultaneously. The range of consciousness within us and our surroundings is limitless— everything from the seemingly unconscious aspects of our being to the highest divine consciousness are continuously present at any given moment and form the core of our being. As we examine this concept more deeply we become aware that the most powerful dimension of our being is the part to which we seem to have the least access from moment to moment. The highest aspect of our nature is the most hidden. There are terms and names that we use to describe it — Higher Self, the soul, the Divine Spark, the Ego, the individuality, Âtma-Buddhi-Manas. Some of the qualities that seem to appear when this higher aspect of our being has a greater sway in our lives are peace, love, compassion, and wisdom.

The poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson beautifully describes the closeness and ever presence of this higher self in this way:

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
And Spirit with Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet.

As time goes on, we become aware that this is not something that someone has created as a fiction. We have glimpses of it, our own experiences of this deeper nature. When this awareness moves beyond being a mere concept to the level of actual experience, we are faced with a problem. Looking out into the world inhabited by billions of people just like us, each one of whom is inhabited by that same Divine Spark, we find that there is an abyss between the higher nature and our normal

behaviour. We see wars, famine, economic imbalance, the whole range of self-centred, humanly created problems. Even in our individual lives we find such contradictions.

Thus we have to ask if in fact this Highest is the core and foundation of every being, and what explains our own behaviour as we interact with others and with the world around us. It is an important question. One of the things that H. P. Blavatsky wrote speaks to this issue: ‘Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, the only realities.’ For example, a fish in water is surrounded by the creatures of the sea, lives in a watery world, and has no understanding or interaction with the birds flying in the air or people walking on the land.

The same example has been given for our consciousness as individuals. A thief, one whose consciousness and attention is focused on stealing, can look at a holy man and all he can see is his wallet or the bag on his shoulder, and view it as an opportunity to steal. To a liar, the world is dishonest. To a saint, every being, whether a holy person, a criminal, a beggar, a priest, or a businessman, every being and everything is holy, because of the plane of consciousness on which she functions.

A great Greek thinker, Sophocles, said something on one occasion that speaks to the same concept: ‘To him who is in fear, everything rustles’; everything is moving, and everything is a source of fear. We can imagine a frightened person walking down a road late at night, every sound appears in his/her mind as a warning of impending danger. The common emotion of fear is shared by everyone. This is something that influences everyone’s life and behaviour at some point. For many, fear can be like a ‘never-departing shadow’.

Some say that there are only four emotions — sadness, happiness, anger, and fear — and that everything else is just a mixture of these basic four. Fear is one of the core emotions that has a way of rising up and appearing in our consciousness at those times when we feel threatened and in danger. Depending on the person, the list of things

that can cause such fears is long. There are some for whom spiders would cause them to leave the room screaming and crying. Snakes, mice, thunderstorms, and so on are common examples, but we also have the same emotional response to other things. Many have a huge fear of standing in front of others and speaking about what they think or believe. The fear of rejection by others is a powerful fear. Many others are afraid of death.

We feel these fears in the present moment, yet we are mentally capable of projecting them into the future, so that people can be in a state of constant fear about things that have not happened and never will. We often succumb to this condition. The problem is, like many emotional states, it is not something that is isolated to only one plane of our consciousness. Strong emotion has a pervasive quality that reaches down into our physical bodies and into our minds as well. Just from a physiological point of view, the moment fear arises things start happening within the body. The term that is used for the response is ‘fight or flight’. Our bodies become prepared for one or the other in the face of an imagined or real threat. With the arising of fear, hormones are released into the body; people begin to perspire, their hearts race, muscles tense up, sugar in the blood increases — all in preparation for the imagined fight or flight.

In our theosophical literature we have clairvoyant descriptions of thought-forms that are generated from a fearful mind. When they are described or depicted, a grey tone always predominates in these thought-forms. The vivid colours associated with love or some decisive emotion are absent. Clairvoyants also describe the aura of the fearful person as ‘hardened’ with a grey cast preventing the inflow or outflow of higher energies. The state of being in fear has a natural tendency to lock one into the experience of isolation. Fear can also contaminate others. It has a contagious quality.

Throughout *The Mahatma Letters* we repeatedly find admonitions or advice such as ‘fear not’ or ‘never fear’. In the translations of scriptures from around the world there are numerous instances where this same word, ‘fear’, is used to describe a higher order of being. It is not

used to describe our personal reaction to snakes, and so on, but a completely higher dimension of understanding. In the Bible there is a statement that requires some thought: ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ It is an odd statement because it is talking about something quite different than our normal sense of fear that we feel when we are threatened.

Similarly, in one of the chapters in the *Bhagavadgītā* Arjuna asks Krishna to reveal his universal form. Until that point, Arjuna had been encountering Krishna in the physical body as his charioteer and counsellor, but at this moment he knew that Krishna was no less than the embodiment of the Divine, and he asked for this boon that he be allowed to see Krishna in his true form. Krishna responded saying that no other person had ever seen this form, but Arjuna’s karma was such that he would be permitted to see. What Arjuna saw caused his hairs to stand on end. First he saw Krishna’s body with mouths on all sides, and from every direction all living things were flying into his mouth and being devoured. He had eyes in all directions and was so bright that he was burning up universes. The effect of this vision on Arjuna was so profound that he was filled with ‘fear’. The sight was too much for him to bear, so much so that he requested Krishna to return to his prior form, because the true one was overwhelming.

The word used in the *Bhagavadgītā* to describe the state of awe, wonder, amazement felt by Arjuna was the word ‘fear’. This type of fear results from a recognition that points to our utter insignificance as individuals, that we exist within something so grand and all encompassing. It is perhaps a fearful thing to behold that the reality of our own present potential is limitless. This is a higher fear, not fear in any ordinary sense, but a quality that has great potentials for our exploration.

So what do we do? There is an expression that: ‘The disease that is hidden cannot be healed.’ To first become aware that there is a condition is the beginning of its healing. The awareness of this process and how it operates upon us is a beginning — its naming and recognition is a beginning. When a patient goes to a doctor, the first thing the latter would do is examine, diagnose, and name the condition. Then he might

prescribe pills, but any good doctor would also advise changes in the patient's diet. On another level he might suggest exercises, and on another level it would be suggested that the patient needs to read some things that will elevate his thoughts, or engage in prayer or meditation.

A similar, multi-layered approach could be adopted in dealing with fear, but probably the best approach would be one that addresses the cause. One of the ways that our condition and our normal state of mind has been described is that we function out of 'the heresy of separateness'. This refers to the false idea that in some way we are separated, not just from one another, but from the Divine source that inhabits each and every thing. What is it that addresses that mindset that we seem to carry?

During HPB's lifetime she talked a great deal *about* meditation, but she said little in terms of direction in *how* to meditate. In 1888, three years before she died, she dictated a 'Diagram of Meditation' to one of her students in England. It is profound and has broad application, but particularly to the mind that feels itself walled-off and separate in states of fearfulness.

Its focus is on Unity. In fact it begins by saying: 'First conceive of UNITY by expansion in space and infinity in Time.' The first thing she advises is to make the attempt to conceive of Oneness. Of course, it is impossible, Oneness cannot be a concept, it cannot be grasped by the mind, but she urges us to begin with that attempt.

Then she presents very specific ways of directing our attention in meditation. We should first direct our attention to certain 'Deprivations', that is, a 'constant refusal to think of the reality of' five things: (1) separations and meetings — the sorts of things that happen all the time; (2) the distinction between friends and foes — those we are attached to and repelled by; (3) possessions; (4) personality; and (5) sensations. All of the things that we lend our attention to that tend to isolate us in the sense that 'these are mine', or 'these are my qualities', or 'these are the things that make me different and apart'. We are to deprive the mind-stream from assigning reality to these things. She adds that the culmina-

tion of this avenue of meditation would be the realization that 'I am without attributes'. There are no qualities that divide my consciousness; there are no identities that separate me from others; none of those things. This is the first part of this process. This is the *via negativa*, or the way of negation — *neti neti* in Sanskrit.

She then goes on to talk about the other side of this process, which she describes as 'Acquisitions'. There is a certain state of mind that we are to 'acquire', in this case through meditation on three elements: (1) a Perpetual Presence in imagination in all space and time — a continual effort to imagine ourselves as universally present in all space and time — is a most difficult thing to do. Obviously, any effort in this direction has the effect of diminishing the limitations of the personality. She says that meditating in this way has the effect of developing a background state of consciousness that operates even when we are asleep. So, even in dreams this state of mind remains active. She adds that courage becomes the characteristic of the person who goes along this path, and thus there is no dread experienced in facing the various dangers and trials that come our way in life. (2) The second acquisition that she lists is a continued attempt at an attitude of mind towards all things that is neither love, hate, or indifference — a state of equanimity that regards all as equal. There is no division of better, higher, those to be loved or those to be rejected. (3) The third aspect she talks about is the mind that regards everything that exists as being an expression of limitation only. HPB suggests these three elements as a curative or medicine for the various ills that arise from this heresy of separateness, among which is fear. These acquisitions culminate with the recognition that 'I am all Space and Time'.

These are suggestions. Although, for our present purposes I have pointed to the specific emotion of fear, they apply universally and are worth the attempt of exploring more deeply.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, April 2016)

The Life of the Mother of Theosophy- Helena P. Blavatsky

Helena Petrovna von Hahn was born at Ekaterinoslav, a town on the river Dnieper, in Southern Russia, on the 12th of August, 1831. Her father, Colonel Peter von Hahn, was an officer in the Russian army and belonged to a noble family coming from Mecklenburg, Germany. Her mother, Helena Fadeef, a renowned novelist, was the daughter of Princess Helena Dolgorukov, a noted botanist and writer and came from one of the oldest Russian aristocratic families.

At the time of her birth, the baby was a feeble little infant, which was not expected to live. In fact, her family decided that it must be baptized at once, called a priest, assembled their relatives and friends in a large room and provided them with a burning taper. A little girl in the front row grew very tired and sat down on the floor, with her lighted taper in her hand. Accidently, in the process of renouncing the Evil one and his deeds, the long flowing robes of the priest had caught fire from the little girl's taper and the poor old man was severely burnt. This was considered by the superstitious servants to be a bad omen and a troubled and eventful life was predicted for poor little Helena Hahn.

Contrary to expectations the baby lived and grew up, although for some years her health was delicate. It improved greatly as time went by and at ten years of age she was a good rider. At fifteen she could control any Cossack horse. A Cossack horse is generally considered to have a will and a way of its own, but so had Helena Hahn. She was an exceptional child and at an early age was aware of being different from those around her. The possession of certain psychic powers puzzled her family and friends. At once impatient of all authority, yet deeply sensitive, she was gifted in many ways. She was daring, very lively, full of humour, with a passionate love for everything unknown and mysterious. She had a craving for independence and freedom of action. She was a clever linguist, a talented pianist and a fine artist who was always in close

* Member of the Theosophical Lodge at Bhavnagar; a member of the Indian Section Council and the National Executive Committee of TS in India.

touch with nature. At a very early age she had sensed that she was in some way dedicated to a life of service and was aware of a special guidance and protection.

She was not even ten when Helena and her younger sister went to stay with their father for two or three years. They moved about with the soldiers who were commanded by their father. The two of them were chiefly taken care of by their father's orderlies, and Helena, at least, greatly preferred them to her female nurses.

Before Helena was eleven, her mother died and she was taken to live with her grandmother, princess Dolgoronky, at Saratov, where she spent 5 years. It was a home that quickened her love for the mysterious. She was a highly strung, sensitive girl, given to walking in her sleep, sometimes full of mischief and at other times as assiduous at her lessons as an old scholar. For her, all nature seemed animated with a mysterious life of its own. She heard the voice of every object and form, she talked with birds and animals and had some means of her own for understanding them. Her power of storytelling was remarkable, for she seemed actually to live in the vents she was describing and quite carried her audience away with her.

She made acquaintance of a strange old man and listened with eager interest to all he had to say about the language of the birds and beasts. There was another influence of great importance which ought to be mentioned. At a very early period of her life, Helena was aware of a Protector, invisible to all but herself, a man of imposing appearance, whose features never changed and whom she met in after life as a living man. She knew as though she had been brought up in his presence.

One day she conceived a wish to inspect closely a picture which hung high on a wall with a curtain in front of it - a wish which was not responded to by her elders. So one day, when there was no one around in the house she dragged a table to the wall, placed another small table above that and chair on the top. She climbed on the chair, leaning with one hand on the dusty wall, she pulled back the curtain with the other hand. The picture startled her and the movement made her fall. She lost consciousness from the time she began to fall. When she recovered her senses, she was lying quite unhurt on the floor, the tables and chair were in their usual places, the curtain was drawn back on the picture and the only sign of her adventure was the mark of her small hand on the dusty wall high up beside the picture.

There was one characteristic of HPB which showed from her youth and remained throughout her life. That was her sympathy for those who were poorer and lower in status than herself. As child, she always preferred to play with the servants' children rather than with her equals. She would try to escape from the house and make friends with ragged street boys. Even later in life, she never cared for her nobility of birth and was always sympathetic towards those who were socially below her.

At the age of 13 years, in 1844 Colonel Hahn took Helena to Paris and to London to give her some good music lessons as she showed great natural abilities as a pianist. She then realized that her knowledge of English was more imperfect than what she had realized as her governess from Yorkshire had taught her to speak with broad 'o's and 'a's, which made others smile at her. However, before her next visit to England she spoke English quite well.

Mademoiselle Helena Hahn got married in 1848 and became Madame Blavatsky in a strange way. She was once "dared" by her governess to find any man who would be her husband. She accepted the challenge and even though she did not have high regards for an elderly man, General Nikifor V. Blavatsky, Governor of a Russian province, she made him propose to her within three days time. Too late, she discovered that her joking acceptance was really a serious matter and that she would have to face all the consequences. The whole thing was nothing more than a girlish prank - she was only 17 at that time. Her friends tried to impress upon her the solemnity of the step which she was about to take. She then wanted to break off the engagement so rashly made, but this was not allowed and on the appointed day the marriage took place.

In a mood of rebellious independence and possibly with a plan to become free of her surroundings, the young bride resolved to leave her husband within three months. She took a horse and rode away from the country house in which they were spending the orthodox honeymoon. After some counselling from the family, she set out to join her father in Russia. During the journey she feared that her father might insist upon her returning to General Blavatsky, so she asked her escort and a maid at the next sea port they stopped to go and find an apartment for her. Then by a liberal outlay of Roubles, she persuaded the captain to sail away for his next port! It was an adventurous voyage for a girl of eighteen, for at the next port, in order to escape the harbour police, she

had to borrow the outfit of a cabin boy and hide in a coal bunker! At Constantinople, however, she had the good fortune to meet a Russian lady of her acquaintance and she travelled with her for some time. She visited Turkey, Egypt, Greece and France. She met an old magician in Cairo and a famous mesmerist in Paris, who discovered her wonderful psychic gifts. All her travel was done on money supplied by her father.

On her 20th birthday, in 1851, she paid her second visit to London. There she met the individual, whom she had known in her psychospiritual visions from childhood, unseen to others except herself - a guiding and guarding presence. She had learnt to think of this Presence as her Guardian and to feel that she was under His protection. One day, when she was out walking, she saw a tall Hindu with some Indian princes. To her astonishment she recognized in him the Guardian whom she had already come to revere. Her first impulse was to rush forward and speak to him, but he made her a sign not to move, and she stood as if spell-bound while he passed by. The next day she went to Hyde park for a stroll, so that she might be alone and free to think over her extraordinary adventure. Looking up she saw the same dignified Hindu approaching her, this time with the purpose of meeting her and speaking to her.

He explained that he had come to London with the Indian Princes on an important mission, and that he was desirous of meeting her physically, as he wished to have her co-operation in a work which he was about to undertake. He then gave her some information as to the work she would be called upon to perform and told her that she would have many troubles and difficulties to face and also that she would have to spend three years in Tibet to prepare her for her work.

But the time for Madame Blavatsky's great work in the world was still far ahead and her intense love of adventure and dislike for any constraint were very strong. Her fancy led her to America in pursuit of North American Indians, about whom she had read in stories. She was introduced to a party of Indians in some Canadian city and immediately started asking them about their customs and the doing of their medicine men. While she was deeply engrossed in this conversation, some of her belongings were stolen by them. Very disappointed in her hopes of the Red Indians, she made her way to new Orleans, where the strange magical rites practiced by a sect of West African negroes, known as Voodoos, excited her curiosity. These rites were very undesirable in character and so she moved on southwards into Mexico. During the

Mexican wonderings she resolved to go to India and Tibet to try to meet again that Teacher, whom she now knew physically. She met two other people, one an Englishman and the other a Hindu who also were planning a trip to India. The three of them reached Bombay in 1852 after adventurous travels in various parts of Mexico, South America, via the Cape and Ceylon. She tried to visit Tibet but was compelled to turn back from Nepal. She returned to England via Java in 1853. In the summer of 1854, she went to America again, crossing the Rockies with a caravan of emigrants in a covered wagon reaching San Francisco, where she stayed for some time.

She spent about two years in America and then again left for Calcutta in 1855. Her trips were still funded by her father, who was the only person with whom she kept in touch. She then reached Kashmir and with three companions under the guidance of a monk went to Tibet. The other three had to return but the monk and Madam Blavatsky pushed far into the "Forbidden Land". The monk carried a stone talisman and Madam Blavatsky asked him about it. The monk kept a goat's head at the entrance of the tent as a warning to the villagers that he was not to be disturbed. It seemed that he then swallowed the stone. His body became cold and rigid and a deep voice asked what Helena would have. She asked if the questioner can visit three of her friends and tell what they were doing. One lady in Romania was described as sitting in her garden reading a letter, which was slowly dictated and written down by Madam Blavatsky. Then a misty form of this old lady appeared in the corner of her tent. Months later, it was confirmed that on that very day the old lady was indeed sitting in her garden reading a letter from her brother, which was exactly what was written down by Madam Blavatsky. In fact, the old lady had fainted while reading the letter and had dreamt of Helena in a deserted place under a gypsy's tent. She then asked the monk to contact her occultist friend asking for means of return to more civilized parts. A few hours later a party of 25 horsemen rode up and rescued her from the dangerous situation. This incident put an end to her Tibet trip and she was directed by her occult guardian to leave India before the Mutiny in 1857.

In 1868, she went via India to Tibet. On this trip Madam Blavatsky met another Master for the first time and stayed in his house in little Tibet. In late 1870 she was back in Cyprus and Greece. On way to Egypt a dreadful explosion occurred on her ship and she was one of the

very few on board who were picked out of the water. She managed to reach Cairo, where she suffered many difficulties until money reached her from Russia. In Cairo, she found a certain number of people who were interested in spiritualism and so started a "Societe Spirite". She hoped to show them that she herself could produce at will the phenomena which ordinarily they obtained through a medium and thereby to awaken their interest in the deeper side of her teachings. Because of some unsuitable people her efforts failed. She spent a night in the darkness of the King's Chamber in the great Pyramid. She also met Madam Coulomb who was then attached to a hotel in Cairo. In July 1872, after further travels through the Middle East, she returned to her family at Odessa, Russia. In the spring of 1873, Helena was instructed by her teacher to go to Paris, and on further direct orders from him, left for New York City where she landed on July 7, 1873. However, an incident had taken place from the port of Havre where she had boarded the ship. She saw a lady with two children weeping bitterly. She found out that her husband had sent money to her from U.S. but she got bogus tickets from a crooked steamship agent who had disappeared. She was penniless in a strange city. Madam Blavatsky went to her agent and exchanged her first class ticket for steerage tickets for the lady, her two children and herself. She travelled to U.S. in the crowded discomfort of the steerage of the liner. There were many such incidents in her life showing her sensitivity to people who are in trouble.

H.P. Blavatsky was then 42 years old and in controlled possession of her many and most unusual spiritual powers. In the opinion of the Mahatmas, she was the best available instrument for the work they had in mind, namely to offer to the world a new presentation, though only in brief outline, of the age-old Theosophia, "The accumulated Wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of Seers....." that body of Truth of which religions, great and small, are but as branches of the parent tree. Her task was to challenge on the one hand the entrenched beliefs and dogmas of Christian Theology and on the other the equally dogmatic materialistic view of the science of her day. A crack, however, had recently appeared in the twofold set of mental fortifications. It was caused by spiritualism, then sweeping America. To quote Blavatsky's own words: "I was sent to prove the phenomena and their reality and to show the fallacy of the spiritualistic theory of spirits".

In those days (1874) a series of remarkable spiritualistic phenomena were commencing to attract much attention. William and Horatio

Eddy were farmers at Chittenden, Vermont State in north east U.S. They were poor and ill educated, but strong mediums and crowds of visitors came to witness the remarkable materializations which occurred in their presence. Among those visitors was Madam Blavatsky, and shortly after her, arrived Colonel Henry Steel Olcott- an apparently chance meeting, which was destined to have far reaching effects. Their acquaintance grew into friendship, and Madam Blavatsky began to introduce to him some of the principles of the Eastern Wisdom in which she was versed. She also met William Quan Judge, a young Irish Lawyer, who was to play a unique role in the future Theosophical work.

On 7 September, 1875, these three leading figures, together with several others, founded a society which they chose to call The Theosophical Society, as promulgating the ancient teachings of Theosophy or the Wisdom concerning the Divine, which had been the spiritual basis of other great movements of the past. Colonel Henry Steel Olcott was appointed its life-President and for 32 years he filled that office with dignity, judgment and tact, winning the love of thousands by the sterling qualities of his heart and the noble work for humanity to which he set his hands. His inaugural address was delivered in New York on 17 November 1875, the official date of founding of the Society. The original objective was “to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe”. This was elaborated with seven rules and later refined into the three clearly defined objects of the Theosophical Society as they stand today.

Madam Blavatsky had at first tried to interest those who were already aware of the phenomena of Spiritualism. Her idea was to break down the materialism of her time. She showed the people the wonders she could perform in the world of marvel and magic. By doing this, she speedily attracted the attention of a large circle of people. This was the objective she had in mind to publicize Theosophy. Later on, when the society was well established, she devoted herself to her true work as a Spiritual Teacher and refused to yield to the demand for marvels and magic.

The progress of the new Society was very slow at first, indeed after a year's work, there survived only a good organization, a few members and two friends - Madam Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, who never doubted the existence of their Masters, the excellence of their mission or its final success. The difficulties before them were enor-

mous and so one of the Masters appeared before Col. Olcott to encourage him in the work. This incident was immediately shared by him with Madam Blavatsky.

A book called *Isis Unveiled* was commenced in 1875 and published in September 1877 in New York City. It made a powerful impact upon the reading and thinking public. One thousand copies of the first printing were sold within ten days. It outlined the history, scope and development of the Occult Sciences, the nature and origin of Magic, the roots of Christianity, the errors of Christian Theology and the fallacies of established orthodox Science, against the backdrop of the secret teachings which run as a golden thread through centuries, coming up to the surface every now and then in the various mystical movements of the last two thousand years or so. The New York Herald-Tribune considered the book as one of the “remarkable productions of the century”. Many other papers and journals showered similar praise for the book. Blavatsky said about the book, “whenever I write upon a subject I know little of, I address myself to Them and one of Them inspires me”. That tells us who was behind the writing of this book!

On 8 July 1878, H.P. Blavatsky was naturalized as U.S. citizen, an event which received publicity in various newspapers. In December of same year, it was decided that the Founders should journey to India via London as the Society was beginning to spread, a branch having been formed in London and a number of Indian members having been enrolled.

Arriving in Bombay in February 1879, they established their Theosophical Headquarters in that city. Soon their rooms were thronged daily with native visitors eager to discuss religious questions with Madam Blavatsky and to hear her explanations of their own ancient Scriptures. The value of Theosophy was seen from the fact that it can help equally the followers of various faiths, be it Hindus, Buddhists, Parsees and others who flocked around Madam Blavatsky. Theosophy flows out from the Source of all religions so each faith is benefited by its coming.

The early days in Bombay were not easy for Madam Blavatsky as she made no efforts to be introduced into European Society. The police seeing her with the natives suspected her to be a spy of Russian Government! But those days were made happy for her due to the frequent appearances of the Masters who made her realize more strongly than

ever that she and Col. Olcott were not alone in their work, but were being watched and aided at every turn. The two were also contacted soon by Alfred Percy Sinnett, then editor of the Government paper, the 'Pioneer' of Allahabad. This contact soon proved of the utmost importance in the propagation of Theosophy. After a tour of North Western India, the Founders returned to Bombay and started the first Journal, "The Theosophist" in Oct. 1879, with H.P. Blavatsky as its editor.

During the visit which Madam Blavatsky and Col. Olcott paid to Alfred and Patience Sinnett at Simla, there occurred many remarkable events recorded in the book *The Occult World* which Mr. Sinnett contributed to the library of Theosophical literature. The serious interest of Sinnett in the teachings and the work of the Theosophical Society prompted HPB to establish a contact by correspondence between Sinnett and the two Masters that were sponsoring the Society. *The Occult World* (1881) and *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883), both of which had an enormous influence in generating public interest in Theosophy, were based on the said correspondence. The replies and explanations given by the Masters to the questions by Sinnett were published in 1923 as *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. The original letters are preserved in the British Library where they can be viewed by special permission in Rare Manuscript Dept.

In May, 1882, a large estate was bought in southern India at Adyar, now in Chennai, and the Theosophical headquarters were moved there at the end of the year. This centre soon became the radiating point for a world-wide activity. Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott engaged in trips to many places in India, establishing branches wherever they went and arousing public interest in their work. Everywhere they sought to inspire the true spirit of patriotism among the natives, by explaining to them the beauty and dignity of their own religions and the spiritual worth of their ancient Scriptures. The end of 1882 was marked by the grave illness of Madam Blavatsky at Mumbai. The strain of constant labour, travelling and misrepresentation, and her natural excitability of temperament, combined to bring about a collapse. She was directed to go north via Darjeeling to meet her Occult Guardians, and although she only spent two or three days with them she returned practically well again.

In February 1884, Madam Blavatsky went to Europe. She went to Naples first and then to Paris, where she met many Theosophists from all parts of Europe and America and also some of her own Russian

relatives. Countess Watchmeister, who met her then for the first time, give some very interesting descriptions of those days, when many celebrated men and women gathered round her to listen to and join in her conversation, and perchance to witness some of the remarkable phenomena which occurred in her presence. She crossed to London in summer of 1884 and attracted a great deal of attention to herself and the movement she served.

After staying almost for five months in Paris and London, she visited Germany during late summer and was engaged in writing her second work, *The Secret Doctrine*. Meanwhile, a vicious attack on her by Alexis and Emma Coulomb, whom she had first met in Egypt, and whom she had helped by employing them as stewards in her house at a time when they were penniless, was rapidly building up. She returned to Adyar on 21st December 1884 to learn the details of the situation. She wished to sue the couple, already dismissed from Adyar for their gross libel on her concerning the supposed fraudulent production of psychic phenomena. Overruled by a committee of leading T.S. members and in disgust she resigned as corresponding secretary of the Society. On 31st March, 1885, she left for Europe, never to return to Indian Soil.

The Coulomb attack, as was later proved, had no solid foundation whatsoever. HPB had at once denied that the letters had ever been written by her. One of the first acts of Dr Annie Besant after her election as new President of the Theosophical Society, was to publish a full and complete defence of HPB. The entire case was based on forged letters, purporting to have been written by HPB. A Christian Missionary Magazine in Madras published the most incriminating portions of these letters. A lot of mischief had been done by the Coulobms as house-keepers when they had the charge of the establishment. It took a long time before a full and correct account of these occurrences was obtained and in the meantime a great blow had been dealt on the Theosophical Movement, which was almost crushed. On HPB fell the brunt of the storm and the suffering. Only a few of her friends in the West were faithful to her but in the East, particularly in India, the majority of the members stood by her. Unfortunately, her health had again broken down.

Out of misfortunes, however, some good speedily began to come. HPB felt that by her writings she might justify herself and draw the Movement together. She was right, for her writings from that time to her death are those by which her memory will live and the Society will

grow. Having left India for Europe, she settled first in Italy and then in August, 1885 at Wurzburg, Germany, where she worked on "The Secret Doctrine". Countess Wachtmeister went to live with HPB at Wurzburg, in 1885 upon learning that she was in need of care and companionship. The routine of HPB's life was mentally very exhausting. By seven in the morning HPB was at her desk writing, with only a pause for breakfast, until 1pm, when sometimes she would stop for lunch. At other times her door would remain closed for hours longer, to the despair of the maid who bemoaned the spoiled food. At 7 pm, writing was laid aside and the rest of the evening was spent pleasantly with the countess until 9pm, when HPB went to bed with a bunch of Russian newspapers which she read till late night.

The Writing of *The Secret Doctrine* was long and hard labour, requiring the greatest possible freedom from distractions. As in the book she wrote *Isis Unveiled*, HPB was constantly helped in this work by the Masters, who dictated to her, wrote for her occasionally, or showed her ancient events and scenes, descriptions of which were required. Quotations and references were made to books which HPB did not simply have at hand. The book has the life history of one earth and the system to which we belong. As a result, the book has perhaps the finest picture of evolution ever written. But the writing of the book took a heavy toll on her health. In July 1886, she relocated to Ostend, Belgium where the Countess Wachtmeister accompanied her. There matters grew worse and two doctors were called, who saw no hope of her recovery and were surprised that HPB had lived this long with the complicated medical condition of Kidney she was in. One night matters reached a crisis and HPB told the countess that the time had come for her to lay down her body. She was glad at the prospect of being free from such a worn-out instrument even though she had hoped to give more to the world. At last, she dropped unconscious and the countess felt that it was useless for HPB to make this sacrifice and suffer, for the Theosophical Movement was very weak to continue without her. She was the life- blood of Theosophy. Then, worn out with the fatigue of nursing and the sorrowful thoughts around, the countess also sank into unconsciousness. When her eyes opened in the morning her first thought was that HPB had probably died when she was sleeping. As she turned around in the bed she saw HPB looking at her with clear grey eyes. She asked HPB how she has suddenly become so well. HPB said "Master has been here. He gave me my choice, that I might die and be free or I might live and finish

the Secret Doctrine". He had warned her of suffering in England where she was soon to go. In the interest of the students and the Theosophical Society she accepted the sacrifice.

In May 1887, at the invitation of English Theosophists she moved to a small house at Upper Norwood, London. The Theosophical activities began to move rapidly, the Blavatsky Lodge was formed and started publicizing Theosophical ideas. Since HPB had lost control of "The Theosophist", she founded a monthly magazine "Lucifer" in September 1887, now known as the "Theosophical Review" and edited it for nearly four years. The objective was to bring to light the hidden things of darkness. In the same month HPB moved to a larger house at 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London. She continued to write her great work until it was published as *The Secret Doctrine* in two large volumes between October to December of 1888. It was the crowning achievement of her literary career and received outstanding reviews in all newspapers and magazines worldwide. Volume I is concerned mainly with the evolution of the Universe and the explanation of the fundamental symbols contained in the great religions of the world. Volume II describes the evolution of humanity.

Also in October 1888, HPB formed the Esoteric School of the Theosophical Society for the deeper study of the Esoteric Philosophy by dedicated students and wrote for them her three "E.S. Instructions". In 1889, HPB published *The Key to Theosophy*, a clear explanation in the form of question and answer, of the Ethics, Science and Philosophy for the study of which the Theosophical Society was founded. In the same year was published a devotional mystical gem called *The Voice of the Silence*, containing selected excerpts translated from an eastern scripture, *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, which she had learnt by heart during her training in the East.

The four years of strenuous work by HPB from 1887 to 1891 in London formed the foundation for many of the well established activities of the Theosophical Society and literary gems. It was because of these and owing to the stimulus of her presence, the whole of the movement in England, which had been confined almost entirely to London, grew and flourished in an effective way. This indeed was a wonderful record of work that was done with such a worn out body. In addition to all this HPB continued the still more important task of training pupils, so that the movement might be carried on when she is gone. For twelve

hours a day she would work at her desk and in the evening would receive a wide circle of pupils and sympathizers, amongst whom were some of the best of Society's workers. They were well known men of science, learned professors, literary men, agnostics and socialists, artists, businessmen, industrialists - all finding some attraction in this wonderful Russian woman whose profound knowledge commanded attention and respect. On Thursday evenings she would be present at the meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge and answer questions to clarify different points in her writings. Among these visitors came one Annie Besant, to whom *The Secret Doctrine* had been given for review.

Before long Lansdowne Road was outgrown and a move was made at Mrs. Besant's invitation to her house on Avenue Road. A lecture hall was built beside the house and No. 19, Avenue Road, became the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in London for a dozen years, until it was moved nearer the centre of London. HPB passed away on May 8, 1891, during a severe epidemic of flu in England and her remains were cremated at Working Crematorium in Surrey. However, by then the Theosophical movement in England had been placed on a firm footing and pupils had been found to carry on the work to which she had devoted her life. With her endurance and patience, her writings and teachings, her life and character, her mission and occult powers, her fostering care she gave to the society she founded, taking upon herself all the storm and stress, she ensured that within the shell there might be peace. Every spiritual movement seems to be mothered in this way by some great soul who walls it around with shielding arms, in its early stages and breathes into it the living warmth of Spiritual life. As a mother gives her life to a child, so did HPB identify her life with that of her child - the Theosophical Society she founded. Madam Helena Petrovna Blavatsky is recognized as the greatest occultist in the history of Western Civilization, a direct agent of the Himalayan Masters and Mother of Theosophy.

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AFTER LISTENING TO KRISHNAJI*

Every religion, and nearly every school of philosophy, postulate two basic principles as constituting the world- Spirit and Matter. Spirit is what knows, and Matter is what is known. Spirit is what illuminates, and Matter is what shrouds this illumination. Spirit is what constitutes Life, and Matter is what limits Life. Spirit is joy, bliss, and Matter weighs down and causes sorrow. Spirit is eternally true and real; Matter transforms and perishes.

In Samskrit terminology Spirit is *sat* (real), *chit* (wisdom), *ânanda* (bliss). Matter is the opposite of that. When one says, 'I know', what ought to be actually meant by the term 'I' is the pure Spirit unalloyed and untainted by Matter. But usually one understands by the term 'I' a composite of Spirit, body and its adjuncts, namely the sense-organs, the mind, etc. Very often, the Spirit element is lost sight of, and the Matter element, namely the body with its adjuncts, is exalted to the level of being what is meant by 'I', what knows and experiences. This is due to a confusion of two entirely distinct elements, and this confusion is the root cause of all our sorrows. Sri Sankarâchârya puts this in the following words:

As between Matter and Spirit, after ascribing to each the nature and the attributes of the other, resulting from the illusory cognition of the attributes and their bases which are in truth absolutely distinct each from the other, due to non-discrimination of each from the other, and after coupling the true with the untrue, there is the natural empirical experience 'I am this'. 'This is mine', and so on.

Sankaracharya terms this confusion *avidyâ* (ignorance), *adhyâsa* (mutual super-imposition of the true and the untrue). Whenever a cognition presupposes a differentiation of the knower, the known, the knowl-

edge and the means of knowing, there must be this jumble of Spirit and Matter. Because, if the Spirit is by its very nature pure wisdom, it cannot at the same time be maintained that the Spirit depends for its wisdom on an object to be known and on a means to know the object. Again, if the wisdom of the Spirit is only an attribute abiding in the Spirit, the Spirit in itself is not wise, but depends on an attribute to be wise. True knowledge consists in the cognition of the Spirit itself as wisdom pure and simple, without the Spirit depending on an attribute called wisdom for it to be wise, on an object to be wise about, and on some means whereby to be wise about that object. This absolute abstraction of the Spirit from all its normal entanglements- the fleeting cognitions, the objects of the physical world cognized, adjuncts like mind and the sense-organs for cognizing the objects- such a pure abstraction is what Sankaracharya calls *vidyâ* (knowledge). This is perfection, *Paramâ kâshthâ*; this is 'to be one with life', *atmaikatva*.

Krishnaji freely uses expressions such as 'perfection', 'to be one with life', 'fulfilment'. The terms that we freely find in Sankaracharya are '*niratisaya* (without a superior)', '*brahmâtmaikatva* (union of the individual with the absolute)', '*nityaëuddhabuddhamuktasvabhâva* (by nature eternally pure, awake and free)', '*Kûtasthanitya* (immutably eternal)'. Sankaracharya recognizes two kinds of realities, the empirically real and the absolutely real. What is empirically real is whatever comes within our normal experience. It is real only in so far as we experience it. But whatever we experience as real, we also experience as not real with reference to some other place, time or condition. For example, a tree here is real, but it does not exist elsewhere; the same tree is real now, but if it is cut down, it ceases to exist. A tree is real as a tree, but if it is mistaken for a house in very dim light, then as a house it is unreal. Thus what we experience as real has only a limited reality. But, says Sankaracharya, wisdom as wisdom can have no limitation. The limitation comes from the object of the wisdom, from confusing wisdom with its object, from associating them as inextricably interwoven with each other. All other Teachers hold that there cannot be knowledge without an object. It is only Sankaracharya who holds uncompromisingly that knowledge is independent, and what is called an object for knowledge is only an external limitation to it and not a necessary or inherent factor in knowledge. When knowledge is associated with an object, consequent

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on knowledge, comes in desire, aversion and all the hosts of feelings that bring about misery in life. The entire misery in life is due to the fact of this introduction of the limiting factor, like 'this' or 'that', as conditioning the really infinite and unconditioned wisdom. When there is wisdom pure and simple. Without an object to condition the wisdom, the Spirit is in a state of perfection, without a limiting factor. The Spirit, as we ordinarily understand it, is inextricably entangled in the body and its adjuncts like the sense-organs and the mind. Being confined to this entanglement, the Spirit does not shine in its fullness. It is only in the stage of the Spirit knowing itself as pure wisdom, free from the body and its adjuncts, that there is fulfilment for the Spirit.

Life and Wisdom are not two different things. The Spirit in its state of physical entanglements is called life as a dynamic factor, and is called knowledge as a cognitive factor. The Spirit is not really a 'factor' in anything; it is a complete and independent unit. But in the state of entanglement, it becomes a factor in a complex, and assumes to have 'aspects'. Thus life becomes the dynamic aspect and knowledge becomes the cognitive aspect of Spirit. But when the entanglement is removed and when the Spirit becomes pure, Life in its fullness and wisdom in its perfection become merged into the same thing. Then we have an 'eternal becoming'. Krishnaji speaks of truth as an 'eternal becoming', and says that truth is never static. What is static is Matter. To be static is the opposite of life. Life as we know in our normal experience is a continuous becoming. But this continuous becoming is not eternal. There is an end to life, and some religions and schools of philosophies hold that there comes a new life or life in new conditions. But to Sankaracharya, this is not truth. Change in life is due to the presence of the body and its adjuncts. It is the body that changes. When life is freed from this body, then life, instead of being a merely continuous becoming, becomes also an eternal becoming. In Sankaracharya's terminology, Krishnaji's terms 'becoming' must be translated as *caitanya* as opposed to *jada*, which is static.

In the philosophy of Sankaracharya, there is no 'goal' for life. Life is everything. The goal always presupposes a path, and becomes dependent on the path. There can be no perfection, no real fulfilment, when there is dependence. Thus perfection, fulfilment, cannot be really a 'goal'

to be attained through a path. Krishnaji says that it is 'a pathless reality'. Sankaracharya is absolutely uncompromising in his position that perfection cannot be the 'end' of a path, the 'result' of something done, the 'attainment' after a discipline perfection is reality. There was no time when it was not. One can attain a thing only when it was not at some time attained. One may not know that it existed, but that is different from its not being existent. 'Truth is fulfilment'.

In ordinary life there is not this fulfilment. Life is confined by, limited to, the particular objects of desire and action. In every experience of our ordinary life, there is an element of direct knowledge of a thing along with what is called memory. If the direct knowledge is full, there can be no room for memory. Every case of false knowledge contains an element of direct cognition and memory. Whenever there is the memory element in knowledge, there is imperfection in the knowledge. My knowledge of a tree is not simple direct knowledge though I am seeing the tree. If it were mere direct knowledge the knowledge would have taken only the form of 'this', and never the form 'this tree'. The knowledge that it is a 'tree' is due to the intervention of some previous knowledge; the present knowledge is related to the previous ones, and on account of the admixture of the previous ones, I get the notion that it is a 'tree'.

Knowledge reaches the stage of being relatively the purest when it takes the form of a mere 'this' without the conditioning factor of particulars like 'tree' and becomes absolutely pure when even this element of an object for the knowledge is dropped out. The element of memory, which resolves the objects of our ordinary cognitions into various particulars, is, as Krishnaji says, 'an artificial acquisition'. It is a hindrance to true knowledge. One of the objects of Yogic practice is to free the working of the mind from the intervention of this artificial acquisition. When I can know a tree as it is, not as related to the things I have seen before, when I can know a horse as it is, and not as related to the things that I have seen before, there cannot be any difference between a horse and a tree; the difference comes in on account of the intervention of memory. When there is the intervention of an artificial element, a thing cannot be called full and pure. Conversely, when a thing is full, there cannot be the presence of an artificial element. If a jar is three parts full

of milk and one part of water, that milk is not pure and the jar is not 'full of milk'. Conversely, if the jar is full of milk, then there is no room for the water to dilute the milk.

For the knowledge to be pure, this artificial acquisition must be removed. It is then that life becomes moments of rich fulfilment. Krishnaji says that moments, of rich fulfilment are the realities. It is only at the stage of absolute right knowledge that knowledge becomes free from any traces of memory. What Krishnaji calls by such terms as 'perfection', 'fulfilment', 'reality' and 'to be one with life' are what Sankaracharya calls *brahmajñāna*, *âtmaikatva vijñāna* and *pâramârthika tattva*.

Short of this knowledge of the Spirit by the Spirit itself as pure wisdom, as pure existence, as pure bliss, free from attributes and free from relationships and dependences, everything is false, *mithyâ*, to use the terminology of Sankaracharya. Every kind of doctrine, every kind of systematization, every theory, relationships of teacher and disciple, of path and goal, everything is false, unreal. What is ordinarily called religion, namely rules of conduct consisting of prescriptions of what should be done and prohibitions of what should not be done, ceremonials, forms and sacred formulas, every one of these is an aspect of unreality, is led on by *avidya* or ignorance proceeding in front, Sankaracharya says:

It is with ignorance leading the way that there proceed all our ordinary notions of things known and means of knowing them and all scriptures with their purport in prescriptions and prohibitions for the purpose of procuring the final goal.

But Sankaracharya is incontrovertible in his position that none of them can lead to the final goal, to real fulfilment, to real perfection, to oneness, which is the only reality. Fulfilment is not a result. It is not fruit of something done. It is an eternal reality and by no means can it be 'brought into existence', nor brought into relation in any manner or form with whatever should be done or should not be done. All our limited knowledge is wrong. All religious prescriptions and prohibitions are false. They can never 'lead' to the goal. The goal is not something away from the present either in point of time or in point of space. It is an

eternal reality everywhere and always, and there is no 'leading' into it. Thus it cannot be related to any ceremonial, any act prescribed or prohibited. About this Brahman knowledge, Sankaracharya says:

If this be something enjoined as a consequence of, as a fruit of what should be done, and if the goal be accepted as capable of being produced through what should be done, then Brahman turns out to be something other than eternal.

Sri Sankaracharya is the only Teacher who has taken this uncompromising position of the absolute independence of perfection, its freedom from religion and all its rules and systematization. All other schools of thought in Hinduism accept the value of religion and ceremonial in some form or other as a necessary preliminary to the attainment of the highest. They all accept the absolute reality of differences, of traditions. To them all, perfection is a fruit to be attained as a result of the observance of what is prescribed in religion. Sankaracharya went right against this fundamental principle of organized religion, and, as such Sankaracharya has been called a heathen in disguise, a traitor to orthodox religion.

To Sankaracharya our normal experience of differences, gradations and relationships cannot be the absolute reality. It is a continuum of blind cognitions, *andhaparamparâ* as he calls it. In every form of our normal experience, there is an element of ignorance, whether it is the worldly experience or whether it is the religious experience of prescriptions and prohibitions. Perfection is not a stage in this series of blind notions. It is not to be produced by acts prescribed in religion. It has no relationships of any form. To a close student of Sankaracharya, the talks of Krishnaji have a special appeal.

Both were fighting against the same evil ('evil' only from an absolutist point of view and not in its ordinary sense), namely the dominance of religion and ceremonial and the consequent subordination of individual action and individual efforts to external authority and influence. When Sankaracharya says that all religions and all philosophies are false, what he meant was only that they are not ultimate truths. They have a kind of reality in so far as they are experienced. But their reality is confined to time and is not beyond time. As such, terms like *avidya* (igno-

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rance), *adhyasa* (super-imposition of the true and the untrue on each other), *anitya* (other than eternal), *anrta* (false), do not carry with them any unpleasant odour. There is no moral reflection on any individual person. Similarly, the terms which Krishnaji uses so freely, terms like 'false', 'exploitation', when read in harmony with his point of view, when looked at from the stand of absolute aloofness and high elevation from the petty squabbles of ordinary morals, are seen to be free from any unpleasant odour which they may carry with them in ordinary language.

It will be preposterous for anyone to say that he has understood what Krishnaji is saying. The truth, of which he is talking, is not what could be understood from a talk. It is something which will shine in all its lustre when the shrouds that conceal its illuminations drop off. But a student of Sankaracharya finds, when listening to Krishnaji's talk, that he is in familiar regions, in an ocean which though vast is properly charted. The talks of Krishnaji are reminiscent of much that Sankaracharya has said. All the more absorbing is the interest which a student of Sankaracharya finds in the talks of Krishnaji, when it is recognized that for his talks Krishnaji owes not even a hint from what Sankaracharya had said centuries ago. He has not read anything of the predecessor in the same domain. If a person has studied the three fundamental doctrines in the teaching of Sankaracharya, namely, that in our normal experience, there is an admixture both of what is true and what is untrue, that even the Vedas are, from the absolutist point of view, false, and that Brahman has absolutely no sort of relationships with religion and ceremonial, such a study will enable him to gain a less difficult approach to what Krishnaji is now teaching, also to understand the terms he uses in the nearest approximation to their true bearing.

(Courtesy : *The Theosophist*, September, 1996).

Bombay

Pavri's book *Theosophy Explained in Questions and Answers* added to Jalbhai CD Library by Bro. Navin Kumar: It was an inexplicable inspiration which compelled him to spend about 25 hours on the computer to extract the text of this book page by page from Million Book Project. The texts were corrected & reformatted for word & PDF formats. Bro. Navin Kumar has created a web library on the net called "Jalbhai CD Library" containing most of the important books on Theosophy. Jalbhai CD Library is available on the following link:<http://sites.gogole.com/site/thegrandoldmanofblavatskylodge/home>

Blavatsky Lodge: 'Happiness Unlimited' by Brihmakumari Shivani: There was screening of about 28 talks of Brihmakumari Shivani followed by discussion. At the end of the series of talks, Bro. Navin Kumar screened Power Point Presentation of summarized talks with captions of key messages.

Study of 'Demystifying Patanjali Yoga': Bro. Annie Narendran is currently conducting the study. Bro. Navin Kumar at the following meeting presents PPP on the portions covered with summary of explanations.

Sis. Kashmira Khambatta presented 'Introduction to The Lives of Alcyone'. Now the stories of his lives will be read and discussed by the members at Tuesday meetings.

Kerala

Bro. S. Sivadas, President of the Federation, conducted study classes on *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, Vol.III, in February and March 2016, at Anantha Lodge, Trivandrum. He conducted study classes on "Divine Plan" at Sree Sankara Lodge, Ernakulam, in February and March. Besides, he conducted discussion class on J Krishnamurti's teachings on three Saturdays and also participated in the Lodge Meetings, Adyar Day programme on 17 February and Bharat Samaj Pooja on every Sunday at Annapoorni Lodge, Aleppey.

Thrissur Lodge organized an Inter Lodge Meeting and a seminar on 'Theosophy and Swami Sree Narayana Guru' and also celebrated the 125th Anniversary of the Indian Section at Changampuzha Hall,

Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, on February 28, 2016. Members from Anantha Lodge, Annapoorni Lodge, Sree Sankara Lodge, Mahadeva Lodge, Perinjanam Lodge, Blavasky Besant Lodge and Trichur Lodge attended the meeting.

After the Universal Prayer, Dr. P. S. Krishnamoorthy, Vice President of Trichur Lodge, welcomed the members and guests. Sri. G Ramanathan delivered the Presidential Address. President of KTF, Bro. S Sivadas inaugurated the seminar and the Keynote Address was given by Dr. Geetha Suraj, Retd. Principal, SNM College, Ernakulam. Dr. P.U. Asokan, Former President, Trichur Lodge, Smt. Sobha Prakash from Gouthama Lodge, Kannur and Sri. K.N. Unnikrishnan of Blavasky-Besant Lodge, Pullut, gave short talks on the subject. The speakers were of the uniform opinion that the first object of the Theosophical Society – “To form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood of Humanityor colour” was a similar message propagated by Swamy Sree Narayana Guru (1855 – 1928) – “One Caste, one religion, one God for man”. The Chief Guest talked about the reception given to him at Annie Hall by the members of Calicut Lodge, in appreciation of his work for universal brotherhood and religious tolerance. There was an interactive session with the members. Sri. P.T.Krishndas, Secretary, Trichur Lodge, proposed vote of thanks.

Bro. S. Sivadas visited Asoka Sankara Lodge, Calicut, and spoke there on Theosophical subjects on 19 & 20 March. He spoke on “Theosophy and Yoga Vidya” at Annapoorni Lodge, Alleppey. Besides, he participated along with other members in the 93rd South India Conference at Adayar from 25 to 27 March.

At Trichur Lodge, members are studying, the book *The Key to Theosophy* by H P B under the guidance of Vice-President Dr. P.S. Krishnamurthy. President G. Ramanathan visited Asoka Sankara Lodge Calicut on 20 March and spoke there on Theosophy.

Utkal

Bro. Dilip Padhi, (Diploma No.90307) a long standing member of Sambalpur Theosophical Lodge has gone to peace.

Uttar Pradesh

The following talks were organized by Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, in February:

‘Narada Bhakti Sutras’ by Bro. B. B. Lal; ‘Human suffering’ by Bro. A.P. Capoor; ‘Memory of past incarnations’ by Bro. B.L. Dube; and ‘State after Death’ by Bro. B.D. Shukla.

Study of the book “Hints on the study of Bhagvadgita” by Annie Besant was conducted by a group of members of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, during additional weekly meetings organized in the months of February and March, 2016. Bro. U.S. Pandey directed the study.

On the request of Delhi Federation, Bro. U.S. Pandey conducted a study camp at Delhi on 5 and 6 March. The book *The Mystery of Life and How Theosophy Unveils It* written by Clara M. Codd formed the basis of study. The members of Delhi Federation and one member of Ghaziabad lodge in U.P. Federation participated in it. The study camp started on 5 March with recitation of Universal Prayer. Br. Rajiv Gupta President of Delhi Federation introduced the speaker and welcomed the participants. He thanked the speaker and the participants in the concluding session on March 6.

A study camp on 12 and 13 March was organized at Ghaziabad on the book *Astavakra Samhita*. The camp started on the morning of 12 March with recitation of Universal Prayer. Bro. Bhuvaneshwar Singh, President of Besant Lodge, welcomed the participants and resource persons. About 50 persons including members from Lodges at Gorakhpur, Barabanki, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, and Ghaziabad and a member of Delhi Federation participated in it. Bro. R.A. Goel introduced the subject and conducted the proceedings. Bro. U.S. Pandey, Federation Secretary, directed the study and covered chapter I of the book at the start on 12 March and ch.XIX and XX at the end on 13 March. In between other resource persons covered various chapters: Bro. K.K. Srivastva (ch.II), Bro. S.K. Pandey (ch.III to VII), Bro. Subhash Nagpal and Bro. Suneel Sharma (ch.VIII to XII), Sis. Vasumati Agnihotri (ch.XIII to XV), Bro. S.S. Gautam (ch.XVI & XVII), Bro. S.B.R. Mishra (ch.XVIII-sl. 1 to 35), Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri (Ch.XVIII-sl.36 to 70), and Sis. Preeti Tiwari (ch.XVIII-sl. 71 to 100). After each session there was interaction when supplementary comments were made by some participants. At the end an interactive session was held when certain points of clarification/ elaboration raised by the participants were taken up. A devotional meet was organized on 12 March and a guided group meditation was held on 13 March. A C.D. containing talk of Sis. Maria Persan on the theme ‘Alone and Together’ was also played. In the concluding session held on 13 March, some participants made general remarks ap-

preciating the content presented during the study and also the arrangement of board/lodging made by the host lodges. On behalf of the Federation, Bro. K.K. Srivastava, joint secretary, thanked the officials and members of the host lodges (Besant and Anand), speakers and participants. Bro. Chakit Swarup, Secretary of Anand Lodge, gave vote of thanks on behalf of the two host lodges of Ghaziabad.

Bro. U.S. Pandey delivered a talk at Pune Lodge on 27 March on the topic "Teachings in Astavakra Samhita". Besides, he addressed a group of about 60 trainee officers and faculty members of Indian Railway Institute of Civil Engineering (IRICEN) on the theme "Science of Life" in the background of Theosophical teachings.

Prof. Atual Bhatnagar delivered a very informative talk on 'Correlation between Hurt and Compassion'. The talk was held under the auspices of Kashi Tattva Sabha on 8 April at Varanasi.

Shri Suraj Kumar Singh (Dip.88969) of Agra Lodge passed to peace on 06.03.16.

Indian Section Headquarters

1.) National TOS camp was held at the Indian Section Headquarters, Varanasi on 15-16 March 2016. The camp was organized on the personal initiative of the National Director, TOS, Bro. B.L. Bhattacharya and the National Secretary, Bro. T.K. Nair. About 35 members from various parts of the country representing their respective regions participated in it. The purpose of holding the camp was to understand and share experience of various projects and social services being undertaken by the regions to ameliorate the sufferings of the underprivileged and to appreciate their difficulties being faced at the ground level.

Beginning the session with Universal Prayer the National Director welcomed the distinguished members representing various regions and highlighted the purpose of creating TOS by Dr. Annie Besant. He underlined the need for the T.S. and TOS members to work in harmony with each other so that the knowledge gained could be applied for the welfare of society. Bro. Bhattacharya lauded the efforts made by the regions in the area of service which is being recognized at the international level. He further brought to the notice of participants that the TOS activities are spreading in Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir region as well. Bro. Bhattacharya reminded the gathering that TOS workers need to work hard to serve the humanity. Through heart to heart conversa-

tion, representatives from different regions can share their feelings, experiences and various activities with each other which will help in working together unitedly for the service of poor and needy.

In his inaugural address, the General Secretary of the Indian Section, Bro. S. Sundaram, welcomed the participants and pointed out that this is the first occasion in the history of TOS that so many members from all over the country have come to Indian Section Headquarters. Tracing the history of TOS, he revealed that after formation of TOS by Dr. Annie Besant in 1908, it was revived in 1947 again as it became dormant in the intervening period. It was revived and the work of the TOS was divided into four sections: "(1) Healing and Hospital Work; (2) Work for civic reforms and communal harmony; (3) Work for the social emancipation of women and masses; and (4) Work along educational and cultural lines". Drawing attention to the pathetic state of today's world infested with hatred & selfishness, he emphasized on the need to transform ourselves from within. Referring to Dr. Annie Besant, an embodiment of love and empathy, the General Secretary maintained that we have such enlightened role-models from whom we can imbibe strong values and bring about a change in the world. He summed up by pointing out that instead of reacting, if we respond to the situation, we can render service in real sense. The National Secretary, Dr. T.K. Nair, expressed his concern about future of TOS and endeavoured to inspire all representatives from various regions to dedicate themselves for the service of poor and needy. On the advice of National Director, representatives from different regions presented detailed report highlighting various activities and projects being undertaken at their regional and group level. Some new and simple ideas to improve the life of villagers came up from Gujarat region presented by Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil.

In the concluding session two important issues i.e. teachers' training programme and fund raising were discussed in which participants were apprised by the National Director about teachers' training programme to be held at Bhubaneswar in September 2016. Its great relevance in the modern-day education system was highlighted by Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya, Asst. Secretary, T.O.S. Avenues to raise funds for TOS activities were explored and it was highlighted by the National Director that Assam region, with the initiative of Bro. J.N. Patowary, is procuring fund from National Banks for their key project. Special mention was made by the National Director about the deep commitment of Dr. Deepa Padhi from Odisha region towards compassionate service to the down-trodden and helpless people of that region.

Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya, Assistant Secretary, TOS, extended vote of thanks to all who contributed in materializing the programme smoothly. She chose this occasion to thank all those representatives from different regions who helped her in updating the membership list which was long pending. She concluded by reminding that it is only through our own example, we can motivate and encourage others to render selfless service to the society. The session ended with a thought that through harmony in work environment and total commitment, we can meet the aspiration and high ideals on which TOS was established by Dr. Annie Besant.

(Courtesy: Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya)

2.) Banaras Cultural Foundation and The Indian Section of the Theosophical Society jointly organized tree plantation in the premises of the Theosophical Society, Varanasi. The Garden of Peace was created with the generous contribution of the Banaras Cultural Foundation of 380 plants all from different varieties of Palm. On 10th April 2016, 20 Banarasis together with 14 monks from the Sarnath International Nyingma Institute planted the trees. Some of them were also planted around the Annie Besant Primary School to complete the previous year's plantation exercise there.

On this occasion the monks chanted for peace followed by Smt. Manju Sundaram's vedic chants for peace. Fifty birds were released on this occasion.

Banaras Cultural Foundation has requested the Indian Section, Theosophical Society, for another place in the premises where "Garden of Remembrance" can be created.

Mr. Ajay Pandey- Managing Director and Mr. Navneet Raman-Chairman of the Banaras Cultural Foundation, who are also members of the Kashi Tattva Sabha, were present on this occasion and organized the programme. There were two artists from China and four artists from Switzerland who along with a couple of volunteers from Germany participated in the programme and were invited by the Banaras Cultural Foundation.

Study Camps

1.) The Indian Section as part of the celebration of its 125 years is organizing a National Seminar at Patel Nagar, New Delhi, on 'THE-OSOPHY AND THE MODERN WORLD' on 30-31 July 2016 with the help of Delhi Theosophical Federation [DTF]. Members of the Theosophical Society and sympathizers are welcome to attend the seminar as delegates. The delegates are requested to donate voluntarily. The members who are interested to attend the seminar are requested to contact following members by 15 June 2016 :

1- Dr. Rajiv Gupta, President, DTF -09650015396.

2- Sis. Meena Thakur-09873111242, Secy. DTF

3- Bro. V K Taneja -09810525757; 0981052357, Treasurer of DTF

4- Sis Suvralina Mohanty -09873335928, Librarian of DTF

5- Bro. Pradip Mahapatra -09437697429

Pradip Kumar Mahapatra
Asst. Gen. Secy. Indian Section, TS

2.) U.P. Federation is organizing a study camp on *First Principles of Theosophy* (a book by C. Jinarajadasa) at Lucknow on 30-31 July, 2016 . The study will be conducted in Hindi.

Members of U.P. Federation and also of other Federations are welcome to participate in the study camp.

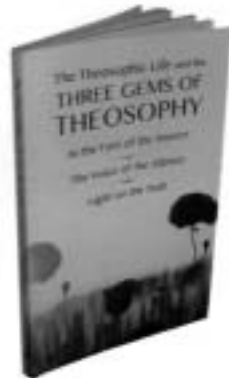
The members coming from outside Lucknow will be provided board and lodging from 29 July (evening) to 31 July (AN), for which each such participant will pay a contribution of Rs.400/- on arrival at Lucknow. However, each such member may advise his/her name to any of following contact persons latest by 15 July, 16:

Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri, Secretary Pragya Lodge,
Mob. No. 09839912070

Bro. B.B. Lal, Vice-President Dharma Lodge,
Mob. No.8004388090

U.S. Pandey, Secretary, U.P. Federation, T.S.
Mob. No. 9451993170

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