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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

A STEP FORWARD

Most of us find it extremely difficult to meditate even though we understand the benefits that we can derive from it. The general experience is that the moment we sit cross legged, close our eyes and try to focus our mind on an object of meditation, our mind starts wandering. It jumps from one thought to another. The thoughts may be connected or there may not be any connection whatsoever. That is why we call our mind as 'monkey mind'. And since we cannot focus even for a few minutes despite making sincere efforts, we drop the practice. The question therefore arises as to why we are not able to focus or concentrate, that is, why our mind behaves in this manner.

Mindfulness is a precondition for meditation. In simple words it means to be present. To be mindful is to be present in the existing moment. We may observe from our own experience that when we are calm, peaceful and not confused, we are able to be present in the existing moment. In such moments meditation practice is likely to be truly effective.

Let us briefly look at the causes which prevent mindfulness. We cannot become mindful by will power, determination, being quiet and trying hard. In reality we find that howsoever hard we may try to be mindful, the mindfulness does not arise because our mind is affected by defilements and taints. The way out of this is to prepare the mind for mindfulness to become possible. We thus need to remove defilements and become virtuous with right conduct. It means we must be loving, kind, generous and avoid bad deeds like killing, stealing, harsh speech, lying, etc. We must change our way of thinking.

The most important mental defilement to overcome is anger and its various manifestations including irritation and negativity like saying "I hate this, I do not like, I do not want" and blaming others. Anger causes a great deal of suffering for ourselves and people around us. The cause of our getting angry with situations around us lies in how we have

formed the habit of reacting to situations which are not to our liking since childhood, to have our demands met. To overcome anger, we need to look at the world differently with more compassion and kindness. This will reduce the anger and negativity and help us become a better person.

People often feel that harmful mental attributes like anger and negativity can be crushed by strong will power. This will never happen. Buddha actually teaches us that the best way to overcome negative states of mind is by reflection using wisdom. Another reflection recommended by Buddha is to see how anger harms the mind. When we are angry we are burning inside. Our blood pressure and heartbeats go up. When we are peaceful, we are calm, contained, energetic and rational. Why then would we ever want to be angry?

Such reflections and wisdom are powerful tools to bring the change of perception and thinking patterns. As our perception changes, the frequency and the length of time we remain angry reduces. With practice, we attain a state when anger and negativity does not arise in us. We will then observe that our mindfulness will become stronger. And as our mindfulness becomes stronger, our meditation becomes effective and effortless and we will make progress on the path of evolution and seeing the real truth. This will certainly be a step forward in the life of a person.

If there is to be brotherhood in action, we must first have the feeling of brotherliness; we must express it in our thinking, feelings and judgements about others, in our whole behaviour, including every act.

N. SRI RAM

ADDRESS TO 38TH EUROPEAN CONGRESS

The theme of the European Congress, “Theosophy — A Way toward Universal Consciousness”, is profound in its humility; the idea of Theosophy as *a* way, not *the* way deserves our special attention. If we are going to be honest with ourselves we must ask: “What do we really know about universal consciousness?” Certainly in the history of the Theosophical Society we have had individuals who have spoken from their experience of this expanded state: HPB, the Masters, J. Krishnamurti, N. Sri Ram, and so on. But, really, what is it that can be said about universal consciousness? Are there words to capture it; are there ideas that can embrace it? I think not. What we *can* talk about is “a way” that leads in that direction.

I will give you two statements, perhaps paradoxical. After H. P. Blavatsky died, in her unpublished writings this piece was discovered: “There is a road steep and thorny that leads to the heart of the universe.” Years later we have the often-quoted statement of J. Krishnamurti that “Truth is a pathless land”. So on the one hand, we have Blavatsky speaking of a road that leads to the heart of the universe, on the other, that no path exists. There is a road, and there is no road. Is one correct and the other incorrect? Or is there some deeper meaning, perhaps that there is in fact a road that leads to Wisdom, that leads to Truth. But Truth, Wisdom, or Universal Consciousness, ultimately is inexpressible and unfindable by ordinary means. These are questions that we need to ask in a spirit of humility.

When the TS was founded in 1875, there was a boy in America who at that time was nine years old. He was influenced to some degree by Theosophy, but also by the growing New Thought movement based on the ideas of Phineas Quimby, Emerson, Thoreau, and others. He went on to write a book in 1897. It was, and still is, one of the most read books in this new movement. His name was Ralph Waldo Trine, and the book that he wrote was called *In Tune with the Infinite*.

In the book Trine has a beautiful example that I think would be helpful for us in our consideration of universal consciousness. Trine speaks about a friend of his who owned a property in the country, and on this farm the gentleman had a beautiful lotus pond. He made it a point to invite others to this beautiful spot. For him all were welcome to share in the beauty and peace of the pond. Bees and animals flocked to the place, the flowers bloomed; it was a place of beauty and of peace. The pond was able to exist because there was a reservoir of water far away. Between the reservoir and the pond was a gateway controlling the flow of the water which the owner always kept open so that it could feed the pond.

There came a time when this gentleman had to travel for a year. He rented his property out to someone else, but the person who rented was a “practically minded” man. He was not much concerned with beauty or with the extra work of maintaining the pond. So he closed the gate leading to the reservoir, and the pond dried up. The fish died and began to smell, and the bees and birds ceased to come to the place. The children and the neighbours who used to visit, and the animals that fed from the stream that flowed on from the pond also stopped coming. The example speaks to the path that we are talking about, the way to universal consciousness.

From the perspective of the theosophical teachings the human being can be defined as: “Highest spirit and lowest matter, linked by mind.” The spirit that is distant, unseen, unknowable, is the reservoir of Trine’s example — the life giving source that is ever invisible, but ever present. The material world of our personality, our personal nature, is the pond of potential beauty, or the one that is foul, barren, unattractive. The determining factor between a place of beauty or one that is repulsive is the gateway, the mind. All of the work that we engage in on our way to universal consciousness is strictly rooted in the work that is done, the openness that we have of this gateway that is the mind.

There is a fundamental principle for all of us who are involved in what we call the spiritual path. It can be described in this way: within us there is a spark from a divine flame, a spark of universal consciousness. When we recognize the presence and potential of this spark, it is possible to fan it into a flame that can ultimately burn so brightly that it

reunites with its source. The journey that we are on, is one of discovery, of how we accomplish this.

The founders of the TS were wise in many ways. One of those ways was that Theosophy was never, and has never been officially defined. There is no official sentence or paragraph that anyone can say that encompasses what Theosophy is. Sometimes I regret that, because it would be easier if there was a ready, prepackaged definition in three sentences or less, but, of course, such a thing is not possible.

That being said, it is true that on certain occasions HPB did give definitions of what Theosophy is. There are two in particular that I would like to share for our consideration. Once she defined Theosophy as “the Ageless Wisdom tested and verified by generations of seers”, and she added that “to the mentally lazy . . . Theosophy will always remain a riddle”. This seems very precise, but is it? One of the things I find impressive about this is the demand that is made for the involvement of the mental component. Theosophy will always remain an enigma unless the mentality, the mind, the intellect, is engaged in considering its value.

So while Theosophy is not comprised merely of its concepts, the conceptual basis of Theosophy is certainly important. Within that same definition, though definitely involving the intellect, Theosophy is also more than a matter of concepts, it is experiential. It is “tested and verified”. And where, in what laboratory is this testing done. The experimentation that leads to verification of the profound principles embodied in Theosophy takes place within the laboratory of our own consciousness.

The second definition that Blavatsky gave of Theosophy is more brief. She said that “it is altruism first and foremost”. This moves into another dimension. In this definition compassion is the basis of Theosophy. So, concept, experimentation, altruism, compassion, begin to describe something of this Theosophy which is a way toward universal consciousness. It is no accident that HPB states about compassion in *The Voice of the Silence* that it is not a mere attribute, “it is the Law of Laws”. These are things that it would be well for us to think about.

Given this background, we must ask ourselves: What is our task? What is the work for us to do? In the United States there is one poet

who is more read and whose books sell more than any other. Surprisingly, he is not an American poet. He was born in Afghanistan in the 13th century. He is the mystic poet and teacher Jalal ad-Din Rumi. He said something outstanding for the purposes of our consideration of universal consciousness. He says: “Your task is not to seek for love.” In our context this love is synonymous with the universal consciousness that is everywhere around us. So our task is not to seek love, “but to seek and to find all of the barriers we have created within ourselves against it”.

Universal consciousness, love, compassion, Theosophy, whatever the name may be, does not require our help. It does not need improvement, development, or discovery. The only thing that is required on our part is to make the opening for this ever-present wisdom to make itself known through us and within us. Mahatma Gandhi said something similar, but in a very different way. In speaking about history as it is taught to us in our schools and our families, he said that “history is the record of every interruption in the flow of the force of Love”.

What did you learn in school? The wars that were fought, the leaders that came to power, the cycles of economy that went up and down, every interruption in the flow of this most natural quality of our being is what we call history. We are capable of perverting even the teachings from the greatest voices that come periodically to try and bear witness to this universal consciousness. I sometimes find myself saying that the TS is perfect in every way, the only problem is the theosophists: you and me. In our sincere-hearted attempts to realize something of this Wisdom Teaching that is more profound than any of our capacities, we get it wrong time and time again; but we also get it right. So this work continues. There is a task, which is not to seek for this universal consciousness, but to become open to it. And then there is the work that we must do. So how do we do the work of becoming open?

Anyone who has read the writings of HPB is aware that she was a great proponent of the value and power of meditation. Even so, there is almost nowhere where she actually gave any specifics about “how to” meditate. Toward the end of her life, when she was in England, she did dictate what became known to us as “The Diagram of Meditation”. It is a most powerful tool that I would recommend to all because it lays out a very profound approach to this process of cultivating the mind toward

universal consciousness. One has to come back to it again and again. One will not see it and grasp it immediately.

I would like to dwell on one aspect of that diagram. It begins with this statement that first we must conceive of Unity, which, obviously, is impossible. Unity is not something that can be captured in anyone's conception, but the direction is indicated: "First conceive of Unity by expansion in Space and infinite in Time." So the immediate direction is one of removal of barriers to Oneness, Unity, what we have named in our first Object as Brotherhood. This is the very first statement. Then she says that we must mould the state of our personal consciousness by dwelling on what she describes as things that we acquire and things that we deprive the consciousness of.

In one of the Acquisition phases: We must arrive at "the perception in all embodied beings of Limitation only". Everything that has embodiment is merely a casing that hides the universal from us. This is a consciousness that she says should be persisted in, that *everything* that we see only hides from us its universal nature. She adds that the results of this is a universal perception of ourselves and our connection with the whole. Obviously there is great value in arriving at a connection that is broader than nation, race, and religion.

There is nothing new in saying that in the world today we face countless problems that are based solely in these separative identities that we embrace. As much as we feel that these problems may be solved by scientific discoveries or political rearrangements, historically we find that is not true. I frequently quote Albert Einstein, who famously said that "no problem can be solved on the same level of consciousness that created it". For every existing problem we face, from ecological changes to imbalances in the economies, we have sufficient knowledge right *now* to address them. This suggests to us that knowledge in and of itself is not sufficient.

The message of the Theosophical Society is that there is a Wisdom which exceeds all knowledge, that Wisdom exists not only outside, but within us, and that there is a way that leads toward this Wisdom. In the world today the importance of the theosophical movement is not that we have better concepts than other organizations, or that we have more prominent people and greater thinkers than others. The value and

the purpose of the attempt at this theosophical movement will be found when we as members come to realize what Unity means.

It is easy to stand up on a stage and talk about Unity, but the work that goes toward it is one of a lifetime. It is the work of seeking and finding the obstacles to the presence of Universal Consciousness, of Unity, of Brotherhood. This work can be started, but it is never finished.

There is a book by Jiddu Krishnamurti called *The First and Last Freedom*. Certainly I would not be one to disagree with Krishnamurti, but I feel it would be more accurate to think in terms of the most *recent* freedom, the most recent barrier of identity that we have been able to recognize within ourselves. Obviously, the time within which we live is one of transition, and in transitions there are necessarily confusions, and that is something that we cannot realistically expect to stop any time soon. But the role that we have is to create in the midst of the turmoil and confusion a dynamic center of individuals who have touched, valued, and realized something of this deeper quality of being.

That is the point of coming together time and time again to theosophical gatherings. Often we think that we come together because it benefits us individually, because something awakens in us, and the community that we share enlivens something within us. Certainly that does happen and it is of great value. But there is a deeper purpose that we serve when we come together. When we are able to be harmonious, to be quiet, we provide a vehicle for those Great Ones who stand behind this movement — a vehicle through which their energy, their life, can find expression and move into this world that is so deeply in need. Let us keep these thoughts in mind.

The main point of this theosophical movement is Unity, to form the nucleus, to provide the means, the base for that which is beyond us to enter into this world. Let us make an effort to accomplish this.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, October 2017)

MEDITATION

Why meditation?

Most people know that by practicing meditation several beneficial effects on emotional and mental capacities/states as well as on physical body can be experienced. So before one starts practicing meditation, one should decide- for what purpose he would use these enhanced capacities/states. If it is only for selfish use-then better not practice, because then meditation may not give positive results; if for the welfare of others, then go ahead and start in all earnestness.

Definition, varieties and goal: Meditation is basically calming of mind. By its regular practice the structure and nature of mind and also other faculties change for the better. All religious traditions and many secular traditions have their own systems of meditation. Meditation is an integral part of some Yoga practices and is, in itself, a type of Yoga.

Primarily there are two kinds of meditative practices-spiritual and general and each of these can have many varieties. In spiritual meditation, awakening of transcendent consciousness beyond personality, emotions and thought is sought. Such meditation is not primarily involved with images or visions or voices which are still in the realm of concrete mind. General meditation may involve such things, these may be useful in some ways, but here goal is not Self-realization. Meditation is not, as sometimes supposed, an unnatural and difficult act. It is glorious expansion and sublimation of normal powers of heart and mind and can be practiced in some measure by every living soul.

One of the first requisite in yoga is to gain an increasing realization of the reality and power of inner life. Goal of spiritual meditation is Self-realization. In the words of a saint 'we are to become what we are', discover the Divine Self within and become one with Him.

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As per Yoga Sutras, the *Purusha* gets established in its own form (*svarupa*). When He is found and realized, a further great discovery awaits us. It is that by becoming one with our deepest Self we mysteriously become one with the deepest Self of all others living beings/ things too.

Our mind has two wings- thought and feeling. Normally these two wings are centred to revolve around the objects and events of daily life. Meditation is a method of setting these wings free, making them wax strong, that one day they may essay on the immaterial "flight of he alone to the Alone".

Preparation and Procedure of Meditation:

Meditation is the highest activity of the soul, and cannot be undertaken haphazardly, casually, without due and continual preparation.

A habitual disposition towards a deep thought, and, if possible, a certain amount of patient study is of greatest value as a subconscious aid to meditation.

Posture- A comfortable position, head and spine erect, nerves and body relaxed. Never meditate after having meals.

Place-a quiet and preferably seclude corner in house. Time-preferably morning hours.

Regularity in meditation practice is important. It is better to meditate even for a short duration, say for 20 minutes, everyday rather than to meditate for one or two hours on one day and no meditation on next few days.

In the beginning, same place and same timing for meditating daily will be helpful.

If no other time is available-sit on bed for ten minutes.

If during meditation-a sensation of heaviness or even pain becomes evident in head, stop at once.

Begin gently by a few moments' reading and thoughts. Also come back gently, open eyes and remain still for several minutes at the closing.

Obstacles in meditation: External- space in house, attitude of other members, daily occupation.

Internal- mental states involving; remorse, anxiety, self- love, pride, grief, despondency, restlessness etc. These can be overcome by living a life of principles, sympathy with others, purging self-indulgence, brooding on the dearest and more importantly by practice (*abhyasa*) and detachment (*vairagya*).

Meditations- Types with brief details:

There can be as many methods as the men/women of different temperament, attitudes and tendencies. Any particular method of meditation will not suit everybody. A person can choose any method suited to his present mental state, and can change the method with his inner changes later.

However, some important types of outlines in brief are as under:

All methods can start with pronouncement of sacred words or few times of deep breathing so as to steady the mind and body.

1. Meditation on bodies:

It can begin with some invocation like, “Lead me from untruth to truth, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from mortality to immortality”. Then negating the bodies and then stating to be the real Divine Self, the Spirit within.

2. Meditation on Love and Charity:

Expanding one’s centre of love and charity to all beings gradually in house, town, country, world, universe, heaven world and God.

3. Meditation on virtues

Every month on a virtue like steadiness, perseverance, unselfishness, compassionate, courteous, cheerfulness, patience, control of speech, courage, discretion and generosity.

4. The Four Meditations of the Buddha:

On Love (*Maitry*), Compassion (*Karuna*), Joy (*Mudita*), and Serenity (*Upeksha*)

5. Meditation by Awareness:

Meditation is done by being aware of feelings and thinking mind, steadying the mind and being aware of the self that is aware.

6. Meditation stages in Yoga Sutra:

Yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of mind.

Eight Limbs of Yoga-

Outer Limbs- Restraints (*Yama*); Niyama (*Observances*); Posture (*Asana*), Aligning Vital Force (*Pranayama*); Sense Withdrawal (*Pratyahara*).

Inner Limbs- Concentration (*Dharana*), Meditation (*Dhyana*), Absence of observer, actually a process of diving into deeper layers of consciousness (*Samadhi*).

Light of Wisdom (*Prajna*) appears when Consciousness becomes free from sheaths,

7. Diagram of Meditation by Blavatsky:

First conceive of UNITY by Expansion in Space and Infinite in Time. Then meditate logically and consistently on this in reference to states of consciousness. Then the normal state of conscious must be moulded by-

Three Acquisitions and five Deprivations.

8. Meditation with mindfulness:

Be mindful in each activity throughout the day- observing dispassionately all impressions arising in the mind of thoughts, feelings and actions while interrelating with other beings and things as well as in routine activities of self-without any judgment, analysis etc. Thus live a meditative life.

Then meditation need not be a routine activity of some fixed time only.

9. Morning and Evening short meditations of few minutes:

When arising in the morning, sit on bed and for few minutes- meditate on The Supreme, and also the Master-wish to be channel of

His work in this illusory world, pledge to do a good work, send noble thoughts to all beings.

Before retiring for sleep in the evening- recapitulate quickly all works done during the day, identify wrong works, say not to repeat it next day, but without any feeling of remorse, send noble thoughts to all beings.

10. There can be other types of meditation for specific purpose like developing detachment (*vairagya*) and to be free from fear- meditation on cremation ground, self sickness, old age and even death etc., reality of impermanence of phenomenal world.

11. Group meditation is also practiced for sending thoughts of Love and Peace to individual beings, another group and to the whole world.

Results of Meditation:

One should not wish for psychic power or personal bliss and happiness etc., though these may come in due course.

Regular practice of meditation results in gradual deepening and purifying of character, widening and purifying of outlook, increase in dignity and power, also an immensely and sympathetic response to need of others. We may look for a discipline of will, an enlightenment of mind, a kindling of heart and then we are on *the path*. This is the growth of soul and it is usually the sum of all developments within. Only self-examination may be done, but not too frequently. No comparison with others is recommended.

Some findings in modern science:

Body is restored, rejuvenated and kept healthy by production and replication of good DNA. Also in deep meditation, the brain produces EM waves called theta and alpha waves ranging from 4-12 Hz but mostly in the range of 7-8 Hz. Possibly, deep and regular meditation helps in rejuvenation of the body by helping replicate good DNA.

More scientific studies have shown the direct effect of meditation on DNA and gene expression, that meditation helps in delaying the process of ageing by increasing telomerase activity. Telomerase is an

enzyme which repairs the DNA. Chromosomes have caps of repetitive DNA called telomeres at their ends, like the end-cap of a shoe lace. Their role is to protect the chromosomes from degradation-which means these protect genes from degradation since genes are enclosed in chromosomes. Every time cells divide, their telomeres shorten. When telomere become short and falls apart, cells cannot replicate anymore- which is what we call death of the cell. This results in ageing process. Thus acceleration and deceleration of ageing depend on telomeres. Meditation helps in increasing the activity of this telomerase enzyme, making the telomere caps stronger and stopping their shortening. This in turn decelerates ageing process.

Another Harvard University study showed that meditation directly affects genes by switching them off to combat the bad effects of free radicals which are produced when we are emotionally and physically stressed.

All these have shown experimentally the positive effect of meditation at the cellular level in the human body though the exact mechanism is still unknown. Further researches are going on to resolve key to such puzzle.

That meditation causes neurobiological changes in a person, is an empirically proven fact. It is now recognized by many researchers that contemplative practices have therapeutic effects.

“...our self-realization reaches its perfection in the abnegation of self.”

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

LOOKING WITHIN TO REACH OUT **

Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all light, influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late...⁽¹⁾

Religion is part of our cultural and intellectual history. It was our first attempt at literature, at cosmology, making sense of where we are in the universe. Yet, fundamentals of all religions are still crawling under a prehistoric rock in which case Theosophy comes to our consciousness, to our sense of being and belief of evolution not merely of human physique, but also of human psyche in the evolutionary spirit of our Ancient Wisdom, in the intuitional comprehension of the existence of the universe and our integral, inseparable role in it. That's why it is called Wisdom Religion which helps us to look within to reach out for there is the world outside corresponding to the one inside, fostering and furthering the ultimate Reality of non-duality. Human being is in search of a meaning to mean what exactly means by life. Symmetry is invariance under transformation. Real relation is when you feel you could touch a star without standing on tiptoe. The complementary Yin and Yang interlocks to release a third force greater than the sum of its parentage. Real resurrection is a leap into a whole new way of thinking.

Adi Shankara exhorts us to undertake the real pilgrimage to “the shrine of the Atman”. His *Atma Bodha*, like its companion-piece the *Vivekachudamani*, is reflective of Shankara's reaching out to people as much as to the intelligentsia of his time. H.P. Blavatsky propounds that we are pilgrim souls. It's a deeper inward journey for a delighting

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**Comprehensive presentation of a short talk delivered at the 4th TOS Regional Conference, Odisha, 2017.

outreach. J. Krishnamurti puts it most subtly, “Truth is a pathless land... the mind that goes into itself goes on a long pilgrimage from which there is no return.”⁽²⁾ In order that I'm seen in my transcendental form I've to reach out from looking within – truly wake up at another level of consciousness. There seems to be a cosmic connection between the matrix of the stars above and the mind-matrix. Our true story is written upon the stars. There is a deeper grid inside of us as well, which we have to navigate, rather than skimming through our existence – in inner search that leads one to plumb the depths of one's being to know the divinity within – inner reaches of outer space. Reach out like a soaring eagle whose eye reflects the blue arc of the all-encompassing sky.

Everything hinges on consciousness. Vedic practices encouraged man to think further, to know from within which involves total wakefulness. The unknown is within us, in our own mind. We establish a connection with the unknown through the act of meditation. Spirituality is an experience that involves an awareness and relationship with something that transcends our personal self. We have to grow from inside out. Stand aside and watch the working of the divine power in you, Sri Aurobindo would espouse. All that matters is what we become through what we experience. High ideals help us tap into sources of energy we never thought we had. God would say, “If you want to see me, turn the lamp around; look within and find the source of all lights”.

Look within to introspect and watch the mind carefully thinking through your thoughts. The search has to be inward. Lack of seeing ‘what is’, is the inner blindness. The question “who am I?” is to be answered before it is asked. The answer is as simple as that that “I'm human” and “I know that I'm human in all its sense and essence.” At the end of the day, we have only ourselves to answer to. If you attain the knowledge of the Self, the meaning of life will cease to be a mystery. You will clearly comprehend the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of this universe – its Physics and Metaphysics. The universe is, in some sense meaningless without each of us. There is an eternal cosmic consciousness in which we participate and which participates in us. Truth is within ourselves.

When we become one with the Supreme, we do not cease to exist; our consciousness expands. Sartre places human consciousness, or nothingness, in opposition to being or thingness; consciousness is

nonmatter and thus escapes all determinism.⁽³⁾ Man is pure light, pure love, and pure consciousness; we need to experience it. We are just particles of the universe. The mystical journey takes us where opposites reveal themselves as one. All around us is the cosmic game, the cosmic play. The universe is full of joy, inner and outer. When realization takes place, we have to feel the necessity of manifesting the constant delight in our heart. Every man is his own ancestor and every man is his own heir. Do not be led by others, awaken your own mind, amass your own experience, and decide for yourself your own path, propounds *Atharva Veda*. You are neither earth nor water nor fire nor wind nor sky. The Self is the embodiment of pure consciousness and the witness of all these, asserts *Ashtavakra Gita*.

Life lived well is life rounded off. Our greatest experiences are our quietest moments. Our existence is more important in the psychological world than in the physical world to live in the eternal Now of God's reality. Think not just positive thoughts, but think transcendental. At its pinnacle, the thought is omnipotent where there is no division or difference between oneself and Divinity and that is Universal Consciousness. Eyes and eye-sight belong to the treasure of spiritual imagery. Divinity never changes; divinity transcends time and space. Looking within for an intuitive understanding is that illumination which evolves within us that prophetic vision enabling us to sense ensuing events. Looking within and Reaching out are not mutually exclusive. It's looking at the Source to reach out to the resources. As long as you look outward you remain unhappy. It's the Atma or Self, the expansive 'I' that inheres in everyone – the individual mind becomes the universal mind. The real Self is essentially beyond identity. Learn to think less of yourself and more of others and their needs in order to reach out.

The way to expand from individual to universal consciousness is to share the sorrow and joy of others. "Let thy soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun."⁽⁴⁾ It is our inner life which makes us what we are. Spiritual heart is where love resides and presides. Choiceless performance of one's duties is worship of God that can free us from the quicksand of *samsara*. Faith is not the clinging to a shrine, but an endless pilgrimage of the heart. "The ultimate end of man is to find the one which is in him; which is his truth, which is his soul, the key with which he opens the gate of spiritual life, the heavenly kingdom"⁽⁵⁾, Tagore would aver. "Only from the heart can

you touch the sky"⁽⁶⁾, proffers Rumi. All teachings are mere references. The true experience is living your own life. Pass from matter to spirit. Matter is diversity; spirit is light, life and unity. "Virtue appears from good deeds and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind. To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue", espouses the Buddha. Act as if what you do makes a difference, it does, suggests William James. Let us live for the beauty of our own reality, says the English essayist and critic Charles Lamb in an imperative mood in his *Essays of Elia* (1823).

Krishna, in an inspiring message in the *Gita*, says, "Don't look down on yourself; don't cry out to the world; don't be dependent on the world. Appreciate your inner strength, beauty and hidden potential and lift yourself by yourself." Death takes toll of beauty, courage, youth, of all, but Truth. Everything material must cease to become a necessity, if we would really advance spiritually... says Mme Blavatsky. Every human being is in essence a bridge between heaven and earth. Scriptures are books of printed pages. But man is a living classic in whose looks are written many stories; in whose quivering lips are written many scripts; in whose smile is hidden the language of the ages and ages. It all happens in a higher sphere of consciousness. "Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known"⁽⁷⁾, expects Carl Sagan.

The *Karmasanyas Yoga* of the *Gita* speaks of four types of people – the *bhogi*, *yogi*, *sanyasi* and *jnani*. The *Jnani* is ever free, never bound by the world and has reached the destination of infinite bliss. A *jnani* has the option of operating with the mind, body and intellect when needed or retreat into the world of infinity when not required. The *jnani* remains steadfast in spite of the vicissitudes of life and uncertainties of the world. Every one is a house with four rooms: Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual; you need to visit every room to keep them aired and fresh in order to be a complete person.

The *Kena Upanishad* explores the unknowable using the method of Self-inquiry: By what (*kena*) power does the mind think, the breath function, the speech work, the eyes see, and the ears hear? This five-fold question reveals that the body, mind, breath, and speech are inert animated and enlivened by another entity altogether. Who thinks through the mind, who breathes through the breath, who speaks through the speech, who sees through the eyes, who hears through the ears? The

answer is embedded in the question itself: It is the mind of the mind, the breath of the breath, the speech of the speech, the eye of the eye, and the ear of the ear. Eyes and eyesight belong to the treasure of spiritual imagery. Sri Aurobindo postulates that the meeting of man and God must always mean a penetration and entry of the divine into the human and a self-emergence of man in the Divinity. Divinity transcends time and space; Divinity never changes. If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change, changes their perspective. God is in all men, but all men are not in God; that is why we suffer, infers Sri Ramakrishna. “Be still like a mountain and flow like a great river”, Laozi would espouse.

“A human being is a part of the whole called universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts, and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion 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 ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of Nature in its beauty”⁽⁸⁾, expounds Einstein. If we don’t hold on to anything, we are free. Events and the interval between events build space-time. Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go. Your problem today is you are too busy holding onto your unworthiness. Our species needs, and deserves a citizenry with minds wide awake and a basic understanding of how the world works. “When your body wishes something, stop and think whether you really wish it... and you will only what God wills; but you must dig deep down into yourself to find the God within you, and listen to His voice, which is your voice.”⁽⁹⁾ The spoken voice is your own; the unspoken, silent voice is the will of God. For small creatures like us, the vastness of the universe is bearable only through immutable virtue of love. “Ignorant people see life as either existence or non-existence, but wise men see it beyond both existence and non-existence to something that transcends them both”⁽¹⁰⁾, says Seneca, the ancient Roman philosopher.

“O How wonderful! I am the unbounded deep in whom all living things naturally arise, rush against each other playfully, and then subside,” says *Ashtavakra Gita*. Spirituality is an experience that involves an awareness and relationship with something that transcends your personal life. The higher nature in man always seeks for something which

transcends itself and yet is its deepest truth, which claims all its sacrifice, and yet makes this sacrifice its own recompense. When the spirit knows only what the body is doing, it is called *Jivatma* or ‘unit cognitive faculty’, and when that very Entity knows everything, of the universe, it is the Cosmic or ‘Supreme Cognitive faculty’, which is the *Paramatma*. “And now thy self is lost in Self, thyself unto Thyself, merged in that Self, from which thou first didst radiate”.⁽¹¹⁾ Consciousness is not created, nor does it perish; it is eternal and world appearance is superimposed on it as waves in relation to the ocean.

“The infinite consciousness being transcendental, how does the universe exist in it?” asks prince Rama. Sage Vasishtha replies: This universe exists in the infinite consciousness just as future waves exist in a calm ocean; non-different in truth but with the potentiality of an apparent difference. Just as light is not seen except through the refracting agent even so infinite consciousness is revealed through these various bodies. Though essentially nameless and formless, but name and form are ascribed to its reflections. It’s all about the age-old perception of *Pinda* and *Brahmanda* which is integral, inseparable and non-dual existing only in two different spheres. Whatever is there outside is also in the inside of a *sadhaka*, and whatever is inside is equally outside for an intuitive evolutionary *Chela*. This *Pinda-Brahmanda tattva* is left for the Theosophical Brethren to meditate upon to make it a living experience and sustained realization and for which Theosophy as Wisdom Religion stands for since humans became aware of their consciousness long before it was given a name and form. Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. We are the fellow citizens in God’s household, built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, asserts the Ephesians. Nature need not know what we all humans know, but we need to know all Nature knows in order to be true Theosophists.

Ashtavakra Gita (1:2-3) says: Cultivate tolerance, sincerity, compassion, contentment, and truthfulness... You do not consist of earth, water, fire, air, or even ether. To be liberated, know thyself as consisting of consciousness, the witness of all these. *Svetasvatara Upanishad* (4:2-4) affirms: “Thou art the air. Thou art the moon. Thou art the starry firmament. Thou art Brahmn Supreme; Thou art the waters – thou, the Creator! Thou art woman, thou art man; Thou art the youth, thou art

the maiden; Thou art the old man tottering with his staff; Thou facest everywhere. Thou art the dark butterfly: Thou art the green parrot with red eyes; Thou art the thunder cloud, the seasons, the seas. Without beginning thou art; Beyond time and space. Thou art He from whom sprang the three worlds.” It is one light which beams out of all these innumerable stars. It is one soul which animates all men. Wisdom itself is an articulation of light. A man is his immortal soul. “How do I know about the world? By what is within me”, assuages Laozi.

Sense perception can be false and deceptive. Where there is realization outside of the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within, says Gandhi. If you look well within you can better reach out to the Society and the service of the people at large. It’s an unconditioned transcendence from within to the without. You need to believe in yourself so that people believe you. American transcendentalists Emerson and Thoreau believed in the perfectibility of man, for he alone can reach out next to looking within as an outward expression of an inward vision. “...within you is the light of the world... If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere.”⁽¹²⁾

For Robert Frost, “If looking within is his delight reaching out is his wisdom. Hence his poems do move from delight to wisdom”.⁽¹³⁾ And for which his poems keep their freshness and their wisdom even if you read a hundred times with a surprising penetration into life’s complexities. “My object in living” is not to “go with the drift of things” through life as “a pathless wood”.⁽¹⁴⁾ All great poets, like the Elysian Masters of Wisdom, have looked within to compose to reach out to the readers, to the perceivers. Man is metamorphosed into a thing, into many things, in his untiring endeavour to reach out from within. In the right state he is Man Thinking, for he looks forward. Thinking is the function; Living is the functionary, “I find ecstasy in living; the mere sense of living is joy enough” wrote Emily Dickenson with a passionate grasp of life.⁽¹⁵⁾ “*What fortitude the soul contains, / That it can so endure / The accent of a coming foot, / The opening of a door!*”⁽¹⁶⁾

The divinity of Theosophy, its sublimity, profundity, and magnanimity ever reiterates in the ear of my ears: So much to think, so little thought,

So much to read, so little read,
So much to write, so little written,
So much to speak, so little spoken...

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NEWS AND NOTES

Bombay

The Aanada Lodge's meeting for the month of May was held at the Lodge to celebrate White Lotus Day. The members were honoured to have BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya with them on this occasion who explained the importance of White Lotus Day. Dr. Ajay Hora shared a story of his Mother's Life. One member Mistry Karla read a poetic verse. The youngest attendee of the meeting, Nimit Mehta read a passage from the book *The Divine* which had an impact on him. A guest speaker Mr. Savant, who is a Tai chi Master shared some beautiful thoughts of Gita. The meeting concluded with Farida and the members who mutually decided that next month's topic would be 'Theosophy & Karma'.

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

The meeting in connection with White Lotus Day started at Blavatsky Lodge on 8 May with the Prayers of All Religions and the Universal Prayer. Bro. Arni Narendran explained the White Lotus Day as under: May 8 1891, was the day when the 19th Century's most outstanding occultist HPB left the body, which strode like Colossus in the world of spiritual search for 60 years. HPB, Co-Founder of the TS, was cremated in London and her ashes were preserved in Pasadena, London and sprinkled across the Ganges at Varanasi. The White Lotus, profusely blossoming in unusual numbers on the day of the Anniversary at the Adyar pond, is a symbol of her death anniversary celebrated by Theosophists all over the world as 'White Lotus Day'. In a covenant registered at the High Court of Madras, Col. Olcott defined the ceremony in all its dimensions such as reading from the *Bhagavadgita* & *The Light of Asia*, to which much later *The Voice of the Silence* was included. The idea is to avoid empty rhetoric and adulation of HPB and instead to rededicate our lives to Theosophy, both in Theory and Practice. Blavatsky strived to collate this Ancient Divine Wisdom, described as Theosophy for posterity not with the intent of individual self-realization, but of the entire macro consciousness is bound to take the human

civilization to the next level of evolution. Truth, Compassion and Brotherhood are the hallmarks. May each member of Blavatsky Lodge rededicate oneself in this sacred mission and make the day's celebration meaningful. This is the best homage we can pay to the selfless soul.

Vice-President Bro. Navin Kumar recited shlokas of the 'Bhagavadgita' and explained their meanings. Sis. Ketayun Irani & Sis. Zeena Rustomji read passages from *The Voice of the Silence*. Bro. Rustom Cooper read passages from *The Light of Asia*. Bro. Bertram Redwood speaking on HPB said: HPB was known to the world as an extraordinary woman with occult powers. She was endowed with higher powers and clairvoyant faculties from her very childhood. She studied magic in Egypt and joined the Druses of Lebanon, a secret society. She was ordered by her Masters to sail to India with Col. Olcott. She landed in Bombay in 1879. She wrote the *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* which the Adapt Brothers had passed the information before the inner gaze of HPB. The verses of 'The Golden Stairs' authored by HPB were recited by Sis. Kashmira Khambatta and followed by members present. The frame of HPB was adorned with a beautiful garland, where members paid their respect and took blessings.

Vesak Purnima meeting at Blavatsky Lodge on 10 May 2017: Members gathered in Green Room near Lord Buddha's Statue. Near the Alter Table Sis. Kashmira Khambatta had done beautiful *Rangoli* of Lord Buddha underneath the Bodhisattva Tree with shining full moon. The meeting was opened with all reciting the Buddhist Prayer together. Bro. Navin Kumar read extracts of the First Sermon from *The Light of Asia* and the Buddhist Catechism by HSO. Bro. Keki Palkhiwalla spoke about the Wesak Ceremony and propounded on Lord Buddha's Teachings to school boy Chatta and the Mahamangla Sutta – The Greatest Blessing. At the end, members partook water as the blessings of Lord Buddha.

Sahnti Lodge celebrated 71st Foundation Day on 22 June 2017 with a musical programme. Sis. Freny Paghdhiwala and Sis. Navaz Dhalla had organized a video of Flying Dutchman Andre Rieu playing and conducting a Concert at Albert Hall, London. The meeting ended with refreshments.

Bro. Arni Narendran gave a talk on 'Basics of Universal Brotherhood' to girl & boy students of 7th to 9th standards of Lady Engineer High School. Blavatsky Lodge President Sis. Kashmira Khambatta ob-

served that it was an interactive session with active participation of students and the students showed interest in visiting Blavatsky Lodge.

Jamubhai & Suryaben Dani Inter School Elocution Competition 2017 was jointly organized with Junior Red Cross, Maharashtra, on Saturday 16 September 2017 at Blavatsky Lodge.

BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya welcomed all and spoke about the great Theosophists & Gandhian Teachers Suryaben and Jamubhai Dani. Rtn. Godrej Dotivala, Chairman Junior Red Cross Maharashtra, addressed the students. The Judges Dr. Francesca Aranha, Ms. Roxane Mody & Mr. Ajeet Bhide were introduced by Principal Errick Elavia. Sis. Aban Patel compered the programme and explained the Rules of the Competition. The Registration was taken care of by Mr. Bhavesh of JRCM. Committee members and Volunteers of JRCM were acknowledged. Blavatsky Lodge's Vice-President, Bro. Navin Kumar spoke briefly about Theosophical Society and the Three Objects.

Topics for group one- Std 5 to 7 (participants 15): Mother Nature-My Teacher; My Ambition in Life; and Indian Festivals – An Opportunity to learn

Topics for Group two- Std 8 to 10 (participants 14): Yoga & Benefits; Universal Brotherhood; and Travel – My Teacher.

The judges after sharing their observations declared First, Second, Third and two Consolation Prizes for each group. The Theosophical Books were presented to the Judges and JRCM Committee Members and Volunteers. Junior students were given 'A Short Biography of Annie Besant' by C. Jinarajadasa and senior students were given 'Right Citizenship' by Annie Besant'. Prizes will be given at the Annual Session in October 2017.

Obituary: Sis. Dolly Jalbhai Sanjana, Life Member of Shanti Lodge, passed to peace on 8 June 2017. She had been a silent stalwart of TS in Mumbai with her TS membership of 71 years.

Sis. Vasantika Bodaji of Blavatsky Lodge with membership of above four decades passed away on 27 June 2017.

Sis. Piloo Nadir Garda, a Life Member of Ananda Lodge after serving TS for 79 years, passed away on 10 July 2017. Late Sis. Piloo and her sis. Jer with their dear Parents were among the first families to

move to the Vasanta Theosophical Cooperative Housing Society. Both Sisters as teachers had instilled Theosophical values in many children of whom some are today the Residents of Juhu Theosophical Society. May her soul blessed with peace continue her good work on higher planes.

Kerala

The North Zone Conference of Kerala Theosophical Federation was held on 16 and 17 September at Annie Hall, Calicut. The foundation stone of this historical hall was laid by **Dr. Besant** more than a century ago. The land where the Annie Hall is situated was generously donated by a prominent Theosophist at Calicut **Bro. Rarichan Moopan**. Later on Annie Hall became the hub of activities not only in the field of Theosophy but also in the Home Rule Movement, *Swadeshi* Movement, Scout Movement etc. This hall was sanctified by the presence of stalwarts like C.W. Leadbeater, Dr. Annie Besant, Earnest Wood and many other Theosophists. When Sree Narayana Guru - a spiritual leader of Kerala visited Calicut he was given a reception at Annie Hall and a *Mangalapatram* was given to him by the Theosophists. Many literary and spiritual figures have visited this hall and given lectures on various subjects.

The book of study for the conference was *Theosophy As Masters See It* by Clara M Codd. The chief guest was Sis. Sripriya from Adyar. The K.T.F President Dr. M.A. Raveendran hoisted the TS flag and the programme commenced with the Prayers of Religions followed by Universal Prayer. Bro. K. Dinakaran read out the greetings received from various lodges and members. Prof. R.C. Tampi welcomed the chief guest and delegates and briefly described the value of the aforesaid book. He briefly narrated the life of Clara M Codd and stated that historical records show that she had visited Calicut during her Indian tour in 1910-1911.

Sis. Sripriya in her inaugural speech talked on "**With Heart, Head and Will**". She stated the lives of our founders H.P. Blavatsky and H.S. Olcott were full of sacrifice and renunciation which is an example for all of us. In his presidential address Dr. M.A. Raveendran spoke on the objectives of the Theosophical Society and how it should be practised in the lodge work and in the personal lives of a member.

On 17th morning the programme commenced with *Bharat Samaj*

Pooja, which was conducted by Dr. M.A. Raveendran. He explained the relevance of the *Pooja* and how it affects the subtler bodies of each one who participates in it and the unseen impact among the surroundings. The first lecture in the morning session was by Prof. R.C. Tampi on the subject **The Work of the Theosophical Society**. Dr. Ajithkumar V.K., President of Anantha Lodge, Trivandrum, spoke on '**Our path to the Masters**'. The Diplomas of the newly joined members were distributed by Prof. R.C. Tampi. Sis. Sobha P., North Zone Secretary, read out the message of the International President to new members.

In the Second session Bro. Dinakaran, Secy. K.T.F spoke on "**The Three Great Qualities needed**" Bro. S. Sivadas spoke on **Hindrances of the Way** and Sis. Sobha P. spoke on **The Joy of the Way**. In the afternoon session Bro. T.S Usman spoke on **The Sanctification of Daily Life**. There was also an interactive session in which members clarified their doubts. There was an exhibition cum sale of Theosophical books from the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, arranged by the **T.S. Information Centre, Trichur**, under the leadership of Bro. Ajeeshkumar. Adv. Anilkumar, Secretary of the Asoka Sankara Lodge, proposed the vote of thanks. Members from various lodges, especially from the northern Kerala, attended the conference.

Uttar Pradesh

A colloquium on 'Hidden life vibrant in every atom, was organized by Nirvan Lodge, Agra, on 3 August in which Bro. R.P. Sarma, Dr. Pratibha Sharma, Dr. H.K. Upadhyay, Bro. Gyanesh Chaturvedi and Bro. Devendra Bajpayee expressed their views. The essence of their talks was that though normal human beings are unable to see the divine elements- they do exist, we are not able to see many things of life and that is why they have been explained through the medium of symbols. In order to understand them we will have to enhance and intensify our own capability; Life-cycle is vibration by itself and conscience exists not only in living beings but in inanimate objects as well.

The other talks organized by Nirvan Lodge in August were on: 'Hidden Life' by Dr. H.B. Pandey, 'Srikrishna' by Bro. Devendra Bajpayee, 'Mysticism' by Dr. H.K. Upadhyay. Besides, short talks on the Significance of Positive Thoughts were delivered by Bro. R.P. Sharma, Dr. H.K. Upadhyay, Dr. Pratibha Sharma and Bro. Gyanesh Chaturvedi.

The talks held at Nirvan Lodge in September was on 'Medical

Science in India Vs. Blind Faith'. It was delivered by Dr. J.N. Tandon. Besides, two colloquiums were held-one was on 'Indian Culture' in which Bro. Harish Sharma, Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma, Dr. Pratibha Sharma, Bro. R.P.Sharma, and Bro. U.C. Sinha expressed their views. The other one was on 'Life and its utility' in which Bro. R.P. Sharma, Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma, Dr. Pratibha Sharma and Dr. H.K. Upadhyay were the speakers. The Annual Meeting of the Lodge was held on 28 September.

Kashi Tattva Sabha organized the following talks at the Indian Section Headquarters in September: 'Learning about pleasure' by Dr. Anshu Shukla, 'Theosophy: Primary solution to health sector reforms' by Dr. Indu Upadhyay, and 'Significance of education in life' by Dr. Chaitanya Nagar. Besides, the Ritual of the Mystic Star was held on September 22.

Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, organized the following talks in September: 'Wisdom experience' by Bro. A.P. Cappor, 'Self-preparation' by Bro. B.B. Lal, two talks of Bro. U.S. Pandey on 'Kriya-yoga and Kleshas' and 'Vrittis and Gunas'. The subject of Bro. Rajesh Gupta's two talks were. "Psychic effect on food" and 'The Theosophic Life'.

Bro.S.C. Tripathi gave two talks on 'Lord Shiva' at Sarvahitakari Lodge, Gorakhpur. The other talks organized at the same venue in August were: 'Kaushalya: Mother of Rama'; by Bro. Raghurai, 'Vedas' by Bro. J.C. Sharma and 'Old Testament' by Father Sabu. Bro. S.B.R. Mishra, President of Sarvahitakari Lodge, delivered talk on 'Aims of Life' before a gathering of students and engineers in a local Centre of the Institution of Engineers in Gorakhpur. This was held on 23 August.

A study camp on 'Sadhana Pada' of Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutras' was organized at Noida on 23-24 September. About 25 members from U.P. and Delhi Federation participated in it. After recital of the Universal Prayer in the morning of 23 September, Bro. O.P. Aneja, President of Noida Lodge, welcomed the participants and the speakers. Bro. U.S. Pandey introduced the theme and directed the study. On first day Bro. Pandey covered Sutras 1 to 34 of the Sadhana Pada. On second day Bro. S.S. Gautam covered Sutras 35 to 45 and Bro. Pandey covered Sutras 46 to 55.

The whole programme was conducted as participative study and many participants expressed their valuable comments during the study.

At the end a Q. and A. session with the participants followed when certain points regarding the five outer limbs of Yoga were deliberated upon. Bro. J.K. Khanna, Secretary of the Lodge, proposed vote of thanks before closure of the camp.

The 98th Annual Conference of U.P. Federation was held at Etawah on 01 October, 2017. After recitation of Prayers of All Faiths and the Universal Prayer, homage was paid to Annie Besant on her 170th birthday. Bro. R.P. Singh, Secretary of Etawah Lodge, welcomed the delegates.

Bro. U.S. Pandey, Federation Secretary, while welcoming the delegates offered his greetings. He then read out the greetings received from the International President, Secretary, and Treasurer, Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil, General Secretary the Indian Section, and Bro. S. Sundaram, former General Secretary.

Bro. S.S. Gautam, a senior member and Secretary of Chohan Lodge of Kanpur inaugurated the annual conference. Bro. Gautam in his inaugural address brought out the importance and relevance of the theme “To live to benefit mankind is the first step” and spoke about the burden of karma increasing every day, universal view in all religions, universal brotherhood and importance of removing pain of others. Bro. Awadhesh Narayan Tewari, Joint Secretary of Etawah Lodge, proposed vote of thanks.

Thereafter the Annual General Body meeting was held which was presided over by Bro. R.P. Singh. Bro. U.S. Pandey paid homage to members who passed to peace during the year 2016-17. Then he read out the minutes of last AGM held at Agra on 02 October 2016 and the same was confirmed by the general body. He then presented the annual report of activities for the year 2016-17 bringing out salient points. Bro. K.K. Srivastava read out the whole report. Bro. S.K. Pandey presented income-expenditure statements of the Federation and also of *Dharmpath* Hindi journal for financial year 2016-17. All the three aforesaid reports after discussion were accepted by the general body.

In the afternoon, a seminar on the theme of the conference was organized. Bro. S.K. Pandey chaired the session. Km. Preeti Tiwari of Kanpur, Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma of Agra, Bro. O.P. Aneja of NOIDA, Bro. Chakit Swarup Arya of Ghaziabad and Dr. K.K. Saxena of Etawah were the main speakers. They in their talk brought out different aspects

of the theme. Bro. U.S. Pandey spoke briefly highlighting some points as reflected in theosophical teachings. Bro. S.K. Pandey summarized the talks and gave concluding remarks.

Study Camp

A day-long study camp was held at Etawah on 02 October, 2017. The book studied was “Mystic Experiences—Tales of Yoga and Vedanta from The Yogavasistha” by Dr. Bhagvan was directed by Bro. U.S. Pandey, Federation Secretary. Other speakers were Bro. K.K. Srivastava, Bro. S.S. Gautam and Bro. S.K. Pandey, national lecturer. At the end an interactive session was held with the participants.

Before closing the study camp vote of thanks were proposed by Bro. K.K. Srivastava on behalf of Federation and by Bro. R.P. Singh on behalf of Etawah Lodge.

Shri Dinesh Prasad (Dip. 77922) of Anand Lodge, Allahabad, passed to peace in April, 2017.

South India Conference

The ninety-fourth South India Theosophical Conference was held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, from 14 -16 April 2017. The conference was on the theme ‘*Theosophy – Defining the Indefinable*’.

The General Secretary, of the Indian Section, Mr Pradeep H. Gohil welcomed the gathering. In his welcome address, he pointed out “..... Theosophy as a bright, living beam of light in our troubled world, which all who want to can see and follow”. He highlighted that HPB brought back to the world more than a century back, the eternal truths which had been taught over the millennia by the sages and prophets all over the world. He added that, “... Theosophy represented the unveiling of Life in all its dimensions, magnitude and beauty. It reminds us of this possibility and that how important self-knowledge is”.

Ms Marja Artamaa, International Secretary, in her inaugural address on “From Definitions to Insight”, elaborated how one could go beyond the definition, to stretch the mind yonder so that we are able to gather experience and gain insights from the core of our hearts..... When there is an insight from concepts and definitions, it helps us to be less attached, more responsible, more tolerant and more satisfied at deeper

level, more quiet and considerate, capable of observing life in a new way from a wider perspective”.

Prof R C Tampi, Director, School of the Wisdom, set the context by his incisive talk on “Can Theosophy be Defined?” He explained that Theosophy was beyond a boundary and therefore does not lend itself to a definition. Pointing out that while knowledge can be transferred wisdom has to dawn on the aspirant. Citing that all the great Teachers taught through parables to get the message across, he conveyed through various examples what Theosophy was.

There were 100 registered delegates from different parts of South India i.e. Tamilnadu, Kerala, Telangana and Rayalaseema who participated in the deliberations.

A new Video on Adyar was screened for the first time during this conference. The picturesque portrayal of Adyar, and the impressions from Bro. Tim Boyd, International President, and various members from all over the world were well received by the participants.

The proceedings included short talks on various aspects of Theosophy, namely - Theosophy as Altruism, absolute and unconditional, Theosophy is what Theosophy does - Self Transformation, Theosophy as Divine Wisdom, Theosophy as Ancient Wisdom, and Theosophy as the Masters see it. The speakers were Bro. N C Krishna, Dr R Revathy, Bro. K Dinakaran and Bro. S Harihara Raghavan.

The talks were followed by workshops, and this method helped the participants to actively participate and assimilate. The link between theory and practice was established through these interactive sessions.

The closing session was on “Why is Theosophy left undefined?” Dr. M A Raveendran, President of Kerala Theosophical Federation tracing the history of the TS, said that in 1875, the name was chosen by our Founders HPB, Col. Olcott, WQ Judge and others as “Theosophical Society” and that it was as per HPB to be “a society which will attract the attention of the highest minds”. Theosophy was a philosophy of so grand, so consistent, so logical and so embracing as our eastern doctrines.... as spelt out in HPB’s teachings. Dr. Raveendran spelt out that any attempt to define Theosophy meant that it had to be mentalised and brought under the semantics of language, and that was by itself a limitation. The answer, he felt, lay in the “Heart Doctrine”.

Presiding over the closing session, Bro. C A Shinde reminded the words of the Masters of the Wisdom and exhorted us to “Try” ; to try and efforts towards conceiving the abstract, going beyond reasoning capacity, and to acquire inner silence.

A recorded talk of Bro. N Sri Ram, on “Various points of work as Theosophists” was also broadcast during the conference. The Easter conference ended with the Vote of Thanks proposed by the convenor Ms H Sripriya and chanting by Ms K Jaishree.

Indian Section Headquarters

Late Thakur Jaidev Singh passed out from Central Hindu College, Varanasi, in 1907. He was a renowned scholar of Indian Philosophy, Kashmir Shaiv Philosophy and Indian Classical Music. A member of the Theosophical Society, had delivered Besant Memorial Lecture and three more lectures in the International Theosophical Convention during different years. A special programme on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary was organized at the Indian Section HQ by Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Art, Varanasi, on 19 September 2017. Smt. Manju Sundaram was requested by the organizers to narrate some significant reminiscences of Thakur Saheb. A special talk on ‘Self-Analysis of Kashmir Shaivas’ was delivered by Prof. Navajeevan Rastogi. Prof. B.P. Tripathi ‘Vagish Shastri’ chaired the session. A large number of prominent citizens and distinguished scholars of Varanasi came to attend the function.

On the occasion of the 170th birth anniversary of Dr. Annie Besant a public lecture was organized at the Indian Section HQ of the Theosophical Society, Varanasi. The speaker was Dr. L. Nagesh, National Lecturer of the Indian Section. Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil, General Secretary of the Indian Section, welcomed the guest speaker and his wife. Bro. Pradip K. Mahapatra, Jt. General Secretary, introduced the speaker. Dr. Nagesh conducted the Universal Prayer and it was followed by his talk on ‘Dr. Annie Besant the Lamp Lighter of Indian Independence’. This was Dr. Nagesh’s first visit to the Section HQ and most of the members and the guests heard him for the first time and were very appreciative of his command over language, content of the talk and his style of presentation. The vote of thanks was given by the Jt. General Secretary.

THE 142nd INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Theme: *From Teachings to Insight: The Altruistic Heart*

The 142nd International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, **from 31 December 2017 to 5 January 2018**. All members of the Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates.

Non-members may send requests for permission to attend, together with a recommendation from an officer of the Federation or the Section, to the Convention Officer (CO) before 25 November.

From 29 Dec. 2017 to 6 Jan. 2018, inclusive

LEADBEATER CHAMBERS (LBC) Registration fee		
Full board		
Overseas delegates	US\$ 70 *	US\$ 280 *
Indian and Less Developed Countries' delegates		
	Rs.200	Rs.8,500

(Includes sharing room, mosquito nets, sheets, no blankets, all meals at LBC dining hall) No reimbursement, if one eats at the Canteen.

Note: half rate for children of 3-10 years. * or EUR or Pound equivalent

INDIAN STYLE Registration fee Accommodation

Indian and Less Developed Countries' delegates (Includes mat/cot or mattress, sheets, no meals) Rs.200 Rs.350

Canteen from 30 Dec. (dinner) to 5 Jan. (lunch) (breakfast, lunch, snack, dinner) **Canteen** Rs.1,100

Canteen will be run by the Karnataka Theosophical Federation.

Note: half rate for children of 3-10 years

ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS

Factors considered in allocating Indian style accommodation are active membership, health, age, priority of registration, size of family, etc. Rooms and bathrooms cannot be made available for anyone's exclusive use. Young persons should be prepared to stay in dormitories. No special facilities can be provided for members who are ill or for women with babies. No kitchens are available. Ordinary medical attention will be available for minor complaints but there will be no provision for serious illness. Since accommodation is limited, especially ground floor, availability will be subject to confirmation by the Convention Officer.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENTS

Last date for registration: 1 December 2017.

Cancellation: last date 15 December 2017; payment will be refunded, except the Registration fee. After 12 December there will be no refund of any amount.

Delegates from India: Send registration, accommodation and canteen charges together, along with the details as per the Registration form (available at <www.ts-adyar.org>), to the Convention Officer before 1 December 2017. Remittance by **bank drafts, duly crossed**, should be **made payable to The Treasurer, The Theosophical Society, Chennai**. For online bank transfers contact the CO.

Delegates from other countries: Make sure you take travel insurance. Send the Registration form preferably by email. For online bank transfers, and any other matters, contact the CO by email.

Convention Officer, email: tsadyarconvention@gmail.com or

The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India

Marja Artamaa, International Secretary

**THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, Adyar,
Chennai 600 020, India
International Convention 2017-18
REGISTRATION & ACCOMMODATION
FORM**

[To be filled in Block Capitals and sent to the Convention Officer, preferably by email tsadyarconvention@gmail.com.

Non-members may send requests to attend, together with a recommendation from an officer of the TS, to the Convention Officer before 25 November.]

Name:..... Nationality: Email: Address (in home country) Phone/Mobile: Year of Joining Section/Federation/Lodge Special Request:

PACKAGE RATES:

A. LBC: Overseas delegates USD 350* Includes registration fee, meals at LBC Dining Hall, accommodation sharing, sheets mosquito nets

B. LBC: Indian delegates Rs.8,700 Includes registration fee, meals at LBC Dining Hall, accommodation sharing, sheets mosquito nets

C. INDIAN STYLE: Rs.1,650 Includes registration fee, meals at Canteen, accommodation - sharing/dormitory, mat/cot or mattress, sheet

Note: half rate for children of 3-10 years

* or EUR or Pound equivalent

No. Name(include the main applicant) Age Gender F/M

Member Y/N Package(A / B / C) Amount

Mode of Payment Cheque # or Online

Date of Arrival: morning/afternoon Date of Departure:..... morning/afternoon

Recommended by Signature:

Signature of applicant: Date: ...

Overseas delegates: Please make sure you are covered under overseas travel insurance

Last date for registration: 1 December 2017

For online payments and clarifications, visit <http://www.tsadyar.org/event/142nd-international-convention> or email to tsadyarconvention@gmail.com