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**Editor**

**PRADEEP H. GOHIL**

## A STEP FORWARD

Very soon, on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022, we will be celebrating the Adyar Day, just as we have been doing for the last 99 years. Theosophists all over the world celebrate it, whether there is a pandemic or not. It would be really worthwhile to review for ourselves the wonderful events that had occurred at Adyar during the early founding days and its importance for us as members of the Theosophical Society. Since then, Adyar has become for us something of a symbol of Theosophy - the esoteric philosophy - and a place where the influence of the outer and inner Founders was stamped upon the movement.

Originally, February 17 was known as Olcott Day, the day of the passing away of our founder, Henry Steel Olcott (HSO) in 1907. He was an American Military Officer, journalist, lawyer and the co-founder and first President of the Theosophical Society. Col. Olcott was the first well-known American of European ancestry to make a formal conversion to Buddhism. Every year after his demise, members gathered at the place where Col. Olcott was cremated, saying a few words and offering flowers to the memorial built in his honour. By 1916, the tradition changed and became centered on the statue of HPB and Col. Olcott that now stands in Headquarters Hall at Adyar. They gathered every year at 7:10 am at this place and stood in a large semi-circle, in front of the small recessed section of an open room where the statues of our Founders stand. At 7:17 a.m., the time of Col. Olcott's last breath, the International President or his representative would speak followed by persons from various religions. Finally, everyone from Olcott's servants to the sweepers of the great hall, silently lined up to offer flowers and give thanks. The tradition continues even today.

One may now ask as to how the Olcott Day became Adyar Day? The process began with Fritz Kunz, husband of past Ameri-

can Section President Dora Kunz. When he returned to the U.S. after an extended stay in India and realized the importance of Adyar, he conceived of the Adyar fund in 1922 and formed the Adyar Committee to raise funds in the U.S. for construction of the buildings at Adyar. As mentioned in the book *A Short History of the Theosophical Society* compiled by Josephine Ransom. "Madame de Manziarly suggested that 17 February should be celebrated as Adyar Day, also in memory of Colonel Olcott's passing away, and as Bishop Leadbeater's birthday. The first Adyar Day was duly celebrated, when the great services of Col. Olcott to The Society were recalled". The first Adyar Day was celebrated in USA 99 years ago on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1923. Dr. Annie Besant officially declared 17<sup>th</sup> February as Adyar Day in 1926.

The importance of 17<sup>th</sup> February is not just for the day Henry Olcott passed away. On the same day in the year 1600 Giordano Bruno, a student of Pythagoras, was burned after being tied to a wooden post. It was also the day J. Krishnamurti passed away in February 1986. Interestingly, Charles W. Leadbeater was born on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1854. You can now see why 17<sup>th</sup> February is called Adyar Day and celebrated in the Theosophical world.

Adyar continues to be a special place for many of our members. It is the Masters' home. With serene beauty of its lush green trees and gardens, the brimming river in the north, the endlessly breaking Indian Ocean in the east, the majestic silence broken only by the chirping of the birds in the campus, it has become a sacred refuge for stray animals, weary travellers and members desiring to understand more about Theosophy and our Society. As I have walked through the gates of Adyar many a time, I have felt the pleasant and magnetic vibrations of its spiritually charged atmosphere, an excitement not comparable with anything in our material world and a feeling of stillness within and without. Adyar is often compared as a Sun and all the Sections revolving around it as the Planets. What better place and what better way than 17<sup>th</sup> February - the Adyar Day, for the realization of the real truth, oneness of life, unity and brotherhood, and in the process change our life? A visit to Adyar on 17<sup>th</sup> February, the Adyar Day, will be a step forward in our life.

## **PERSONALIZING THE WISDOM: THE RELEVANCE OF APPLIED THEOSOPHY**

When the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, much that we have come to take for granted as teachings of the Ageless Wisdom were utterly unknown in the Western world. The language to describe the inner life and the hidden side of Nature was ill-formed in the West. They had to develop a consistent means of expression in order to plant the seeds of these ideas for the benefit of future generations. We are that future generation, the ones who, simply by virtue of being born into the world today, have ready exposure to the ideas of karma, reincarnation, and the various levels of the inner life. With the passing of time the task of rooting these ideas in human consciousness has been done. The priority of our time has changed. Our need is to understand how we can apply and internalize the teachings.

Wisdom is impersonal. Although it permeates all, it exceeds the level of the personality. In the Bible there is an expression: “God is no respecter of persons.” The personal aspect makes absolutely no difference to the wisdom. In much the same way, Theosophy, the Ageless Wisdom, is unchanged and unchanging regardless of whether there are theosophists or not. It is one of the many paradoxes of the spiritual life.

On the one hand there is wisdom, which is utterly impersonal, and on the other hand there is the human being, the person, with all of our limitations and strengths. When we find that the truths expressed in the Ageless Wisdom tradition have value, then we embark on what many describe as the spiritual path. We commit to an

effort to understand and draw closer to these truths, to internalize and make them active in a manner specific to our personal lives.

We all have a personality with its own particular features and idiosyncrasies. Our bodies, senses, emotions, minds, and thoughts are differently calibrated according to who we are. Some of us are more emotionally active, others are more intellectually inclined, and some are more physical. From the Ageless Wisdom perspective, one way the personality has been described is “the soul’s toolbox”. It is a set of tools the soul can utilize to make itself felt in the world. The idea of “Personalizing the Wisdom” comes down to this: How can this wisdom become something that is active within our lives?

Recently I had the thought that it would be a valuable exercise for me to put in writing, in the most concise form possible, what is my understanding of living this life. No extra words, as simple as I could make it. What is the meaning and direction of this process of living, and how does it relate to principles of the Ageless Wisdom? Albert Einstein said: “We must make everything as simple as possible, but no simpler.” We have to refine and express our comprehension of wisdom, but there is a limit. We need to be careful about oversimplification.

The Buddha, after his experience of enlightenment, spent the next 50 years of his life attempting to teach a path to end suffering and experience self-transformation. Over the course of his life he presented profound teachings in many ways. Toward the end of his life he simplified his teachings to just three things: (1) do no harm, (2) do good, (3) purify your mind. Each one of them connects to a vast body of profound teachings. For our benefit, the Buddha, as all great teachers, made things “as simple as possible, but no simpler”.

Although H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) could express herself in very expansive language, she was not immune to simplification. In her introduction to *The Secret Doctrine*, she refined her presentation to

three points that were of the highest importance in her view: (1) the Absolute, (2) the cycles that govern human life and are active in Nature, and (3) the obligatory pilgrimage of incarnation in which we are all engaged. In order to expand on those three things, the next thousand pages of *The Secret Doctrine* were written.

There is a quote from the Mahatma Letters that expresses what I would like to share with you: “Theosophy must be made practical and has therefore to be disencumbered of useless discussion.” It goes on to say that “It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit . . . of mutual tolerance, charity, and love.” The manner in which we approach our, society, friends, and community, has to find an all-embracing expression that is not merely situational. This is the task before us. To the degree that we expose ourselves to this Ageless Wisdom, with time we find that our view of the world and ourselves changes. Self-transformation is a fundamental goal of this work.

We have to keep in mind that whatever we see as true or real is partial, conditioned by our inherent limitations. It is the highest that we are capable of at the moment, but there is always a deeper possibility. It is best seen as our most recent highest understanding, but always there is that what lies beyond our field of vision.

In my effort to simplify my understanding of the Ageless Wisdom, I came up with some aphorisms of my own:

- (1) Only a few things truly matter.
- (2) It is a marathon, not a sprint.
- (3) The world and I are complex, but it is all really simple.
- (4) We can choose.
- (5) We will know.

(6) There is only one.

(7) No words.

Obviously, these need some expansion:

(1) Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the great American transcendentalists said: “Society everywhere is in conspiracy against . . . every one of its members. . . . The virtue in most request is conformity. . . . Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.” So the safeguarding of the integrity of the mind is most important. Of the few things that truly matter, this is one of them.

There are numerous practices we are encouraged to utilize in order to protect the mind. One such tool is “mantra”. The literal meaning of this word is “that which protects the mind”. This is worth some exploration. What is it about mantra that is protective of the mind? With a confused, deranged, or poorly functioning mind, our spiritual path and our path through daily life will be clouded. By focusing the mind’s energies on sound and elevated meaning in a powerful way, mantra protects the mind from itself— from its conditioned and uncontrolled habitual functioning.

In the little book *At the Feet of the Master*, J. Krishnamurti makes a statement about study. In the theosophical tradition we talk about a three-pronged approach to the spiritual life: study, meditation, and service. He says: “Study first that which will most help you to help others.” So what is it that matters in terms of our study? Within the Ageless Wisdom tradition, the information, knowledge, and facts that are possible to obtain is limitless. How do we determine what will be most valuable? No matter how long we live, we have a very short time. So we experiment to determine that which will most help others. That is one of the few things that really matters.

In many spiritual disciplines great emphasis is placed on using

the short span of a lifetime well. Because there are so many avenues into which we can pour our time and energy, we have to develop a sense of what is most important — a sense of priorities. I have a number of friends who have had near-death experiences (NDEs). Although the experiences may be slightly different, what is true in *every* case is that having left this world of embodied existence, even for a brief while, and returned, each one returns with a different sense of priorities — of what is actually important. These are things we have to examine for ourselves. Look, see, and determine, based on our living and inner experience, what are those “few things that truly matter”. That is my first aphorism.

(2) “It’s a marathon, not a sprint.” Even from the perspective of a single life, it is a *long* journey from infancy to old age. There is an occult expression by Ibn Arabi: “God [Consciousness] sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal, and awakens in the human.” This is the arc of the unfoldment of consciousness from the mineral realm to the human, and of course there is an endless hierarchy of consciousness far beyond humanity. From the Ageless Wisdom perspective this one life is like a pearl on a string of many such lives. The thread of continuous consciousness connecting them is termed the *sutrâtmâ* in Sanskrit. The possibility for unfoldment of consciousness is not something isolated to this moment; it takes place as a result of actions and thoughts we bring to every moment over a long series of lives — “a marathon, not a sprint”.

(3) “The world and I are complex, but it is all really simple.” If we have had any exposure to the teachings of Theosophy, we come away with a sense that there is a great deal of complexity involved in these teachings. Just for starters, we speak of seven planes through which consciousness expresses. Add to that the thought that there are seven subplanes for each of those seven planes.

This describes a multidimensional universe and us as multidimensional beings that live, grow, and exist within it.

With all of these different currents as part of our makeup, complexity is the nature of things. But it is all really simple in this sense: All of these streams and activity are an expression of one consciousness — a universal consciousness present throughout and expressing through its infinite forms. The interblending of numerous levels and forms of consciousness as the activity of one thing is not foreign to us, if we give it a little bit of thought. To take the analogy of our own body, within it there are countless processes going on simultaneously — the electrical processes with the nerves and the brain, the chemical, and the biological processes. There are trillions of cells that compose the human body, each one composed of an individual life with its own needs and form of expression. Yet they all come together to form this one thing that I call “me”, “I”. “This world and I are complex, but it is all really simple” when we dig down into it.

(4) The fourth aphorism says: “We can choose”. So often we feel as if we are at the mercy of random forces of life. To a certain extent, of course we are. If we are standing outside and it starts to rain we do not change the rain. Gravity is a law whether we like it, understand it, or not. If we step off from a bridge, we are going down. Those things we cannot control. What we *can* control is our mind, our response. I know people who, if it is raining outside on a given day, become unhappy, depressed, complain about the weather. “I can’t live my life today because it is cold, because it is raining”; this is common.

There is an advice toward the end of the little book *The Idyll of the White Lotus* by Mabel Collins, which says: “Each person is their own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to their self; the decreer of their life, their reward, their punishment.” It describes an inner capacity always available when we are aware that we can choose. At the time I am writing this we are living in the midst

of a global pandemic that has instilled fear, great uncertainty, even depression globally. This is the condition: there is a virus which poses a certain degree of threat, and has affected economies, populations, and societies around the world. But does that mean that we have to succumb to being fearful? It does not. No matter how we live our life, a basic fact is that at some point it ends. So we live our life with intelligence. We make choices that address our highest possibilities, recognizing that even “our highest” will elevate as time goes on. Focusing on the few things that matter, we cultivate our mind, and the capacity of our heart for a deepening level of compassion. Pandemic or not, we can focus on these things. “We can choose”, and those choices have consequences.

(5) “We will know.” At the stage that we are in now, there are certain things that we do know; it is very little, but even during the course of one lifetime we are very aware that the scope of what we know and grow to understand has expanded enormously from the time that we were little children. The Bible says: “When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became an adult, I put away childish things.” (1 Corinthians 13:11) Evolution, in the spiritual sense, is what becomes one’s focus. Evolution literally means “unfoldment”.

For example, if I had someone’s photo and folded it many times, in the process of evolution/unfoldment I unfold one corner of it. From that unfolding I see an ear. For a time the scope of my understanding of the reality of the person is only one ear. As more of the photo unfolds, we see more and more of the reality. Ultimately, we see it all. So “we will know” at some future point, if we persevere. Even if we do not persevere, this awareness will ultimately open as we are swept along with the evolving wave of humanity. Part of the choice that we make in exposing ourselves to Theosophy is to try to be in the forefront of this unfoldment, not just so that we

can feel good about ourselves and have a good life and be happy, but because in this process of forced unfoldment, we are able to transmit something to humanity as a whole that is much needed in this world.

(6) “There is only one.” In the three Objects of the TS, this object is the first: “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour”, or any of the separative elements that divide us. “Brotherhood” is another expression for oneness, unity, interdependence, and interconnection. These are words we use in our attempt to describe a fact of the universe.

The deepest problem that humanity faces, from the perspective of the Ageless Wisdom, HPB described as: “The heresy of separateness” — our deeply rooted conviction that each of us is fundamentally separate from everyone else and from all other things. Even though our deepest experiences of love and compassion demonstrate the underlying possibility of union, a separative view of life seems to be confirmed in our daily experience. The value of the previous aphorisms is that, together, they move us toward the experience of Oneness.

(7) Finally: “No words.” The *Tao-te-Ching* says: “The Tao (Way, Truth) that can be spoken, is not the eternal Tao.” There are no words to describe what occurs within us when we actually experience these deep truths that we now study.

(Courtesy: *THE THEOSOPHIST*, November 2021)

## THEOSOPHY-THE EVERLASTING TRUTH

A HUNDRED years have passed since the Theosophical Society was founded and yet the whole question of what Theosophy is lends itself to interpretations which are different and even diametrically opposed, for Theosophy is that many-faceted diamond—the Eternal Truth. The Theosophical Society has effectively survived and attracted a large number of members, and also non-members who value the purposes for which the Society stands, precisely because it has not given a definition to theosophy and has offered the fullest freedom within its ranks in the search for truth, establishing no authority. The bond of union in the Theosophical Society has not been the profession of a common belief, or the acceptance of a set doctrine, “but a common search and aspiration for Truth”. Truth has been regarded “as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority”. Members of the Society have included thus men and women with wide divergences of temperament and approach in the nucleus of a truly eclectic, if not already universal, brotherhood.

In the context of the centenary of the Society, thoughts turn to the founders, and particularly to H.P. Blavatsky who gave the life-teaching, which Col. Olcott was able to make available to thousands all over the world by creating the structure of the Society—a structure, will be necessary for a very long time in order to channel the life. However, it is vital to remember that it is the irradiation of that life, which goes by the name of Theosophy, which is the primary purpose of the impulse and movement which arose in 1875. In H.P.B.’s Words, “Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection.... It was

formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities”.

In *The Key to Theosophy*, the author proclaims: “If you speak of Theosophy, I answer that, as it has existed eternally throughout the endless cycles upon cycles of the past, so it will ever exist through the infinitudes of the future, because Theosophy is synonymous with Everlasting Truth”. She speaks of it as the essence of all religion and of absolute truth, and as the Wisdom-Religion, a phrase which is known to every student of the subject, variously named in eastern literature as *prajna* (Upanishads), *vijnana* (Buddhism) and so forth. The Wisdom-Religion is an esoteric knowledge, and science in the sense that it pertains to realities and the facts of existence, consciousness, and imperishable absolutes. Such transcendental wisdom has existed throughout the ages and its quintessence has been expressed in the lives and consciousness of the Illumined in many regions of the world, who, whether they had, or did not have contact with the Theosophical Society, carried humanity in an inevitable progression towards a superior destiny. There is no reason to presume that the work of these enlightened ones will not still be carried on for ages to come and their wisdom communicated by other messengers.

Before the founders came to India, their arrival had been prophesied by Sri Ramalinga Swami, whose teachings in Tamil bear a striking resemblance to what was later to be found in the Theosophy of H.P.B., and others. He appears to have been in contact with some of the Elder Brothers of humanity and tried to gather people together in a movement very similar to our Society, to which he gave a name in Tamil corresponding to Universal Brotherhood. Another personage who also knew Theosophy before the founders arrived in India was Swami T. Subba Row, whom H.P. B. considered her equal in occultism. Thus even within the sphere of the history of the

Theosophical Society we know of those who were teaching Theosophy before H.P.B., not only through words, but through their lives, meditations and inner work. No doubt, the Wisdom-Religion was known and realized before H.P.B., and will be known long after her, forever, it being a universal and everlasting truth.

The Society has been extremely fortunate in that it has had a series of successors to H.P.B. who have communicated the Wisdom, the first of whom, Annie Besant, was called “the one and only one” by H.P.B. herself. Through her consecrated life, depth of wisdom and powerful exposition, thousands were inspired to engage themselves in the discovery of the eternal verities. The quest of the Wisdom-Religion, based on self-knowledge is inseparable from a sensitive response to the sorrows of men, and indeed of all life, caused by man’s own pursuit of pleasure and power. Annie Besant forged a notably compassionate link between the struggle of people to find liberty, justice and well-being with man’s quest for freedom from the fetters of his own ignorance.

Apart from enlightened Adepts and their disciples, speaking of theosophists, H.P.B. says that they exist outside the Society also, “more than people know of”. Presumably these theosophists outside have realized something of Theosophy to earn the name of theosophist. Obviously, the Wisdom-Religion-Truth which is everlasting will find many channels through which to flow till the world has been flooded with it, and those who are the embodiments of that Wisdom will continue to proclaim it in its infinite aspects with the ever-new power which is inherent in truth realized.

Answering the question whether the Wisdom-religion can be known by study, H.P.B. replied: “The infinite cannot be known by the finite—i.e. sensed by the finite self”. The statement is an almost exact parallel of the Upanishadic declaration: “The Eternal cannot be reached by the non-eternal” The Theosophy of the sages, according to H.P.B., is well expressed in the assertion, “the kingdom

of God is within you”. Her understanding of the Wisdom-Religion (Theosophy) is of the highest, for she states it to be infinite, the essence of truth—the kingdom within. She offered no lesser conception of that Wisdom, as an exoteric knowledge to be found within the confines and contents of books or verbal expressions, however grand these might be, not excepting her own words and works.

A Theosophy which is the kingdom within, the ascent into a new dimension superseding the finite self is thus something which can be known and communicated only in the depths of the heart. It is therefore always an esoteric science, *gupta-vidya*. It is not the mind’s knowledge, the eye-doctrine, but the heart doctrine. It is not the mastering and repeating of tomes and tenets, nor conformity to a tradition and an authority. It is a discovery. It begins and ends in no less a thing than knowledge of self. “It is not ‘the fear of God’ which is the beginning of wisdom, but the knowledge of self, which is *Wisdom Itself*”, says H.P.B.

Though the T.S. has made available a great literature through which it is possible to obtain a perspective of man’s place in the universe, its vast processes and laws, ultimately Theosophy can be known only in self-knowledge, and therefore it is that part of the literature, which gives glimpses and hints to each one to find out for himself, which is most directly valuable. These indications are a help to “open up the power of cognition”, to use N. Sri Ram’s phrase, to reach “That by which all else is known”. That power of cognition is in the purest state of each individual’s consciousness, which is the repository of All-Truth and not a gathering together of conceptual possessions from outside.

“Let those who complain that they have learned little in the Theosophical Society, lay to heart the words... The key in each is the aspirant himself”. This lays upon each member the paramount duty of realizing wisdom and to that end, turning to himself and into himself and not merely to books and words and traditions, even



though they may be the words of great persons. These can at the most be a map to indicate the nature of the domain beyond, but the map itself can never convey the truth and beauty of the Beyond.

The greatest values in life are those which can be known only through being that which is sought to be known, in other words, through identification. One cannot know love except when there is love within oneself. When that love transforms the petty personal self, till it ceases to be self, then is the greatest realization of love. Thus being and knowing are one. Only he who knows love through loving can see love whosoever it is. Only he who has felt the fragrance of wisdom in his own true self can respond to wisdom which lies elsewhere. As one of the Adepts said, it is affinity alone that draws the disciple to the Master. If knowledge, learning, familiarity with concepts, tradition, that is, head-learning, is confused with that Soul-wisdom which is Theosophy, no Adept can teach nor true message be received.

Speaking of the future of the Society, H.P.B. says that it will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion and, last but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members on whom it will fall to carry on the work and to direct the Society after the death of its founders. In her view the Society can be prepared for the invariable outpouring or upheaval of spirituality which comes at the end of every hundred years. If the attempt which was made in the form of the T.S. in the last century is to carry on successfully, the Society has to be “a living and healthy body,” alive because its members have chosen the Soul-Wisdom rather than the eye-doctrine of Theosophy. *The Key to Theosophy* mentions “a new torchbearer of Truth”, who will spearhead the new impulse in the last quarter of the century. Who knows what exactly will be the message of that torchbearer, since so many colours from the white light of truth have flashed and will flash, all of which being entitled to be called Theosophy? If a new message comes,

would the members be prepared for it or would they be so encrusted in their own particular traditions, the crystallizations of the mind formed from the known solutions, that they will fail to recognize the unknown as part of the infinite light of Theosophy?

“Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard and fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart”. Is such a fate ahead of our Society? This is a question which the future alone will answer. If H.P.B. herself in a new incarnation offered a new facet of the everlasting truth, a different nose-gay culled from the garden of truth, would the message be received or would she once again be reviled and ridiculed and her teaching rejected as not the original Theosophy, of which she was held to be the authority in the previous incarnation? Can minds and hearts among the members be open to truth, howsoever it may come?

If the Society is to be an instrument for the enlightenment of the world, there needs must be clarity among the members as to aims and work. Will the members and the organization be satisfied with distributing a few books and holding some lectures, etc., or will they exist for the purpose of encouraging and helping men and women to open their hearts to the infinite Wisdom and Truth, unconfined to particular sources and transcendental in its nature.

(Courtesy: *THE THEOSOPHIST*, October- 1975- November, Vol. 97, Nos. 1 &2)

## A LETTER FROM N. SRI RAM

President N. SRI RAM

Adyar, Madras 20, India

17<sup>th</sup> September, 1971

Mr. Dinshaw K. Buxey,  
6A, Woodlands,  
67, Peddar Road,  
BOMBAY-26

**Dear Mr. Dinshaw Buxey,**

I have your letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> September referring to the “killing of thought”. This does not mean that one ceases to think. Man has the faculty of thought, and like all other faculties it has to be used wisely according to context. You have also referred to the phrase in *Voice of the Silence* “slaying the Lunar body at will”, and you remark that it is a poetic way of saying the same thing, that is, killing thought. The Lunar body represents the astral principle in man; that is, his desires, emotions and so forth. One’s thinking is influenced by these forces. The average mind is under their domination; it has to free itself from that influence or domination. That is why there are the words “at will”, and it is only when the mind is free from the movements in the Lunar body (if one may continue to use that ..... be killed by force of will but thinking, which in our cases is largely a play of memory, will come to an end by itself, except as required for particular purposes, when the person is free from that astral urges, his cravings and emotions centred on the self. I hope I have made my own understanding quite clear.

When the astral nature is purified that mind will cease to be dominated by it and will see all things clearly, uninfluenced by per-

sonal wishes or fear of any sort. Then the mind will become truly harmonized with the emotions. In the case of an Adept, the colors of the astral body are exactly the same as the colors of his mental body, although perhaps one or more octaves lower. In other words, the two bodies are completely harmonized and act as if they are one.

One may think that he is lost in adoration of something, but then there is the question of what he cooks through that adoration. Is it the love of the woman he adores or the protection of the deity which he addresses? When the person is in a mood of adoration will he be able to attend to something else besides the object of adoration which calls for his urgent help? If he cannot turn aside from the adoration to give the help that is needed it means that the so-called adoration is a kind of orgy from which he is unable to separate himself, so all such phrases as “slaying the Lunar body”, “killing thought”, “losing oneself in adoration” have to be understood not literally but according to the truth which they are intended to convey. In the last analysis, the question is reduced to this: is the activity of thought, emotion, love, adoration or anything else rooted in something which the self desires, or is it free from the domination of that self?

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

President

## NEWS AND NOTES

### Bombay

BTF & Blavatsky Lodge joined in the Theosophical Society, Adyar Webinar meeting in connection with Dr. Annie Besant's birthday celebration on 1st October 2021.

The meeting conducted by Sis. Catalina was opened with the Universal Prayer by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri. The International Secretary Sis. Marja Artamma spoke in Welcome Address about the occasion and introduced the Guest Speaker Bro. Pedro Oliveira of T.S. Australia.

Bro. Pedro Oliveira from his Third Book '*Annie Besant in India*' shared Testimonies of Annie Besant's Indian C0-Workers: Tallapragada Subba Row, Rangaswami Iyengar, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Bahadur Mulaswami Iyer, Dr. Bhagwandas, Bipin Chandra Pal, B. Sanjeeva Rao and Nilkantha Sri Ram. Though thinking of some of them was different, they greatly admired Annie Besant and paid glowing tributes to her. They mentioned about Annie Besant's life dedicated to TRUTH and to India - preparing India for political freedom and spiritual regeneration.

The talk was followed by tributes with a video and a Sanskrit prayer. The meeting ended with vote of thanks given by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri.

Theo Jyoti Triveni Tuesday Meet *of Rewa Lodge Vadodara, Rohit Lodge Ahmedabad & Jyoti Lodge Mumbai on 28th September 2021*: It was a unique Meet with two speakers of each of the Three Families speaking in English, Hindi & Gujarati on 'Selflessness and Divine Life of Annie Besant' and 'Inspiring Life Journey of Annie Besant'.

*Synergy' Year 3 July – December 2021 Issue on 'Zen and Art of Mindfulness'* - This Synergy issue has cover profile of young Theosophist of Philippines Ms. Marlyn Ranola. Dr. Uma M. Shankar writes about 'Shankara – Divinity in Human Form'. 'My Journey with Theosophy' is by Late Bro. Rustom R. Dalal. Bro. Arni Narendran explains 'Zen and Art of Mindfulness'. Sis. Catalina Isaza Cantor Agnihotri gives 'Profiles of Four Women in the Fields of Literature and the Theosophical Movement'. There are articles on 'The Psychedelic nature of Islam Art and Architecture' and 'The Forgotten Priestesses of Cetts'. Climate Soul Song and other information opens up spiritual vistas. Synergy receives appreciations from readers of Japan, Finland, England, Austria, Ireland, India, Netherlands, East & Central Africa, Philippines, Adyar, Australia and Toronto.

BTF Brethren at Triveni Tuesday Meet - Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered a talk on 5th October and the subject he spoke on was '*Allegoryin Durga Saptshati*'. This talk was translated in Gujarati by Sis. Archana Munshi. There are 700 Shlokas which explain *Durga* as '*Shakti*', hence shlokas are called '*Saptshati*'. Sis. Archana spoke about Saptshati in the light of Theosophy.

Bro. Navin Kumar was the speaker on 19 October 2021 and he spoke in Hindi on '*Brief Elements of DR. Annie Besant's Bhagvad Gita*'. He said that Bhagvad Gita is a scripture which mainly covers '*Brahm Vidya*' and '*Yog Shastra*'. The Second Chapter summarizes the essence of these teachings as under:

- a) Find out your duties and perform them, come what may.
- b) The soul is immortal; it is unaffected when body dies.
- c) One should strive to raise one's consciousness to the *Buddhic Plane*, then one is called "*Sthit Pragya*"

- d) One should try to identify the actions which are of the nature of “*Sacrifice*” or “*Yagya*”. They are actions which are not one’s duty but what one should do for the welfare of people in general.
- e) The last 18 shlokas of chapter 2 tell us about the qualities of a person who is a “*Sthit Pragya*”

**OBITUARY:** Sis. Dhun Fitter, member of Blavatsky Lodge with membership of 33 years passed away on 30th September 2021. She was an active member of her Mother Lodge – Besant Lodge, which used to meet at a member’s place in Princess Street. When Besant Lodge closed, her membership was transferred to Blavatsky Lodge. She was also a Co-Freemason with High Degree. May her soul be blessed with eternal peace.

## Kerala

On-line seminar on the book ‘*HUMAN REGENERATION*’ written by Radha Burnier:

In connection with the death anniversary of Dr. Radha S Burnier, former International President of the Theosophical Society, a Seminar was organized on 30-31 October 2021 on the book **The Human Regeneration**. The programme on the first day commenced at 7.00 p.m. with Universal Prayer. Bro. K. Dinakaran, Secretary K. T.F. welcomed the members and spoke on the noble life of Radhaji and her contribution towards the Theosophical Society and world at large. Dr. M.A. Raveendran, President, K.T. F., was the chief speaker of the day and he spoke on the first three chapters of the book. He said that without the first Object of T.S, the second and third objects become mere academic study only. We have to keep alive the spiritual intuition within us. The talk was followed by discussion in which Sis. Sripriya, H.Harihar Raghavan and Bro. E.V.G. Nambiar participated.

The programme on the second day commenced with the Universal Prayer. Dr. M.A. Raveendran presided. Bro. T.K. Nair, Perinjanam Lodge, spoke on the subject “**Our Approach to Theosophy.**” Bro. Damodaran, Trichur Lodge, spoke on “**Individual and Group Work.**” Bro. K. Dinakaran, expressed his views on “**Source of Spiritual Energy**”. The talks were followed by discussion and members actively participated in it. Bro. Harihar Raghavan who was closely associated with Radhaji shared his experiences with her and said that she lead a very simple life and courageously faced the challenges of life. She always believed in freedom of thought and the value of a truthful life based on Theosophical principle of One life. The Meeting came to a close at 8.30p.m.

## U.P. & Uttarakhand

Annie Besant’s Birthday: Many members of the Federation participated in the on-line talk organized by the Indian Section on 01 October, 2021, the birthday of Annie Besant. Sis. Linda Oliveira spoke on this occasion on ‘Annie Besant and the Way of the Warrior’. Besides, in the meeting organized by the International Headquarters, Adyar, Bro. Pedro Oliveira spoke on ‘Annie Besant in India’.

Several lodges like those of Agra, Gorakhpur, Varanasi observed this day by holding special programmes and talks on life and work of Annie Besant. Kashi Tattva Sabha Lodge of Varanasi organized a public talk by Bro. Gyaneesh Kumar Chaturvedi, a very senior member of Nirvana Lodge, on “Life and Work of Annie Besant.” Bro. Chaturvedi in his talk covered many aspects of Besant’s life and her multifarious activities as educationist, social reformer, political and moral regenerator, brilliant orator, author and spiritual leader.

## Conference of the Federation: The 102nd Annual Confer-

ence of this Federation was organized on line on 2-3 October 2021. Meeting of Federation council was held one day earlier on 01 October when annual report of activities for 2020-21 and statements of Income and Expenditure of the Federation as well as of *Dharm Path* for F. Y. 2020-21 were approved for presentation to general body. The Conference was inaugurated on 02 October. Federation President Bro. U.S. Pandey, after invoking the Universal Prayer, welcomed the chief guest Bro. C. A. Shinde, and all the participants and then offered his greetings. He also read the greeting messages received from Sis. Deepa Padhi, International Vice-President, Sis. Marja Artamaa International Secretary, Bro. Pradeep Gohil, President of the Indian Section and Bro. V. Narayanan, Treasurer of the Indian Section. Bro. S. K. Pandey, Federation Secretary, read out the greeting messages received from other Federations. Then other guests and lodge representatives offered their greetings. Thereafter Bro. Shinde inaugurated the conference and delivered his inaugural address. Federation Secretary thanked Bro. Shinde for his illuminating talk.

Thereafter the business session was held when Bro. S. K. Pandey read out minutes of the last meeting of general body held on 03 October 2020, it was confirmed. Then he presented annual report of activities for the year 2020-21, which was discussed and adopted. Km. Preeti Tewari, Treasurer, presented statements of Income and Expenditure of the Federation as well as of the Hindi journal *Dharm Path* for F.Y. 2020-21, which were adopted.

A seminar on the theme "Be in the World but not of the World" was held on 03 October. Sis. Bina Singh, Bro. Surhid Sudarshan Shah, Bro. Praveen Mehrotra and Sis. Vibha Saksena were the speakers and they presented their views from different perspectives. Bro. U.S. Pandey complimented the speakers. This was followed by the concluding session in which some members gave valuable suggestions for the propagation of theosophy. The session ended

with the vote of thanks given by the Federation Secretary Bro. S. K. Pandey.

Four on-line meetings of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, were organized in October, 2021, in which talks were delivered on the topics 'What is Theosophy?', 'Doctrine of Heart', 'Look to all situations with gratitude' and 'Qualifications for Discipleship'. These talks were delivered by Bro. U. S. Pandey, Bro. Pramil Dwivedi, Bro. Ashok Kumar Gupta, and Bro. B. K. Pandey respectively.

Nirvan Lodge, Agra, conducted physical meetings. Annie Besant's birthday was observed on 01 October when Bro. S.K. Shama, Bro. G.K. Chaturvedi, Bro. H.B. Pandey, Bro. S.S. Kapur and Bro. R.P. Sharma spoke on many aspects of her life and work. During meetings held on 07, 14, 21 October, talks were delivered on topics '*Aradhana*', '*Sadhana*', and 'I and My' by Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma, Sis. Pratibha Sharma and Bro. Harish Sharma respectively. A seminar on the theme 'O! Hidden Light shining in every creature' was organized on 28 October in which B. S. K. Sharma, Dr. C. R. Rawat, Dr. Harish Sharma, Dr. Pratibha Sharma and Bro. G.K. Chaturvedi spoke.

Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, held on-line meetings on 03, 17, and 24 October, in which talks were delivered on the topics 'Philosophy of Music', 'Three Halls lead to the end of turmoils', and 'The Causal Body'. The speakers were Sis. Jayshree Kannan, Bro. C.A. Shinde and Bro. Mathurnath respectively. An interview was held with Sis. Marja Artamaa on 31 October, 2021.

The lodge held three more weekly meetings in Hindi exclusively for the members of the Lodge. During such meetings held on 07, and 21 October, talks were delivered on the topic 'Allegory in Durgasaptashati', and '*Sukhi Jeevan ke Sutra-series III: Raag Dvesh aur unse nivritti*' by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri and Sis. Sushmja Tewari respectively. A guided Awareness meditation session was

conducted by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri on 28 October 2021.

Sarvhitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, organized four on-line meetings in October, when talks were delivered on the topics 'Life and work of Annie Besant, *'Brahma-Vigyan, 'Aim of Human Life', and 'Mysteries of Life and Death'* by Bro. Ajai Rai, Bro. Ram Achal, Acharya Santosh and Bro. S.B.R.Mishra respectively.

During the on-line meeting of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad held on 03 October, Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted study of the book *'The Masters and the Path'* - Ch. 11. In the meetings held on 10, 17, 24 and 31 October, summaries of The Bhagavad Gita- chapters 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 were presented by groups of young members: (i) Amaresh and Pranshee, (ii) Kritika, Smurti Sagar and Mansha, (iii) Bhaumik, Baivab and Pranshee, and (iv) Kritika, Amaresh, and Suhani, respectively.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted on-line study class for children and youth on Sunday morning at 09.30 a.m. The subjects covered during October, 2021 were 'Mantra Yoga' and 'Meditation.'

Noida Lodge held on-line meetings on 10 and 17 October when study of the book *The Voice of the Silence* was continued by Sis. Lalita Khatri.

Bro. S. S. Gautam delivered a talk at Chohan Lodge, Kanpur on 'Superstition' on 10 October. He also delivered talk on 'Dreams' in three sessions held on 17, 24 and 31 October 2021.

Anand Lodge, Allahabad, held meetings through WhatsApp and members listened to pre-recorded talks, on 03, 10, 17 and 24 October, on the topics 'Mahatma Gandhi and Theosophy, 'Power of Prayer', 'Membership of Theosophical Society', and 'Contribution of women in Bhartiya Sanskriti and Spirituality'. These talks were recorded by Sis. Sushma Srivastava, Sis. Ranjana Srivastava, Bro. K.K. Jaiswal and Dr. Geeta Singh respectively.

### **Talks in Delhi Federation:**

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Sis. Vibha Saksena delivered an on-line talk on the theme "Mystical Significance of Zodiac" on 03 October and Sis. Suvralina Mohanty anchored the programme of this talk.

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Sis. Suvralina Mohanty delivered an on-line talk on the theme 'Gayatri' on 10 October.

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Bro. S.K. Pandey delivered two on-line talks on the theme "*Ram ka Vairagya evam Yogavashishtha ki Shikshayen*". These talks were held on 23 and 30 October 2021.

### **Talk in a joint programme of three lodges of Mumbai Federation (Jyoti lodge) and Gujarat Federation (Rewa and Rohit Lodges):**

Sis. Vibha Saksena delivered a talk on 'Esoteric Significance of Kashi' on 12 October.

**Participation in the study class organized by the Indian Section:** About 10 members of the Federation participated in the on-line study class on the theme "Personality and Inner Life: Tuning the Soul's Instrument" conducted by Bro. Tim Boyd, International President on 8, 9 & 10 October, 2021.

Participation in the study class organized on-line by the School of Wisdom, Adyar: Three members of this Federation participated in six days' study class on the theme "Mindfulness in Daily Life" directed by Ven. Olande Ananda in October, 2021.

### **Contribution in the Indian Section on-line programmes:**

(i) Sis. Suvralina Mohanty anchored the programme of talk by Bro. Tim Boyd on 09 October 2021.

(ii) Sis. Vibha Saksena conducted study of the book “*Man and his Bodies*” by Annie Besant in two sessions on 23 and 30 October 2021.

#### **Contribution in International programmes:**

Sister Vibha Saksena delivered a talk on the topic “Man, know thyself” during a joint lodge meeting of Philippines Section held on 23 October 2021.

#### **Contribution in the events of other Forums:**

##### **Talks etc. in Young India Theosophists Group:**

Sis. Suvralini Mohanty moderated a short talk on ‘Vegetarianism and Occultism’ on 03 October. She also conducted study of the chapter ‘The Physical Plane’ from the book “Ancient Wisdom” on 24 October

Kritika Goel, a young member of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad, delivered a short talk on “Vegetarianism and Occultism” on 03 October, moderated the talk on the same topic on 10 October, moderated the talks on ‘Introduction’ and ‘The Physical Plane’ of the book *Ancient Wisdom* on 17 October and 24 October respectively.

Short talks on ‘Vegetarianism and Occultism’ were delivered by young members of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad- Mansha Mishra and Vansh Goel on 03 October and by Shruti Goel, Pranshee Mohanta and Bhaumik Bhatt on 10 October, 2021.

#### **National Lecturer**

On invitation by Barabati Lodge, Cuttack, Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered an on-line talk on the theme “Human Happiness” on 11.10.2021.

On invitation by Barabati Lodge, Cuttack, Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered an on-line talk on the theme “Allegory in Durgasaptshati” on 18.10.2021.

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Delhi, Bro. U.S.Pandey delivered an on-line talk on 16 October on the theme “OM and its Practical Significance”.

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered an on-line talk on the theme “Seven Portals”. It was held on 17 October.

Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered a talk on ‘Allegory in Durgasaptshati’ on 05 October, 2021. It was held in a joint programme of the three Lodges of Mumbai and Gujarat.

**Talk in Gujarat Federation:** On invitation by Rohit Lodge, Ahmadabad, Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered an on-line talk on the theme “Allegory in Durgasaptshati” on 16 October, 2021.

**International Seminar on *The Secret Doctrine*:** Bro. U. S. Pandey joined as a panelist in an international seminar organized on-line by ‘Adamant’ Lodge, Moscow of the Theosophical Society in Russia. The theme was “Sloka 8, of Stanza I of *The Secret Doctrine-Cosmogenesis*”. It was held on 30 October, 2021.

Several members from countries like Russia, Ukraine, Great Britain, Greece, South Korea, Australia, Portugal, Brazil, U.S.A. and India participated in this seminar.

#### **INDIAN SECTION PROGRAMME HELD IN OCTOBER**

##### **Study Class on Mahatma Letters**

National Lecturer Bro. N. C. Krishna delivered two lectures on Ch. Letter no.131 [ML-66] on 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October respectively.

Bro. K. Dinakaran, Secretary Kerala Theosophical Federa-

tion, delivered a talk on 22 October on Ch. letter no.110, 123 and 69 [ML -67, 68 and 69].

National Lecturer Bro. B.D. Tendulkar, explained Ch. letter no.97, 24, 95 and 25 [ML -70, 71, 72 and 73] on 29 October.

### **Programme organized in Hindi**

National Lecturer Bro. Naresh Thakaria gave a talk on 2<sup>nd</sup> October on, 'Be Wise to gain Peace by Theosophy'.

Bro. Rajeev Mathur, Secretary, Delhi Theosophical Federation, delivered a talk on 16 October and the subject he spoke on was "The Laws of The Higher Life".

Sis. Vibha Saksena, Secretary, Noida Theosophical Lodge, dealt with the subject of Theosophical Manual Book -*Man and His Bodies*.

### **Lectures organized in English and Study Classes**

Bro. Dhruv Prasad Panda, Former President of Sambalpur Theosophical Lodge, delivered lecture on THE ESSENTIALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY [Part- II]. It was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

Bro. K. Sivaprasad, National Director, TOS in India, spoke on "Role of TOS in Spiritual and Social Development".

Dr. P. S. P. Sarangi of Cuttack Theosophical Lodge explained Chapter-3- "EFFICIENT METHODS" from the book "*The Principle of Theosophical Works*" written by I K Taimni. It was held in a study- cum-lecture programme.

### **Special Functions Organized by the Indian Section**

Brother Tim Boyd, The President of the Theosophical Society, conducted on-line STUDY-CLASS ON 8, 9 and 10 October 2021. The theme was- "PERSONALITY AND THE INNER LIFE: TUNING THE SOUL'S INSTRUMENT"

More than 150 members participated on each day through Zoom On-Line. Bro, Tim Boyd described [1] What is Personality and working of the Personality on 08-09. October with detail discussion followed by the question and answer sessions. On the last day of the study class he described the meditation diagram as given by HPB. Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri helped the Indian Section to organize the programme, whereas Sis. Catalina, Sis. Suvralina and Sis. Manshi were the moderators of the programme. Sis. Uma Bhattacharyya gave vote of thanks to Bro. Tim, and to all the participants from India and other Sections.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr. Radha Burnier Memorial Lecture : Dr. Deepa Padhi, International Vice-President, Theosophical Society, delivered the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dr. Radha Burnier Memorial Lecture on "Dr. Radha Burnier and Practical Theosophy". More than 65 members of the TS from India and other Sections joined in the programme. Sis. Shivani Keshari was the moderator of the programme.



## *Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom...*

There is no such thing as heresy; for no man is another man's judge and master in any sphere of thought, whether in the sphere of religion, of politics, morals, or philosophy. Thought must be free and unfettered, otherwise you will have stagnation and death. But because that is true, do not make the illogical deduction: 'It does not matter what I think'. It matters enormously what you think. If you think falsely, you will act mistakenly; if you think basely, your conduct will suit your thinking. So think your noblest, your highest, your purest. Think the best you can, and not the worst. Aim high, for the higher the arrow is aimed, the higher the mark it hits. Keep your own ideals lofty, while you keep your judgement of others charitable; and your ideals shall lift you, and your charity shall raise your fallen brother. For never yet did a man rise by being trampled on. Man only rises by being loved in the midst of his sins and follies, and as we deal with our brethren, so do those who are above us deal with our outer selves. Such our final lesson, and I finish with the words of the Upanishad (*Svetasvatara*, II.14): 'The embodied Self, beholding his real nature, obtains his true end, and every pain ceaseth'.

Annie Besant

*The Wisdom of the Upanishad-s*