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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

A STEP FORWARD

This year Guru Purnima falls on Wednesday, 13 July 2022. It is observed every year on the Full Moon Day in the month of Asadha (or *Asala*), as per the Hindu Lunar calendar. It is the day when one offers deep respect to their spiritual masters, teachers or Gurus. In Sanskrit “*Gu*” means darkness and “*Ru*” means the one who dispels it. So, the one who is capable of removing the darkness is a Guru. This is what is said in *Advayatrak Upnishad*. The Guru is a spiritual guide who enlightens his disciples through his knowledge and teachings. It is beneficial for everyone to carry out yogic sadhana and meditation. The Guru Purnima is also celebrated every year as an occasion to thank our teachers for all the knowledge which we have received from them and to seek their blessings.

It is believed that Lord Shiva became ‘*Adiguru*’ - the first guru on earth, on Guru Purnima Day. A Yogi emerged in the Himalayas about 15,000 years ago. Nobody knew anything about him. The simple looking Yogi had sharp and extra ordinary personality. There was no sign of life when one saw him. But sometimes he used to shed tears of ecstasy. People did not understand the reason for this. Exhausted Lord Shiva slowly started going. But seven determined men stayed with him. When Lord Shiva opened his eyes, those seven people wanted to know about him. The seven men wanted to experience ecstasy. Lord Shiva ignored their request and told them that they have not yet developed and reached the stage to experience ecstasy.

He told those seven men the methods of meditation and became engrossed in meditation. Many days and years passed, but Shiva did not pay attention to the seven men. After 84 years of spiritual practice at the time of *Dakshinayan* in the summer solstice, Shiv incarnated as a yogi and saw them. He found that all the seven persons were now ready to attain knowledge. He realized that there could not be any delay in imparting knowledge to them. On the next full moon day,

Lord Shiva accepted to be their Guru. After this Lord Shiva turned towards the south and sat down, and passed on the science of yoga to these seven men. These seven men were later known as *Saptarishi*. This is the reason why Lord Shiva is also called *Adiyogi* or *Adiguru*.

Buddhists celebrate Guru Purnima in the honour of Lord Gautama Buddha. It is believed that Lord Buddha gave his first sermon on this day. After five weeks of achieving enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, Buddha went from Bodh Gaya to Sarnath, a suburb of Kashi or Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, and gave his first sermon on this Full Moon Day. Even in Jainism, this day is celebrated as the beginning of *Chaturmaas* or four months, which are reserved for penance, austerities, fasting and religious observances. Theosophy has taken the best of all religions and Theosophists observe this day in meditation with the Masters in their mind. Your real Guru is truly within you. You are the one which can remove all fears and ignorance. Swami Ram Krishna Paramhansa once said, “he alone is the true teacher who is illumined by the light of true knowledge”. Your Guru helps you connect to the Guru within each one of you. He resides in your *Vishudha Chakra*, located on the throat and awakens when you surrender to your higher self.

The relationship between the Guru and the Disciple is considered very sacred and is purely spiritual in nature, based on *Jnana* or Spiritual Knowledge and *Sadhana* or Spiritual Practice. A guide is needed in one’s spiritual journey and he needs to be an authority in a particular field. A person who is an authority in the field of spirituality is known as a Guru. He is someone, who has already tread on the spiritual path under the guidance of His Spiritual Guide and has access to the Universal Mind and Intellect.

The Guru guides his disciples according to their spiritual level and the capacity to imbibe knowledge and helps them to develop skills such as perseverance, dedication, tenacity, compassion, etc. All these skills are intrinsic to being a good seeker and vital to strengthen our spiritual journey. May this Guru Purnima Day accelerate our spiritual journey and be a step forward in the right direction.

TIMBOYD

“SMALL ACTS WITH GREAT LOVE”

IT is an understatement to say that we find ourselves living in challenging times. Right now any direction we look, there seems to be some looming crisis. In H. P. Blavatsky’s “The Golden Stairs” the person who aspires to wisdom is charged with “a valiant defense of those who are unjustly attacked”. But where do we begin with those who are unjustly attacked? Certainly there are human conditions of unjust attacks, person to person, nation against nation, but there is also the natural world, which is under an unrelenting and unjustifiable attack from humanity as a whole.

In these moments, not just within the Theosophical Society (TS), but in the world, it seems that many people are reaching out for some spiritual grounding — a sense of something more real than the turmoil they are experiencing. While there is such a thing as genuine spirituality, from my point of view an untested spirituality is somehow not real.

On a sunny day, with good health and a pocket full of money, spirituality is not a difficult thing to proclaim. However, the course of every life is filled with challenges. One of life’s great challenges is to discover and exhibit what is in fact real. The great saint Kabir made the statement: “What Kabir talks of is only what he has lived through. If you have not lived through something, it is not true.”

For some years I worked in hospice, caring for the dying. When people would die, it was often unsettling and confusing to the people they knew in life. Friends and acquaintances, when speaking to the loved ones who remained, did not know what to say. Very often people would say things like “he/she is in a better place”, “it’s God’s will”, or “at least you had 10 good years together (or 15, 20, and so on, years)”. These kind of remarks are more a sign of people’s personal discomfort, unfamiliarity, and perhaps fear of this moment. But it is something that comes from this category of un-lived truths. To someone who is grieving, they need companionship, not pronouncements. Too often, people fail in that regard. Until we have lived it, it is not true for us. Without having had the experience within our heart, spiritual sounding words can flow too easily from our lips.

When we talk about a human life, all of us are experienced in it.

Each of us is here for a very short period of time — if we are lucky, 100 years — but it is short, and filled with crises and joys. During that time many things happen, and we try to make sense of them. Very often the deepest meaning we find is in some outlook related to spirituality. An American humorist once made the point that “Life is full of miserableness, loneliness, and suffering, and it’s all over too quickly.” Crises and loss seem to be the main ways that we deepen, as well as joy. Every life has its share of them. So when we think about what life is, it is many things. It is growth and creation, also it is destruction and decline. The great spiritual Masters throughout the ages have repeatedly tried to draw our attention to the fact that it is *all* of these things at once. Try to ignore any part of it, and we limit our access to truth.

Periodically I reread the *Bhagavadgitâ*, and always I find new insights. It is a source of great enjoyment and instruction whenever I get to the chapter where Arjuna recognizes that Krishna is not merely a friend, or a knowledgeable charioteer, but that he is, in fact, the supreme Lord. Arjuna asks him for the boon of seeing him in his true form. Krishna obliges, and when Arjuna sees all that, his hair stands on end. It is much more than what he could have expected.

What is described as being seen within this “true form” are *all* of the devas (angels) and gods, innumerable eyes seeing in every direction, fires coming from his body “burning up universes”. The *Gitâ* is the conversation that results from Arjuna’s indecision on the cusp of the battle between two warrior families, his family, the Pandavas, and his opponents, the Kauravas. Arjuna sees all the warriors of the Kaurava family, flowing into the infinite mouths of Krishna, and being crushed in his teeth, but also all of humanity is flowing into the mouths of Krishna. As much as life is creation, it is equally destruction.

When we talk about Oneness and Brotherhood, often we limit our consideration to Light and enlightenment. Oneness is a solidarity, a shared, mutual experience of life. But life is a sharing in both its lightened and dark aspects — in enlightenment and in ignorance, equally so. There is no such thing as one without the other. It is an immature approach to the spiritual life to want the icing on the cake and not the cake.

In spiritual traditions around the world there is a term that comes up again and again — emptiness. It is a term which is equated with wisdom or enlightenment. You find emptiness in the Sufi tradition, in

Buddhism and Christianity as well. The idea expressed is that the deepest wisdom, or connection with the Divine, is related to this experience of emptiness. Saint Paul talked about the experience of communion with the Divine, saying: “To be absent from the body is to be present with God.” To be absent (empty) from all of the senses, from all the experience with desires that we treasure is to be present with the Divine.

In Buddhism emptiness is highly emphasized in the six *pâramitas* (perfections, or virtues). HPB’s *The Voice of the Silence* lists seven. In all of the approaches to the perfections, the final one is *prajñâ* — wisdom. A great emphasis is placed on that in the sense that patience, perseverance, morality, and all the other perfections, even meditation, or *dhyâna*, are deepening, and each one is regarded as an antidote to different conditions of the human mind. But they would say: “When in doubt, look to wisdom.” When in doubt try to connect with whatever your experience of emptiness, or wisdom, might be. So what is this emptiness?

I spent a good deal of time during my life actively involved in a Buddhist approach to spirituality. This whole consideration of emptiness is central in Buddhism, but it breaks your head when you first encounter it. It is hard to get a handle on it, necessarily so. One of the great presentations of this Wisdom Tradition is called the Heart Sutra, or the *Prajñâ Pâramita Sutra*, in which the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara gives the teaching to a disciple of the Buddha. In it, his sole focus is on wisdom and emptiness. To me it is revealing, because the entire discussion is about what wisdom is *not*, not what it is. From beginning to end it is a negation of everything that we might think wisdom could be.

The Bodhisattva tells the disciple that emptiness is the original character of *everything*: It is not born, not annihilated, not tainted, not pure, it does not increase or decrease. Then he goes on to talk about how with emptiness there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no body, no mind. And he goes on layer after layer of what it is *not*. This emptiness the sutra attempts to convey is not a void. In a sense it is a Space-like understanding, and Space contains *everything*.

As individuals we move and function within space; nations, houses, ideas, all are within space. It is probably our closest metaphor for God, or the Divine, something that is present everywhere, that

participates in everything, out of which everything comes into being, yet it is completely unaffected by anything created or destroyed, by ignorance or enlightenment. Understanding this is described as the pathway to enlightenment. Enlightenment does not arise because we sit in meditation, or from the things we do for others, or ourselves. All of these things need to take place, but wisdom only makes itself known to us when every category in which we attempt to contain it drops away. That is the difficulty.

Very often the statement is made: “With age comes wisdom.” As someone who has entered the category of “old”, this is a statement that I have to disagree with. A more correct statement would be: “With age comes the possibility of a deepening wisdom.” One of the things that aging does is that it strips many things away from us. All of us who in our youth were active, perhaps even vain, proud of our good looks, our hair, our smile, find that with time the hair thins and disappears, that youthful vibrancy diminishes. With time our attachments to many superficial things can lessen. This can have the effect of allowing us to see something that is more real, that was always present, but hidden by our youthful involvement in a range of activity that has faded away.

Many of us find ourselves drawn to some form of spirituality because we feel it will benefit us, that in some way peace and tranquility, are possibilities for us *if* we follow this avenue. While this is certainly true, when we think in terms of the enlightened beings such as Krishna, the Buddha, and we study the way that they had to interact with the world, it might not fit with our normal ideas. For example, Krishna, in the Mahabharata, is not only fully engaged in a war, but he has chosen a side in the war. He is not merely an all-seeing witness of the violence, he is on the side of Arjuna and his family, and assists them in the battle. So, there is this war, where he seems to be favouring one side, but in the end he claims everybody in the universal experience of death. *All* is completely equal.

There is a well-known story about one of the people that the Buddha had to deal with. There was a great murderer called Angulimâla. He was given the name because when he murdered his victims he would cut one of their fingers (*anguli*) and place it on his necklace (*mâla*). He was famed and feared for this. On one occasion the Buddha was near the forest where the murderer was staying, and he decided he would walk there alone. His disciples warned him of the danger,

yet he went alone into those woods where Angulimâla lived. As the Buddha was walking, Angulimâla spotted him and told himself: "I have another victim!"

As the Buddha was meditatively walking through the forest, Angulimâla started to run after him. The Buddha continued walking slowly, never increasing his pace, but somehow the murderer could never catch up. He ran faster, but he could never bridge the distance. Finally, he shouted: "Stop! What are you doing?" The Buddha kept walking and said, "I have stopped!", to which Angulimâla responded, "No, you haven't!" This dialogue repeated itself until the Buddha said: "I have stopped from violence, from killing, from the pursuit of desires that harm others. You have not." At that moment this dialogue sank in, and the murderer went on to become one of the great disciples sitting at the feet of the Buddha.

These are stories about the vision and effects of a genuine spirituality, but it always comes back to us: How do we behave? What do we do based on the situations we are facing in our world? Recently the news around the world is about a new war that has broken out between Ukraine and Russia. How do we help? What do we do? Often the thinking and conversation runs to who is right and who is wrong. Based on our judgment we decide and then often take the next step of creating an enemy. Within us we identify and create an enemy, and in so doing we become participants in the process of war-making. Nothing good comes out of war, except what it generates as an enlightened response among people.

One of our TS members who periodically comes to Adyar to visit with us, is from Russia. In talking with him the other day, he said he has to return now, because his visa is expiring. He is not involved in the war, but when he returns home he will find that, as a consequence of war, his life savings will have been reduced by sixty per cent. More than half of the value of his lifetime earnings has vanished almost overnight. The job he worked for many years is also gone. Why? because he works for Google, who, as a party to sanctions against Russia, is no longer operating in his country. He also is "unjustly attacked".

I received a letter from one of the representatives of the TS in Russia. It was not addressed to me, but to his "Ukrainian brothers and sisters in the TS". It was a very brave thing for him to do, because

that letter could land him in jail. It was a letter of open support for the Ukrainian people and a statement of the fact that the *people* of Russia are not an enemy to them. He wrote it knowing that already thousands of Russians have been imprisoned for writing or saying similar things.

Many of the millions of Ukrainians who have left their homes in war-torn areas have arrived in Hungary, a neighbouring country to Ukraine. In that country the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) and other groups are inviting refugees, people they have never met, into their homes. People in America are putting together homoeopathic medicine packages, food, clothing, toys for children to send to them. Globally there is the question "what can I do for *all* who are affected by senseless and unnecessary violence?" And there is a response.

These are some of the things that fill our attention in these times, and every time there are issues like this. The difference now is the growing awareness that we are globally interconnected. If it was not clear already when the pandemic rose up and a small virus brought every country and economic class to their knees, we become aware that this is one life that we share. It comes back again to "what do we do?" There is no prescription for that.

Mother Theresa is well known for having said: "We can do no great things." Most of us want to do the great thing that will change the world, that will end war, poverty, hunger, and unloving behaviour. All of this we would do if it was within our capacity, which, as individuals, it is not. But her full statement was: "We can do no great things; we can only do small things with great love."

We can care for the people within the circle which we inhabit. We can think of the people beyond our reach. We can devise ways to support those things that support others. It spreads. You do not throw a rock in a pond and the ripples stop; they spread. This is worth remembering if we ever feel powerlessness in the face of very challenging times.

Wherever we are, small acts with great love invariably reach beyond the boundaries of our locale.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, May 2022)

[The theme of the Indian Section Convention-II was “**Look Beyond Yourself**”. It was held on 30 December 2021 in which five members expressed their views on the theme of the session. Their on-line short talks have been published in the following pages.]

CHAGANTI ADITI MAITHREYA*

THE FRUIT OF LOVE IS SERVICE

I would like to begin with a significant event in Madam Blavatsky’s life that many of you may already be familiar with. Once when Madame Blavatsky was going to travel to New York a very interesting thing occurred. She had a first-class ticket for New York and was going to board the steamer. But just then, she happened to notice a poor woman crying on the platform with her little children. She went up to her and asked her what happened. The woman explained that she had no money to travel because someone had cheated her. Hearing this, Madame Blavatsky immediately got her own first-class ticket exchanged for steerage tickets for herself and the woman’s family. She ended up travelling all the way to America in a crowded steerage of a liner.

Her compassion and empathy for that family was so much that she instantly wanted to help them. It is indeed true, that there is a compulsion to serve when you love. And that compulsion often translates into meaningful action that helps alleviate the pain and suffering of another being. And as J.Krishnamurti said that real love *means* instant action. One of the most common examples can be seen in our own homes. A mother knows when her child is in danger and immediately rushes to help. A father wants his child to succeed and goes to great lengths to help him achieve his dreams. Neither of them needs a special occasion to help their child nor do they expect anything in return. Their actions stem from the unconditional love they have for their child. It is pure and unlike any other.

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As a member of The Theosophical Society, I feel immensely blessed to be part of an organization where this ideology is woven into its very DNA. Our first objective itself is, “*To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour*”. Moreover, one of the main reasons Dr. Annie Besant started The Theosophical Order of Service was because there was too much visible suffering in the lower planes of consciousness. Unsurprisingly, the motto of the TOS is, ‘*A union of All who Love in the Service of all that Suffers*’ and its framework includes nurturing social action as a spiritual practice. One of the objectives of the World Care Way movement founded by theosophists is to address the moral and spiritual sufferings of the world.

Here, I would like to draw your attention to the word ‘Love’ for it is the key ingredient to selfless social action. In life, we come across many instances where an act of service is performed with a selfish motive. The giver first analyses what he will get in return for the help he offers. Sometimes, it is more of a photo opportunity to build an image or show the public that he is a “social worker”. The moment we start seeing our own gain while helping someone, that act is no longer born out of love. It becomes more of a transaction.

In *At The Feet of the Master*, the fourth qualification is ‘Love’. But if you look at the Viveka Chudamani, it is ‘*an intense desire for liberation*’ or *Mumukshatva*. The Master, while teaching Alcyone explained that both are one and the same if they are genuine. Alcyone carefully explains, “Often it [Love] is translated as an intense desire for liberation from the round of births and deaths, and for union with God. But to put it in that way sounds selfish, and gives only part of the meaning. It is not so much desire as *will*, resolve, determination... It is indeed the will to be one with God, not in order that you may escape from weariness and suffering, but in order that because of your deep love for Him you may act with Him and as he does. Because He is Love, you, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and Love also.”

He further elaborates that this boils down two things in our day-to-day lives. The first is that we must be mindful not to hurt any living thing and second is that we shall always be watching for an opportunity to help. In my experience, this awareness and keen desire to help is often inculcated at a young age. I have been fortunate to be part of organizations like The International Order of the Round Table through which we were involved in many social service activities from a young

age. Through ceremonies, I learnt about the qualities of kindness and helpfulness and their value in life. I remember how during our meetings; we would brainstorm the various causes we could support. Whether it was relief material for a natural disaster or the school fees for an underprivileged child's education, if any of us heard that help was needed, we would discuss it and come up with a way to help. Our recent plan is about the 'Feeding the Hungry' project where we provide free breakfast to the underprivileged. Having grown up within such a circle, it was natural for these values to translate into my work ethic.

As an entrepreneur, I am happy to share that our company has worked on many causes, be it supporting our vendors during the pandemic or offering animal- friendly alternatives to cruelty-based products. Each day we try to see what we can do differently to make the planet greener. With time, we've realized that small changes in the choices we make – from using a cloth bag to recycling scrap cloth, can go a long way.

Alcyone highlights the importance of small gestures too. He writes, "You must render it [your intense desire of service] in small things every day, that the habit may be formed, so that you may not miss the rare opportunity when the great thing offers itself to be done." While reading this, I was instantly reminded of the Girl Guide Movement. The international Boy Scouts & Girl Guides Movement is another movement that seeks to inculcate these virtues in young minds. As a girl guide myself, I have a fond memory of maintaining a diary called 'Daily Good Turn' in which, at the end of every day, we had to record a good deed we had done. They were simple acts of kindness [like keeping water for birds or helping my grandmother in the kitchen] but their impact was huge.

Our acts of service, however, mustn't be limited to just human beings. We must be ever-willing to help all sentient beings who are suffering, like the plants, animals and birds. They can feel pain too. While many are aware of the suffering of animals, they tend to overlook the suffering of plants. But if you look closely, plants have feelings too. The Touch-me-not plant, also known as the Sensitive Plant, is an ideal example of how plants can feel too. It is, therefore, our duty to be a voice for the voiceless. By being more mindful of our lifestyle choices we can drive change. From the food we eat to the clothes and cosmetics we buy; we must try to make more conscious choices that aren't harmful to any other being.

When our actions are driven by our love for other beings, we are on the Path [of enlightenment]. As Alcyone points out, "He who is on the Path exists not for himself, but for others; he has forgotten himself, in order that he may serve them." The saints incarnate only for the upliftment of the world, to take across the ocean of worldly life the poor and meek. The Bodddhisatva path is a path of renunciation which is beyond service to humanity and involves absolute love. The teachings of our World Teachers reiterate the need for us to live in harmony and help each other.

The Ritual of The Mystic Star quotes the teachings of Jesus Christ in which He says, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The message of our Masters rings true even today. Time and again, we are presented with situations that demand us to come together and serve one another. The most recent example is how during the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire medical fraternity came together to serve humankind. They made huge sacrifices while performing their duties. To ease their burden, the rest of the community pitched in. Whether it was delivering homemade meals for home quarantined patients or finding a bed for a stranger, everyone was doing their bit to serve society and minimize the suffering. Our compassion pushed us to serve even in severe lockdowns and together we were able to successfully navigate through some of the most challenging times.

As we grapple to make sense of the world around us today, it is important for us to carefully discriminate between what's permanent and what is transient. In the *At The Feet of the Master*, it is said: "Of all the qualifications, Love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest, and all the rest without it would never be sufficient."

In the Round Table we salute the King within us with our Heart, Head & Hand – signifying that with all our emotions, thoughts and actions we will serve the Higher Self. On that note, I would like to conclude with Alcyone's words: "The wisdom which enables you to help, the will which directs the wisdom, the love which inspires the will – these are your qualifications. Will, Wisdom and Love are the three aspects of the Logos; and you who wish to enrol yourselves to serve Him, must show forth these aspects in the world."

AJEESH KUMAR*

MANKIND IS ONE

When I was a child I wanted to hear stories daily. In this context my mother put in great effort. Daily she had to find new stories for me. Through my mother I came to know about Ramayana, Mahabharata and about Hindu Gods. Unknowingly my mother in those days gave me a new organ or a new spectacle for my eyes and the power of the lens increased day by day.

I also troubled my father and through him I heard the stories of Vikramaditya and the contribution of other great kings to our nation. Before joining the school I got a foundation on the concept of Hinduism and Hindu Gods and became proud of being a *Bharatiya* through my parents. When I learned to read, my parents gave me story books which were also based on Hinduism or Indian culture and tradition. While in school I got *Panchatantra* story book which influenced me a lot. Now also when I take a decision, unknowingly those stories help me. When I completed my schooling, I got a copy of *Bagavadgita* with Malayalam translation. From this book I got a different angle of Hinduism than what I learned from my parents and friends. From my parents I understood that a genuine Hindu worships daily, goes to the Temple and so if I follow this practice and if god is happy with me I will get all my wishes fulfilled. The method of pleasing God changed with age, instead of a simple namaskar I started offering flowers to make Him happy, then it changed to offering money, performing *poojas* etc. I felt that what makes me happy that pleases my God as well. But when I read the *Bagavadgita*, I noticed the words - “*Sarvopanishado Gavo*”, “*Chatur varnyam maya sritsta*”. I felt that due to *karma* God separated people into different castes and each caste has its own privilege directly given by God Himself, i.e. *Chaturvarna*. I also read that *varna* of a person is not decided by birth but by his karma

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only. I was totally confused by looking through my new lens. Then I searched *Upanishads* everywhere. In those days internet was not popular. Then I searched Upanishads in bookshops, and nearby temples. I was totally confused, many books with huge price were there but I could not find Upanishads. Besides, my mind said, ‘without understanding Upanishads the knowledge about Hinduism will remain incomplete’.

While I looked through those glasses I felt so proud as a Hindu and as a *Bharatiya*. If one lives like a Hindu it’s enough. I believed it is because of my previous birth’s good karma that I got an opportunity to born in this great country and also got an opportunity to live here as a Hindu. By God’s grace my pride turned into sympathy and not to hate others and their religious and cultural views.

I could get book on Upanishad from the Sri Rama Krishna Math bookstall. I developed good relationship with the Sanyasees of Sri Rama Krishna Math, especially with the head of the Thrissur Sri Ramakrishna Math. And then only I came to know that Sri Rama Krishna gave due respect to all religions. Relationship with Sri Ramakrishna Math’s Head gave me different views and angles of Hinduism. From Upanishads I understood about the relationship between *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*. Physical body will go, but *Atma* remains. We all will become one with the Paramatma. I could understand the *Bagavadgita* in greater depth, when I read the Upanishads. But all views were through the Hindu lens only. When I thought about *Pramatma* I saw only Lord Vishnu who laid in *palazhi*. I can’t think about a Christian *Atma* or a Muslim *Atma*.

Unfortunately for me the Head of Sreeramakrishna Math was transferred to Delhi’s Ashram. And his going from Thrissur deprived me of having good and useful knowledge of the subject. During those days I was a medical representative in a pharma company and so I knew all the Doctors of the medical college of Thrissur. One doctor who knows me personally called me one day, and said that if you want to know Upanishads then meet the superintendent of the medical college. He is taking classes in his house. With my eagerness about knowing Upanishads, I met superintendent on that very day. The Doctor thought that I am a medical student who requires his support. But when I told him about my purpose of meeting, he said that on every

Wednesday we are having classes, come to my home. The meeting of Upasika Lodge, Thrissur, was held on every Wednesday for the study of Upanishads.

When I went to his house, as a good medical practitioner he diagnosed my disease and gave me a prescription. "Come on every Wednesday and attend the class". I felt some strong vibration from his heart. I myself got admitted as his patient. That doctor diluted my new organ which was given by my mother. Through that thinner glass, I felt that all religions are one and the same. All light inside the people are same. The same Upanishadic words without that spectacle showed me that Christians, Muslims, Buddhists all have an Atma or something beyond the words, which connects us. The biblical statement 'We are from the same Father' showed me the path to *Paramatma*.

If I go to the nearby state in India then only I say that I am a Keralite and if I go to the other country then only I say that I am an Indian. In the same way if we can uplift us from this physical or mundane world we can find all mankind as one. If we go beyond, then we can understand, treat and regard all animal kingdom, vegetable kingdom, mineral kingdom and all living beings alike. Then only we can see the same light in all. If anyone knows this *Oneness* he feels harmony everywhere. He will live in his present religion with a new vision. He will not argue that his religion has something special.

As the Buddhist disciple once said before the *Satori* (sudden enlightenment) :

A tree was a tree, a river was a river, an animal was an animal, a mountain was a mountain.

But after *Satori*:

A tree **is** a tree, a river **is** a river, an animal **is** an animal, a mountain **is** a mountain.

The one who knows and realizes **That Oneness**, he only can achieve the first object of the Theosophical Society.

ARUNIMA BARUAH*

SELFLESSNESS AND DIVINE LIFE

Look beyond yourself means coming back to Yourself. The statement looks paradoxical at the outset. But if we go deep into it, we will understand true meaning of it. We have two level of existence - 1) Personality level (i.e. mind, body and emotion). 2) The individuality level (i.e. Atma, Buddhi and Higher Manas). To know the difference between the two, we have to understand first of all "Who am I?" and "Who am I not?". Here "Who am I" means we are not merely our physical identity. It is our Higher Self, which is our original nature, which is eternal. "Who am I not" means we are not the personality, i.e. our physical body, our emotion and thought which are transitory. An impressive quote by Swami Sukhabudhananda which needed to be mentioned here. It said, "There are two words for the self. One is *Asmita* and the other is *Ahankara*. Both mean 'I' but *Asmita* is 'I' with purity". For an ignorant person 'I' means the physical body because "*Dehe Pushte Aham Pushtaha, Dehe Nashte Aham Nashtaha*" (when the body is healthy I am healthy, when the body is destroyed I am destroyed). Our journey is to explore our divine self- i.e. the higher consciousness, which is one with the Universal Spirit. Due to "Avidya" we seek happiness in the realm of personal mind, which is conditioned by our belief system. One must transcend the lower mind to enter the real world. It is the journey from *Ahankara* to *Asmita*. i.e a journey from "lower yourself to Higher Yourself". It is the evolution of the consciousness - journey of the soul from material to spiritual. Such souls are not attracted by any object of senses because they know their true nature. Each individual is bound to come to that state by the process of evolution; but it takes many lifetimes for the soul to rise to that level depending at what stage of evolution the soul is in.

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The individual who wants to live a divine life must be aware of his potentiality. He must realize that he has all the capacities to be with the Divine. He must know that evolution does not mean growing old. It involves a certain level of awareness. He must think beyond his petty self so that he can realize the universal oneness. He must be aware and alert all the time of the fact that he is immortal and divine. The individual who strives for a blessed life has to undergo certain disciplinary measures. By reading scriptures, contemplating upon them, help a lot. Occult science shows us that there is no limit to the gradual unfoldment of the Divine life. Effective techniques of character building are found in occultism, by following which one can purify his lower vehicles and after being purified this pristine personality becomes a fitting channel of the higher consciousness to work through. By meditation one can transcend his consciousness to a higher level, where his awareness expands, he realizes that essentially he is divine. He becomes aware of his tendencies and habits and the way his mind works. He is no longer slave of his desire, passion, pride, anger, hatred pleasure etc.,. He is now ready to let go his lower self and realizes the universal oneness. This emancipated soul is no longer limited by parts. It is conscious of the undivided whole. His selfishness vanishes. Self-love changes to divine love. His body and mind work for work's sake. He becomes selfless by denying his desires. His awareness now becomes experiential, not conceptual. Clara M. Codd in her book "*The Technique Of The Spiritual Life*" tells how the famous physicist Nikola Tesla practiced to deny himself. He used to say "If I had something I particularly liked, a sweet, cake or chocolate, I gave it away, although I suffered in doing so. Was there some task or exercise I disliked, I did it, no matter how inclination pulled. As the years passed the conflict ceased. My wish and my will became one." This is complete self-denial, true asceticism. According to H.P.B. self-sacrifice is "The giving to others more than to oneself". Theosophical idea of charity means not only physical aid provided to the sufferers. It means personal mercy and kindness, personal sympathy in their need. The divine life will be achieved only through love, selfless service for all life around us. In this context the words of Sadhu Vaswani can be put

forward as, "Never for a moment forget that life and all its bounties are given to you as a trust to be spent in the service of the poor and the needy, in the service of brother birds and animals."

One who wants to lead a divine life should be alert all the time and guard himself from being derailed from the path of spirituality. If consciousness is entangled with our personal matter, it is very difficult for the consciousness to perceive the higher ideals. H.P.B. in "*The Voice of the Silence*" said "The self of matter and the Self of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both". So silencing our lower nature is very essential. By doing so gradually we will be able to fill the higher impulses where sense of oneness is realized. Our lower nature will be more in tune with the perception of real nature Now we will live life not only for ourselves but for the whole, for the humanity and for the whole universe. Our works now become worship. We "rejoice in renouncing". In such state our life become an offering on the altar of sacrifice. We are in a state of enlightenment, *stitaprajna*. We are at "peace that passeth understanding". We live a blessed or divine life bringing Devachan to the physical plane.

Now, I would like to conclude with a sloka from *Ishavasyopanishad* :

Ishaa vaasyam idam sarvam

Yat kincha jagatyaam jagat

Tena tyaktena bhunjeetha

Maa gridhah kasya svid dhanam

SHREEYASHI OJHA*

LOOK BEYOND YOURSELF AND THE FIRST OBJECT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

To “Look beyond oneself” simply means to break the barrier of the self-perceived image of the self as well as the other, and to view it from an equitable plain with complete objectivity. There lies within each one of us, a constant friction thus segregating every notion between the two: I and the Other or Me and You.

To cognize this difference, one must comprehensively understand the two terms:-

Me(अहम्) comprises of MY thoughts, My ideas, My greed, My desire, My ego. Everything that I am made of is the “ME” and so perhaps, अहम् forms a part of अहंकार i.e. Ego. But one must acknowledge that the Self transcends the content of consciousness and me forms merely a part of it.

Similarly, You is the sheer “Perception” of what you are. Our mind which is the core of the ME has made certain observations and stereotypes on the basis of which it has formed images. Therefore, both ME and YOU are images based on how I perceive.

J. Krishnamurti states that, “There is no perception if the perception is through an image.” The said image is formed within our mind which is the focal point of me. For instance, if we take our mind to be a vessel and everything that we perceive i.e. all the images as its contents then we can conclude that there must be an image of me within my mind too. In order to Look Beyond Yourself you must break the self-perceived image of me and you by training your mind to observe without evaluating.

* Shreeyashi Ojha joined The Theosophical Society (Anand Lodge, Allahabad) in March 2021. She is an ardent follower of the tenets of the Theosophical Society and strives to propagate Theosophy amongst the youth.

The next quest that awaits us is, how do we do that? The answer is by simply being aware of each thought, action or image that we create, and by knowing who we truly are. There is a famous saying that, “We are all made of stardust,” i.e. we are the fragments of the universe in pursuit of feeling one with it. The differentiation between Us and the Truth is a veil of ignorance, a garb of ego which needs to be identified in order to understand the higher truth. Madame H.P. Blavatsky states, “The universe is worked and guided from within outwards,” and I believe that because we are mere fragments of the universe, so are we.

This world is full of *Maya* or “Illusion” and we are so wrapped up with having to think, do or act that we do not understand reflectively and profoundly of what takes place before we think, act or do something. I think it is imperative to reflect backwards or inwards i.e. to stop searching for answers elsewhere and to begin our search within ourselves. To understand that there are no roots as deep as those that bind our Mind (*Manas/Viveka*) to our Soul (*Atma*). By conquering our battles within ourselves we win the war to look beyond. In this conquest our mind i.e. *Chitta* is our commander and our weapon is “The Knowledge Of Absolute Truth”. To discern with tremendous honesty that we are the manifestation of the Absolute One, who dwells in each substance and substratum negating all segregations or divisions. Therefore, spirituality makes us aware of our true form. Mrs. Annie Besant stated that, “Spirituality does not know of myself or the other. It only knows the oneness of whom all forms are a manifestation.” The oneness or the absolute self is the universe which is the manifestation of the Absolute Self and it knows no segregation.

The *Nirvana Shatakam* by Adi Shankaracharya states:

“अहं निर्विकल्पो निराकाररूपो
विभुत्वाच्च सर्वत्र सर्वेन्द्रियाणाम्।
न चासङ्गतं नैव मुक्तिर्न मेयः
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोअहम् शिवोअहम्॥”

i.e. “I am without any variation and without any forms, I am present everywhere as the underlying substratum of everything and behind all sense organs, Neither do I get attached to anything nor get freed from anything. I am the ever pure blissful consciousness. I am Shiva.”

Therefore, the journey to look beyond yourself begins by looking within; by emptying the mind of all its contents and by developing a sight without any differentiation or distinction, by forming a “Universal Brotherhood”

To quote the *Maha Upanishad*:

“अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्।।”

Which means that, for the narrow minded people things belong to them or others. But for a person with the knowledge of the Absolute Truth there is no such differentiation. For him the universe is one big family.

“To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour,” is the first object if the theosophical society. A nucleus, similar to that found in a cell, is the core or the centre and the most important part. It might not be the complete puzzle but definitely forms a piece of it which if lost might crumble the entire unit. So, if a cell is the smallest unit of the human body and the family is the smallest unit of the society, then, the nucleus is the core of the cell and an individual is that of a family. We may thus conclude that each individual forms a nucleus within humanity.

Now having understood that each of us are a nucleus, we must understand what is the Universal Brotherhood? Universal Brotherhood is treating all the people of the world with equality irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, religion etc. Basically, it is the feeling of being in a family. It does not mean that one must see eye to eye on every matter but that one must be willing to rise above the imperfect relations like in a family and having each others’ backs. If we recognize the differences that divide us on the basis of race, creed, caste, colour, sex, nationality, religion, region or ethnicity, we might be able to rise above them by accepting that we are all the manifestations of the Absolute One.

The distinctions that are based upon race, sex and colour are anatomical, and those based upon caste, creed, religion, region or ethnicity are man-made. These are the segregations of a conditioned mind. As has been made clear, our mind has been conditioned through perception which has set the images in fixed moulds. Conditioned

minds view certain situations in a certain manner, this obstructs us from looking beyond. All such perceptions and divisions can be eradicated only on a spiritual plain. When all you see in every person is the same spirit that dwells in each of us the lines of segregation fade and what is left is the Truth. Formation of the Universal Brotherhood irrespective of race, creed, sex, caste or colour is a spiritual process; a process which identifies every atom as a part of the whole and every being as a part of the Absolute. Such inequality of perception must be eradicated on all levels inclusive of every substance living or non-living.

Ibn Arabi states: “God sleeps in the rock, Dreams in the plant, Stirs in the animal, Awakens in man.”

We are thus threads woven into a single fabric, each of us equally important and purposeful and within each lies the same spirit. Like one man cannot wage a war, we cannot rely upon one community to form a universal brotherhood. It has to be a joint effort of humanity as a whole. In *The Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky states, “It is only by all men becoming brothers and all women becoming sisters, and by all practising in their daily lives true brotherhood and true sisterhood that the real human solidarity... can ever be achieved.”

Think of a world with no distinction or division; a world where everyone is treated equally and perceived by the content of their character. This can only be attained by looking beyond oneself which shall accomplish the first object of the Theosophical Society.

Let us build a world which is a fraternity of equals, where each man is our friend and we the friend of all. With reference to this the *Yajurveda* states:

“मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम्।
मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे।
मित्रसा चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे।।”

VIBHA SAKSENA *

CENTRE EVERYWHERE, CIRCUMFERENCE NOWHERE

There is an intriguing relation between the theme “Look beyond yourself” and the quotation “Centre everywhere, circumference nowhere”. If a question is posed: what does it mean to look beyond yourself? Then the answer lies in having the centre everywhere, circumference nowhere.

To explain simply, the word “yourself” necessitates an identity, which is created using a name and form. Identities are divisive, they are separative. Looking beyond this identity, implies doing away with names and forms. It means synthesis of the seeming separateness into oneness, into unity or having the centre everywhere and circumference nowhere. It conveys the idea of infinity as boundless expanse of homogenous creative potency.

At the present stage of evolution, intellectually we know, I am not the body, I am the spirit. Yet, experientially, we relate heavily to the body, perhaps marginally to the spirit. In thinking of ourself, we essentially think of our body. In speaking of ourself, we habitually say ‘I am Mr. or Ms. so and so’ or that ‘I am the son or daughter of so and so’ or that ‘I am a doctor or professor’ ... so on and so forth. But all this is just my name, relation or profession; so, who am I really? This is a philosophical method of self-inquiry which enables one to look beyond their illusive, temporary identities.

When I was invited to speak on this topic “Centre everywhere, circumference nowhere”, under the theme “Look beyond yourself”, I immediately recalled the blockbuster Disney movie “The Lion King”.

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I enjoyed watching it with my kids when they were even younger. The lion king explains the circle of life to his young son, Simba. HE explains that lion eats deer. When lion dies, his body turns to dust. It serves to grow grass and deer eats grass, thus completing the ‘Circle of life’.

It is this ‘One Life’ which seeks to express itself through every form. It is the ‘One Life’ which lives and moves through all the different forms. The ‘One Life’ is the boundless expanse with its centre everywhere and circumference nowhere. To look beyond yourself, then, necessarily means, to look beyond our limiting identities and realize the oneness of Life, the oneness of spirit behind the manifold forms.

There exists a medieval period Latin text of unknown authorship, called “*Liber XXIV philosophorum*”, the Book of the 24 Philosophers. It consists of 24 aphorisms attributed to 24 philosophers, each aphorism attempting to define ‘what is God?’. The second aphorism in particular, gained wide influence since the Middle Ages. It says “God is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere”. This statement has been frequently quoted by poets, philosophers and scientists to describe God or the universe or the Self. Notably, by Hermes Trismegistus and by the 18th century French writer and philosopher, Voltaire.

This idea, “Centre everywhere, circumference nowhere”, is the bedrock of theosophical philosophy. The Occult Catechism states “That which ever is, is One, that which ever was, is One, that which is ever being and becoming is also One: and that is Space” ... the eternal *Anupadaka* or parentless.

The One is an unbroken Circle with no circumference, for it is nowhere and everywhere; the One is the boundless plane of the Circle, manifesting a diameter only during the *manvantaric* periods; the One is the indivisible point found nowhere, perceived everywhere during those periods.

“Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge” details Madam

Blavatsky's explanation about this concept, also given in her "Collected Writings, Vol X". The unknowable Absolute is called the Darkness itself. It is the Source, firstly of the radiation called the First Logos, then of its reflection, the Dawn or the Second Logos and finally of the manifested Light or the Third Logos, *Brahmâ*.

The "mundane egg" is an expression of Abstract Form. It is simply the first stage of manifestation, undifferentiated primordial matter. In this mundane egg, the vital creative Germ receives its first spiritual impulse. The word "Germ" is used here in a figurative sense, since "the germ is everywhere, even as the circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere"

The third Stanza of *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol 1, states:

"2. 'Darkness' radiates light, and light drops one solitary ray into the waters, into the mother deep. The ray shoots through the virgin-egg; the ray causes the eternal egg to thrill, and drop the non-eternal (periodical) germ, which condenses into the world egg".

Here, Darkness is the unknowable Absolute (*Parabrahman*) itself. It is the Source of radiation called Light.

The solitary ray of light, dropping into the mother deep symbolizes the Divine Thought or Intelligence, impregnating chaos and shooting through the virgin-egg.

The Virgin-egg, in a sense is abstract Egg-ness, or the power of becoming developed through fecundation. It is eternal and forever the same.

The ray of light causes the virgin-egg to drop from itself the non-eternal periodical germ. This vital, creative germ contains in itself 'the promise and potency' of all the Universe. It becomes the mundane egg.

This brings before the mind's eye the picture of Kosmos emerging from and in boundless space, a Universe as shoreless in magnitude if not as endless in its objective manifestation.

Occultism teaches that the primordial form of every manifested thing, from atom to globe, from man to angel, is spheroidal. An infinite sphere can be conceptualized as the field of vision or the field of thought whose radii proceed from one's self in every direction, and extend out into space, opening up boundless vistas all around. It is the symbolical circle of Pascal and the Kabalists, of Voltair and Hermes, "whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere."

The vital creative germ is everywhere in the boundless sphere called the mundane egg because, it is the mundane egg. This vital creative germ becomes the One Life, the undivided Universal Spirit, the substratum of the manifested universe. Every particle, every form in the universe, is ensouled by the One Life, becoming a centre of consciousness.

I will conclude here, leaving you with this thought that if we develop the power to look beyond ourself, then the individualized centre of consciousness that we presently are, will become the universal consciousness, symbolizing 'centre everywhere, circumference nowhere'.

NEWS AND NOTES

Bombay

Blavatsky Lodge Opens to Welcome Brethren after Pandemic:

It was 1st April 2022, when about 15 Brethren present in Green Room and 5-6 joining virtually from Canada, USA and other parts of the World had made the good beginning to revitalize Blavatsky Lodge Building with Theosophical activities. The meeting started with recitation of the Prayers of All Religions and The Universal Prayer to thank Almighty for the world gradually coming out of Corona Pandemic and praying for peace in Ukraine.

Bro. Navin Kumar requested Sis Aban Patel to place a cabinet size photo of Late Bro. Rustom Dalal in Green Room. She paid fond tributes to Late Bro. Rustom Dalal.

Bro. Navin Kumar released SYNERGY issue of Year 4 (January – June 2022) with cover story ‘SUFISM – in Search of the Mystic Rose’ by Bro. Arni Narendran. A pictorial issue produced by Editor Dr. Rajam Pillai from her Synergy Trust has other articles on Art, Communicating with Devas in Daily Life, A Tamil Poet Arunachala Kavirayar, An Ancient Ruin The Last of the Marsh Arabs, Historical Architectural Goldmine and Bro. Ulisses Riedel.

The prestigious news in this issue of Synergy with photos is of Dr. Rajam Pillai receiving Vagdhara Navratna Sanman (Hindi Literacy Award) conferred on her by H. E. Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Governor of Maharashtra. Dr. Rajam Pillai from Synergy Trust also printed ‘Universal Theosophical Calendar 2022’ designed by Pragya CS Studios, Adyar. Theme of the Calendar is: *Glimpses of Adyar – The International Headquarters of TS.*

After these Special Agenda, the meeting continued with the study of CWL’s book ‘*Inner Life*’, conducted by Sis. Aban Patel.

Virtual Centre for Theosophical Studies, 16 April 2022, Presentation on Zoroastrianism:

Sis. Meherangiz Baria, Hon, Treasurer TOS Mumbai Region, spoke on Teachings of Zoroastrianism sharing power point which she had prepared for the First Wisdom Capsule of VSTS launched at the 89th Bombay TF Annual Session.

Bro. Arni Narendran, Education Director VCTS, traced Parsi

Community Enchantment to Theosophy, which was information even for Parsi Members of today.

The Zoom programme was initiated by Bro Luke Ironside from his base in Dilijan Armenia. It was well attended by the participants from Manila to Washington, Singapore to Spain, spanning continents. Bro Jerome Guamagay from Manila hosted the programme and Sr. Miriam Martinez from Madrid delivered the closing invocation.

VCTS thanks all the participants from various countries for showing their enthusiasm for knowing more about the Zoroastrian faith. Special thanks to attendees who beat the compatible time zones and took that extra effort.

Painting Life with Poetry, Paintings by Marina Poems & Limericks by Deepa Kapur:

At the First physical meeting of Blavatsky Lodge after Pandemic on 1st April 2022 in Green Room, Sis. Deepa Kapur presented her first book to Sis Aban Patel, who was conducting study of CWL’s book ‘*Inner Life*’.

About her book ‘*Painting Life with Poetry*’ Sis Deepa writes, ‘The Magic Began! during the ‘Stay at Home’ phase of the Pandemic we reconnected. Marina would send me her latest paintings and voila! I would feel a set of impressions that seem like ‘downloads from the universe’! My fingers kept tapping away at the key of my laptop, almost automatically!!! Words kept flowing and weaving themselves into patterns of poems and limericks! There was no ‘effort’ or, ‘deliberate thinking’ involved in the writing. It felt like an outpouring from some dimension of creativity.

Telugu

The monthly meeting of the Olcott Theosophical Lodge of Machilipatnam was held on 30th April. Karumni Rajendra Prasad, a Retd. Education Officer, was the guest speaker and he spoke on ‘Sanatana Dharma and Present Situation’. Fifteen members attended the meeting. President Appaji and Secretary Sri K. Ramesh conducted the meeting.

Some members could not attend the 101st anniversary of Telugu Federation at Kakinada. So, as per their request, the Secretary narrated in brief about the 101st annual meeting.

Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand

The following programmes were organized at Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, in April: Bro. B.K. Pandey gave a talk on the topic 'Who am I?', it was held on 6 April. His other talk was held on 13 April and the subject was 'Results of Meditation and Obstacles to its success'. During the meeting held on 20 April, after invoking universal prayer, Bro. U. S. Pandey welcomed three newly admitted members namely Bro. R. G. Saxena, Bro. Narendra Deo and Sis. Saroj and then read out the message of the International President Bro. Tim Boyd to welcome new members. Diplomas were handed over to these new members. Thereafter Bro. U. S. Pandey spoke on the theme 'The Theosophical Brotherhood in Today's Society'. The meeting concluded with the prayer '*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah.*' In the meeting held on 27 April, Bro. B.K. Pandey expressed his views about 'Civility' and Bro. U.S. Pandey's subject of talk was 'Mental healing- its adverse effects and Spiritual healing-its benign effects'

During the meetings of Nirvan Lodge, Agra, held on 07 April and 21 April, talks were delivered on the topics 'Navaratri', and 'Vedant Darshan' by Bro. Devendra Vajpai and Dr. Vinod Sharma respectively. A presentation on the memoirs of Late Bro. L.S. Sengar, former President of the lodge, was made by Dr. Rakhi Singh in the meeting held on 14 April. A symposium was held on 28 April on the theme '*Theosophy ki Upyogita.*'

Bharat Samaj Puja was performed by Bro. Gyaneesh Kumar Chaturvedi on 17 April.

An on-line symposium was held at Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, on 03 April on the theme 'Challenges of the Youth and Theosophical Solutions' in which Sis. Kritika Goel, Shreeyashi Ojha and Pooja Gole spoke. During the on-line meetings held on 10 and 24 April, talks were delivered on the topics 'How to argue without leaving scars', and 'Hidden aspect of Light and Sound' by Dr Enrique Reig Pintado (President of Inter-American Federation) and Sis. Vibha Saxena respectively.

During hybrid mode (physical and on-line) meetings of Sarvahitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, held on 06, 13, 20 and 27 April talks were delivered on the topics 'Power of sub-conscious mind', 'A period of Divine Rejuvenation', 'Hatha-yoga' and 'Shabda-Brahm and Cosmology'. The speakers were Bro. S. C. Tripathi, Bro. Ajai Rai, Dr. V. Dwivedi, and Bro. Ajai Rai respectively.

Sis. Kritika Goel conducted study of Chapters 21, 22 and 23 of the book '*Commentaries on Living*' in the on-line meetings of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad, held on 03 and 10 April. In the on-line meetings of the Lodge held on 17 and 22 April, Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted study of Ch. 1 and 2 of the book '*The Key to Theosophy.*'

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted on-line study class for children and youth on every Sunday at 09.30 am. The subjects covered by her during April, 2022, were: 'Self-review', 'Holistic education', and 'Purpose of Life.'

The meetings of Noida Lodge in April were held in hybrid mode (physical and on-line)- Bro. Prabhat Saxena conducted study of the book '*Light on the Path*' on 3 April and Sis. Sunita Gahrotra delivered a talk on the theme 'Sikhism in the light of Theosophy' on 24 April.

In the on-line meeting of Chohan Lodge, Kanpur held on 03 April, Bro. Parihar spoke on 'Reincarnation' and Bro. S.S. Gautam's subject of talk was 'Life after Death.' During the on-line meeting held on 10 April and physical meetings held on 17 and 24 April, Bro. S. S. Gautam continued group study of the book '*A Study in Consciousness.*'

A talk on the topic 'Salient features of the book *Isis Unveiled*' was delivered by Bro. Sudeep Mishra in the meeting of Anand Lodge, Allahabad on 03 April. During other meetings of the Lodge held on 10, 17 and 24 April, Sis. Sushma Srivastava delivered talks based on and conducted study of the book '*The Hidden Side of Lodge Meetings.*'

A meeting of the Executive Committee of Kashi Tattva Sabha, Varanasi was held on 24 April to discuss the programme of the Lodge for the month of May, 2022.

U.P. and Uk Federation Programme: The Federation has planned a series of on-line talks on "Basics of Theosophy". Two talks in this series were delivered on 03 and 24 April on the topics 'Reincarnation' (second session) and "Study, Meditation and Service" by Bro. S. K. Pandey and Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri respectively. The talks were followed by close interaction with the participants.

Programme for students/teachers/ youth: As part of a course on 'Self realization through Theosophy', which started in November 2021 for the students at UG and PG levels in Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya Varanasi, Sis. Uma Bhattacharya gave lecture on 'Personality Development' in two sessions on 01 and 02 April. Prof. S. C. Lakhotia gave talk on 07 April on the topic 'What's Next?'

These talks were delivered in the gathering of students of the college.

In a joint programme (Triveni) of three lodges of Mumbai Federation (Jyoti lodge) and Gujarat Federation (Rewa and Rohit Lodges):

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty delivered a short talk on 'Theosophy and Natural Laws' on 05 April.

Contribution to the Indian Section work/ Programme:

Bro. S. S. Gautam translated the Section's journal "The Indian Theosophist" of April 2022 in Hindi and it has been published by the Indian Section.

During the Easter Conference organized by the Indian Section- Sis. Suvralina Mohanty and Sis. Kritika Goel moderated one session each on 16 and 17 April respectively; Sis. Pranshee Mohanta prepared and presented a video on "The Indian Sections Hqs. in Varanasi" and Bro. Biswajit Mahapatra presented a musical (flute) video.

Bro. S. B. R. Mishra delivered talk on "The Gospel of Islam" in two sessions on 23 and 30 April.

Contribution in the events of Young Indian Theosophists Group:

Sis. Kritika Goel moderated sessions held on 03, 10, 17 and 24 April, 2022.

National Lecturer

On invitation by Shankar Lodge Delhi, Sis. Vibha Saxena delivered a talk on the topic 'Evolution of Life' on 09 April.

Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered a talk on the topic 'Science of festivals and Ram Navami'. It was held in a joint programme of Triveni Meet on 12 April.

Sis. Vibha Saxena conducted study of Mahatma Letter no. 18 (cr. edition) in two sessions on 22 and 29 April. It was held in a programme of the Indian Section.