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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

A STEP FORWARD

Work can be defined as an activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a purpose or result. It is also a task or tasks to be undertaken. Work is doing. Work is action. Work is effort. Work is endeavour. When spirit utilizes energy, it becomes work. Work is the creating process. Things are created only through work.

The nature of man is of three kinds. This applies to his body, mind and intellect - each corresponding to his actions, feelings and thoughts. The three natural tendencies are *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sattva* is gentleness, *Rajas* is aggression and *Tamas* is stubbornness. *Sattva* is knowledge, *Rajas* is egoistic and *Tamas* is ignorance. *Sattvik* is gentle and knowledgeable. *Rajasik* is aggressive and active. *Tamasik* is stubborn and ignorant.

Sattvik works without errors and mistakes most of the time. *Rajasik* works with errors and mistakes but corrects them with rework. *Tamasik* works with errors and mistakes and does not own them and does not correct them. *Sattvik* is quality and quantity oriented. *Rajasik* is quantity oriented. *Tamasik* is neither quantity nor quality oriented. *Sattvik* works on his own for everyone. *Rajasik* works in his interested areas only. *Tamasik* works under force.

Rajasik works with passion and desire. His actions are with bias and self-interest. He is restless and hyper active. He craves for results, credit and fruits of work. He is fast and forceful. *Rajasik* is always busy. *Rajasik* works with attachment and own interest. Though *Rajasik* is a forceful leader, he is not respected by all. Some like him and some dislike him. Ofcourse, that makes him an ideal leader.

Tamasik works with dullness, lethargy and inertia. He is concerned with the self, dissatisfied and materialistic. He is unfaithful, tortures others and always asks others for something. He is full of

anger and greed. He shows off and pretends to be what he is not, gives difficulties to others, causes people to fight among themselves, causes sorrow to others, he thinks poorly, leads down the wrong path, worries and make others worry.

This world is the work of the Supreme Ultimate Spirit. When work is done, one becomes responsible for the consequences. Good work generates credit and ill work generates debit. The Supreme Spirit has no credit and debit. It is completely free, is in eternal liberation, has no bindings and bondages and has no bound. The ultimate goal of living beings is the Supreme Spirit.

Work is the process of reform but it can be both reform and deform. Good work is reform and ill work is deform. One has to be reborn each moment to reform oneself to non-form. Each moment, each day, each year and in each life man has to endeavour and work to become non-form which is beyond debit and credit.

Both, good work and ill work are the cause of credit and debit. They are also the cause of rebirth with the purpose of becoming credit-less and debit-less. So work is the cause of birth and death. Non-work is the cause of birthlessness. Worklessness is birthlessness. Work to non-work is the journey of reform to non-form. So man has to endeavour to eliminate the debits and credits of his previous work.

Every work becomes non-work when it is totally dedicated to the Universal Spirit and humanity. Then work is no debit and no credit. There is only liberation and oneness with the Supreme Spirit. Once we understand this, it is a step forward in our life.

PRACTICE AND FREEDOM

I Would like to consider two ideas that are central to the life of anyone whose focus is unfoldment. The two ideas are dissimilar in many ways, but are completely interrelated. They are the ideas of spiritual practice and freedom. Those people who have demonstrated some degree of experience of freedom have great difficulty describing the nature of that experience.

What is freedom? Anything we read or hear falls short of the clear definition which our minds demand. Unable to say what freedom is, the great and inwardly free people generally speak in terms of what freedom is *not*. We can understand that a little better. So we have H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) speaking about the spiritual path being a road steep and thorny that leads to the centre of the universe. But what is meant by “the centre of the universe”? J. Krishnamurti describes Truth as “a pathless land”. He is not saying what it *is*, but what it is *not*. It is not a place where there are well-worn pathways that can describe its dimensions and outline.

Whether we look to the Buddha, Jesus, Ramana Maharshi, or anyone regarded as enlightened and free, what people like these do describe in great depth, is Practice. All of them spent most of their lives teaching ways to remove the obstacles that prevent our experience of genuine freedom. Even though they themselves were beyond the need of these practices, they set the example of a life steeped in a practice that has the potential to lead to the state which characterizes their norm.

So what is practice? Practice is any regular action or activity that we undertake under a certain system or set of rules that develops a skill in action. Familiar examples are in the field of music or sports. Someone who plays a musical instrument is not born playing that instrument. They familiarize themselves with the methods of making sounds. They learn the notation relating to how those sounds are generated. There is a physical aspect to it, with a condition of body that is required to do it, and do it well. No one is born looking at dots

on a piece of paper and knowing that it relates to notes, specific sounds, and rhythms that they indicate. Day after day the body, the eye, and the mind are trained before the skill becomes innate and unthought. It is the same exact training with sports.

The result of this is that someone becomes able to act without the distraction of thought. One experiences a sense of ease in the midst of sports competition or the differing sounds and rhythms of orchestral music. That is the experience of the skillful musician or athlete. But there is something beyond skill that can arise from intensive practice. Occasionally there comes a moment where the skill has been developed and where there is an intense involvement in the piece of music or the sporting event, where they enter another state of being.

There is a branch of psychology that has developed around the study of this condition of being described as “flow”, when the individual enters a space where the limits of one’s normal boundaries dissolve. It no longer becomes a matter of paying attention to notes on a page, or movement on a basketball court. It moves to a state where the people describing the experience say that it felt as if their movement was directed by something else.

Often it is described as if they are even in a river, and it is this more expansive river that is moving the music or their part in a sporting event. To those who have had that experience of “flowing”, inevitably the word “free” is associated with the experience of moving outside of long-accepted personal boundaries. Practice and intense involvement precipitate such a moment

Our first encounter with a spiritual path usually moves us to study, to regularly exposing ourselves to materials that elevate the mind. Annie Besant was famous for saying “If we read for one minute, we should think for two”. Also at an early stage of developing a practice we are advised of the value of meditation; that to meditate we first need to learn how to relax the body so that its demands do not overwhelm the moment. We learn to concentrate the mind so that it is not distracted by the varying emotions and thoughts continually passing through it. And we learn to enter into a state of quiet in which there is the potential for deepening states of stillness, and ultimately even the possibility of a genuine silence.

Purification is part, maybe even the root, of this daily practice. We are advised to refrain from foods or behaviours that cause harm to others. There is the idea that in our personal relations we take in, and expose others to energies. These, too, should not be harmful.

Then there is **service**, which is also part of the practice. From regular practice we develop a certain skill, to quiet the mind, to recognize the upwelling of a compassionate impulse, and to express it through service of all different types. With the foundation of practice the possibility presents itself to enter the realm of genuine **freedom**.

Our focus has been on practice, but this practice is geared toward something else. So, what is freedom? If we are going to be honest, we cannot define it any better than Jesus or the Buddha, or Ramana Maharshi did. What we can say is that there are things that characterize freedom. When we are at an early stage there is the “freedom from” certain things. Often we get stuck there and go no farther.

For example, in the case of someone who is focused on the cultivation of the inner life there is the freedom from the commanding presence of the body and senses. Through practice their demands can be quieted. There is the freedom from thoughts and the thinking process that hooks us like a fish, and drags us along in whatever direction it chooses. That is another “freedom from” that *can* develop out of this genuine practice.

There is the freedom from preferences, including personal, family, and cultural preferences. We are swimming in an ocean of them, so much so that we do not know that we are living, and speaking, and presenting them every moment.

For example, I come from the United States. As we know, in the US women and men often walk around in jeans, t-shirts, and things like that. Here in India it is a different cultural presentation, particularly for women. The US has a culturally defined costume, and India has a costume. The US has its values that are national and regional. India, and every country, every family, has preferences that we internalize.

Then there is the freedom from the controlling self. This overwhelming core sense of a certain identity and reality — the ego — masquerades under the guise of self-control, which is nothing less

than a *controlling self* that distorts the possibility of an experience of genuine freedom. Clearly that is not freedom. It is the clothing that freedom wears. In this practice/freedom relationship there are profound paradoxes. Practice involves repetition, discipline, control, and restrictions. That these limitations can lead to freedom is, in many ways, counterintuitive. But the idea that “habit overcomes habit” is rooted in this practice concept. It takes enormous effort to become effortless.

Because we cannot define freedom, some analogies might help us to *feel* it. The experience may be like the raindrop that falls into a body of water — a river, a lake, an ocean. The isolated drop that somehow merges with an infinite body of the same essence; the soap bubble that the child blows into the air, that bursts, frees what was apparently defined and contained within it. And finally an example that we may aspire to, that comes closer to our own experience, is that of a heart consumed, inflamed with love for another — a person, a cause, or a mate. A heart that is consumed with love is the heart that is free. It is the sign of a person who is free.

A brief poem is included at the very end of Krishnamurti’s *At the Feet of the Master*. It speaks to this movement from practice to preparedness, to freedom:

Waiting the word of the Master,
Watching the Hidden Light;
Listening to catch his orders
In the very midst of the fight;

Seeing his slightest signal
Across the heads of the throng;
Hearing his faintest whisper
Above Earth’s loudest song.

This suggestive rhyming poem is profound in the context of our consideration. What are we talking about when we consider practice? Waiting to hear the word, preparing ourselves to be able to wait, to attend, to watch, is the process of practice. We prepare ourselves. And in that process, what are we doing? In the imagery of the poem we are watching for something that is hidden, a hidden light. We are

also listening for the sound, for the current of “sound” that can move us to another plane, to connect us with that Master which is spoken of, whether that is a person, or the central core of our being.

We watch, we listen. As we become more proficient in our watching, there comes a point when we see. “Seeing his slightest signal” — from the practice and effort of stilling, we see, and in listening ultimately we hear above “Earth’s loudest song”. So we see and we hear. In and of itself, this is not freedom. What it is, is that moment of possibility poised for the experience of freedom to make itself known through us.

As a final analogy, let us look at a musical instrument. In past times, before flutes were made of metal, they had their beginnings as a reed, or a piece of bamboo. A flute began as one among many reeds growing out of a marsh somewhere, anywhere. Its growth followed the normal course of any blade of grass. It expanded and stretched toward the sun. However, at some point a particular reed is harvested, cut off, then placed into the hands of a master instrument maker, who shapes, carves, and tunes it. The main quality the reed has to offer is the fact that it is hollow, it is empty.

After it has left the hands of the musical instrument maker, it is ready. It is poised to make music, but it is not playing any music whatsoever. The purpose of that former reed, which has now been cultivated, shaped, tuned, is to be played; and the prayer of that instrument becomes: “Play me. I am empty. I am hollow. I am waiting for the lips and breath of the master musician to blow through me.”

In that process, “I”, as that instrument, know I have a form, I have limitations, I have qualities. But in the hands of the musician all of it becomes music. Through countless hours, days, years, lifetimes of practice, there does come the point where this channel is open and the breath of spirit can flow through us. We do not have to know anything about the music that is playing, we certainly cannot control it, but we hear, and in that process we are blessed, and anyone who has ears to hear is also blessed.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, July 2022)

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

COMPASSION AND THE FIRST OBJECT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

At a time when millions of people on this earth are suffering in many ways, compassion is the need of the hour. Compassion leads to service and service is an ingredient of theosophical life. Compassion is defined as a sense of concern that arises in us in the face of someone who is in need or someone who is in pain. It is accompanied by a kind of a desire to see the relief or end of that situation, wanting to do something about it and actually doing it.

Someone has defined compassion as a deep awareness of and sympathy for suffering of others. This is just to be sympathetic and to have concern and pity for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. Another definition says that compassion is the human quality of understanding the suffering of others and doing something about it. In my opinion the second definition of compassion is more appropriate because it goes beyond awareness, understanding and sympathy for suffering of others, by wanting to do something about it. Helping such a person is an act of true compassion.

If someone shows kindness, caring and willingness to help others, they are showing compassion. This is a word for a very positive emotion that has to do with being thoughtful and decent. Volunteering to work with sick people or animals need compassion. When you have compassion, you are putting yourself in someone else’s shoes and really feeling for them. Anytime a disaster like a hurricane or earthquake hits, others will feel compassion for the victims. When you feel compassion for someone, you really want to help him.

Compassion has two components. First it means to put oneself in another person’s shoes and ask, “if I were that person, then? How

would I feel?” So compassion involves developing an awareness of the suffering of the other person. Compassion has a second component. Once a person has an awareness of the suffering, he must respond appropriately. To do nothing in such circumstances is not compassion.

So, compassion also means to embrace the “Golden Rule”- treat others as you desire to be treated yourself. Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you. If one finds someone in pain, or requires assistance, or asks for help, one must come to his/her aid, must lend a hand and must offer assistance. In a small way, one must help the person alleviate his/her suffering.

I would like to share with you six famous quotations on compassion:

1. Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists, once said, “Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty”.

2. Dr. Albert Schweitzer, a renowned medical missionary and who was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, believed in the principle of “reverence for life” and the religious and ethical imperatives of helping others. He once said in simple words : “the purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others. Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things man will not find peace for himself”.

3. Alfred Montapert was always full of compassion for animals He said, “animals are reliable, many full of love, true in their affections, predictable in their actions, grateful and loyal”. He also said, “the monument of a great man is not of granite or marble or bronze. It consists of his goodness, his deeds, his love and his compassion”.

4. Thomas Merton was an American monk who once said that “the whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another”.

5. George Washington Carver was an American agricultural scientist who wrote “how far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Some day in life you will have all of these”.

6. Mahatma Gandhi once said that the simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.

We live in a world lacking in compassion. The sad reality of humanity is that the vast majority of people ignore the suffering of others. Perhaps many turn a blind eye for their own survival. Witnessing the suffering of another person can evoke raw emotion of fear or sadness or repulsion. Too often people are detached or wilfully blind. We often learn compassion only after we have undergone some sort of suffering - perhaps experiencing sickness, accident, job loss, marriage breakdown, illness, death of a loved one, prejudice, discrimination, social scorn, bad luck, etc.

Compassion is very important to humanity. Without it, we would descend into a state of war. We would continually witness the wicked deeds of the Holocaust, the detonating of the atomic bomb, the 9/11 episode, the present situation in Afghanistan, etc. The philosopher Thomas Hobbes once said, “Life is nasty, brutish and short”. he also said that without government, “the natural condition of man is a condition of war. Everyone against everyone else”. The Dalai Lama stated it best: “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive”.

A compassionate person is loved by everyone. People do not ignore his plight. When he is in need, people try to help him in whatever way they can, because they know that if they would not help a kind friend, then they would lose him for ever, as the kind person may stop helping selfish and cruel people, who do not help him in need. Therefore, people who are helped in their need must also help others

in need. Compassion is one of the greatest boons of God. We are fortunate if we possess it.

On a more general level, compassion means to have genuine concern for all, not just for our own tribe. It is my view that most people are compassionate towards the members of their own family, such as spouse and children, but are blind or indifferent to the suffering of others. Compassion also means to practice random acts of kindness and expect nothing in return. For example, if you see someone on the street, and that person requests some change, give it to him. Give a donation to an organization that is feeding the hungry people, give your clothes to the needy, or give money for educating a poor child. Finally, compassion means to believe in the dignity, respect, equality, justice for everyone. It means to live peacefully and avoid engaging in violent behaviour. We can agree or disagree and still live peacefully.

Compassion motivates people to go out of their way to help people so that they may be relieved of their physical, mental or emotional pains. Compassion is often regarded as having sensitivity, which is an emotional aspect of suffering. Though, when based on cerebral notions such as fairness, justice, and interdependence, it may be considered rational in nature and its application understood as an activity also based on sound judgement. There is also an aspect of equal dimension, such that an individual's compassion is often given a property of depth, vigour, or passion. Compassion involves "feeling for another" and is a precursor to empathy, the "feeling as another" capacity for better person-centered acts of active compassion; in common parlance active compassion is the desire to alleviate another person's suffering.

We can distinguish compassion from empathy and altruism. Empathy is the emotional experience of another person's feelings. It is in a sense, an automatic mirroring of someone else's emotion, like crying at a friend's sadness. Altruism is an action that benefits someone else. It may or may not be accompanied by empathy or compassion.

Although these terms are related to compassion, they are not identical. Compassion often does, of course, involve an empathetic response and an altruistic behaviour. Compassion is not pity, it is not attachment, it is not the same as empathetic feeling. It is not simply wishful thinking. It is not self-regard. It is defined as the emotional response when perceiving suffering and involves an authentic desire and action to help.

The more one person knows about the human condition and the associated experiences, the more vivid the route to identification with suffering becomes. Identifying with another person is an essential process for human beings, which is even illustrated by infants who begin to mirror the facial expressions and body movements of their mother as early as the first days of their lives. Compassion is recognized through identifying with other people, the knowledge of human behaviour, the perception of suffering, transfer of feelings, knowledge of goal and purpose changes in sufferers, and leads to the absence of the suffering from the group.

Compassion consists of three major requirements. People must feel that troubles which evoke their feelings are serious, the understanding that sufferers' troubles are not self-inflicted, and ability to picture oneself with the same problems in a non-blaming and non-showing manner. The importance of identifying with others for compassion is contrasted by the negative physical and psychological effects of abandonment.

Compassion is often a characteristic element of democratic societies. The compassion process is highly related to identifying with the other person because sympathizing with others is possible among people from other countries, cultures, locations, etc. The role of compassion as a factor contributing to individual or societal behaviour has been the topic of continuous debate. In contrast to the process of identifying with other people, a complete absence of compassion may require ignoring or disapproving identification with other people or

groups. Earlier links have been established between interpersonal violence and cruelty, which leads to indifference. This concept has been illustrated throughout history-the Holocaust, Genocide, European colonization of the Americas, etc. The seemingly essential step in these atrocities could be the definition of the victims as “not human” or “not us”. The activities conducted throughout history have only relieved, minimized, or overcome its damaging effects through the presence of compassion. Compassion may have the ability to induce feelings of kindness and forgiveness, which could give people the ability to stop situations that have the potential to be distressing and occasionally lead to violence.

There are many kinds of compassion including emotional recognition (knowing how another person feels), emotional resonance (feeling emotions another person feels), familial connection (care-giver-offspring), global compassion. (extending compassion to everyone in the world), sentient compassion (extended compassion to other species) and heroic compassion (compassion that comes with a risk). One can go on further to make an important distinction between proxied (i.e. in the moment) and distal compassion (i.e. predicting the future; affective forecasting)- It has implications in terms of how we go about encouraging compassion. We are all familiar with proximal compassion: Someone falls down in the street, and we help him get up. That is proximal compassion: where we see someone in need and we help them. But when a father tells his son “Wear a helmet”, when he goes out on a motorcycle, that is distal compassion. He is trying to prevent harm to his son before it occurs. And that requires a different set of skill - anticipating harm before it occurs and trying to prevent it. Distal compassion is much more amenable to educational influences.

Individuals with a higher capacity or responsibility to empathize with others may be at risk for “compassion fatigue” or stress, which is related to professionals and individuals who spend a significant amount of time responding to information related to suffering. Vary often it is

lack of suitable distress tolerance which gets people fatigued in compassion activities. People can alleviate the sorrow and distress by doing some self-care activities on a regular basis. Improving consciousness helps to guide people to recognize the impact and circumstances of past events. After people learn the experience from the situation in the past, they are able to find the courses of compassion fatigue in their daily life. The practice of non-judgemental compassion can prevent fatigue and burn out. There are some methods that can help people to heal compassion fatigue. People should do physical activity, eat healthy food with every meal, create good relations with others, enjoy interacting with others in the community, write in a journal frequently and sleep enough every day.

There are several factors that reduce the likelihood of someone willing to be compassionate to another. These include liability, competence, deservedness, empathic capacity, self-focused competitions, anxiety-depression, being overwhelmed and inhibitors in social structures and systems.

Compassion fade is the tendency of people to experience a decrease in empathy as the number of people in need of aid increase. In examination of the motivated regulation of compassion in the context of large scale crises, such as natural disasters and genocides, it has been established that people tend to feel more compassion for single identifiable victims than large masses of victims. It is found that people only show less compassion for many victims than for single victims of disasters when they expect to incur a financial cost upon helping. This collapse of compassion depends on having the motivation and ability to regulate emotions.

There is a very moving story of compassion. A small girl was drenched with mud while returning from school. When questioned about it by her mother she said, “Mom, it started raining heavily soon after I left school. My umbrella got flown away and as I tried to grab it, I slipped and was rapidly sliding into a deep ditch. Fortunately, my

class teacher happened to see me. She rushed, unmindful of getting wet and held my hand and lifted me up.” The mother asked, “but your teacher could have slipped too with you”. “Yes Mom”, replied the child, “but she had compassion to save me, how could she slip?” And when the teacher heard the story, she thought, “That little child, weakest in the class, perhaps most lonely, helped me recognize my strength and raised my spirits”. It shows the power of what compassion can do.

There is another great story of compassion. When Hitler invaded Poland and started the World War II, 500 Polish women and 200 children were put on a ship to save them from the Germans. The ship was left in the sea by the Polish Army. The captain was told to take them to any country where they can get shelter. The last thing they heard from their families was “if we are alive or survive, we will meet again?” The ship filled with 500 Polish women and 200 children were refused entry to come in by many European and Asian countries. Finally, after many days of wandering in the sea, the ship reached India. They arrived in the port of Bombay. But the British Governor also refused and did not allow the ship inside. The news soon reached the ears of the Maharaja of Jamnagar, “Jam Saheb” Digvijay Singh and he was overwhelmed with compassion. He allowed the ship to port in his kingdom near Jamnagar. He not only gave shelter to 500 women but also made arrangements for the free education of 200 children in an Army School. These refugees stayed in Jamnagar for nine years till the World War II Lasted. They were well taken care of by Jam Saheb who regularly visited them. He was fondly called Bapn by them. Later on, all these refugees returned to their own country. One of the children of these refugees later became the Prime Minister of Poland. Even today, the descendants of those refugees come to Jamnagar every year and remember the Maharaja with compassion. In Poland, the name of many roads in the capital of Warsaw are named after Maharaja Jam Saheb. From the ancient times, the message of India has been *Vasudev Kutumbakam* (the world is a family) and so

people are instilled with sense of compassion. We pride ourselves to be brave, tolerant, compassionate and genuinely humanitarian.

The final story of compassion has to do with the co-founder of the Theosophical Society. Madam Blavatsky. She had reached the port of Havre in France on her way to the U.S. in June, 1873. She saw a lady with two children weeping bitterly. She found out that her husband had sent money to her from the U.S. but she got bogus tickets from a crooked steamship agent who had disappeared. She was penniless in a strange city. Madam Blavatsky went to her agent and exchanged her first-class ticket for steerage tickets for the lady, her two children and herself. She travelled to U.S. in the crowded discomfort in the inferior accommodation with the lowest fare in the passenger ship. This is the best example of compassion.

The first object of the Theosophical Society and its Mission Statement are both in a way connected to compassion. The first object is the foundation of the belief and practice of the Theosophical Society. It says “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste and colour”. The word ‘humanity’ here can be extended to all forms of life like animal, bird, insect, fish and plant life. Some even say that it covers all matter like stones and clay also. When there is a feeling of brotherhood, compassion is natural. The Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society says, “To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual Self-transformation and the Unity of all Life”. It is interesting to see how the mission statement is connected to the first object of the Theosophical Society and how both are connected to compassion.

The First Object of the Theosophical Society and the Mission Statement aim at offering a space for people to come together and share their search for Truth, regardless of any external differences. The practice of this Object and the Mission Statement is a concrete recognition of humanity’s common essential nature and origin. This is

what encourages us and leads to compassion, which in turn appreciates external differences as something that enriches our human experience instead of being a source of intolerance and war.

H.P. Blavatsky, Co-founder of the Theosophical Society wrote: “Social differentiations, the result of physical evolutions and material environment, breed race hatred and sectarian and social antipathies that are insurmountable if attacked from the outside. But, since human nature is ever identical, all men are alike open to influences which centre upon the human “heart”, and appeal to the human intuition. And as there is but one Absolute Truth, which is the soul and life of all human creeds, it is possible to effect a reciprocal alliance for the dissemination of that Truth”. It is because of this that compassion is created. This is why it is said that compassion is linked with the first object of the Theosophical Society. Compassion has a second component. Once you have an awareness of the suffering, you must respond appropriately. To do nothing in the circumstances is not compassion. So compassion also means to embrace the “Golden Rule”- treat others as you desire to be treated. Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you. If you witness someone who is in pain, or requires assistance, or asks for help, you must come to their aid, you must lend a hand, you must offer assistance. In some small way, you must help the person alleviate his/her suffering.

Based on my observations and personal life experiences, I am not sure that humankind is hard-wired for compassion. I do not believe that the virtue of compassion is innate. It is not an inherent human attribute. In my opinion compassion must be learned. So let us look at the ten things we need to do to live a compassionate life.

Firstly, we need to educate ourselves about what it means to be compassionate. There are many ways such as studying other religions, reading theosophical literature, learning about spirituality and what Buddha, Jesus, Confucius, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama have to say about compassion.

We must develop empathy and become aware of the suffering in the world. We can learn by watching films or television or the web and by reading poetry, novels, newspapers and magazines.

We must look at our own world. Charity begins at home. How does your family nourish you? Is there compassion in the workplace? Are your friends toxic? Do they embrace a similar moral code and compassionate view of humanity?

We must develop compassion for ourselves. Each of us has a dark side. Be kind to yourself. Do not blame yourself for things you cannot control.

We must become mindful of the suffering in our families, friends, community, country and the world. In other words, we must become aware of other people’s suffering.

We must realize that we do not know everything and that our way is not necessarily the best way. Too often, we fail to understand other cultures, other religions, other views and perceptions. Instead, we gaze at others who are different through our ethnocentric lens. We too often believe that our way of life is superior.

We must take action and help those who are suffering. We must discard the ethnocentric view and also discard the sense of moral superiority. Instead, we must embrace compassion as the highest of virtues. We must practice random acts of kindness, offering help to anyone who crosses our path and is suffering.

We must embrace the golden rule- “do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you”.

We must love our enemies even though it is not easy to do. It is best to ignore them. Don’t seek to defeat and humiliate them. This will only create hatred and the desire for revenge. Instead, we must strive to understand and befriend. Only goodness can drive out evil and only love can overcome hatred. We must learn to see sorrow in our

enemies. The supreme test of compassion is to love your enemy.

Finally, our own suffering such as illness, financial problems, death of loved ones, job loss, marriage breakdown, etc can educate us on compassion if we observe and contemplate.

One cannot become a compassionate person within a month or even a year. However, if one practices the aforementioned 10 steps to a compassionate life, I am sure it will lead to a great spiritual progress in one's life to become compassionate and achieve the first object of the Theosophical Society.

He who does not practise altruism, he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself, he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, wherever and whenever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own, is no Theosophist.

H.P. Blavatsky
Practical Occultism

NEWS AND NOTES

Bombay

CONGRATULATIONS to Sis. Armaity Tirandaz, President of Vimadalal Bilia Lodge, Dadar, Mumbai, on being elected as Chairman of Bombay Parsee Panchayet: Sis. Armaity Tirandaz is the Second Woman Chairman in 200 Years of the Board of Trustees of this Premier Zoroastrian Institution of the World taking care of Zoroastrian community from Birth to Death. Sis. Armaity had taken over reins of BPP during the last term on passing away of Chairman Mr. Yezdi Desai. She has been re-elected for 5-year term with two more Lady Trustees, which has happened for the first time in BPP's, history. Teachings of Zoroastrian Religion and Theosophy have been her inner guiding light to steer BPP in the service of humanity.

Bro. Arni Narendran conducts study of Pavri's book '*Theosophy Explained in Questions & Answers*'. It is held at Blavatsky Lodge on every Monday. Besides, Sis. Aban Patel conducts study of C. W. Leadbeater's book '*Inner Life – Series II*', at the same venue in the Green Room and Virtual on Friday.

Virtual Meetings are conducted on Thursday at Vasanta – Ganesh Lodges, for "*GURUDEV GOSHTHI*" with discourse on reading of Gujarati books: Bro. Vinayak Pandya displays the book on screen as he reads and explains the content. Dr. Ajay Hora guides the discussion. Shri Harshvadan Sheth of Ahmedabad also adds his wise words.

JYOTI LODGE – TUESDAY TRIVENI MEET VIRTUALLY - 6.30 TO 8.00 PM: Bro Taral Munshi and his wife Sis. Archana have crystallized their dream of spreading Theosophy across Indian Section TS and even beyond the shores of India. With their IT expertise they had started with virtual Meets of Three Lodges – Jyoti Lodge of Mumbai, Reva Lodge of Vadodara & Rohit Lodge of Ahmedabad - with Three Speakers in Three Languages – English,

Gujarati & Hindi to facilitate Brethren to take advantage of Spiritual wisdom in their own languages.

The next idea which occurred to Taral Munshi was to expand Trivani meet with Three Federations. So, after many efforts MARATHI became the First Trivani Federation Meet with speakers : Chandrakant Shinde-(in) ENGLISH, Ashok Lokhande (in)- HINDI and Nandkumar Raut –(in)MARATHI. The subject of talk on 22nd March 2022 was *PASAYDAAN*.

Now their network has expanded to Five more Federations with their speakers speaking in Marathi, Malayalam, Odia, Kannada and Tamil. Prof. P. Krishna was invited to address Meet on his book ‘*A Jewel on a Silver Platter*’ Triveni Meet has given platform to Youth as speakers and with special Meet for them. Foreign Speakers like Bro. Vick Hao Chin, Jr. of Philippines and Bro. Luke Ironside of the Virtual Centre for Theosophical Studies were invited to address the Meet.

Triveni Meet encompasses Theosophy, Vedanta and Spirituality through different Art forms. Triveni Meet also had a Musical Saga by Sis. Jayashree Kannan and Dr. Ajay Hora’s talk on ‘Code of Medical Ethics in India’.

Utkal

The Utkal Theosophical Federation (UTF) conducts on-line weekly study classes regularly on every Wednesday at 4.00 P.M. Study of the book *The Divine Plan* is conducted by Bro. Pradip Kumar Mahapatra, Vice-President, UTF and Sis. Purnamasi Pattnaik, Secretary, UTF.

The Federation celebrated “Adyar Day” on 17 February 2022 in the UTF Hall, 346, Gautam Nagar, Bhubaneswar. Sis. Sailabala Acharya, Sis. Tapaswini Samantray, Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra and Sis. Purnamasi Pattnaik delivered talks on this occasion on the significance

of Adyar Day and contribution of different theosophical leaders to the TS. Bro. Pradip Ku. Mahapatra, Vice-President, UTF presided over the meeting.

“White Lotus Day” was observed on 8 May in the Federation Hall, Gautam Nagar. Bhubaneswar. Sis. Banita Mohanty read out the 2nd chapter of *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, on this occasion. Sis. Tapaswini Samantaray read out a passage from the book *The Light of Asia* and Bro. Patanjali Tripathy read out a passage from *The Voice of the Silence*. Bro. P.K. Mahapatra presided over the meeting. The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks given by Sis. Purnamasi Pattnaik. The meeting was hosted by Siddharha Lodge, Bhubaneswar.

“Buddha Purnima” was celebrated on 16th May in the Federation Hall, Bhubaneswar. A passage on “Wesak Festival” was read out by Sis Reena Sahoo, Sis. Swarnalata Das and Sis. Sailabala Acharya. The meeting was presided over by Bro. P. K. Mahapatra and it was hosted by Maru Lodge, Bhubaneswar.

Regular weekly on-line meetings are conducted by Barabati Lodge, Cuttack on every Monday at 6.00P.M. At present study classes on the book *At the Feet of the Master* is being conducted. The main speaker is Prof. Sahadeb Patro who spoke on the chapter “Good Conduct”. Bro. B.S. Mohanty also spoke on the subject. Apart from the members of the Lodge, Bro. C A Shinde and Sis Arunima Baruah etc. are regularly attending the meetings and participate in the discussion. The meeting is hosted by Dr. Patanjali Tripathy of Barabati Lodge.

Regular weekly meetings of Bhubaneswar Lodge are held on every Sunday. The study class on the book *Light on the Path* is conducted by Dr. K. P. Padhy, President, Bhubaneswar Lodge.

The weekly meetings of Cuttack Lodge, are held on every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 4.00PM in the Lodge’s Premises, Kaligali, Cuttack. Study and discussion on the books like *Bhagavadgita*, *Manabodha Chautisha*, *Light on the Path* and

The Light of Asia are conducted by Dr.Chittaranjan Satapathy, President and Bro. S S Pati, Secretary of Cuttack Lodge.

“White Lotus Day” was celebrated in the Theosophy House Kaligali, Cuttack on 8 May 2022. Extracts from the Gita were recited by Bro. S. Pati. A chapter from *The Light of Asia* was read out by Prof. Sunanda Mishra and a portion from *The Voice of the Silence* by Bro. Ashutosh Pati. Dr. Chinmayee Mohapatra spoke about the life and works of Madam Blavatsky. The relevance of the metaphor of white lotus was discussed by Bro. S. Pati and Bro. P.S.P. Sarangi.

Besides, an awareness programme on Organ Donation was conducted in collaboration with the Rotary Club Millennium, Cuttack. Another subject ie. “Introduction to Secret Doctrine and fundamental propositions” was also taken up.

Regular on-line study classes on the book *Vivek Chudamani* are held at Maru Lodge, Bhubaneswar. Bro. Dhurba Prasad Panda, President of Sambalpur Theosophical Lodge, conducts the study. The meeting is hosted by Sis. Paurnamasi Pattnaik.

Besides, regular weekly meetings of the Lodge are held on every Sunday at Plot no, 29, Gautam Nagar, Bhubaneswar in which the book *The Key to Theosophy (Theosophy ki Kunjika)* is studied. The study class is conducted by Sis. Paurnamasi Pattnaik and Sis. Gayatri Pattnaik.

Study of the book *Light on the Path (Marga Deepika)* is conducted in the weekly on-line meetings at Siddharth Lodge, Bhubaneswar on every Tuesday. The speakers are Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra, Sis. Nilendri Panda, Sis. Sailabala Acharya, Sis. Reena Sahoo, Sis. Tapaswini Samantray.

Sis. Varsha, President of Rohit Lodge, gave a talk on “Good Vibes, Good life: How Self-Love is the key to unlocking your Greatness”. It was held in the on-line meeting on 31 May.

Besides, study classes are held on every Saturday on the book *Life's Deeper Aspects*. The study is conducted by Prof. Partha Sarathi Prasad Sarangi, National Lecturer, Indian Section and member of Cuttack Lodge. The meeting is hosted by Bro. P. K. Mahapatra, Vice-President, UTF.

On-line study classes in Odia are held on every Sunday in which the book *The Mahatma Letters to A P Sinnett* is being studied. The study is conducted by Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra, President, Siddhartha Lodge.

On-line Bharat Samaj Pooja is performed daily by Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra at 6.30 A.M.

The members of Aum TS Study Group in association with the members of Pythagoras Youth Lodge are conducting on-line study classes on every Sunday on the book *Talks on the Path of Occultism* (Vol. -III) by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater.

Barabati Lodge, Bhubaneswar, organized a virtual meet on 6 June in which Bro. Sahadeb Patro delivered a talk on ‘Desirelessness’. He explained to discriminate and pursue what is desirable and stay away from undesirable thoughts and work (or action). International Lecturer Bro. C.A.Shinde said that one must understand the nature of all things and one’s lifestyle should be pure. Sis Arunima Baruah from Guwahati joined in the meet and pointed out that the Law of Karma takes care of desire and in the course of evolution desirelessness develops. Bro. B.S. Mohanty said that there must be discrimination between the eternal spirit and the non-eternal changing phenomenal existence. Then, he explained about the five kinds of desirelessness as laid down in ‘Guru Bhakti Gita’ by Saint Poet Mahapurusa Achyitananda.

U.P. & Uttarakhand

Two newly admitted members, namely Sis. Anchal Gupta and

Sis. Geeta Srivastava, were welcomed and Diplomas along with the copies of message from International President welcoming new members were handed over to them during the meeting of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, held on 01 June. One old member Bro. Vijoy Kumar Srivastava with his revived membership was also welcomed on this occasion.

In the weekly meetings of Dharma Lodge held on 01, 15, 22 and 29 June talks were delivered on the topics 'What is Theosophy', 'Theosophic Life', 'Overview of Theosophical Society and Theosophy', and 'Karmic Agents'. The speakers were Bro. U.S. Pandey, Bro. Ashok Gupta, Bro. B.K. Pandey and Bro. U.S. Pandey respectively.

Talks were delivered on the topics 'The Key to Theosophy', 'Spiritual Inspiration' and 'Seven Questions' in the meetings of Nirvan Lodge, Agra, held on 02, 09 and 23 June. These talks were given by Bro. Gyaneesh Kumar Chaturvedi, Prof. Hari Nirmohi and Bro. Shyam Kumar Sharma respectively. Besides, a symposium on the theme 'Law of Karma and God's Grace' was organized by the Lodge on 16 June and it continued on 30 June also.

A meeting and session on 'Meditation' was held at Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, on 05 June FN.

An on-line meeting was organized by Pragya CS studio on 05 June on 'A cup of Tea-osophy with Dr. Deepa Padhi', the Vice-President of the T.S.

Bro. Ajay Rai gave talk at Sarvahitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, on the topic 'Nad- Brahm and Evolution'. The subject of talk given by Bro. V.K. Dwivedi was 'Essence of Vedanta'. These talks were held on 19 and 29 June respectively.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted study at Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad on 5 and 19 June in which Chapter V of the book *The*

Key to Theosophy was studied. Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted on-line study class for children and youth on every Sunday morning at 09.30 am. The subjects covered during the month of June 2022 were Self-review, Service, and Benefits of Yoga.

The meetings at Noida Lodge, were held in hybrid mode (physical and on-line) during the month of June. The study of the book *Light on the Path* was continued by Bro. Prabhat Saxena on 5 June. Besides, a talk on the topic 'Hidden side of lodge meetings' was delivered by Sis. Vibha Saxena on 19 June.

During the meetings of Anand Lodge, Prayag Raj, talks were organized on the topics *Theosophy aur Bauddh Chintan*, 'Listen the Music of Life', 'Seven Planes and Seven Bodies', and *Karma jigyasa*. These talks were held on 05, 12, 19 and 26 June and the speakers were Sis. Geeta Singh, Bro. Sudeep Mishra, Sis. Ranjana Srivastava and Dr. Darshan Jha respectively.

U.P. and Uk Federation Programme: The Federation organized a study camp on the book *Esoteric Instructions* by HPB. It was held from 05 to 09 June at Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali. In all, 41 members from U.P. & UK, Delhi and M.P.& Rajasthan Federations participated. The study was directed by Bro. U. S. Pandey in four sessions on each day followed by close interaction with the participants. Meditation sessions were held in the morning and evening.

During the closing session held on 05 June, participants expressed their appreciation for the presentation of study matter and for the arrangements made.

Two general talks on 'What is Theosophy' and 'Mahatmas' were also delivered on two different days on the request of some new members participating in the study camp.

Special Meetings with members of Bhowali Lodge: Bro. S.K. Pandey and Bro. U.S. Pandey took opportunity to meet some

senior members of the local lodge at Bhowali on 11 and 12 June and discussed the matter regarding the revival of lapsed membership, admitting new members and activities of the lodge.

Triveni Meet

A talk on the topic 'Song of Brahma' was delivered by Bro. Ajai Rai on 21 June. It was held in a joint programme of three lodges of Mumbai Federation (Jyoti lodge) and Gujarat Federation (Rewa and Rohit Lodge):

Contribution to the Indian Section work/ Programme:

Bro. S. S. Gautam translated the Section's journal "*The Indian Theosophist*" of July 2022 in Hindi.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty moderated the session on 'The Devachan' on 25 June

Contribution in the events of other Forums:

In Young Indian Theosophists Group:

Three young members of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad, namely Smruti Sagar Mohanta, Vansh Goel and Prabshee Mohanta, participated in the symposium on 'The Need and Importance of being Human and Right Citizen'. It was organized on 26 June.

National Lecturer

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Delhi, Bro. S.S. Gautam delivered a talk on the topic 'Thought Power'. It was held on 11 June.

Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered talk on the topic 'Mahatmas and the Inner Government of the World'. It was held in a programme organized by the Indian Section on 17 and 24 June.

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Delhi, Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered a talk on the topic 'Divine Ethics' on 18 June.

Study Camp at Vikram Lodge, Ujjain (M.P. & Rajasthan Federation)

A study camp at Vikram Lodge, Ujjain, will be held on 24 and 25 September, 2022. The book for study is "आध्यात्मिक जीवन" (*Theosophic Life*). Talks on "At the Feet of the Master" The study will be directed by Bro. Narsingh Bhai Thakariya, National Lecturer, Indian Section and Vice-President of Sanatan Lodge, Surat (Gujrat).

Registration will be made on the first come first serve basis. Members of the Theosophical Society are welcome to attend as delegates. For Registration please send Name & Diploma No. on wats app no. 8719857866.

Accommodation charges & meal charges (from 23rd evening to 25th evening) for the outstation members will be Rs. 1500 and the local members will have to pay only meal charges (Rs.800/-) for three days. Late joining and early leaving of the camp will not be permitted.

Dr Divyarth Dubey

Secretary of M.P. & Rajasthan Federation

**DONATIONS RECEIVED BY THE INDIAN
SECTION**

Between 1-4-2021 and 31-3-2022

General Donations	in Rs
Ms. Veena Agrawal, Chennai	5,000
Sri Pratik Mehta, Nani Daman	1,01,000
Sri Satyaveer Tyagi,	850
Smt. Arun Bhatia,	1,000
Sri Jitender Bhargav	1,000
Anonymous	400
Sri Govind Narain Singh, Bombay	1,00,000
Sri K. Mahaadevappa, Bangalore	10,000
Sri Jyoti Bhushan and Prakash Gupta & Smt Jyotsna Gupta	1,350
Tamil Theos, Fed.	440
Indian Section Corpus	
Smt. Manju Sundaram, Varanasi	66,000/-
Sri Lambodar Nayak, Varanasi	20,000/-
Ms. Keshwar Shreriyar Dastur, Ahmedabad	1,00,000

**127th INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION,
VARANASI**

Date: 28-30 October, 2022

**Venue: Indian Section Campus, Gurubagh Road,
Varanasi**

It will be held physically at Varanasi on 28-30 October, 2022. Registration will start from 15th July 2022 by email (theosophyvn@gmail.com). Kindly mention Name, Diploma No., Mob. No., Name of the Theosophical Lodge and scanned copy of the bank receipt of Rs 100.00, being the Reg. fee and send it to the Indian Section, the Theosophical Society Varanasi. The bank details are given below:

Name of Bank : Bank of Baroda
Account Name: The Indian Section,
The Theosophical Society
Bank A/c. No: S.B. A/c No. 28600100018425
IFSC Code : BARB0LUXABS

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The outstation members will not have to pay for their Board and Lodging charges. The local members will not have to pay for their meals. The last date for registration is 15th September 2022.

Pradip Mahapatra
Convention Officer
Mob. No 9437697429

ANNUAL ON-LINE STUDY CLASS-2022

INDIAN SECTION- TS, VARANASI

Theme - 'Discovering Divine Wisdom'

ON 03.10.2022 Monday	09.00 to 11.00 AM[IST]
05.10.2022 Wednesday	09.00 to 11.00 AM[IST]
07.10.2022 Friday	09.00 to 11.00 AM[IST]
10.10.2022 Monday	09.00 to 11.00 AM[IST]
12.10.2022 Wednesday	09.00 to 11.00 AM[IST]
14.10.2022 Friday	09.00 to 11.00 AM[IST]

The Directors of the Study Programme are- Sister Linda Oliveira and Brother Pedro Oliveira.

BOOK FOR STUDY- "**SEEKING WISDOM**" By N. SRI RAM. Sri Ram's approach to Theosophy brings with it a liveliness as well as practical guidance in the exploration of life's deeper aspects. Subjects will include Chapters like Seeking Wisdom, Truth or Semblance of Truth, Freedom from Opposites, The Beauty of Virtue, The Changing Self: Its Progression, Meeting Death as a Friend, The Three Paths in One and The Song of Life.

The TS members / sympathizers from India and outside India are requested to register after 01.08.2022 through mail theosophyindia1891@gmail.com . On registration, each one will be provided with ZOOM meeting ID and Passcode before 01.10.2022. For any clarification kindly contact Pradip Mahapatra, Cell /WhatsApp No-9437697429, [email- peekem0277@gmail.com](mailto:peekem0277@gmail.com)

FORM OF REGISTRATION

1. Name of Delegate/Sympathizer _____
2. Name of The Theosophical Lodge/Federation _____
3. Name of the Country _____
4. WhatsApp No. _____
5. Email I.D. _____

Pradeep H Gohil
President, Indian Sec. TS, India