

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.



THE THEOSOPHIST

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

Presidential Address

To the 141st Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society
Adyar, 31 December 2016

On this opening day of the 141st Convention of the Theosophical Society (TS), I would like to warmly welcome you all at Adyar after another year of challenging and important work around the theosophical world. On this occasion, let us remember the many members all over the world who are with us while watching via webcasting, and those in spirit though not in body, who like the rest of us seek wisdom for the sake of others. Let us also open our hearts to the Holy Ones who show the way to all those who seek selflessly, and guide every person who is prepared to learn. Please rise:

**May those who are the embodiment of Love Immortal
bless with their help and guidance this Society, founded
to be a channel for their work. May They inspire it with
their Wisdom, strengthen it with their Power, and energize
it with their activity.**

I am very glad to open this 141st Annual Convention of the TS.

The eighteenth century poet, William Wordsworth, captured a sense of the human dilemma when he wrote, “the world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending we lay waste our powers.” In his time the invasive pressures of “the world” were being powerfully expressed in the Industrial Revolution that was changing the face of long-accepted social, economic, and political structures in Britain. Gandhi expressed the same idea very differently when he said that “to a hungry man, a piece of bread is the face of God.” Whether it is the preoccupation with “getting and spending”, providing nourishment for our bodies, or checking and responding to an endless stream of email and text messages, we find our at-

tention absorbed by an outer world whose reality is continually confirmed by our needy involvement with it. Everywhere we look we see the conflict, limitation, and unhappiness that are the necessary result of our conviction that we are separate from each other and from the natural world. HPB described our condition as the “heresy of separateness”. What we experience as normal and real, is viewed in the Ageless Wisdom tradition as fundamentally unreal. It is the *māyā*, the illusion, that binds us to an unrelenting cycle of suffering and need.

There is something which lies beyond illusion. Though our experience of it is weak, our remembrance dim, still it lives on the periphery of our awareness, always

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waiting for those moments when the grip of our illusory attachment weakens. At those moments it makes its presence known in a brightened perception of the present moment. So different are these momentary experiences from the dreary norm that they become the touchstones for our life's direction. In the words of Albert Camus: "In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer." Illusion and reality are part of one fabric.

The prevailing quality of our forays into reality is a sense of expansion and connection. The more profound the experience, the deeper the awareness of an all-pervading, undivided consciousness — the sky encompasses both clouds and earth; though space seems to divide, in reality it connects, defines, and pervades all things. We live, move, and have our being within that consciousness which not only unites, but is Unity itself.

Although the voices of religion, phi-

losophy, and contemporary science are calling out for us to deepen our awareness of the power of unity, the only call which we can truly hear and respond to is that muffled voice within us — the voice of our own Higher Self. In its still, small tone it continually calls out through the intervening layers of our busyness and worldly involvement to look beyond illusion.

The Theosophical Society's emphasis on the primacy of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity is in a sense the means and goal of our practice. At whatever level we are able to see, and then engage with the separative tendencies of our mind, we lift a little of the heavy karma of this world. In *At the Feet of the Master* the statement is made that "though a thousand men agree upon a subject, if they know nothing about that subject their opinion is of no value." Both value and power flow into the world as our study and practice verge onto genuine inner experience.

* * *

As this is my last full year as National President of the **TS in America** (TSA), we will begin with what is my last report of TSA work in this capacity. Last year the imminent closing of Quest Books publications was a sad announcement. Now it seems that last year's report was premature, because their reduction in the publication of new books per year resulted in TPH operations being profitable for the first time in more than 20 years! Online education efforts via Internet-based seminars and classes (or webinars) continued to grow. They are available

through the TSA website and their YouTube channel. The information technology and audiovisual department head, with his assistant, came to Adyar to live-stream last year's international convention. Public programs are now offered every day of the week and on some days there are multiple programs. Attendance increased in every category of programming.

The National Secretary reports that the TSA, with 3,343 members in 38 Lodges remains stable, and that 58 percent of all new membership applications are

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received online. National speakers were scheduled at 48 different venues. The Prison Program continues to be active and to touch the lives of hundreds of prisoners. The Olcott Library and Archives director produced the first digitized book for their Theosophical Digital Collection. The Archivist continues to assist researchers, members, and staff around the world. She coordinates the online theosophical encyclopedia, Theosophy Wiki, now available in French, Russian, Spanish, and English. Quest Book Shop added 120 titles to the Theosophy section, a number of which were newly integrated into other categories of relevance, doubling the sales of theosophical books.

The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) in the USA publishes *The Spirit of Service* e-newsletter 3 or 4 times per year. Their healing network has 46 groups and many individuals performing regular healing meditations. Their magazine, *For the Love of Life*, is published annually. TOS funds were granted to a conference on theosophical education in Odisha, India. Emergency funds were sent to Adyar in January for Chennai flood relief; in September to the Italian TOS for earthquake relief; and to the Louisiana TOS also for flood relief. Finally, a grant was given to the TOS Annie Besant Model School in Odisha, India.

The **Brazilian** Section has 782 members and 33 Lodges. The National Council met in January in Esmeraldas during their 35th Summer School, and in July, during their Winter School, at the Institute

in Brasília. They also held the International Theosophical School at the Theosophical Institute, with visiting lecturers Fernando de Torrijos from USA, and Barend Voorham, of the TS Point Loma in the Netherlands; and the 2nd Youth International Meeting in February with my participation. The Regional Councils met once each semester in the four different regions, giving seminars, workshops, and lectures. Their various departments are working at a fast pace. *Sophia* magazine has 636 subscribers, being sold at newsstands all over the country. The TOS is active in four cities with fundraising activities and assistance to the needy.

In **Cuba** the Section membership rose from 558 to 566 in 12 Lodges. Its annual convention was celebrated in January on “The Feminine Aspect in Manifestation”. Lodge studies continued with various themes based on theosophical books, lectures, and articles. They are studying Annie Besant’s *Thought Power* and *Esoteric Christianity*, *The Hidden Side of Things* by Leadbeater, and others. All Lodges in the Section celebrated the official dates of our Society: Founders’, Adyar, and White Lotus Days. In July the Lodges in Havana organized a summer school on “Four Basic Ideas for the Study of *The Secret Doctrine*”, as a workshop for members. The Section’s online magazine, *Revista Teosófica Cubana*, continued its quarterly publication.

The **Argentinian** Section, with 328 members, held a book fair in Río Cuarto, where they distributed flyers on the work of the TS and sold a number of

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theosophical books. About 2,500 information brochures titled "You Are Invited" were distributed nationwide, and in Paraguay. In mid-March I gave a public conference held in San Rafael on "The Root of All Problems", with 250 persons attending. This was followed by the 3rd Seminar of Luso (Portuguese)-Hispanic Theosophy, jointly organized by the Inter-American Theosophical Federation (IATF) and the Argentinian Section on "The Change to Individual Transformation", attended by myself and around 110 persons from nine different countries.

The TS in **Mexico**, with 148 members, hosted the IATF's "First Encounter of North America" in Cholula, Puebla, in late March on "Applying the Principles of the Ageless Wisdom", with myself as their guest of honor. It was a good event with many members and non-members attending. In mid-December they held a two-day Wisdom School on the "Katha Upanishad" at the National Headquarters, with two guests from Spain: Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig, whose presentations were well received.

In **Bolivia** the Section's membership has increased to 122. They were visited by Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, and La Paz for three days in late May and early June, holding workshops and public conferences. Their national conferences were held in Cochabamba in mid-August on "Service, Study, and Self-knowledge" by Radha Burnier; and in La Paz in late September on "Probation and Chelaship".

The TS in **Canada**, with 118 mem-

bers, has a new Lodge in Val-David, near Montreal, and they also appointed a new Treasurer. Also, new study centers were approved in Calgary and Nanaimo. Their annual general meeting was held in September in Quebec. Vice-president Robert Béland returned to Adyar last December and January to attend the School of the Wisdom and International Convention, and in July the Organizing Secretary attended the National Convention of the TS in America.

The **Costa Rican** Presidential Agency has 59 members in 5 Lodges. Their studies included several of H. P. Blavatsky's classics and others. An "Introductory Course of Theosophy" was offered to the public free of charge from January through July by Ligia Montiel Longhi.

In the **Uruguayan** Regional Association all of their 6 Lodges meet weekly, having added three members last year, for a total of 56. The Lodges studied Radha Burnier's *Human Regeneration*, among other books; articles from the Spanish Section magazine, *Sophia*, were also studied, and they showed videos of a seminar given for Arjuna Lodge in Spain by Dr Isaac Jauli, and a video with Juan Viñas giving a lecture in Brasilia.

In **Colombia** there has been a change of Presidential Representative, from Nelly Medina to Antonio Martínez. They now have 52 members in 8 Lodges. They offer a basic course on "Approaching Theosophy". The TOS is active in Bogotá and in rural areas, and they also hold meditations for Peace. The Round Table ritual is performed by young people, and they

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have been receiving the *Theosophical Readers' Digest* published in the Philippines continuously since 1952.

The TS in **Chile**, with 50 members, held its national Convention in April on "Discovering Ourselves". They have 50 members and disseminate Theosophy by distributing pamphlets in subways, on electronic pages, in their magazine, and online radio to transmit lectures and classes. Information can also be obtained on their website. Their "Theosophical Electronic Brochure" and their magazine are sent monthly to different Spanish-speaking countries. They also have a team translating articles and books, and collaborating with the translation of *The Theosophist* into Spanish.

In November, the **Dominican Republic** Presidential Agency, with 42 members, hosted 96 members from the three Americas and the Caribbean. They heard a well-attended public lecture by Dr Isaac Jauli. Then began the Seminar of the Caribbean Basin on "An Illumined Mind", with 8 speakers from 6 countries. Two visiting speakers were hosted by the Presidential Representative, Fernando de Torrijos, who gave a lecture at a University, two public lectures, and a well-attended workshop; and Terry Hunt, who gave a public lecture and directed a three-day retreat on Raja Yoga. The Lodges studied the Mahatma Letters all year long in addition to many other theosophical subjects.

The TS in **Puerto Rico**, has 39 members in 3 Lodges. They offered a quarterly program of conferences and almost

every Sunday gave public lectures on "What is Theosophy?" and "The Law of Cycles", among other topics. In November, Inter-American Federation president Isis Resende gave two public lectures.

The Presidential Agency in **Perú**, with 33 members in 2 Lodges, offered seventeen public talks on various topics. They freely offered an internet course on Theosophy, and HPB Lodge also offered a course in July on "The Basis of Esoteric Philosophy".

The TS in **Venezuela**, with 16 members in 2 Lodges, celebrated Foundation Day and White Lotus Day. Both Lodges have joint meetings, studying I. K. Taimni's *The Secret of Self-Realization*. Oscar José Hernandez holds regular retreats in the state of Bolivar to teach Theosophy to a group of aborigines.

The **Central American** Regional Association has 2 Lodges totaling 14 members. One Lodge has its own website: <www.sociedadteosoficaelsalvador.org>. They held a total of eight public lectures and studied HPB's *The Secret Doctrine*, J. Krishnamurti's *At the Feet of the Master*, and Annie Besant's *Esoteric Christianity*. They also gave four conferences sponsored by the Inter-American Federation.

The **Italian Section**, now the largest in Europe with 934 members in 29 Lodges and 20 study centers, carries out "members only" meetings and public conferences. Their website attracts around 4,000 visits per month with videos of theosophical conferences, now featuring a section on the TOS. They publish 1,300

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copies of their monthly magazine, with over 1,000 subscriptions. Also, their monthly e-newsletter is sent to over 4,500 interested readers. The Section and nine other Lodges have launched their official Facebook page. New Facebook pages for their publishing house and the Italian TOS are also online. Their publishing house website <<http://www.eti-edizioni.it>> offers theosophical books for the public, both in Italian and in English.

The **English Section** (TSE) is in a transition period, as in June they became an official charity. Their 35 Lodges met regularly. In September Headquarters hosted a successful International Conference on Theosophical History, attended by members from Israel, Canada, and the USA. The summer school was on “Divine Wisdom”, with Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, Chairman of the European Federation, as the guest speaker. She gave the Blavatsky Lecture on “The Wisdom of All Ages”. After a few years’ absence from the European Federation, the TSE was warmly welcomed back into the fold.

The Annual Convention of the **Finnish Section** was held at Helsinki Headquarters in April. In June their summer school took place at Kreivilä on “Compassion as a Way of Life”, and in Estonia the Lodges arranged a summer school on “The World in Us and Us in the World”. A new Finnish translation of HPB’s *The Secret Doctrine* II was published in September, jointly by the TS and Kalevala and Minerva Lodges. They have 394 members in 22 Lodges. The TS in **France** held its National Convention at

the Paris Headquarters on “Theosophical Teaching and J. Krishnamurti’s Message”. It included two symposium talks and a public lecture on the theme by Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy. At the Paris Headquarters, the work of the 4 Lodges went steadily with 329 members. In Africa, two out of the three Lodges became active and two study groups were formed. All of the Section’s programs were published on its website and in their magazine, *Le Lotus Bleu*.

The **Dutch Section** reports a membership of 325 in 10 Lodges. In March, they held Spring Day, when they presented a new book written by Dutch members on *Theosophy, Ageless Wisdom for Our Age*; in October a silent retreat was led by Trân-Thi-Kim Diêu on “The Siva Sutra” based on the book by I. K. Taimni; and in July a “Self-transformation and the Spiritual Life” seminar was led by Vic Hao Chin, Jr. In September they had a “European afternoon”, when I gave a lecture followed by discussion.

The TS in **Spain**, with 318 members in 14 Lodges and 6 study centers, held the 9th Silent Retreat guided by Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu in December, attended by 33 people. This year the in-depth study was based on “The Golden Stairs” of H. P. Blavatsky. In late April, Carmen César held a seminar on “The Emerald Tablet”, attended by 25 members. In August they had a Summer School in Sant Feliu de Guixols on “Meditation” with 108 participants, and the international lecturer Pablo Sender conducted sessions that were theoretical as well as practical.

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The **Icelandic Section** membership increased by 15 this year to 262. Their website is both in Icelandic and English. Their Friday evening and Saturday afternoon meetings are advertised in the newspapers as free and open to the public. They had 45 meetings with 40 to 60 persons attending. After each Friday talk, people have an opportunity to meet the lecturer for further discussion over refreshments. Some Lodges also have members-only meetings on Sundays.

The **Russian** Presidential Agency had overall growth of activities and 11 additional members, with a total of 170. Two study centers were created in Makaryevka and Yurga, and work is going on to create a Siberian Theosophical Center. Big publishing projects are going on to develop a theosophical review, *Miscellany*, with the complete works by H. P. Blavatsky, and a theosophical library. The 8 Lodges are cooperating with common projects, and social networks are actively visited and updated with the new materials. A dialogue between Russian and Ukrainian theosophists has been established.

The **Swedish Section** has 155 members. Their magazine, *Timeless Wisdom*, was published four times in 2015. Their 6 Lodges had many lectures on various theosophical themes and also had study groups and workshops. They have arranged mini-schools at the headquarters in Stockholm twice a year, each with around 15 participants. Their summer school was on Shirley Nicholson's *Ancient Wisdom — Modern Insight*, with 19

members participating. Their TOS work has helped orphan children in Latvia and they also have a website.

The TS in **Greece** is translating *Talks on the Path of Occultism* by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. Membership dropped to 156 from 187, and Apollon and Kaviros Lodges have lapsed. The study group Prokris is inactive, but Radamanthis and Minos Lodges in Crete are working very well.

The **Scottish** Regional Association, with 129 members in 3 Lodges, has a substantial Library with TS teachings from the earliest days. It is now being catalogued electronically to make it a resource for members and students worldwide. They continue to have international TS speakers for two weekends per year. Lodges with study groups have been working on *The Key to Theosophy* and the abridged *Secret Doctrine*, among others.

The **German Section's** summer school was their main event, with Dr Andreas de Bruin once again, and Jutta Häuser-Hartung, a specialist in yoga and the Upanishads. It was attended by 40 members, some of them from the TS in Pasadena and Point Loma. During the School they commemorated the work of former General Secretary of the TS in Germany, Elisabeth Schmidt, who died in June at 79. Work and meetings with 119 members in 7 Lodges continues on a regular basis. Their magazine, *Adyar*, is published three times a year. We are glad to learn that they are attracting younger people to theosophical work.

The TS in **Portugal** had a visit by

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Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy and members from Porto, Évora, and Lisbon attended his lecture on “Theosophical Teaching and Krishnamurti’s Message”. The Lodges mentioned above and the study groups in the Azores and Setúbal continue to work with enthusiasm and dynamism, attracting new sympathizers. The Section reports 111 members in 10 Lodges and 2 study centers.

The 11th annual Convention of the TS in **Ukraine** took place in November in Kyiv on “Theosophy in a Changing World” with a varied program. About 50 participants arrived from six other cities. It ended with a round-table meeting with all present on “Service as Spiritual Necessity” directed by Loshchinina Olga. Their membership is steady with 94 members.

The **Belgian Section** reports that a study centre has been formed named “Open Paradigma”, promoting the study of theosophy-science. The Brussels headquarters welcomed lecturers Trâm-Thi-Kim-Diêu in November, speaking on Dharma, and Muriel Pécastaing-Boissière in April, with a lecture on Annie Besant. Some of their activities include theosophical workshops. The young are finding their way to their activities and it is hoped this trend will continue. The Section has 85 members.

The **Welsh** Regional Association’s 77 members meet fortnightly, except for Conwy Lodge, which has suspended meetings. They have 10 unattached members. At Bangor Lodge Eric McGough gave 4 Lectures on the “Nature of Consciousness” from October to December.

These were recorded and are available as CDs and on Eric’s website. Gary Kidgell, former Organizing Secretary of Scotland, gave a full-day seminar at Colwyn Bay Lodge which was well attended, on “The Pathway to the Higher Self”. In South Wales, Swansea Lodge has had an increase of 9 members in the last six months, with no members lapsing.

The TS in **Ireland** has flourished for 11 years since 2005, when Northern and Southern Lodges came together under one umbrella as a Regional Association. The 11th All Ireland Convention was held in Dublin this year in May. Their guest speaker, Bhupendra Vora, gave a talk on their Convention theme, “The Glorious Future of Man”. Membership, which has risen over the past few years, is now at 74. The Organizing Secretary keeps in touch with each member with regular news-letters and Study Notes.

The TS in **Austria** has 55 members, up from 49 last year. The 3 Lodges offer weekly lectures throughout the year. Study subjects are based on classical theosophical teachings and related topics, with lectures regularly placed on their website. Their members receive *Adyar* magazine from the German TS. In April Raphael Langerhorst, member of the Lodge in Linz, who has helped with the reconstruction of houses after the earthquake in Nepal, financed and built four houses in Trisuli near Kathmandu. In one building a Theosophical Library was set up with books ordered from the TPH Adyar. The costs were covered by the Lodge in Linz.

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The **Slovenian** Regional Association stands at 53 members in 4 Lodges. All Lodges had regular weekly meetings, studying many theosophical books. Some of Krishnamurti's DVDs were watched, followed by discussion. All memorial days were celebrated.

The **Hungarian** Presidential Agency has 31 members in 3 Lodges, but work could continue in only two Lodges, one in the country and the other in Budapest. Forrás Lodge was dormant, as two members resigned and four lapsed. They organize monthly recorded public lectures and upload them with slides onto the Agency and Lodge websites. They could publish the newly translated sixth part of *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. II, part 3) during the year and sent a set of published books (23 books and 4 booklets) to the Adyar Library in April.

The TS in **Norway**, with 19 members in 3 Lodges, has a new website with the help of members. Five new members were accepted to the Ostfold Lodge. Their Facebook group has increased to 45, and some have expressed the wish of joining the TS. They hope to elect a new Organizing Secretary in 2017.

The **West African Section** has increased its membership from 238 to 243 in 11 Lodges. Planned public lectures for the year and the annual Convention could not be held because the General Secretary was seriously indisposed and the programs for these activities had to be cancelled. The economic and political environment made things difficult but they are hopeful that things will improve

with the recent election of a new government to take effect in January.

The TS in **South Africa** reports a membership of 151 in 6 Lodges. The location of Capetown, Pretoria, and Durban Lodges has been identified as a possible reason for the drop in membership from 174. These Lodges have been assessing the viability of relocating to residential suburbs, with positive financial results. The Section held their biannual Convention at the Johannesburg Lodge on "Be the change you want the world to be". During the Convention, Jack Hartmann was re-elected as General Secretary and Tom Davis as National Lecturer.

The **East and Central African Section** composed of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia, has increased its membership from 135 to 146 in 5 Lodges. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract new members, but they continue their efforts. Nairobi Lodge has seen keen interest from a few new members. But administration of the other four Lodges is very poor, with almost no one willing to take up administrative work. They look forward to regular international speakers visiting Lodges in Africa, as it may arouse more interest and attract new members.

The **Togo** Regional Association reports a membership of 25 in 2 Lodges meeting twice a month. They have been studying Annie Besant's *The Doctrine of the Heart* and *Thought Power*, and the Three Objects of the TS. Their annual Convention took place in August at the TS Center in Danyl. The French Section

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sends them books and their monthly *Lotus Bleu* magazine.

The **Indian Section**, with 11,323 members in 408 Lodges under 16 Federations, held its annual Convention in January at Adyar, inaugurated by me and chaired by international Vice-President Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy. Their second day of Convention consisted of short talks by Shikhar Agnihotri (UP); Geetha Jaikumar (Adyar), and S. U. Mahesh (Karnataka). Their talks were appreciated and published in the March issue of *The Indian Theosophist*. The 93rd South India Conference was held during the Easter holidays in March at Adyar with 137 delegates. The theme was Mabel Collins' *Light on the Path*. It had 10 speakers and was inaugurated by Dr Satapathy, who also released a new book combining four classics, *The Theosophic Life and the Three Gems of Theosophy*, published by TPH Adyar. The North India Study Camp was held in Varanasi during October and I directed the study on "The Three Objects". While there, I was also invited to the Besant Theosophical School to inaugurate a new building. Other study camps were held at Gwalior, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar, and Bhowali through the year on far-ranging topics. A first-of-its-kind School of the Wisdom course was conducted in Spanish on "Beyond Physical Death" by Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig at Bhowali in September, with 35 enthusiastic participants from 8 countries.

The 125th anniversary of the Indian Section was marked by a special edition of its journal, *The Indian Theosophist*,

in November, and by a two-day seminar on "Looking Ahead in the Context of the Theosophical Society" organized in Varanasi in the same month. Other seminars were also conducted in July in Delhi, and in December in Varanasi. Almost all the Federations held their annual conferences, and I delivered the inaugural address at the Bombay Federation conference in November on "The Illumined Mind". I was also the chief guest at the Kerala Federation conference in October, where the theme was "Man — the Problem and the Solution". Dr Satapathy was the chief guest at the Utkal Federation conference in February. General Secretary Mr S. Sundaram officiated at two of the annual conferences. National lecturers B. D. Tendulkar, G. Dakshina Moorthy, S. K. Pandey, Shikhar Agnihotri, C. A. Shinde, L. Nagesh, and Avatikaben Mehta visited and gave talks at various places during the year. The 14th East Zone Conference of the TS and TOS was held at Guwahati in April, with Mr Sundaram as the chief guest. The TOS had their National camp in Varanasi in March, conducted by their director, Mr B. L. Bhattacharya, and secretary, Mr T. K. Nair. The North Zone Conference was held at Noida in August, and the South Zone Conference at Salem in September. In order to manage the properties of the Society it was decided to set up a Central Property Committee at Varanasi headquarters to expedite the decision-making process.

The **Australian Section's** National Convention was held in January and

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I was their guest speaker; the completion of their first professionally produced promotional video, filmed during the Convention week, is now on the Section's website; a well-attended School of Theosophy at Springbrook was held in April, with John Vorstermans on "The Mahatma Letters"; a successful open day at Blavatsky Lodge took place in May, following its move to St. Leonards in Sydney. This included the inauguration of its new premises, a celebration of White Lotus Day, and an opportunity for over 300 people to enter the Lodge. Membership declined by 45, mainly in three Lodges, and one center expanded with 21 new members, totaling 823. However, the continuing overall decline in membership is one of the reasons for their current move, at the national level, for more active promotion of the TS.

The main events held in the **New Zealand Section** were the annual convention in Auckland in January with guest speaker Victor Peñaranda from the Philippines, followed by a 3-day "Process of Self-Transformation Seminar". In April they held a 7-day School of Theosophy with guests Pablo and Michele Sender from the USA on "The Yoga of Theosophy". Many of the videos of these events are viewable on their website <Theosophy.nz>. Their membership has declined to 633, so there is a focus on using social media much more to let people know more about the TS.

The TS in **East and South East Asia** comprises Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, and Myanmar — with an active Lodge

in each. Their website has more information on the history of the Lodges and the Presidential Agency. The Singapore Lodge is 368 members strong; the Selangor Lodge in Malaysia has 89 members; Japan has Lodge Nippon in Tokyo with 48 members; and the Yangon TS in Myanmar has the Olcott Lodge with 47 members. The total number of members is 552, having a large turnover, with 53 incoming and 58 outgoing members.

The **Bangladesh** Presidential Agency added 110 new members and 4 new Lodges: Maynamati, Lalon, Proactive, and Kazi Nazrul Islam. The Comilla Lodge Secretary revived activities and organized programs jointly with Maynamati Lodge. They distributed and sold a good number of books supplied by Mr B. L. Bhattacharyya, the Presidential Representative. The Agency has added 34 members, totaling 273 in 8 active Lodges. They have been studying *At the Feet of the Master*, and Annie Besant's *Thought Power* and *Beauties of Islam*.

The TS in the **Philippines** has had another active year, adding two new Lodges, totalling 20, with 239 members. Their Theosophical Publishing House in Manila publishes and distributes the *Theosophical Digest* quarterly public magazine through over 100 bookstores nationwide, which attracts new members. They also publish TS books and pamphlets and distribute these worldwide, including the *Theosophical Encyclopedia*; the chronological edition of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*; *The Collected Works of H. P. Blavatsky* (in digital

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edition and CD-ROM version); and many others. The Section also maintains “theosophical schools”, where they are evolving a model for theosophical education, catering to many underserved areas. Former General Secretary and current Golden Link College President, Vic Hao Chin, Jr, gave numerous lectures in the Philippines and abroad, including Adyar and Bhubaneswar in India, and in Hong Kong, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

The new National Committee of the **Indonesian Section** analyzed their organizational problems and designed improvements such as amendment of the national rules to better regulate the work of the Section and prevent abuse of funds and positions through transparency; development of human resources through study, networking, and venturing; training in leadership; standardization of administration and accounting, and other reforms. The need is to venture on enterprises to generate funds to implement still needed changes and programs. They request moral and material support from the international theosophical world.

The **Sri Lankan** Presidential Agency reports that their activities included five administrative committee meetings, meditation programs, and several lectures by various speakers. Their membership stands at 182 in 3 Lodges.

The Presidential Agency in **Pakistan** has no official membership, but it reports that the political climate is now good in Karachi, so they have started activities in their buildings there and in Hyderabad

(Sindh). Cataloguing is also progressing in their Library. Their Montessori School is working nicely, and they have started another Institute for training Montessori teachers.

Covenant Lodge in Tel Aviv, **Israel**, with 66 members in 6 study centers, reports that they had 5 seminars totalling 248 participants, and one convention with about 220 in attendance, most of whom are sympathizers and those who studied Theosophy in the past. A study group of young participants who previously attended their courses is meeting monthly. More members are active on Facebook, disseminating Theosophy and the Lodge’s activities, with about 1,500 followers. They also have a channel on Youtube presenting theosophical talks and short clips.

In addition to the Covenant Lodge, there are 6 other **Lodges attached to Adyar**, totalling 85 members, and there are 35 **Fellows at Large**.

At the **International Headquarters** the Adyar River clean-up started in April by volunteers mainly from the Chennai Trekking Club and friends; clean-up has been done each Friday morning. Also the Dhyana Yoga, Naturopathy, and Ayurveda Clinic started in August in part of the Bhojanasala on a part-time basis.

The **Archives and Museum** has continued scanning documents, especially those of H. P. Blavatsky. The availability of many volunteers, mainly from abroad, has been helpful in this regard. A new catalogue is being prepared. Audio and video tapes are also

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being digitized. Several of them were publicly viewed, including talks by J. Krishnamurti and C. Jinarājādāsa, and an interview with Radha Burnier.

The work of digitization of palm-leaf and other manuscripts initiated last year by the **Adyar Library and Research Centre** was continued in earnest, with the help of new equipment such as lights, camera, scanners, storage devices and so on, obtained through purchases and donations. They started a research affiliation with the American Institute of Indian Studies. Conservation of old and rare books and manuscripts continued to be done.

The **School of the Wisdom**, for the first time, had a session in Spanish, a one-week programme conducted in September at the Himalayan Study Centre in Bhowali, India, on “Beyond Physical Death”, directed by Drs Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig. This was in addition to the sessions at Adyar by Dr Pablo Sender on “The Yoga of Theosophy”, Prof. R. C. Tampi on “Life’s Deeper Aspects”, Mr Vicente Hao Chin, Jr on “Self-Transformation and the Spiritual Life”, and Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu on “Glimpses into Chinese Philosophies in the Light of Theosophy”, each lasting two weeks.

The **Theosophical Publishing House** brought out 28 books (1 new and 27 reprints) during the year. The Editorial Office brought out a special issue of *The Theosophist* on Joy Mills in December, commemorating the first anniversary of her passing.

The **Olcott Education Society** suf-

fered a great loss when Mrs Lakshmi Suryanarayanan, who joined the Olcott Memorial School as its headmistress in 1999, and later became the School’s Director, passed away in April 2016. Her contributions have been invaluable. Also, the HPB Hostel is being renovated, and it has a new warden on board, Mr P. Perchamy.

The renovation of the **Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary** has started. The new veterinary surgeon Dr Rm. Kannambal, who took charge in June is an expert in animal birth control procedures. There were about 2,800 cases attended during the year.

The **Besant Scout Camping Centre** had thirteen institutions and scout groups utilizing its services. Around 1,400 children benefitted through camping activities in line with theosophical values.

The **Theosophical Order of Service** (TOS) continued its work with Mrs Nancy Secrest as its international Secretary. Carolyn and Geoffrey Harrod who were producing the quarterly e-newsletter — the latter was also the webmaster of the TOS website — retired this year, and Ms Rozi Ulics is the new webmaster. Activity on the Facebook Page started last year, has been growing. Efforts in raising a corpus fund for the Olcott Memorial School has begun. TOS Italy was involved in helping the Syrian refugees with material aid, and even constructed a small paediatrics clinic. A notable event was the First National Conference on Theosophical Education in Bhubaneswar, India, last September,

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for implementing a theosophical education model for schools linked to the TS and TOS, along the lines of similar work done in the Philippines.

As to **travels by international Headquarters officers**, last January I went to Australia to speak at their National Convention and a public meeting; I spoke in Brazil at a Lodge and public meetings, and attended the first International Young Theosophists Conference, both in Brasilia. I also spoke at Lodges in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo and to the public, and conducted a three-day workshop at the Raja Center near Sao Paulo. In Cholula, Mexico, I gave talks at an Inter-American Federation meeting and at a public meeting. In Argentina, I spoke at the Lodge in Buenos Aires and gave a public talk, as well as conducted a workshop in the San Rafael Center. I also presided over and spoke at the TS in America National Convention and at public meetings, ending with the centenary of the Detroit Lodge. On to Europe, I held a private meeting with the National President of the TS in Italy, and spoke at three meetings in the Netherlands. After returning to India, I spoke at the Kerala Federation annual conference in Alleppey and at the 125th anniversary of their Lodge in Kochi. Later I spoke in New Zealand at the Indo-Pacific Federation gathering and at Lodge and public meet-

ings in three other cities. Finally, I went to Delhi at the invitation of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to speak on "The TS: India's Gift to the World".

The **international Vice-President** went on a lecture tour of Europe in June, visiting Perugia, Vicenza, and Trieste in Italy; Ljubljana and Kranjska Gora in Slovenia; Barcelona and Madrid in Spain; and Lisbon, Evora, and Porto in Portugal. In Paris, he spoke at the French Section's Headquarters for their National Conference, and gave a public lecture. He also travelled in India throughout the year to Tanjore, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Bangalore, New Delhi, and Bhowali, to speak in different capacities.

In March the **International Secretary** gave a talk on "Brotherhood" for the Theosophical Seminar of sister-organizations in Helsinki, Finland. She attended the European Federation meeting in Barcelona in April, and the annual meetings and Europe Day at Naarden in September. In October she was invited by the Karnataka Federation to meet theosophists on their premises in Bangalore, and on to Huliyaar to give the inauguration address at the Golden Jubilee of their Lodge.

This ends my report and I offer my warm good wishes to everyone present and also to every one of our members worldwide.

TIM BOYD

Living from the Still Centre

LINDA OLIVEIRA

A conversation between a disciple and a Master illustrates an almost universal truth about the human condition:

“Where shall I look for enlightenment?”
“Here,” answered the Master.
“When will it happen?”
“It is happening right now.”
“Then why don’t I experience it?”
“Because you do not look.”
“What should I look for?” asked the Disciple.
“Nothing. Just look.”
“At what?”
“Anything your eyes alight upon.”
“Must I look in a special kind of way?”
“No. The ordinary way will do.”
“But don’t I always look the ordinary way?”
“No.”
“Why ever not?”
“Because to look you must be here. You’re mostly somewhere else.”¹

The general human condition is one of immersion in this world of forms, driven by a thirst for the whole gamut of sensate experience. We do not normally inhabit *this* moment. Have you ever considered that we commonly tend to live,

act, and function as if we are on the circumference of a large circle, and that this boundary becomes the limit of our experience? *Within* the circle lie all the potentialities of what each of us can, and will, become. Yet most of the time we remain comfortably on the very edge of who we really are. We are “somewhere else”, as the story mentioned; we are not present. A metaphor for this is the fact that we live on the exterior of planet Earth. Curiosity by scientists, deep-sea divers, and others, about our planet and how it works, spawns adventures into hidden places such as underground caves and ocean depths. Similarly, our innate curiosity about inner worlds is inevitably piqued at some stage during the journey through *samsāra* — this seemingly endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. It is when deeper enquiry into life occurs that the boundary we have created starts to thin, and weaken.

The fact is that we may have occasional moments of wholeness, yet mostly still perceive ourselves as separate, situating ourselves on the boundary of the circle. The microbiologist Darryl Reaney asserted:

Mrs Linda Oliveira is National President of the Australian Section and former international Vice-President of the TS. Talk delivered at the International Convention, Adyar, 1 January, 2017.

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We do not stand alone, we are all inter-linked. . . . *All is One* . . . is the convergent message of both science and the sacred sense. So each time we make a choice that puts self ahead of the other, each time we withhold a word of compassion from a troubled friend, we shift the balance, albeit perhaps slightly, towards our collective extinction. By contrast, each time we smile at someone in the street, each time we extend a caring hand to a fellow creature in distress, we move — *all of us* — towards . . . light.²

To acknowledge our interconnectedness is the beginning of compassion; and the degree to which we are separated is reflected in unwise behaviours.

Adjusting our Mental Frequency

Rather poignantly, the author just mentioned also observed that ‘Each moment is an undiscovered country.’ What an eloquent observation! It implies either that we do not live within in the present moment, or else that we do not live *fully* within this moment.

This particular moment is undiscovered because we do not allow it to reveal itself to us. Typically, the mind may move almost randomly between past and future, disturbed by numerous things that ultimately may be relatively trivial. But it is in only *this* moment that there is harmony, depth, and joy. Each of these qualities is diminished to the extent that the mind loses focus, moving either backwards or forwards in time. As soon as something is finished, such as a past moment of happiness, it cannot be relived

fully. Have you ever replayed a previous experience in your mind? Each attempt to relive that experience tends to be a more faded version of the experience itself.

This process is similar to turning the dial of a radio. It is only when the dial is centred on the correct frequency that there is real clarity. Any other position on that dial produces static. Similarly, our consciousness is full of static — that is, it is full of thoughts and feelings, many of which are a bit hazy, not well formed. This is partly because these thoughts and feelings are things of the remembered past, or else they belong to a future that is largely the subject of speculation. The mind is fundamentally lacking in strength. Only by deliberately turning the dial do we obtain clarity — and so it is with the mind. There needs to be a conscious movement of consciousness so that static is diminished and greater coherence can emerge. This involves initially the faculty of concentration; and it is from a quiet, concentrated state that consciousness may deepen.

It is possible to live, and to function, from a consciousness that tends at all times *towards* unity. HPB’s diagram of meditation³ advises one to *begin* by conceiving a state of unity, by expanding in space and time. After a set of acquisitions, a complementary set of deprivations is laid out according to which the student is told to refuse to think about the reality of friends and foes, separations, and so forth. This can only be accomplished when the past and the future are both set aside. (One could add that, in the absence of a

permanently unitive state, an attempt can be made to bring past and present to mind consciously *only* when they are relevant to a given situation.)

Unitive consciousness is a very clear and focused state of awareness. If this were to become a constant background to our lives, it would actually be possible to meet every situation without prejudice, in a completely new way. We would be able to come to every experience in life without prior assumptions, without reactions, without trying to predict outcomes, and without analysis. A unitive mind possesses tranquillity. This may seem supremely difficult to attain, but it *is* possible. This is direct perception.

Many people are so full of mental and emotional noise that they are afraid of silence. However, meditative practices can help one learn not to be afraid in this way. It is important, too, to learn to be still. Why? Because in this stillness there is no striving, no worry, and no wasted energy. One just *is*. And at times there is an unexpected by-product of stillness: bursts of fresh new energy enter the system, as if from nowhere. This energy wells up through the still point within. Regular meditators would be aware of this phenomenon. Energy can be produced through exercising the physical body. However, the process we are considering here possesses precisely the opposite characteristic. For it is by *ceasing* to allow thought to exercise itself in the mental realm that energy flows into, and through, the system.

The Bindu

In the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* there is a description of a white disc with a dot in the centre, from which the whole manifested universe emanates. This point-like unity is known as ‘*thig-le*’ in Tibetan and ‘*bindu*’ in Sanskrit. *Mahabindu* refers to the Great Cosmic Centre of the macrocosm. ‘*Bindu*’ denotes the centre of consciousness of the individual, or the microcosm.

Dr I. K. Taimni described the *bindu* as a symbol of all-inclusive unity. There is sound reasoning behind this, for the point is the basis of space. If we extend a point in any direction it becomes a line. In turn, a line moves to become a surface or plane. Then the plane moves at right angles to itself to form a solid. And so space continues to develop out of a point.⁴

One of the great memes of the twentieth century was Neil Armstrong’s experience of unity when he viewed the earth from the moon. Theosophical author Jack Patterson recounted another such experience that happened to an Australian, Arthur Osborn. He had been reading about *pratyag-ātma* (the collective self) and *param-ātma* (the supreme self) in *The Science of Peace* by Bhagavan Das. Osborn confessed to being confused about the two. The following day he opened the book concerned again at the same page and had a profound experience. His surroundings simply disappeared and he found himself in the midst of a boundless ocean. Around him, innumerable columns of water arose from the water below and

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united overhead in a misty unity. He said, 'I knew the columns of water to be human beings, who sprang from a common source, and reunited after their temporary separation in a richer unity.' But he observed that the *essence* of the experience was that the water columns were people; he was one of them and they were him. All of these individuals were simultaneously present in his consciousness. He knew that all had arisen from a common source and would reunite after a temporary, apparent separation. The essential point of the whole experience, he said, was UNITY. After returning to his room again in consciousness, he knew that the experience had occupied scarcely any time. Arthur Osborn mentioned that for about ten days afterwards he wanted to throw out love frequently on the surrounding neighbourhood. He was also full of joy and exhilaration. This was not a psychic experience but a profound, even mystical one, presumably a brief but potent touch of *buddhic* consciousness.

Let us return to planes, lines, and points. An infinite number of planes can meet at a point. An infinite number of lines can also meet at a point. Recall the analogy of the circle at the beginning of this talk. Each of the lines extending inwards to a point at the centre, from the circumference of a circle, *remains present in that interior point*. In other words, the centre point can contain an infinite number of points, where each particular line reaches the point of intersection. This is a physical fact. Hence, esoterically

speaking, both the one *and* the many coexist at this central point.

Now, imagine that our consciousness is at this central point. From here it would be possible to look out from the centre and know the nature of any line that leads to and from it — to know any aspect of the many, when required. This is the mode of consciousness of an Adept. In *The Mahatma Letters* the statement appears:

Having always the means on hand — whenever absolutely needed — of bringing to our knowledge minor details, we concern ourselves but with the main facts. Hence we can hardly be *absolutely wrong* — as we are often accused by you, for our conclusions are never drawn from secondary data but from the situation as a whole. (Barker, ML #29)⁵

But what happens when awareness *leaves* the still point in the centre? It ventures out along one of the lines and only the nature of that separate line can be known. However, the closer we are on that particular line to the point in the middle, the deeper our level of awareness pertaining to that line of perception. Indeed, this is the nature of human consciousness, isn't it? When we are truly tranquil and have temporarily forgotten our sense of separateness, then we are at that still point in the centre; we see things as a whole in that moment. Otherwise our consciousness ranges between the circumference and the centre point. The further away from the centre we move, the more partial our apprehension of life

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actually is. Much of the time, human beings dwell on the circumference of the circle. Also, the more we live in the past or the future, the further away from the centre we are. This is illustrated in the following story. The Master loved to show how Nature is shot through with holiness. He was once sitting in the garden when he exclaimed: “Look at that bright blue bird sitting on the branch of that tree springing up and down, up and down, filling the world with its melody, abandoning itself to unreserved delight because it has no notion of tomorrow.”⁶

Self-Subdual

*We prevent ourselves from living from in, or near, that still centre which is always there patiently waiting to reveal itself. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Krishna provides much wise counsel to the despondent Arjuna. The chapter which is rendered “The Yoga of Self-Subdual” gives some hints in this regard:*

The Yogi who is satisfied with wisdom and knowledge, unwavering, whose senses are subdued, to whom a lump of earth, a stone, and gold are the same, is said to be harmonized. (6:8)

He who regards impartially lovers, friends, and foes, strangers, neutrals, foreigners and relatives, also the righteous and unrighteous, he excelleth. (6:9)

On the one hand, these remarks demonstrated very clearly the enormous challenge in becoming a yogi, that is, living in a completely harmonised state from the still centre within. When the

senses are subdued, then all things in the external world appear as equal. The person of the world might consider gold to be superior to earth, as it is precious and valuable. Yet does not a lump of earth hold equal value? For it, too, is a manifestation of the Divine Mind and we need it for our survival.

The text speaks of regarding impartially ‘lovers, friends and foes, strangers, neutrals, foreigners, and relatives’. Let us consider this in relation to the world today. Foreigners the world over are frequently treated with suspicion, not impartiality. We live in an age of terror, racism, and extreme nationalism, all of which bear the hallmarks of hatred, intolerance, and division. This is hardly impartiality. We live in an age of extreme materialism in which individuals are judged, typically, according to their appearance and perceived wealth; this is not impartial. We also live in an age of refugees; millions of people have been fleeing to new places in an effort to leave despotic regimes, endeavouring to find a better life out of sheer desperation. They are regarded too often as foreigners, rather than brothers and sisters. Then again, how easy is it to regard impartially friends and foes? The normal response is to like friends more and to like foes less — or else not at all. It is supremely difficult to be so harmonious that one is not driven by these kinds of considerations.

Krishna set out for Arjuna, in the *Gītā*, the facts of spiritual life, if we may put it that way, through which he demonstrated

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to Arjuna that it is possible to become fully harmonized through performing his dharma with a certain kind of attitude. At one point, we read from Krishna: “As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the Yogi of subdued thought, absorbed in the yoga of the SELF.” (6:19)

Here we can take SELF to mean ātman, the universal spirit within, the still centre. It is possible to locate and enter this windless place, in which the lamp of consciousness does not flicker. This occurs once *all* division within ceases and a certain benevolent impartiality arises. Furthermore, when consciousness is raised even slightly, one cannot help but observe patterns of interconnectedness.

Dr Taimni has written:

As our consciousness sinks into greater depths . . . of Reality in its progress from the periphery to the centre, this whole universe around us becomes endowed with greater depth, richness, beauty, and harmony, owing to the removal, step by step, of our limitations . . . our consciousness

sinks into the greater depths of our own centre of being.⁴

In other words, one becomes merged with the *bindu*.

It is insight into Unity which holds the precious power of profound transformation. This is not a borrowed idea; rather, it is a direct experience or perception.

This Self-born insight, or state of being, is the ultimate key to the regenerate individual, for whom the circumference of the circle no longer exists. The boundary is dissolved permanently. There is no artificial line between that person and other life forms. There is no separation, no peering towards the centre through only one, or two, or three, apertures on the circumference. This is what it means to live from the still centre. It demands a qualitative change of heart and mind in which separation and fragmentation do not exist. This is what it means to be fully harmonious and integrated, to become a Holy One. The circle has disappeared, the centre is everywhere, and the circumference is nowhere. ✧

Endnotes

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Inner and Outer Aspects of Universal Brotherhood

MARJA ARTAMAA

The past has meaning

In the world as a whole, during most of our own lives, a lot has changed over the last thirty years. We can only imagine how much it has changed since H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott arrived in India for the first time in 1879. But since then there has always been an inner impulse to form a theosophical Lodge. That impulse is there before anything manifests. We are guided from within as individuals to make a difference in the world, but also as sincere groups and organizations with faith that this kind of work is necessary. The past does have a meaning for the present through ups and downs along the way. We do not need to live in the past, but we can be grateful of the past, because it has led us to what is now available, what is the present. Most of us can relate to this.

When we look at the global social environment in general today, we wonder why we are facing such dramatic mental negativity and violence resulting in wars, pollution, wrong use of the astral body, and so on. In such situations it is ever more important to help people understand

themselves, their behaviour, and the consequences involved. Theosophy has the wisdom to open that understanding, to inspire us to look into ourselves, to know ourselves with an open heart and intelligent mind.

There is an instructive story I would like to share with you. A senior Native American of the Cherokee tribe was teaching his grandson about life:

“A battle is going on inside all of us”, he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil: with anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, feelings of inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority complex, and a big ego. The other is good: with joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. This same fight is going on inside you — and inside every other person, too.” The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf will win?” The old Cherokee simply replied: “The one you feed.”

The outer world is not easy to deal with

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today, but we *can* see growing awareness about the environmental and spiritual needs of human beings. Mindfulness (calling back to mind the opposite of superficiality and obliviousness, mindfulness as a faculty and as power) is spreading to schools and workplaces rapidly to help people step ahead. Psychology and science in general have a big role to play in making people believe and trust in what is good for humanity. We know about ecological catastrophes around the world because of the global communication culture. We know about hate speeches. And yet we have to live in this world together, share the consequences. We are universally connected in knowing much about the world and humanity. Yet Theosophy can bring heart, compassion, to this knowledge, with the true understanding and meaning of life.

Universal Brotherhood

Universal Brotherhood, the main focus of the First Object of the Theosophical Society (TS) is very uplifting, because it teaches us about unity. We are all one, yet different in experience and in our paths. It is good to recognize that universal brotherhood is declared as an Object of the TS, not just an idea but an object, which means that it is to be a reality in our lives. *Brotherhood is not just an extra thing to practise and try. It should be in our heart.* We can ask ourselves, if each one of us is a true brother to those we relate to in daily life outside the brotherly atmosphere of theosophists, and even in it. Do we believe in universal

brotherhood, do we have faith in it? Are we proud of the brotherhood which the TS promotes?

When some people hear about the TS, the first thing which comes to their mind is that this is the organization that promotes brotherhood. If they do, we have done our work well, because we are the faces they see in the outside world. Former international President Radha Burnier has beautifully expressed that the concept of brotherhood is based on the truth of unbreakable harmony, the music of eternal energy. When we talk about “universal brotherhood” the communication level is love, compassion. Again, brotherhood is not only a great ideal, but needs to be an integral part of our being. We are here to help to uplift humanity. There is no other way. Our loyalty, our belief or faith in bettering everyone’s future, is important. We should never lose hope.

Faith — an extension of the mind

I would now like to focus on one value, or virtue, which may be a bit surprising, and that is faith. Charlie Chaplin wrote in his autobiography:

As I have got older, I have more and more started to think of faith. . . . I believe that faith is a precursor of all our ideas. Without faith, there never could have evolved hypothesis, theory, science, or mathematics. *I believe that faith is an extension of the mind.* It is the key that negates the impossible. To deny faith is to refute oneself and the spirit that generates

Inner and Outer Aspects of Universal Brotherhood

all our creative forces. *My faith is in the unknown, in all that we do not understand by reason; I believe that what is beyond our comprehension is a simple fact in other dimensions, and that in the realm of the unknown there is an infinite power for good. Life is a beautiful, magnificent thing, even to a jellyfish. . . .*

I chose this quotation because it discusses faith at a deeper level than just the concept of blind faith. Theosophy does not support blind faith, because it prevents conscious development and gives authority to someone else in our lives. But faith, the sincere trust that there is something sacred in life, not necessarily in a religious sense, is an uplifting factor. Trust to go where your innermost guides you. Faith is an extension of our mind, a power rising from within, a connection to the unknown. Believing in the good uplifts the world.

When I was a child I sometimes went with my parents to theosophical events, and I got excited about the peculiar people who were there, and about their stories. Later I wanted to know more, and to find out by myself. I met unknown people who remained unknown; strangers who became familiar; various meditation groups became familiar. In everything there was a faith and trust in people, and in something greater, a higher consciousness, about which I had heard in Theosophy. These had a remarkable impact on the choices I made later, while searching for meaning in my life. Thus began my wandering, exploration, belief in human beings, my doubts, my feeling

of insignificance, idealism, detachment, my Theosophy, science, and humanity, my inner calming down.

I have heard many times people saying that theosophists are daydreamers, nonsensical, with feet above the ground and heads in the clouds, credulous. I accept it, only if by that they mean we have sensitivity, intelligence, courage, humility, daring to manage our own life, aiming to spiritualize our life with the ability to experience the power of silence. Wisdom is born with the collaboration of our spiritual activity, intelligence, and spirit. Spirituality requires observation and discrimination.

When one learns to know oneself, those common opinions or views break down. What looks credulous turns out to be love and belief in human goodness. What looks like having our feet above the ground, is actually courage to be different. What seems nonsensical is, after all, a connection to the unknown, because beyond it there is a greater reality (human-kind is more than what we see with our eyes). The Ageless Wisdom does not make man stupid.

When we search for a true theosophist, a true human being, we need to search for wisdom, which includes self-knowledge. Mere desire to become wise is not enough. Actually, one needs to give up desire to become something. One needs strength, self-discipline to educate oneself, in order to become a facilitator of the wisdom of each era.

Each one of us makes our life visible in our own ways. Let us be courageous

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in what we believe to be right, true, and good, with the faith which is the power rising from within and the extension of our mind. In the middle of all these virtues, it is essential that we remain in a continuous state of self-examination. It leads to a connection with the here and now. At the same time, we must believe in intuition and the flow of the unconscious. The path of human growth is a combination of determined aim and intuitive search towards the aim, which one can only sense with expectancy. We do not have a ready-made blueprint or model. Often only afterwards we understand the reasons and inner logic on our path. And this requires spiritual discipline and endurance. When that has been learned through concentration, life becomes easier to understand. The only thing that matters is what takes human evolution forward.

We should be like light bearers

Paulo Coelho, in his *Manual of the Warrior of the Light*, describes the warrior as a resilient, truthful man, full of goodness, who accomplishes in his life only what he in his innermost self knows or believes is right. A warrior of light does not act for himself, but he is determined that he acts according to his inner, or higher, knowledge, or wisdom. He is continuously learning. He acts so that his presence helps others and vice versa. Below, Coelho writes how someone becomes a warrior of light.

Warrior of the Light:

Every Warrior of the Light has felt afraid of going into battle.

Every Warrior of the Light has, at some time in the past, lied or betrayed someone.

Every Warrior of the Light has trodden a path that was not his.

Every Warrior of the Light has suffered for the most trivial of reasons.

Every Warrior of the Light has, at least once, believed he was not a Warrior of the Light.

Every Warrior of the Light has failed in his spiritual duties.

Every Warrior of the Light has said 'yes' when he wanted to say 'no'.

Every Warrior of the Light has hurt someone he loved.

That is why he is a Warrior of the Light, because he has been through all this and yet has never lost hope of being better than he is.

We need sometimes to observe externally. Through art we can see ourselves from outside, we are able to come out from ourselves and empathize with another's plight. Instead of seeing only one world, we can see its multiplicity. We can open up to this multidimensional world when we get rid of our prejudices, habits and mental obstacles. This is true connectedness, oneness, brotherhood, which does not separate people, but respects each path. ✧

The Life of HPB — II

BORIS M. DE ZIRKOFF

Q: What happened to Madame Blavatsky after her last known visit to Tibet?

A: She came back to Europe some time in 1871 and she is known to have been in Rumania and Greece, and possibly what is today Yugoslavia. She made a very short trip across the border into Russia and says she did not stay there but a few days on some errand, after which, I think her last stay in Europe in those days was Greece. She embarked in July on a steamer apparently bound for Alexandria in Egypt. The boiler exploded on that steamer. Everybody was catapulted into the sea and most of them were drowned. She was saved and taken over with no belongings of any kind to Alexandria, and thence to Cairo.

It is during that trip, when she landed in Egypt, that she was helped by a woman who later when she married became Madame Emma Coulomb, of a very unsavory fame in the history of the TS. HPB remained very grateful to her for being helped in those days. She stayed in Cairo perhaps six months more or less, and she started a little society for the

investigation of spiritualistic and occult phenomena by reliable mediums, but this came to naught. It was some kind of an effort along occult lines, but it had no success whatsoever. She ran into all kinds of frauds and had to disband the whole thing. From there she moved to Paris. Madame Coulomb disappeared from the stage of HPB's life for the time being. It was just a casual meeting apparently. But some kind of a karmic connection existed there.

In 1872 HPB lived with one of her cousins in Paris and, apparently from what she says, had no idea of going to the United States, when she received a peremptory order in 1873 from her Teacher to move on to New York, and she did so. That was the beginning of her great mission. She came to the US on 7 July 1873.

Q: What was the manner of Madame Blavatsky's passage to the US? One of the very unhappily critical books written about Madame Blavatsky states that she came by steerage. But it seems to me that there was more to it than that. Do you know that story?

Mr Boris de Zirkoff was a close relative of HPB's father and compiler/editor of her *Collected Writings*. Interview by Ralph Gardner, Denver Lodge, 1958 Summer Session, "Olcott" Center, Wheaton, USA. This is a continuation of the article in the November 2016 issue of *The Theosophist*.

A: Yes, there was more to it. Before embarking on a steamer from Cherbourg, she found a woman with children, as far as I can remember, who had either lost her tickets altogether, or somebody had stolen them from her.

Q: I believe that some ticket-scalper had sold her a worthless steamship passage.

A: Something like that. HPB, of course, was holding her first-class passage and she exchanged it for steerage, so that all of them could go. This was one of those self-sacrificing moves on her part. She seems to have travelled with another couple, friends I think, from France, but their names are mentioned only in a few letters from HPB, and nothing more is known about them. When she arrived at New York that was the beginning of her real mission. However, between July 1873 and the middle or end of '74, when she began to write her articles in the spiritualistic press, we have quite a little period of time there to account for. For a good many years nobody knew what HPB was doing in the US for almost a year and a half of complete silence.

Some letters were found not so long ago which have thrown some light upon this situation. They were addressed to her great friend in Russia, [Prince Alexander M.] Dondukov-Korsakov, Viceroy in the Caucasus, an old friend of the family, much older than she was. It appears that HPB again crossed the US to San Francisco, took a steamer to Yokohama, Japan, where Master M. was staying for the time being, spent there about one week, and returned in the same fashion.

You can imagine that in those days, 1873-4, such a journey took quite some time, which would account for at least a number of months of this interim period. What she did in Yokohama nobody knows, but that is what she had to go through by order, again.

At the end of 1874 and '75 began the whole episode of meeting Colonel Henry Steel Olcott at the farmhouse of the Eddy Brothers in Chittenden, Vermont, and the gradual initiation of the Colonel into the mysteries of true occultism, and finally the founding of the Theosophical Society, which, of course, are all subjects fully treated by the Colonel himself in *Old Diary Leaves*.

Q: There has been a tendency on the part of some critics of the Adyar Theosophical Society to neglect Colonel Olcott's place in the founding of the Society or belittle his importance. How do you feel about this?

A: With regard to feelings that exist in some parts of the Theosophical Movement against the Colonel I have very definite ideas. Every time Col. Olcott is minimized or ignored, this makes me sore. I am not speaking now from the standpoint of a personal feeling, but rather from the standpoint of history. It is unjust and non-factual. In the history of the Theosophical movement in the early days the Colonel played a role practically equal to the role played by HPB, but their roles were different. The Colonel was the exoteric organizer and HPB was the occultist and messenger from the Brotherhood. Col. Olcott was

the personal disciple of Master M., but he was a beginner for quite a number of years and gradually rose in stature. HPB, on the other hand, was the occultist from four incarnations and their roles were, of course, completely different. But had there been no Col. Olcott around, there would have been no Theosophical Society as an organization, just as much as if there had been no HPB, the Masters would have had to find somebody else or postpone the whole experiment, perhaps another hundred years. We must be fair in these matters.

Col. Olcott had his weaknesses and shortcomings, and so had HPB. I would like to find somebody who has no shortcomings. I believe that the Masters themselves have their own shortcomings. They are not infallible and never made any claims to being perfect. So why are we always trying to find the weaknesses and shortcomings of the people instead of emphasizing the magnificent work that some of them have done? I would like to find another individual in the entire history of the TS since 1875 to the present moment, who has done such an enormous work in a cause of the Masters as Col. Olcott has. To disregard him, ignore him, and minimize what he has done shows simply the smallness, the puny character of the individuals who are doing this. To speak of him in terms of laudation and glorification such as no human being deserves is wrong also. It is just a one-sided approach either on one side or another. We must be fair, I repeat.

Col. Olcott made mistakes. We know

some of them, but we do not fully know the reason for such mistakes. He too was being tested, with his own trials and tribulations. He could by no means escape making mistakes. But the attitude that has existed and exists today in some of the sections of the theosophical movement, to put the Colonel completely into the background, is an attitude which is non-factual, not good history, and it does not reflect upon the fairness of the individuals who are engaged in it.

Q: The writing of *Isis Unveiled* then began after the formation of the TS, is that right?

A: Yes, approximately so. I think it coincided with it, more or less. She began to write *Isis Unveiled* somewhere in 1874 or the beginning of '75, and it was published in 1877. This book can be considered together with *The Secret Doctrine*, although the latter was written much later, and it took quite a number of years to be completed. But both works can be looked upon from the same standpoint if we look upon them as the production or an unusual production of a literary type, in that HPB quoted in both of them from a tremendous number of various books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and journals without ever having any access to them. The only explanation, and, of course, she gives such an explanation herself in more than one place, is that the facts contained in these books that she quoted from, the passages required, were read by her in the astral light. She says that a great many of them she could read herself or

summon herself before her vision. But with a great many others she had to have the help of her Teacher. In other words, there were limitations to her spiritual vision in the *ākāśa*. She had, of course, a great deal of help from the Teachers, as well as a considerable amount of help on purely exoteric lines from some of the members who supplied a good many of the quotations. But this was the least part of the story. Had HPB been unable to consult books astrally, she could have never written within such a short time either one of these two books.

Isis Unveiled became a bestseller almost overnight. I believe that they printed something like a 1,000 copies in the first impression, and they were sold within a few weeks! So there was an outstanding work that made a tremendous impact. If anybody reprints this book it sells very rapidly. It is a bestseller in some parts of the world and with some type of people.

Q: What was the reason the Founders decided to move their headquarters from New York City to India?

A: Well, they did not move their headquarters to India exactly. The TS founded in New York remained in New York for a while and sent HPB and Olcott as delegates to India. It was only later that their stay in India became more or less permanent and the TS in New York ceased to be the center. It was still called the “parent” body for quite some time, and was issuing diplomas, but at a later date, provided by the Constitution, the headquarters was to be the place where the Founders were. That is the

manner in which the headquarters, or the main seat of the Society anyway, became India. That was long before Adyar was founded.

The move to India as well as the later move of HPB to London are really not sudden things that have no relation with each other. It looks, from a careful observation of the history, that the Theosophical movement had to organize nuclei of occult force in America, India, and Europe. I am convinced that there was a pattern to the presence of the great messenger which HPB was inwardly, the inner HPB, and it was necessary first in America, then in India, and then at a later part in her life, in London.

Q: What external evidence from fairly reliable witnesses have come down to us concerning phenomenal events that occurred in the life of Madame Blavatsky?

A: The evidence is considerable. They were by no means limited to the writings of Col Olcott. We have quite a large number of various accounts by eyewitnesses, members in India, the United States, and all over Europe. We have long accounts from William Quan Judge, her great collaborator and one of the three chief co-Founders of the TS in America. The accounts of these eyewitnesses were very frequent in those days. They have written articles in newspapers, magazines of the day, they have also left some memoirs, so they were by no means limited to just a few or a handful of people who had testified about them. The strange powers which HPB had, as any occultist would have, have been publicized,

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I might say, even a little bit too much. Where they have been publicized too much, not enough attention has been paid to the philosophy backing them.

Q: Would you be able to give a brief statement of some of the types of phenomena or powers displayed by HPB on various occasions?

A: It was mainly along the line of psychic and spiritual vision of events and occurrences, as well as the character of the people. The reading of sealed letters, the instantaneous transference of her consciousnesses to different parts of the world, and perhaps more than anything else, the materialization or physical production of objects and bits of writing on paper, or the materialization of paper and the writing on them on various occasions. Also the production of music out of what you might call nothing, just out of sheer air. Probably the most

startling phenomena were those of materialization. It would take a long time to explain, and we would not be able to explain them too well anyway, but the records about these types of phenomena which she produced are very widespread. But she always spoke of them as merely samples of the powers innate in man. However, we can never emphasize too much the fact that HPB was the messenger from the great Teachers who was sent to provide at this cyclic and critical time, the foundation principles of a great philosophy of life to instill into the minds of men the rudiments of true esoteric knowledge. Phenomena are phenomena, and they are good in their place, but what the world needs and what the world has received through her works are the great precepts of the esoteric philosophy of all ages, which is the only basis upon which a new civilization can arise. ✧

Let those who complain that they have learned little in the Theosophical Society lay to heart the words written in an article in the *Path* for last February: — “The Key in each degree is the *aspirant himself*.” It is not “the fear of God” which is “the beginning of Wisdom”, but the knowledge of SELF which is WISDOM ITSELF.

Practical Occultism
H. P. Blavatsky

A Hymn to the Lord Buddha

J. KRISHNAMURTI

1. The Vision

I sat a-dreaming in a room of great silence. The early morning was still and breathless; the great blue mountains stood against the dark skies, cold and clear; round the dark wood house the black and yellow birds were welcoming the sun. I sat on the floor with legs crossed, meditating, forgetting the blue sunlit mountains, the birds, the immense silence and the golden sun. I lost the feel of my body; my limbs were motionless, relaxed and at peace. A great joy, of unfathomable depth, filled my heart; eager and keen was my mind, concentrated; lost was the transient world. I was full of strength.

As the eastern breeze that suddenly springs into being and calms the world, there in front of me seated cross-legged, as the world knows him, in his yellow robes, simple and magnificent, was the teacher of teachers. Looking at me, motionless the mighty being sat. I looked and bowed my head; my body bent forward of itself.

That one look of mine showed the progress of the world — showed the immense distance between the world and the greatest of the world's Teachers: how

little it understood and how much he gave; how joyously he soared, escaping from birth and death, from its tyranny and entangling wheel. Enlightenment attained, he gave to the world, as the flower gives its scent, the truth.

As I looked at the sacred feet that once trod the happy dust of India, my heart poured forth its devotion, limitless and unfathomable, without restraint and without effort.

I lost myself in that happiness. My mind so easily and strangely understood the truth he longed for and attained. I lost myself in that happiness. My soul grasped the infinite simplicity of truth. I lost myself in that happiness.

2. The Hymn

Thou art the Truth, thou art the Law, thou art the Refuge, thou art the Guide, the Companion, and the Beloved. Thou hast ravished my heart, thou hast conquered my soul; in thee have I found my comfort; in thee is my truth established.

Where thou hast trodden do I follow; where thou hast suffered and conquered do I gather strength; where thou hast renounced do I grow. Dispassionate,

Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, May 1995. Original document dated April 1927.

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detached, like the stars have I become. Happy is he that knoweth thee eternally. Like the sea, unfathomable is my love: the truth have I attained and calm grows my spirit. But yesterday I longed to withdraw from the aching world into some secluded mountain spot, untrammelled, free, away from all things in search of thee; and now thou hast appeared unto me.

I carry thee in my heart; look where I may, thou art there, calm, happy, filling my world — the embodiment of truth. My heart is strong, my mind is concentrated: I am full of thee. Like the eastern breeze that suddenly springs into being and calms the weary world, so have I realized. I am the Truth, I am the Law, I am the Refuge. I am the Guide, the Companion, and the Beloved. _____

Look where I may, thou art there, calm, happy, filling my world — the embodiment of truth. As one beholds a light in the distance, in the dark I saw thee. I have walked towards thee through many lives, in sorrow, in joy, in doubt, in suspicion, over thorns, over fair fields, on the pavements of crowded cities. I have known from the very foundation of the earth of thy glory, of thy existence, of thy beauty that thrilled my soul.

Never was I certain, never was I allowed to be at peace with myself, with man or with the fair heavens. Out of the great uncertainty certainty is born. Like the eastern breeze that suddenly springs into being and calms the weary world,

so have I realized; I walk henceforth in thy shadow.

Because thou art my eternal companion I am strong — strong as the stream that rushes down the mountain side. I am unshakeable because thou art my Counsellor; because of thee I am full of vision. Because thou hast sent me out (I am as nothing, as the passing wind) but because thou hast shown thyself to me I am as the rivers that dance down to the sea. Because of thy bidding, what I do is for thee. My heart is aflame, for I am come near unto thee everlastingly. Each breath is transforming me into thine image, for thou hast given me.

I am full, full as the ocean, though all the rivers do flow into it. Thy majesty has awakened thy power in me to shout from the mountaintops thy Truth. Thy look has burnt away the dross: I am pure, I am holy. As the rose-petal is to the rose, so thou art to me. As the mountaintop that disappears into the clouds, so my love for thee disappears into space. As on the sunlit sea the waters dance joyous in their ecstasy, so is my heart dancing for love of thee. As the small raindrop mingles in the vast ocean, so have I lost myself in thee. As the shadows that grow of an evening, so has my soul grown immense in thy Light. My love for thee has awakened the love for all.

O man, what knowest thou of love?

I must bring the world to thee; I must make thee their eternal Companion. They must know thee as I know thee — the Perfect, the Simple, the Glorified, the Fountain of Truth. Knowing thee, they

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will set aside their toys, their small worlds, their playthings, their pomp, the complications of their religions, their rites, their ceremonies. For thou art the end of all sorrow, of all joy, of all knowledge, of all search.

What is religion? What is worship? What are the temples and altars of the world? Thou art the goal of all things; in thee alone lies enlightenment, the happiness of the world. Look where I may, thou art there, calm, happy, filling my world — the embodiment of truth. I am the Truth, I am the Law, I am the Refuge, I am the Guide, the Companion, and the Beloved.

The sun was setting as I on a hilltop stood, watching it disappear behind the mountains. In the midst of that radiance, clad in the clouds of yellow, thou wast seated. The whole vast heaven was in adoration; the sky, the clouds in robes of yellow were thy worshippers, thy disciples. The mortal world joined in thy adoration, shouting with joy — the birds, the distant valley, the passing vehicles in the far distance, the crickets, the grasshoppers, the winds in the trees. The black mountains stood amazed in their dance, fearing their own mighty sight. Then utter silence, all things perceiving thee as thou art. In that great silence an immense desire was born in me to bring the world to thee, to thy perfection and to thy happiness. Thou art the only altar, though men worship at the altars of many temples; thine is the only imperishable Truth,

though men clothe it with many names. Thy garment is the sky.

I love the world and all the things thereof: I will bring it to adore thee, to worship thee, for thy beauty is Truth. Immense happiness has filled my being, for I have found thee. Thou shalt not disappear, though a thousand suns shall set over the mountains. As never is the sunset the same, changing constantly from day to day, so is my desire for thee more glorious, more perfect. It shall fill the heart of all men till thy perfection is perceived. In thine eye is the whirlwind, the soft breezes, the sacred Himavat, the low plains, the happy valley and the blue skies; all things are in thee. Thou art the happiness of the world; the Path of Happiness is the Path of Truth.

As the rain cleanses the tree by the roadside, so the dust of ages has been washed away in me. As the tree sparkles in the sun after the soft rain, so my soul delighteth in thee. As the tree that looketh to the roots for its immense strength, so do I look to thee, who art the root of my strength. As the smoke mounteth heavenwards in a straight column of a still evening, so have I grown towards thee. As the little pool on the road reflecteth the face of heaven, so my heart reflecteth thy happiness. As the solitary cloud that hangs over the mountain, the envy of the valley, so have I hung for generation after generation in a secluded place. As the great cloud that hasteneth before the mighty wind, so descend I into

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the valley — into the valley where there is sorrow and transient happiness, where there is birth and death, where there is shadow and light, where there is strife and a passing peace, where there is comfort of stagnation, where to think is to grieve, where to feel is to create sorrow. Into that valley I shall descend, for I have conquered — for in me thou art born.

As the light pierces through darkness, so thy Truth shall pierce the world; as

the rain purifieth the earth and cleanseth all things thereof, so shall I cleanse the world with thy Truth. For many ages through many lives have I prepared; but now, behold! the cup is full; the world shall drink of it. Man shall grow into thy divinity; thy happiness shall shine on his face, for thy messenger shall go forth.

I am he that openeth the heart of man, that giveth comfort. I am the Truth, I am the Law, I am the Refuge, I am the Guide, the Companion, and the Beloved. ✧

**It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;
Listen! The mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine.
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.**

William Wordsworth

Theosophical Work around the World

Argentina

The winter school of the Theosophical Society (TS) in Argentina was held at the Theosophical Centre in San Rafael from 11 to 17 July, with the theme “The Past, Present, and Future of Humanity”, with guest speaker Dr Esteban Langlois from Buenos Aires. The School was attended by around 30 members and non-members who were very interested in the ideas of H. P. Blavatsky on the origin, development, and evolution of the human being.

Once the topic was developed, questions were given for group study and discussion to be answered orally by a chosen member, in a sort of orator-training workshop. Winter and the fireplace invited participants to share each other’s company and to discuss some Stanzas from vols. I and III of *The Secret Doctrine*. Dr Langlois also gave a public lecture in downtown San Rafael on “Neurobiology of Meditation, and Its Effects on Health” in the building of the Annie Besant Lodge and the public library, which was attended by 85 persons.

Slovenia

The new theosophical year started on 1 October 2016 with a commemoration of Annie Besant’s Birthday at which the members spoke about her life and work.

In the Lodges we commemorated the memorial day of Radha Burnier’s passing on 31 October 2013, when members read

her articles and thoughts on Theosophy, Adyar, and living in our modern society. At the end members offered flowers in her memory in front of her photo.

We had an autumn school/seminar from 4 to 6 November in Planinka, in the middle of the beautiful Pohorje mountains, on *The Voice of the Silence*. The school was organized by Lodge “Understanding,” of Celje, conducted by Mrs Breda Zagar. Also a video of J. Krishnamurti’s second public talk in Washington DC, 1985, “Why can’t man live peacefully on the earth?”, was viewed, which very much inspired all 20 participants.

India

The 85th annual session of the Bombay Theosophical Federation (BTF), held from 4 to 6 November, had international Vice-President Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy as chief guest. “Theosophy: The Ageless Wisdom” was the theme of the session, which opened on 4 November evening at Blavatsky Lodge, Bombay, with the lighting of the lamp, “Prayers of All the Religions”, and the Universal Prayer. BTF Vice-President Mr Vinayak Pandya conveyed the greetings received by BTF. In his opening address on “An Antient Theosophical Text — Modern Relevance” Dr Satapathy spoke about the history and uniqueness of one of the three gems of Theosophy — *Light on the Path*, and explained “the rules written for all disciples” as stated in the beginning of Part 1.

Theosophical Work around the World



Ernesto Garcia, Director of the San Rafael Center in Argentina, opening their winter school



Participants of the autumn school seminar held in Planinka, Slovenia, in the Pohorje mountains

Theosophical Work around the World



Opening of the 85th Annual Session of the Bombay Theosophical Federation with (*l to r*) Blavatsky Lodge President Ms Kashmira Khambatta, international Vice-President Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, BTF President Dr Ajay Hora, and BTF Vice-President Mr Vinayak Pandya



Young members in Argentina provided special attire for the outgoing (Jorge Garcia) and incoming (Esteban Langlois, *in red cape*) General Secretaries to add a bit of humour to the official act of transfer on 17 December

Theosophical Work around the World

At Blavatsky Lodge, on 5 November evening, Dr Satapathy spoke about similarities of “Theosophy and the Upanishads”. He explained the four great sayings (*mahavakya*-s) with stories, and the meaning of “Upanishad”: coming closer (*upa*), with humility (*ni*), with quiet stable mind (*shad*), is to realize one’s humbleness to learn from the Guru, akin to *At the Feet of the Master*. The meeting ended with singing by members of the Ritual of the Mystic Star.

On 6 November there was a full-day session in the midst of beautiful Juhu Theosophical Society with the warm hospitality of the Vasanta Theosophical Cooperative Housing Society, Juhu. BTF President Dr Ajay Hora and VTCHS Secretary Mr Anup Bodaji welcomed chief guest Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy and Ms Lata Navin Kumar was felicitated for her 40-year membership. Dr Satapathy then presented a newly published TPH book, *The Theosophic Life and The Three Gems of Theosophy*, to President Dr Ajay Hora. Dr Satapathy then turned his talk on “Theosophy for New Inquirers” into an interactive session.

The afternoon session had a Sympo-

sium on the theme “Right Citizenship” based on the title of Dr Annie Besant’s book. Dr Satapathy concluded that the citizen’s loyalty has to extend from his hometown to his nation and beyond. Let us be patriotic citizens of the world family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*).

In the 85th Annual General Meeting of BTF, Dr Ajay Hora and Mr Vinayak Pandya were elected as BTF Representatives to the Indian Section Council for three years: 2017–19.

Recent Changes

The TS in Colombia has a new Presidential Representative, Mr Antonio Martínez, succeeding Mrs Nelly Medina in March. The TS in Hungary has a new Presidential Representative, Mr Janos Szabari, as of 1 November, succeeding Mr Thomas Martinovich; the TS in Uruguay has a new Organizing Secretary, Mrs Ema Ma. de Souza Leal, also effective 1 November, succeeding Mr Ramón García; and the Argentinian Section has a new General Secretary, Mr Esteban Langlois, as of 17 December, succeeding Mr Jorge García, who had held the post for eight years. ✧

Only as you live Theosophy can you spread Theosophy. It is not our words, it is our life, that affects people. . . . Our lives, if they are unselfish, pure, loving, and helpful, are the best propaganda of Theosophical ideas; for it is not good to talk Theosophy unless we live what we talk.

Annie Besant

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