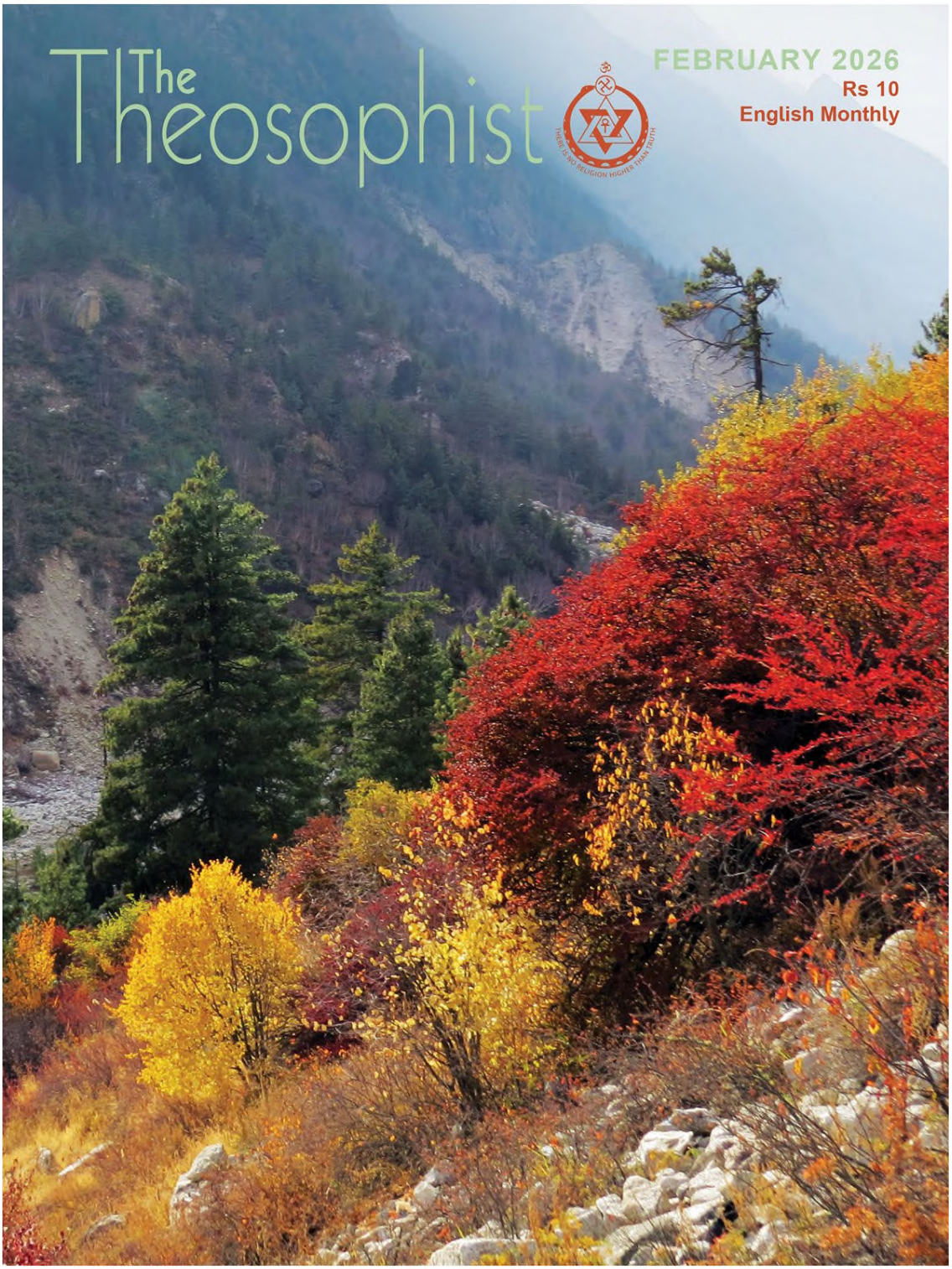
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Cover: Part of a Himalayan valley in **Gangotri National Park** in Uttarakhand state of India. Its habitat consists of coniferous forests, alpine meadows, and glaciers. **Gomukh** at Gangotri glacier, **is the origin of the river Ganga: <commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images>**

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

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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.

What is New? A Question Worth Asking

TIM BOYD

OUR Convention theme has been centered around the concept of newness, particularly the emergence of a new humanity. We have touched upon this aspect, but it is not possible to fully explain or define what we are moving towards. However, I'd like to spend some time exploring the newness aspect of this. I may touch upon the past to better understand the present, but we'll see how we proceed.

Now that medical science tends to include some of the psychological and spiritual aspects of the human being, one of the things that has become clear is that there is a positive, accelerating quality to our exposure to new things — a chemical and neurological effect affecting our mood, memory, learning, motivation, inspiration, and so on. However, these are initial effects which fade with growing familiarity. For many the altered feelings result in a constant craving, an addiction to the new. This attraction to novelty relates to a level of sensations, feelings, and ideas with little relation to a New Humanity that is more than just changing circumstances.

When we talk about what is new, there are two ways to look at it. On the one hand, we tend to lean toward the idea that new is something that has never before existed, that has been invented, brought into being, or discovered now for the first time. Another approach is that there are things, ideas, conditions, states of being that already exist, but for whatever reason, we are seeing them for the first time. So, there is the new already existing, and the new, never before existing. Let us look at it through the lens of our Theosophical Society and its history.

In the early days of the Theosophical Society, its history was intrinsically linked to a single individual, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB). Without her, the Society would not have existed. There would have been no one to bring this movement into being.

Blavatsky's life was marked by extraordinary experiences. At the age of 17, she embarked on a journey around the world, a trait that would characterize her life until her death. Her travels were driven by a profound desire to immerse herself in the deep esoteric teachings of the world and seek guidance from diverse mentors. Her initial travels took her to Turkey, Greece, Egypt, India, and North and South America. These were times when air travel did not exist, and travel was a vastly different and challenging endeavor. Despite these obstacles, Blavatsky set out on this transformative

journey, which would continue throughout her life.

In her early years, she had experiences of the presence of someone she regarded as her teacher. She even had instances where, at moments when her life or safety was in danger, she was physically helped by his intervention. She had visions of him, but not in a physical form.

At the age of 20, she was in London. While observing a passing procession of Indian princes on the streets, she saw her master for the first time in physical form. The story is that she tried to run to him, but he made a sign, and she stopped.

Later that evening, as she was walking outdoors thinking about this experience, she actually met him in the flesh. During that meeting, he described to her something about the future that lay ahead for her. He said that she required additional training, but she would be involved in bringing a movement into existence. The details of this movement were not specifically described, only that it was related to the Ageless Wisdom.

Her travels continued, and for the next twenty years, she continued making contact with profound teachers and students of occultism. She made her way to India, where she spent two years. Then she found herself in Paris in 1873. At that point, she says that her master told her it was time for her work to begin, and that the future that awaited her lay in the United States.

For someone like HPB, the allure of Spiritualism was irresistible. At the time, the US was experiencing a vibrant and much reported spiritualist movement. This resonated deeply with her, as it offered a tangible connection between the physical world and other realms. Newspapers reported on these phenomena, and HPB found herself drawn to witness and participate in bringing a deeper understanding to the phenomena of spiritualism, of what was actually happening in bridging the gap between the living and the dead. She recognized the reality of communication with some aspect of departed people. But she also recognized that actual knowledge was absent from the movement to counteract the wild speculation and manufacture of theories and doctrines on the afterlife.

HPB described her journey to the United States as akin to the feeling of the devout Muslim visiting Mecca, filled with excitement and anticipation. It was there that she met Col. Olcott, who was observing and reporting on séance activity at the Eddy brothers' farm. Olcott, while not a skeptic by nature, was an investigator requiring visible proofs. What he witnessed at the sessions he attended convinced him of its authenticity. One notable observation was the sudden shift in the nature and intensity of the phenomena when HPB arrived. Remarkable occurrences began to unfold, including the appearance of Asiatic people in attire that Americans could not imagine or comprehend. HPB attributed a portion of these events to her own psychic atmosphere and a significant portion to her own purposeful materializations.

Following her meeting with Olcott, the

Society was officially founded in New York City in 1875. The United States at that time was a mere 99 years old — a baby among nations, young, fresh, new. It was only a decade after the laws had changed, abolishing the legal ownership and sale of people as property. Prior to this, individuals of African descent were imported to the country as goods for sale. The laws of the time were far more lenient towards the mistreatment of horses and dogs than towards human beings of African descent. It is striking that it was here that a Society that would later embrace universal brotherhood regardless of race, caste, and other distinctions was born.

It was a nation that had just endured a civil war, a conflict that claimed the lives of one out of every 50 people in the country. Every family and household was touched. Out of this trauma, the spiritualist movement emerged, fueled by a deep longing to connect with recently lost loved ones. Although there have always been individuals with heightened sensitivity to other realms — mediums, psychics, and so on — this longing brought them to popular prominence. This was what HPB came to research, and to use Spiritualism as a platform to present the deeper more comprehensive view that Theosophy was intended to provide about the scope and capacity of latent human powers.

Initially, HPB's mission was to establish a "philosophical-spiritual organization". It took on the name "Theosophical Society" as the proponent of Theosophy — the Divine Wisdom. She was entrusted with the task of communicating the teachings that resonated with the ancient wisdom.

In 1877, HPB published her first book, *Isis Unveiled: A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*. By comparing and contrasting current views with those of ancient wisdom traditions, it presented a strong view of the inadequacies of contemporary science and religion.

So, returning to the question of, what was new? Literally everything she presented was new — ancient in every way, but thoroughly new, unknown, unseen in the West of the 19th century. One idea she emphasized throughout her life was the importance of the intertwined doctrines of reincarnation and karma. While we may never fully comprehend the workings of karma, understanding it necessarily implies the concept of reincarnation — the idea that causes work themselves out to produce effects over periods of time that extend beyond one individual lifetime. These words are now in every dictionary and encyclopedia in the world. However, during that time they were considered exotic and largely unknown in America.

She also elaborated other "new" concepts such as the multi-dimensional nature of the human being, which evolved into the concept of seven planes; the idea that there is no such thing as empty space; that intelligence is omnipresent; that there is an ongoing spiritual evolution, not merely the Darwinian unfoldment of physical forms, but an evolution of the "inner man" that for human beings necessitates the

stage of the Masters of the Wisdom — the perfected human being; and that we can be proactive in our evolutionary progress. These were exotic, ancient, but utterly new concepts she introduced to the Western mind. Many of these ideas, particularly the concept of the unity of all life, were novel and garnered significant attention.

Part of HPB's appeal lay in her ability to produce various psychic phenomena at will. When she held her salons in New York City, people were astounded by some of her extraordinary abilities. There is a wonderful book by Daniel Caldwell called *The Esoteric World of Madame Blavatsky*. It is a collection of letters, newspaper reports, and diary entries of people who knew HPB. Not all of them were friends, or agreed with her thinking, but all of them had some first-hand experiences with her.

Just one of the phenomenal things witnessed: HPB, a chain smoker, could hold a conversation, write, and roll a cigarette with one hand all at the same time. In one of the reports it was told that she had left her tobacco [pouch] in another room. Rather than get up and walk to get it, to the amazement of the people gathered there, she summoned it, and they watched as it floated across the room to her hand. In our Blavatsky Museum of Arts you can see some of the drawings and objects that were phenomenally created in this manner.

HPB remained in the United States for approximately five years until 1878 when she and Colonel Olcott relocated the TS to India. They left the New World and came, not just to the Old World, but to the oldest world, India, where an active and profound spiritual tradition had been alive for millennia. Although the TS was founded in the United States, it truly came to life in India. Here, these two Westerners arrived and began speaking about the profound truths inherent in the religious and spiritual practices of this place, refusing to allow them to be suppressed by colonial rule, and encouraging rediscovery. From this point, the Society was embraced and it flourished.

When the TS was founded it had only one stated Object — "to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe".

Over the next few years, the organization's Objects evolved from one to six, to seven, to four, and finally, to three. All of these refinements in the Objects occurred during HPB's lifetime. However, a very significant change occurred five years after her passing. It involved exchanging the positions of a three-letter word with a one-letter word in the First Object. The wording changed from "to form *the* nucleus of *a* Universal Brotherhood", to "to form *a* nucleus of *the* Universal Brotherhood". This was a significant transformation that moved the TS from specific, geographically local to global traditions, and from Ancient (time-specific traditions) to Ageless Wisdom, and made possible its unfolding into new directions.

At the time of its founding, the Theosophical Society was basically a men's

club, a fraternity, not unlike the Freemasons, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, and so forth, composed exclusively of people of European descent, with a few having an American lineage of one or two generations. Although the intention of the founders was directed toward the highest ideals, Olcott himself made the distinction that at the outset very few actually got it. He divided those who participated in the birth of the TS into two groups, "Founders" (those who understood and were aligned with its deep purposes), of which there were three (HPB, Olcott, and Judge) and "Formers", the remaining sixteen original members drawn to it by a passing interest.

In India, the Society flourished and expanded its influence to other parts of the world. HPB lived in India for six years. The remaining six years of her life, she spent in Europe, ultimately settling in London, where she wrote the renowned works that are widely recognized today.

Despite HPB's passing, the Society continued to thrive. The foundation was laid, but a new wave of leadership and attention emerged. Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater (CWL) played a pivotal role in this new phase. While the focus remained on Theosophy, a new emphasis was placed on clairvoyant investigation. Annie Besant's influence led to a greater understanding of the application of deep truths to our daily lives and societal issues.

A century later, the effects of that wave continue to be felt. Annie Besant, CWL, and that cohort lived and passed away. Subsequently, a new generation of thinkers emerged, notably N. Sri Ram, J. Krishnamurti, and Radha Burnier. In my opinion, these individuals maintained the core focus of Theosophy as it had evolved and expanded, but they also brought a fresh perspective to our understanding of it. They placed a strong emphasis on the mind, its use, its understanding, recognizing and addressing its potential for both expansion and limitation. This focus was pivotal in bringing the psychological element to the application of Theosophy.

This historical context is crucial in understanding our present situation. When we examine the conditions and circumstances of our world, again the question must be asked: What is new? A variety of conditions come to mind. One notable and extremely impactful change is the global population. In 1875, the world's population was just slightly over a billion. Today, it has surpassed 8 billion, which is unprecedented in the planet's history. Eight billion human beings, their bodies, personalities, and habits of behavior moving across the Earth and interacting in the ways we do. As students of the Ageless Wisdom, we know that birth involves more than a body and a personality. The animating principle inhabiting each and every one of these more than 8 billion people is what we would describe as the soul.

So, we are living in a moment in the Earth's history when an unprecedented number of souls have incarnated. Why? What is it that is so attractive about this particular moment within which we live?

From the perspective of the Ageless Wisdom, one result of the massive influx of souls is that there are souls at various stages of development. There are very young souls whose past, karma, and unfoldment necessitate intense physical and emotional experiences, who crave excitement and forceful involvement, who are still becoming acquainted with the tools that living through a body and personality presents, and who are drawn to exercising their powers in destructive ways. There is also an influx of very old souls. Souls who are not here to destroy, but to envision and build the framework of a new and sustainable humanity. They too are present and active here in our midst.

It seems that every day's cycle of news brings reports of some new form of destruction or atrocity. I find myself asking, "How did anybody even dream of something this destructive and debased?" Yet such things seem to recur continuously. What does not make the news is something like this gathering where a group of hundreds of people are not only engaged in a global meditation, but understand what they are doing; people who are able to still their minds, to envision themselves as a consciousness embracing the planet, apart from the chaos and noise, embodying a consciousness of harmony and openness and radiating it to the planet as a whole. These are not dark times; these are not bright times; we are living in a moment of both darkness and light, and engaged in choosing our role within it. From my point of view, it is a wonderful time for humanity.

In the midst of these new conditions that have never existed before, what do we do? How can we address this moment? The poet William Wordsworth wrote: "With an eye made quiet by the power of harmony, and the deep power of joy, we see into the life of things." When the eye which focuses on surfaces becomes quiet, a deeper possibility emerges, always present, but unseen to us. The factor that brings this quieting is the "power of harmony" and "the deep power of joy".

There was a contemporary musician who had a line in one of his songs that said: "Jesus taken serious by the many, Jesus taken joyous by a few." We could say the same about HPB or the Masters of the Wisdom. Honestly, I know many people whose seriousness toward HPB hides the joy that fueled her entire existence. It goes unnoticed. HPB did not endure her lifetime of hardship, betrayal, and physical pains just to have her name on a few books. There were no tangible rewards for her work. The reward was the deep and abiding joy of a life linked to what she viewed as the Masters' work.

For clarity's sake we do not want to confuse joy with happiness. The two are related, but are qualitatively different. Joy is not happiness, or even extreme happiness. Happiness is closely linked to desire. It occurs when our desires temporarily die down. For example, if you want ice cream, you get it and feel happy. Similarly, if you find your ideal mate, you are happy, but then you have to live together. With the quieting of the desire, in a temporary condition of being desireless, we experience happiness.

It is a symptom of something else.

In Buddhism, there is a practice called the Four Immeasurable Minds, or the Brahma Viharas. One of these four relates to joy. This immeasurable mind is something we can cultivate. But, "What is joy?" One example that is given to communicate the nature of joy is this: Imagine a person lost in the desert. They have been wandering in the dryness and heat for some time and are dying of thirst. This person looks ahead and sees a mirage — an oasis with palm trees, shade, and springs of water. Imagine the feeling that arises in that person. The example is intended to give a sense of what is meant by joy. Despite the fact that in reality there is no oasis, and despite the fact that the thirsting person has not drunk a drop of water, an internal state of being, with no connection to the satisfaction of desire arises — a sense of joy. This state of being is continuously available to us if we learn how to access it.

Joy, by its very nature inspires, but also it opens us to a deeper level of vision, to a higher understanding. It gives access to a certain type of guidance — the direction of the intuitive or illumined mind. It is magnetic. It attracts others to us who can recognize and magnify it, and it draws us to others who have found a way to root themselves in this joyful mind. It is something that magnifies itself through others. Wherever you find groups of these sorts of people — people who understand it — remarkable things happen. It is infectious — the disease we all want to get.

We are here to bring in what is new. The need of the moment, the need of the world, and our individual need is all around us at every moment. The power of harmony and the deep power of joy are the needs for a renewal of humanity. ✧

A Master is a term applied to denote certain human beings who have completed their human evolution, attained human perfection, have nothing more to learn so far as our part of the solar system is concerned, reached what the Christians call "Salvation", and the Hindus and Buddhists "Liberation". When the Christian Church still kept "the faith once delivered to the Saints" in its fulness, salvation meant much more than escape from everlasting damnation. It meant the release from compulsory reincarnation, safety from all possibility of failure in evolution. "To him that overcometh" was the promise that he should be "a pillar in the Temple of my God, and *he shall go out no more*". He that had overcome was "saved".

Annie Besant
The Masters, ch # 3 "The Adepts"

THE DALAI LAMA

MESSAGE

I extend my warm greetings to all brothers and sisters participating in the 150th International Convention of the Theosophical Society.

I have had a long association with your Society since visiting its headquarters in Madras (now Chennai) during my first visit to India in 1956, an experience that left a deep and lasting impression on me. I was inspired by the Society's efforts to bring together the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions alongside scientific insight, and by the openness, pluralism, and respect for all religions shown by its members in India and abroad.

After tragic political circumstances forced me into exile in India in 1959, I was given the freedom to deepen my engagement with the world's faith traditions, a journey that has further shaped my outlook.

Over its 150 years, the Theosophical Society has made commendable contributions toward creating a better world for all of humanity. I am pleased to note that the theme of this Convention is "One World, One Life: The Spirit of a New Humanity." I strongly endorse this theme, which reflects my own commitment to promoting the oneness of humanity. Our shared humanity must be the basis for building a more compassionate world, for lasting happiness depends on the well-being of the whole.

To realize this vision, we must cultivate fundamental human values such as compassion, patience, self-discipline, forgiveness, and contentment. Education plays a vital role in nurturing these values and in promoting interreligious harmony and mutual respect. Genuine concern for others and inner transformation are the true foundations of lasting peace.

I wish the Convention and the Theosophical Society every success in your noble service to humanity.

With my prayers and good wishes,



December 27, 2025

Adyar Chronicles: The Living Heart of the Theosophical Society — I

GEETHA JAIKUMAR

TODAY, the Theosophical Society (TS) has spread its presence across nearly fifty-eight countries, forming a worldwide network of Lodges, study centres, and communities. Yet among all these centres — each carrying its own vitality and history — one stands apart — ADYAR. Adyar is not merely the administrative headquarters of the Society. It is its living heart.

To understand why Adyar holds this unique place in the spiritual life of the TS, we must journey back — not only in time, but in consciousness — to the very origins of the theosophical movement itself.

A Forlorn Hope: The Birth of a Spiritual Experiment

From archival documents, early correspondence, and eyewitness records, we know that over 150 years ago certain Eastern Adepts — known in the theosophical tradition as the Mahatmas — were instrumental in initiating what would become the modern theosophical movement. Their aim was nothing less than the revival of the ancient Wisdom-Tradition, adapted for the needs of a materialistic and divided age.

Two of these Adepts, Mahatma Morya (Master M.) and Mahatma Koot Hoomi (Master KH), selected Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) and Henry Steel Olcott (HSO) as the visible founders of the movement. The task they entrusted to them, however, was daunting. The Masters themselves described it as a "Forlorn Hope". When asked in 1881 what they meant by this phrase, the reply was stark:

> When one regards the magnitude of the task to be undertaken by our theosophical volunteers . . . we may well compare it to one of those desperate efforts against overwhelming odds that the true soldier glories to attempt.

But against all expectations, that forlorn hope survived. More than that — it flourished. What seemed impossible gradually took form as a worldwide movement, carrying the ideas of Universal Brotherhood, spiritual inquiry, and inner transformation across continents and cultures.

The Three Objects

Although inspired by the Masters, the practical shaping of the Society was left to its Founders. After a period of experimentation and exploration, Blavatsky and

Dr Geetha Jaikumar is a Researcher in the Surendra Narayan Archives and a long-term resident of Adyar. Public talk delivered at the 150th International Convention, Adyar, on 1 January 2026.

Olcott crystallized the work of the Society into three Objects — three pathways through which its mission could unfold:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.

2. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science.

3. To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in humankind.

At different moments in the Society's history, one or another of these Objects came into prominence, shaped by the needs of the time.

In New York, during the Society's earliest phase, the third Object dominated. This was the age of phenomena. Mme Blavatsky fearlessly challenged materialism, demonstrating that reality extended far beyond the visible world. Occultism, mesmerism, and psychical research compelled the modern mind to take the unseen seriously.

When the Founders came to India, a subtle shift occurred. The second Object came to the fore. Both HPB and Olcott embraced Buddhism in Ceylon; while HPB introduced the Aryan-Arhat philosophy to Western audiences; Olcott laboured tirelessly for the revival of Buddhism and for harmony between its Northern and Southern traditions.

Underlying all these phases, however, was a deeper purpose: the gradual fulfilment of the first Object — Universal Brotherhood. Today, in a world fractured by conflict and division, it is this Object that speaks with renewed urgency.

A Tamil Saint's Prophecy

In 1873, the revered Tamil saint and poet Vallalar, also known as Ramalinga Swamigal, is said to have foretold the arrival of two foreigners who would carry a universal message of brotherhood to India. Remarkably, this was one year before Blavatsky and Olcott had even met, two years before the founding of the Theosophical Society, and six years before the Founders came to India.

Vallalar himself had worked tirelessly to awaken the spirit of brotherhood through the "Suddha Sanmarga Sangam", but had been disappointed by the poor response. In 1879, when the Founders arrived in India, his prophecy was seen by many as having been fulfilled.

Arrival on Indian Soil

Blavatsky and Olcott left New York in December 1878, spending some time in England, before setting sail for India. They arrived in Bombay on 16 February 1879. Initially, they stayed in the home of a member, later moving to a modest rented house on Girgaum Back Road, where they lived for two years. Towards the end of 1880, while they were away on tour, the Bombay members secured a more spacious bungalow for them — "The Crow's Nest", perched on the rocky slopes of Breach Candy.

In *The Theosophist* of April 1913 (p. 115), Annie Besant recounts with affection the story of the Crow's Nest. The rent had dropped from Rs 200 per month to Rs 75, because it was thought to be haunted! But the Bombay brothers felt that this was

naturally of no account to the great occultist and her comrade. Some playful spook did, one night, lift the corner of the Colonel's bed, but he uttered a "word of power", taught to him by HPB and the invisible visitor scuttled away never to return! The Crow's Nest was a pleasant residence; but it was also a place of important beginnings. In 1881, the young Damodar Mavlankar joined the Founders there. On 25 February of that year, the idea of forming an Esoteric Section was first conceived. And after much discussion, a pivotal decision emerged: Universal Brotherhood would be placed in the foreground, while occultism would remain in the background. This decision would shape the future ethos of the Society.

The Birth of *The Theosophist*

Financial hardship marked the early Indian years. As recorded in *Old Diary Leaves*, both Founders struggled to support themselves. HPB wrote for Russian newspapers and magazines; Olcott contributed to American journals and even attempted some small business ventures — but nothing brought enough income.

Meanwhile, letters and inquiries about Theosophy poured in from around the world. Night after night, they stayed awake until two or three in the morning replying to correspondence, much of it repetitive. It soon became clear that this was unsustainable. Out of necessity came a bold idea: to publish their own journal. Thus, on 1 October 1879, *The Theosophist* was launched.

Few are aware of the role played by the Masters in this venture. On 15 July, Master Morya appeared physically to guide the work, while Master Narayan (identified with Rishi Agastya) ordered final adjustments before publication. In the early issues, the Masters themselves contributed articles under pseudonyms. By January 1880, the journal began to show a profit, easing financial strain and enabling Olcott to focus fully on the work that had brought him to India. Like the Society itself, *The Theosophist* was a joint creation of those working openly and those guiding from behind the veil.

As we look back on these remarkable beginnings, we can see that the TS was never just an organisation — it was a living experiment in the evolution of human consciousness. To understand how this vision continued to unfold, we must now turn to the place where its ideals took root in the physical world, in Adyar.

Discovering Adyar

In *Old Diary Leaves,* Colonel Olcott tells us how he had looked for a permanent headquarters in a number of places. Many properties were shown to him and to HPB — large bungalows set in beautiful surroundings — but perhaps the psychic atmosphere was not right in any of them. At last, on 31 May 1882, they came to Madras, and were shown Huddleston Gardens by Subbiah Chetty and his brother.

HSO wrote in his diary: ". . . at first glance we knew that our future home was found." Mme Blavatsky, who had gone alone to the upper storey, called Subbiah Chetty to her and said the unforgettable words: "Master says, buy this." In that moment, destiny had spoken. . .

Providence played a part in this purchase. The property was available at the astonishingly low price of £600 — about Rs 8,500. A new railway line had just opened to the Nilgiris, with a cart track leading to the top of the mountains. The Government began moving its summer headquarters to Ootacamund. Officials who once cherished their serene homes on the Adyar River suddenly began selling them off — quickly, and cheaply. For the Founders, who had very limited funds, this was nothing short of a miracle.

The estate itself was impressive: twenty-seven acres of land with fruit trees, a large mansion — now our Headquarters Building — two smaller bungalows, coach houses, a swimming bath, servants' quarters, and other structures. Subbiah Chetty handled the transaction and on 17 November 1882 the purchase of the property was formally completed. On 19 December 1882, the Founders entered Adyar for the very first time as residents. With them travelled some — unusual companions!

HPB brought with her an Arabian horse gifted to her in Bombay by Damodar Mavlankar's father, to pull her double-bodied phaeton that also formed part of their luggage, and (most interestingly!) their two beloved dogs — Djin and Pudhi — who, as Olcott noted in his diary, were "very unhappy in the dog-box of the train!" (And no wonder — travel then took days, not hours!) They were accompanied by the loyal Damodar, the Coulombs, and HPB's servant, Babula.

Col. Olcott wrote in his diary with delight: "Our beautiful house seemed a fairy-place to us. Happy days are in store for us here." HPB made her home upstairs in the main bungalow. Olcott chose to live in the Garden Pavilion — now called the River Bungalow. This building was later occupied by C. W. Leadbeater, who wrote: "The blessed Master KH often came; and in that room happened the most important events of my life." This building, therefore, is a very historic one, a highly magnetised space, where Col. Olcott received visits from the Masters and Leadbeater had many occult experiences, including initiations.

The bungalow on the western side — now known as the Guest House — became the home of the Coulombs.

Adyar — The Masters' Home

There are reasons why Adyar is referred to as the Masters' Home.

For one thing, Adyar was chosen by the Masters themselves as the physical headquarters of the TS. Since then, the Founders and their successors have worked to transform it into one of the world's great spiritual centres.

In *The Theosophist* (January 1931), Leadbeater wrote:

> Adyar, the true centre chosen by the Masters . . . the only centre in which their emissary, our great founder Mme Blavatsky, was directed to reside for that purpose. Our Society is worldwide, yet its root is in this sacred soil of India, the Motherland of the two Adepts who were jointly responsible for its foundation.

In another article titled "The Angel of Adyar" (*The Theosophist*, November

1933), Leadbeater recounts how, upon acquiring the estate, Madame Blavatsky sought the assistance of an Angelic Being to guide and energize the new Centre. She reportedly consulted an Angel who "held his court at St Thomas Mount". With his guidance and her Master's approval, she secured the presence of a higher-ranking Angel to preside over the spiritual work at Adyar. This great Angel, together with his host of assistants and the countless Nature spirits woven into the landscape, continues to inhabit the estate invisibly — a presence that sustains its atmosphere and spiritual vitality.

Adyar is therefore, far more than its trees, its river, or the beautiful stretch of the Bay of Bengal on whose shore it rests. Its true life is invisible — an inner sanctuary where the Great Ones abide, and where aspirants who are inwardly attuned may sense their Presence. Even Adyar's physical location carries sacred meaning. Situated where the river meets the sea, it symbolizes the soul's pilgrimage — its flow from many origins into a single universal source.

Life at Adyar during the Early Days

Life at Adyar during the days of HPB and Col. Olcott was profoundly simple and frugal to the extreme. There was no electricity, no running water, and very limited funds.

By the light of candles and oil lamps, the Founders often worked far into the night attending to their correspondence and building the young Society with unwavering dedication. Hardship was constant, but the work never stopped, for they were sustained by the great mission entrusted to them.

The Headquarters staff (including Col. Olcott and Leadbeater) and a few Indian workers lived on the estate, often subsisting on just sixpence a day!

The Theosophist was printed in Madras, 7 miles away from Adyar. Col. Olcott would ride in a horse-drawn carriage to the printing press, and sit in a poky little back room, doing the proofs. Later, when Leadbeater took over, the horses having passed on, he would walk the 7 miles to the Press each way, carrying the proofs and materials, a real feat considering the hot and humid weather.

During the early annual Conventions, some 200–300 delegates would attend. While some stayed with friends and relatives in Madras, others would spread mats and sleep on the floor of the Headquarters Hall as there was no accommodation available on the estate. Col. Olcott would come by at night with a paraffin lamp to check whether everyone was comfortable and had everything they needed. A far cry from the comforts our delegates enjoy today!

Starting of the Olcott Panchama Free Schools

When Col. Olcott came to reside at Adyar, he was deeply shaken by the extreme poverty and inhuman exclusion endured by those then called "Pariahs" or "Untouchables" — shunned not only socially, but from even physical contact deemed to be polluting. Appalled by this injustice, he became one of the earliest reformers to challenge untouchability,

long before it emerged as a national concern, recognising it as a grave moral stain demanding action.

A revealing incident brought this issue forcibly home. Col. Olcott often swam in the Adyar River, floating on his back, and simultaneously reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar — an eccentric sight that drew local children to him. These mostly naked children of the fishermen swam around, diving joyfully for the coins he tossed into the river. One day he asked why they were not in school and their reply that no school would admit them shocked him deeply. Convinced that education was the key to emancipation, Olcott acted swiftly: in June 1884, the first of five Olcott Panchama Free Schools was founded near the Adyar Headquarters to serve this excluded community. His passionate appeal made several highly qualified people from abroad come to Adyar to help with this educational venture.

The Headquarters: A Living Shrine

In 1883, another room was built adjoining HPB's, that was referred to by Col. Olcott as Morya's Room. Later, this came to be known as the Occult Room. Inside there was a special cupboard in which were placed the portraits of the Masters and a silver bowl. This room became the site of many phenomena. Letters from the Masters would appear in the cupboard, and correspondence placed there by aspirants would receive replies — often within seconds, though sometimes after days. The room served as a kind of astral post office, with concentrated psychic energy forming the link. After the room was desecrated by the Coulombs' malicious alterations during HPB's absence, with the intention of defaming her and branding her as a fraud, it was sealed. Today it is used as the office of the Vice-President.

When HPB left Adyar on 31 March 1885, she asked Colonel Olcott to occupy her room, almost as though she wanted him to stand guard over it — and respecting her wishes, he remained there until his passing in February 1907.

The first major changes to the Headquarters Building were undertaken by Colonel Olcott in 1885, shortly after Madame Blavatsky left Adyar. Feeling the need for a big hall to hold conventions and other gatherings he did not allow lack of finances to deter him. He ingeniously adapted what already existed. Raising the roof by six feet, he merged the verandas and the rooms on either side with the living area and created the T-shaped hall, that we see today.

(*To be continued*)

If thou would'st be Tathâgata (Buddha), follow upon thou predecessor's steps, remain unselfish till the endless end. Thou art enlightened — Choose thy way.

The Voice of the Silence
Translated and annotated by H. P. Blavatsky

The Philosophical Identity of J. Krishnamurti — I

SHREYA

Introduction

Jiddu Krishnamurti believed in the total awareness of being, which leads to a free mind. He focused on human consciousness rather than merely thinking about certain concepts. He had a great impact on the lives of millions of people across the world. While many regard him as a philosopher, he himself consistently rejected this label, distancing his teachings from traditional philosophical categorization. What he really taught or meant is a matter of contestation.

While some try to find coherence in his writings, like a philosopher's, others focus on learning from his silences between words, like a spiritual guru. For those related to the enterprise of education, which includes any type of learning, this becomes a crucial question, because one will have to decide whether to engage with his words or take action based on the belief that one has some sense of the spirit of his words. Krishnamurti (K) had an elaborated vision on education to refine the understanding of teachers, parents, educational administrators, teacher-educators, and anyone interested in education.

Education serves as the foundational element that empowers individuals to seek, analyze, and comprehend truth beyond the confines of any particular religious organization. His teachings harmonise deeply with the ideals of the Theosophical Society, which aim at removing religious antagonism and to unite women and men of goodwill. K's ideas on education have a profound intersection with Theosophy, leading to the question of whether K is a philosopher or not, so as to practice one's freedom of thought.

At the intersection of philosophy, spirituality, and educational reform, Krishnamurti's teachings raise an essential question: can he be considered a philosopher, despite his own denial of the title? This paper explores various criteria for what constitutes a philosopher, examining whether Krishnamurti's insights align with these frameworks. Through this exploration, we aim to reach a nuanced understanding of Krishnamurti's philosophical identity, or lack thereof, and its implications for education and personal transformation.

Deep Thinking

Often, K is not considered a philo-

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sopher, and rightly so, because he said that he is not trying to create a system of thought. Thus, we begin with the position that K is not a philosopher. There is a general non-technical usage of the word "philosopher": for example, Phillips (2010) discusses whether a football team coach can be rightly called a philosopher because of the depth of his game analyses. So suppose one agrees that a football coach is a philosopher. In that case, there is a greater possibility of considering K a philosopher, because he has done a great deal of analysis of the human condition. The essential feature of such a person is deep thinking.

As stated by the literal meaning of the Cambridge dictionary, a "thinker" (noun) is someone who considers important things, and "deep" (adjective) is going or being a long way down from the top of the surface. So a deep thinker selects important things/ areas in a field and goes beyond the superficial level or the top.

By the act of "thinking deeply", a philosopher does not engage in the discourse of exploring the nature of the topic, say X, alone but instead analyses the X itself in totality by means of its verbal definition, its features that would allow cases, for it to be identified, or mere examples, or knowing the essence of X. This act of analysing a topic signifies the act of thinking deeply about the topic (Phillips, 2010).

With respect to K, he talked about many aspects of humanity, like nature, freedom, education, fear, knowledge, love, truth, relationships, peace, reality, and so on. His dialogues and writings show that it is impossible to study one of them in isolation, since they all are interconnected and that these aspects cannot be talked about individually or in a fragmented way. For example, K talked about his views on understanding mankind or self in his teachings, that a man is not just a body or just mind or brain (Karve, 2015). He didn't look at a person's physical, psychological or intellectual aspect separately; rather, he considered the totality of such aspects, thus signifying the holistic view of the concept. He elaborated the understanding of Man as an absolute entity, in terms of understanding and knowing self, his responsibilities and relationship to the Earth, to Nature and each other, psychologically the whole of mankind characterised by being humanist, universalist and individualist in his approach. (Singh, 2020)

More to substantiate, when asked about "What do we mean by free will? Is there such a thing?" in a talk (Krishnamurti, 1968), K elaborated by examining the meaning of the term "freedom" consisting of its literal, comparative and psychological meanings. He further discusses different parameters of being free and the nature of the term "free" — an idea, actuality, or feeling. Here, he gives a clear understanding of how he analyses the concept of "freedom" in totality, signifying **his ability to think deeply.** It can now be inferred that "thinking deeply" is not the only characteristic of an individual to be a philosopher. It is one of the criteria identified so far.

Moving onto the next criterion, mere

thinking deeply would not qualify an individual to be a philosopher. For say, the coach of the Indian hockey team possesses a higher understanding and knowledge about the game and, because of this, is able to analyse the sport deeply. So commonly regarded as a philosopher coach. How is the coach different from any other established philosopher? Although the coach owns the ability to think deeply and be able to do in-depth analysis, however (s)he will probably be able to make statements that only cater to the specific field, here, sport. Thus, for Phillips (2010), the logical analysis of the concepts could be the foundation for calling someone a philosopher.

Coherent System-building

However, how far is it possible to say that all deep thinkers are philosophers? This leads us to the next question: whether it is correct to state that all philosophers are deep thinkers, but all deep thinkers are not philosophers. The act of "deep thinking" is necessary but insufficient for an individual to be a philosopher. Is there a difference between thinking deeply and philosophical thinking? The distinction lies in the nature and coherence of the thought processes. When deep thinking becomes repetitive or incoherent, it is called overthinking in common parlance, which indicates fragmentary thinking and could also be far from reality. In contrast, a philosopher has a coherently argued thought process and attempts to present the true nature of reality.

Coherence encompasses identifying a phenomenon, analysing it, and making further value judgments and remarks about it. K's views, especially emphasising education as a transformative potential, not only for individuals but for global crises, deconstruct his system of thoughts. To end conflict, war, and violence, education provides freedom from conditioning and the systems that perpetuate it (Thapan, 2022). He envisioned that the right education would bring freedom, freedom from conditioning and fear, along with discipline that brings peace and thus preach for a flourished society. He was able to conceive the idea of right education as a sequel of his systematic thoughts.

Nevertheless, various thinkers who engaged with K's writings claimed to have witnessed contradictions within his teachings. Ravi Ravindra states his concern:

> This was one of the things which I generally did not actually agree with Krishnamurti. He somehow ended up being more or less as if he's against teaching or teachers . . . Yeah, I know, but so it ["the guru scene"] is around Krishnamurti as well, I can tell you, in the Krishnamurti Foundation. It is inevitable. It happens everywhere because, in a way, the Krishnamurti Foundation, just like the Guru or any other foundation, is, after all, set up to celebrate him, to promote his books and his writing. So he obviously has to be the centre of everything. (Archer, 2020)

K does not fit into the structure of a "technical" philosopher entirely because of the lack of formal, logical analysis of the concept using sense experiences as the basis of the analysis alone. So, is it enough to conclude that K is not a philo-

sopher? Even though K's work resonates with some philosophical perspectives, there may still be chances that K's work would not fulfil the criteria, yet still be a philosopher or, on the contrary, would be fulfilling all the criteria, yet not be a philosopher. Nevertheless, we will continue to analyse the listed criteria below and, with the journey, will clarify the stance of K.

Depth of Inquiry

Further, being able to think deeply and analyse is a matter of judgment, which may differ from individual to individual or discipline to discipline. The interaction between a group of scholars or practitioners of a particular field, like economists, physicists, historians, politicians, artists, and so forth, might lead to breakthroughs or discoveries, which are considered "level one" or "object-level" work. Individuals of a particular field who are not necessarily leading breakthroughs or making discoveries that enhance the field but are at a higher or more abstract level and are gazing down at object-level discourse are considered the philosophers of that field. Philosophers work at a meta-level to raise meta-questions about the object level of the domain they are studying. For example, Phillips considers Skinner a philosopher because Skinner changed the way psychology was being practised.

K's teachings elicit his insight into the nature of the mind, the self and the human condition. He weaves his core of teachings around understanding *human life* and its cognates, i.e., the "object level". But can "human life", in particular, be contested as a field? His field includes his work relating to the domain of education, which incorporates his core understanding of human life in totality, which blurs the distinction between "philosophers" of the field and "practitioners or researchers" of the field.

So it can be believed that K's teaching and discussions deal with meta-questions where issues are raised about the object level, namely, human life. As per the understanding, human life — that is level one in this case — is itself an abstract concept for many and its cognates like freedom, education, fear, knowledge, love, truth, relationship, and peace are further placed at a higher level. It may be obvious that most of K's work lies at a meta-level by understanding his teachings. To support the stance here, his teachings on thoughts, reality, and truth can be viewed.

An excerpt from "Reality and Truth" from K's talk session (Krishnamurti, 1975):

> So we must, if we may, consider the whole structure of our society and civilisation in which we live. We are not only concerned with the economic, social problems, political, as well as all the problems that we have to face every day: livelihood, the enormous amount of suffering that's going on in the world, the deterioration of human morality, his behaviour, the problems of fear, pleasure and the very complex problem of not only individual suffering, but the suffering of humanity.

The object-level discourse of the above

excerpt includes the economic activities, social and political problems, and livelihood issues of the individuals living in the society. For example, a female student unable to attend school because of her family's financial crisis, a man getting a promotion and incentives over a woman working as hard as him (Gender pay gap, social and political problem), or mere difficulty in finding balance in reel and real life are a few issues dealt at object level by all of us might be different by nature and in context. However, reflecting on the excerpt of the talk, K ascends from the object-level problems / sufferings to the meta-level and gazes and talks about the fundamental nature of these complex problems faced by humanity in general and further how self-understanding and arousing one's consciousness can counter such issues, reflecting his humanist approach. Another excerpt:

> We have got religious problems — whether there is God or no God, whether Christianity is superior to other religions, whether there is the only Saviour and there is no other — you know. The paraphernalia of rituals, dogmatism, superstition — all that is the work of thought. And in the world of economics, it is the same, and in our social relationship with each other, the movement of thought, being in itself fragmentary, has isolated each one of us into a self-centred human being. . . . We say: separate religions destroy man, obviously. And this separation has come about through thought: thought trying to find security in a world in which there is no security, in a world it has projected as heaven — this is all the movement of thought. . . . Again the operation of isolation which has been brought about through the fragmentation of thought.

Again, in the above excerpt, K attempts to examine the nature of the human mind and the structure of their thoughts by raising problems and questions that humans have, calling it fragmentary. He tries to build a trajectory of the path by analysing what and how thoughts arose and how these thoughts influence humans' perception of reality. His exploration leads to how fragmentary thoughts lead to isolated and self-centred humans having their perception of their respective reality at different fronts, be it at the human relationship, religious, or economic level.

Thus, ascending from object-level problems to giving an outlook of humanity's meta-level suffering and further examining the nature of the human mind and the structure of thoughts that it entails signifies and strengthens the belief that K functioned at a meta-level by meta-questioning metaphysical entities like thought, truth, and reality.

Nature of Inquiry

As discussed above, dwelling on identifying the type of meta-questions one is generating refines our understanding of the discourse. The distinguished moral philosopher William Frankena identified three types of activity, one or more of which a philosopher pursues. For Frankena, there are three types of activities engaged in while philosophising: speculative, normative, and analytical or critical (Noaparast, 2015).

Speculative/ metaphysical activity:

As per the above-stated reference, it combines the scientific findings with the outcomes of moral, aesthetic, and religious experiences to display a picture of the universe as a whole and humans' position in it, which indeed helps in providing meaning to life. Under this activity, the philosopher is concerned with abstract reasoning and questions to explore the fundamental nature of the world / reality and human knowledge.

Normative activity: The aim lies in determining the goals, norms, and standards for human, personal, and social behaviour to orient their actions. Philosophers practising this activity tend to provide a clear and precise description of the phenomena, concepts, or theories, or simply a guide to action or conduct of human affairs.

Analytical activity: Here, the aim is to analyse and explore the concepts, assumptions and methods used by philosophers, scientists and ordinary people. Philosophers engaging in this activity analyse and critically evaluate the existing beliefs, values, and practices.

An individual, if philosophising, may engage in any one or more activity, but the activities are not entirely discrete. Again, it can be realized that the types of activities identified are based on the author's analytical lens. However, it can still be attempted to bring forth the partial connection between K's work and these activities.

Now, the question arises as to which of the above-mentioned activities K was practising or if he was at all practising any. To answer the question, the areas to explore would be K's work on self-knowledge and education. Let us look at another excerpt from K's talk (Krishnamurti, 1949).

> So, we have to come to the point when we have to ask ourselves, really earnestly and profoundly, if the peace, the happiness, reality, or God, what you will, can be given to you by someone else. Can this incessant search, longing, give you that extraordinary sense of reality, that creative being, which comes when you really understand yourselves? So does self-knowledge come through any search, through following anybody else, through belonging to any particular organisation, through reading books, and so on? . . . As long as I do not understand myself, I have no basis for thought, and all my search will be in vain.

In these words, K caters to a wide range of metaphysical and existential questions. The excerpt's analysis can help us to decide whether K is engaged in the three types of activities, if any. From the knowledge of his work, K's insights, displayed through his talk, are closely aligned with the first type of activity, that is speculative activity. The particular excerpt gives a glimpse of his work where he engages and urges his listeners to question and understand the nature of reality, human consciousness and the fundamental issues of life, thus giving meaning to it.

By questioning whether peace, happiness, truth, and God could ever be given to us by someone, K is delving into the very idea and nature of reality. His belief that reality is not confined to the physical world and has much broader meaning and

dimensions signifies his ability to consider metaphysical entities like *peace, happiness, God, thought, and truth,* as reality and seeing one's position or relationship with it.

Further substantiating, a lot of K's work (as also in the above excerpt) reflects his idea of self-knowledge, which further influences one's basis of thought and deciphering one's perception of reality, actions, and behaviours, and thus the meaning that one adds to one's life. With this, he raises questions about the nature of self, which is construed through one's thoughts and conditioning. With this discourse, it can be appreciated that he engages with abstract reasoning and questions related to the nature of reality, the nature of the self, the purpose and meaning of life, and so on, the fundamental issues of life that one encounters and the ultimate freedom therefore, displaying his use of speculative / metaphysical activity in his teachings.

Now the question arises if his work also includes other types of activity, as per William Frankena's typology. Again, it can be attempted to justify the stance by catering to the individual activities, that is, normative and analytical, by considering his teachings on education now.

K has majorly talked about and set forth his concern about education. He describes the present system of education as "a system of frustration" which does not allow one to be truly educated. By "teaching him (the child) a technique in order to find a job, you (teachers and the education system in general) also burden him with its implications of success and frustration." (Krishnamurti, 1974)

(To be continued)

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Mahatma Gandhi, Theosophy, and the Brotherhood of Religions — II

NINGTHOUJAM SOMOKANTA SINGH & ELANGBAM GIRANI SINGH

THE concept of God is a dual philosophy of both Theosophy and religion, and also a subject of Gandhi's. Gandhi says that God is indescribable and impenetrable, present in everybody and everything, because his manifestation is innumerable. He was also influenced by the Vaishnava teaching: "God is the creator, the Ruler and Lord of the Universe." All the Vaishnavas accept that God's Creatorship is real, and agree that liberation can be obtained only by the mercy of God propitiated by devotion and self-surrender.

Gandhi also holds that man can only achieve perfection and liberation through self-surrender to the grace of God. Nevertheless, he opposes fatalism and firmly believes that humans can control their own fate. Complete dominion over the mind is impossible without unreserved surrender to grace, which alone can provide perfection or freedom from mistake. He wants to convey that although God is the source of light and life, truth and love, ethics and morality, fearlessness and conscience, and is above and beyond all.

God gives the freedom to choose between right and wrong. He conceived as a benign power struggling against an opposite principle or principles responsible for the world's evils. God is regarded as all-inclusive and ultimately capable of overcoming the evils of Satan, which makes God subject to partial limitation by an opposing principle. The religious sentiments require an unfailing source of help and are fully satisfied by it.[8]

Gandhi accepts God, as Theosophy does, in his religious thought. He accepts that God is a part of life, which is what religion is all about. Accepting God entails allowing love, truth, and reason to govern the heart and prohibit selfishness, ill will, ignorance, and irrationality, as well as all the passions that result from them, such as desire, rage, and greed.

Gandhi defines religion as that which underpins and unifies all religions, that which transforms a person's essence, that which ties them to the truth within, and purifies the soul.[9] He mentioned that God is the fundamental element of Theosophy, which seeks the Truth, and religions are merely various routes leading to the same destination, that is, Truth. In the same way, he respects other religions as he does

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his own, so he cannot consider converting to them.

Gandhi claims that religion in reality is Theosophy itself, which is not limited to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, or Islam, and he undoubtedly values it in all its forms. Religion is the transformation of human essence, linking them inextricably to the truth within and purifying them. The soul is entirely restless until it has discovered itself, acknowledged its Creator, and recognized the genuine correlation between the Maker or God and itself.[10] In reality, religion is also a cornerstone of existence and influences every aspect of life. It lies in the perpetual presence of the cosmic spirit and incorporates awareness in everything. It impacts everything from the tiniest to the most significant aspects of human life, including how to sit, speak, eat, and conduct their private, professional, and public lives.

Religion excludes all forms of force and is a matter of freely and genuinely held views that do not imply theocracy or rejection of the secular state.[11] It gives them reality and brings them into harmony. It denotes faith in the universe's morally ordered government. Gandhi permits a humanist approach to religion, assessing logic from an aesthetic perspective to eradicate any superstition that might infiltrate through the potent effects of religion. He holds that all moral principles are merely effective coordinators of certain aesthetic aspects, such as the pervasiveness of religion, the acceptance of all faiths for the sake of humanism, and the ultimate Truth as the true realization of God.

Gandhi's religious thought and Theosophy are parallel in purifying the heart and mind, and making man liberal. Both occur on the path to a better existence and are closely tied to one's inner life. Although religions are known by their different spiritual Teachers, such as Lord Rama, Rahim, Allah, Christ, and Guru Nanak, their teachings share a common thread. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and so on, all use different ways to approach the ultimate power, God, or Truth. Religion binds us to God and to each other, and is intended to tame the wild nature of humanity. They seek to enshrine man's moral and logical will and to stifle his animal nature.[12]

It is a way of life that aims to establish a relationship between humans and God. It is discovered that God is perceived differently by individuals across various religions and countries. This idea of religion is a false representation of humanity, and each one should stand for an essential and shared element that suggests tolerance and understanding among people. People's conceptions of religion are evolving, and as such, they are open to change and reinterpretation. A thorough knowledge of one's own religion would bridge the gap betwen different faiths and beliefs. The most significant aspect of religion is living a decent life and morality, which is a fundamental component of all aspects of the world. Religion represents a prevailing focus on moral principles, such as fasting, prayer, vows, and the five cardinal

virtues: non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and renunciation, all of which are ways to discipline oneself. According to Gandhi, religion is a reflection of how people think about and relate to God. All religions have some truth, and the twin tenets of the unity of all life and the unity of all humanity must form the foundation of any religion. True religion offers the most opportunity for self-expression, the greatest freedom from dogma, and the most significant opportunity for the universal principle of compassion. Gandhi believed that all religions were equally legitimate and that they all represented the fundamental character of humanity.

Gandhi's religious thought has a theosophical insight into the realization or understanding of oneself. He felt that a man's divinity or goodness must be aided by religion. Although there is only one God, all faiths are flawed because they were transmitted to the populace via imperfect human means. God, the main character or idea in all religions, is the object of man's evolutionary quest for Truth.

Certain religions believed that prayer and fasting were tools for religious practice. But a true fast purifies the body, mind, and soul. There must be a simultaneous fast for the body and all of the sense organs. Inward communication with the almighty power is what prayer is all about. Prayer, which must be said with the heart rather than the lips, is essential for anyone who has a deep desire to awaken the holy force inside them. Prayer is more than just reciting a meaningless formula. It must be in response to what the spirit desires. Gandhi said that God will never hear the prayers of men who have poisonous hearts and nectar-filled tongues. Prayer is meant to awaken each person's divine power and subjugate the animal. The purpose of prayer is to subdue the animal instincts and awaken the spiritual power within each individual.[13]

Mahatma Gandhi frequently states some theosophical elements that referred to his religion as the Religion of Truth or Truth is God. According to the Upanishads, Truth, Knowledge, and Eternity are the Supreme. The Lord of Truth, Satyanarayana, is God. Gandhiji seeks Truth and says he has discovered the path to it and is working tirelessly to find it.

Realizing oneself and one's destiny to perfection is the ultimate definition of Truth. He is dressed in the same tainted flesh as his weakest fellow creatures. He made an effort to become a more suitable instrument of God's work by overcoming the discursiveness of his nature and the inconsistencies of his flesh via fasting, prayer, and loving practice. He believed that all religions pursue the same discipline and desire for human fulfillment.[14]

Gandhi practised a love-based religion. He defined non-violence as the spiritual energy that is inside us and, to a certain degree, becomes divine. He described it as the power that unites all living things. He urged us to become proficient in force and said that the only way to discover God is to recognize him in his creation,

and that this is an unlimited love that includes the ability to experience pain. The human body should never be used for pleasure but always for work. This necessitates renunciation, which is what sets humans apart from animals. Without hesitation, a real devotee dedicates himself to the service of humanity. Without helping and identifying with the poorest, self-realization is impossible. To him, service devoid of humility amounted to egotism and selfishness, which necessitated total surrender. Gandhi said that religion is not about following rituals or dogmas, but rather about having a strong belief in the unchanging principles of justice, love, and truth, and working tirelessly to bring them to pass on Earth. In the sense that they are all truthful, the major religions are all equal. They are filling a perceived gap in humanity's spiritual development.

Conclusion

The context mentioned above indicates that Gandhi's religious thought has a theosophical character. It also shows that Gandhi's religious thought is distinct from other forms of religious thought. It is a composite picture of theosophical elements and the most sublime aspects of various religions. It is also evident that he was a member of the Theosophical Society in London in 1889, and had read various theosophical and religious books. It may be concluded that the influence of his religious thought may be a reflection of his theosophical and religious experiences. His personal experience of living in a multireligious society, which he shares with everyone else on the Indian subcontinent, serves as a constant reminder that the debate over religious truth is not just a theoretical issue but also directly affects how men treat one another, taking into account their differing beliefs and points of view. The entire issue is actually closely tied to the question of whether or not men of different persuasions can coexist peacefully.

Gandhi was deeply impacted by his extensive experience with a wide range of men, including English vegetarians, nature-cure faddists, theosophists, fundamentalist Christians, Muslim merchants, political figures, and the country's people. His religious thought also clearly derived from spirituality, morality from its foundation, and social forms and behaviors from its superstructure. To create an integrated theosophical and theological framework, he compared all formal religions and faiths, taking the most sublime aspects from each.

His teachings and principles had a holistic flavor and a religious undertone. Since he believed that religion embodied truth, he conducted both subjective and objective tests to evaluate the effectiveness and legitimacy of Dharma in both private and public life. He sought Truth and discovered that it was the same as love, non-harm, and non-violence. He believed that Truth is the only religion and that it is spiritual, absolute, and pervasive. His goal was to serve humanity to realize God. His religious thought is a mixture of Theosophy and religion, but is broadly characterized by theosophical behavior. ✧

(Concluded)

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. . . Universal Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. It is a fact for the lowest part of Nature; for the animal, vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms. We are all atoms, obeying the law together. Our denying it does not disprove it. It simply puts off the day of reward and keeps us miserable, poor, and selfish. For example, if all in Chicago, in the United States, would act as Jesus, the Buddha, and Confucius said, as all the great ethical teachers of the world have said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" [the Golden Rule], would there be any necessity for legal measures and policemen with clubs? . . .

The Theosophical Society (TS) desires above all things, not that you should understand spiritualism, not that wonderful occult works should be performed, but to understand the constitution of matter and of Life as they are, which we can never understand but by practicing right ethics. Live with each other as brothers; for the misery and the trouble of the world are of more importance than all the scientific progress that may be imagined. I conclude by calling upon you, by all that humanity holds dear, to remember what I say, and whether Christians, Atheists, Jews, Pagans, Heathen, or Theosophists, try to practice Universal Brotherhood, which is the universal duty of all men.

William Q. Judge (13 April 1851 – 21 March 1896), former Vice-President of the TS Adyar and one of the founders of the TS in New York City, gave an address, "Universal Brotherhood — A Fact in Nature", at the first Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893. The extracts above are from that address.

Esoteric Vegetarianism: A Worldview Reflected in the Diet — III

PAVEL N. MALAKHOV

TOWARD the end of Part II of this article, the last sentence of the paragraph subtitled **Expenditure of Energy** reads that "a large, and perhaps the larger, part of our energy is spent in resistance, overcoming, and opposing something" in four levels:

On the **physical** level: the breaking down of heavy elements, the cleansing of the body of waste products, and also resistance to people who oppress us or compete with us.

On the **emotional** level: the balancing of emotions, the transformation of negative impressions, the suppression of negative reactions.

On the **mental** level: disputes with those who hold different views, including the inner dialogues we carry on with ourselves.

On the **spiritual** level: contending with the obscuration born of the illusion of personality.

If we set our orientation toward resistance as human beings endowed with free will and the power of choice then destiny will unfailingly provide us with the conditions in which resistance is required. In other words, we will always find ourselves in a competitive environment, compelled to struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi, whose role in India's liberation from British rule is well known, stands as a vivid example. He is not alone: the path of non-resistance has been the way of many Teachers of Humanity. It is characteristic, in particular, of the Christian outlook, where saints choose the way of suffering for humanity and accept the redemption of its sins at their own cost. This path consists in directing one's energy and time into the creative work of transforming humanity drawing others along toward a worthier life. Such an approach catalyses change not by outward compulsion but by an inner impulse, awakening and quickening *their own* divine nature within.

Whereas the struggle against others aims to restrict (what we regard as) wrongful actions, the path of non-resistance and the power of one's own example encourage people to act aright. The former approach directs our efforts

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Mr Pavel N. Malakhov, former Presidential Representative of the TS in Russia, made a presentation based on this article at the Russian National Theosophical Congress of November 2021. First published in *Sovremennaya Teosofskaya Mysl*, 2019, No. 2(8).

toward changing the outer world, often breaking out in harsh or disproportionate measures. The latter also changes the world inevitably but does so gently, in proportion to the readiness of those around us to accept such change.

Of course, everything must be measured and reasonable. Struggle itself has its positive side. The essential task is to discern where it will be useful, and whether it will serve selfish or altruistic aims, destruction or transformation, domination or service. A beginning vegetarian (like any new convert) sometimes throws himself into an active struggle to promote the teaching he has embraced, and inevitably meets with resistance from his surroundings: misunderstanding, ridicule, reproach. These in turn only spur him on, inflaming his zeal for battle.

In this connection we may recall Leo Tolstoy, perhaps the first successful pioneer of vegetarianism in Russia, and at the same time a champion of the ideal of non-violence. Tolstoy's life shows how one may act in such a way as, on the one hand, to impose nothing and waste no strength in conflict with society, and on the other, to advance lofty moral ideas, changing convictions and lives in profound and lasting ways by directing energy toward the struggle against ignorance. Much the same is expressed in the well-known maxims: one must *fight the sin, not the sinner*; and *contend not with people, but with their shortcomings.*

Practice

For a practical understanding of the transition from meat-eating to vegetarianism, let us once again move from the general to the particular.

From a practical point of view, the key to success in any undertaking lies in finding ones own balance between *aspiration* and *patience*. On the one hand, it is unwise to rush, to force events, or to break ones own habits violently, for such an approach may end in failure and even a relapse to an earlier stage. On the other hand, it is equally harmful to postpone important decisions endlessly; this can lead to inertia, chronic passivity, and an inability to act at all.

For long-term effectiveness it is most practical to proceed by the method of gradual substitution replacing undesirable elements step by step with those that are preferable. This follows the natural course of things, for nature is constantly renewing our bodies by producing new cells to take the place of those that die. Here, *special* attention should be given to the importance of *small steps.*

If you are a committed meat-eater with a deep-rooted habit of consuming this food, then a sound approach to changing your diet is a *temporary* abstention from meat, together with a *gradual* and *partial* replacement of it with plant-based foods. In this way, progress toward the goal is steady and assured. Such a change is an expression of free will and an exercise in the development of willpower through daily choices an exercise that will gradually strengthen your convictions and bring the ideal into practice.

The most effective way to free oneself from *any* chronic harmful habit is

to replace it with a more wholesome action one that, in time, itself becomes habitual. The same method applies to food. We must discover those tastes and dishes among wholesome foods that we are ready to adopt in our daily diet, and use them to displace the tastes and dishes to which we have grown accustomed but which it would be better to leave behind.

To the question, "How can such an approach help a person to become better?" we may give an answer drawn from the article "The Elixir of Life":

> First the neophyte will take more pleasure in things spiritual and pure. Gradually gross and material occupations will become not only uncraved for or forbidden, but simply and literally repulsive to him. He will take more pleasure in the simple sensations of Nature the sort of feeling one can remember to have experienced as a child. He will feel more light-hearted, confident, happy. Let him take care the sensation of renewed youth does not mislead, or he will yet risk a fall into his old baser life and even lower depths. Action and reaction are equal.
>
> 1 Now the desire for food will begin to cease. Let it be left off gradually — no fasting is required. Take what you feel you require. The food craved for will be the most innocent and simple. Fruit and milk will usually be the best. Then as till now, you have been simplifying the quality of your food, gradually, very gradually, as you feel capable of it diminish the quantity."[1]

Theory is often set against practice, yet to divide them is to diminish both. To act with the greatest success we must have some understanding of what we are doing and why such conduct is the best course. The broader our understanding, the easier it is to make the right choice. The more thoroughly our theory is developed and the wider our worldview, the stronger our inner core becomes, and the more easily we are able to decide and to act.

Our worldview must not stand in contradiction to reality. The claim that human beings cannot develop fully without meat should not be generalized to *all*. For some individuals, meat may for a time be necessary because of personal attachment; our preferences and even our needs are themselves subject to the law of karma and shaped by previous inclinations and convictions. Yet it is important to distinguish between our individual path of development, where each of us must recognize and overcome our own weaknesses, and the objective laws of Nature, according to which all beings evolve.

In building a picture of the world, we must be observant — attentive to what is happening around us. We must learn to shift from the egocentric view that takes *itself* as the measure of all things, and to ask instead: "How else might it be? And what would be more truly right?" The impartial observation of a seeker can provide us with wholesome food for thought. We see that the synthesis of all beings and organisms arises from a single element, making possible the transformation of any particle (vitamin, protein, mineral, and so forth) into another; that herbivorous animals build their bodies without recourse to animal food; and that in India countless generations of Brahmins, who never ate meat, nevertheless grew up

with sound bodies, minds, and intellects. All this demonstrates the groundlessness of the claim that human development requires the consumption of animal flesh.

The recognition of this fact makes it easier to move into practice shaping our lives in accordance with our convictions.

Morality and Interaction with the Universe

Our moral perception and aesthetic sense already point the way to our attitude toward food. All we need is to listen to the inner response that arises when we reflect on different kinds of nourishment. The sight of a bleeding creature convulsing in pain will awaken in many meat-eaters, too, the impulse to prevent such suffering. That alone should be enough to show that such food is not in harmony with our true nature.

From the standpoint of practical morality, it is useful to view nourishment not merely as *consumption* for the maintenance of *our own* existence, but rather as part of the universal metabolism of Nature, operating on many levels. It is better to move away from regarding food as simply a means of survival, and to see it instead as a form of interaction with other beings recognizing that we are all in constant exchange with one another, and that this exchange operates on many planes.

In this light, nourishment may be understood as a process of transforming energy and matter for the good of the whole world. For our spiritual progress it is desirable to view all processes in terms of cooperation and mutual support, shifting our focus from the egoistic pursuit of advantage to an altruistic orientation.

The universe responds to *all* our aspirations and actions. Its response is always proportionate and fitting. At the beginning of this article we noted examples of the universe's reply to human aggression and to a consumerist way of life. Let us now observe that this same unbreakable interconnection ensures a response also to our peaceful aspirations. Our interaction with the universe is a constant and enduring bond. Therefore, if what flows from us is love, attentiveness, the will to do no harm, respect, and cooperation, the universe will assuredly return the same.

As a result, the one who becomes a channel for the forces of Nature attains the fulfillment of all his or her aspirations in the swiftest way, for the whole universe lends its support. In view of this, it would be well if our desires became less impulsive, more conscious, and more attuned to the surrounding world so that their realization may bring no harm to those around us. (*Concluded*)

Endnote

1. Godolphin Mitford's "The Elixir of Life", in *Five Years of Theosophy,* (London, 1885), p. 24.

Helpful Resources

1. *The Game Changers* — a documentary on vegetarianism produced by James Cameron, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Jackie Chan. **(2)** *Earthlings* — a powerful film exposing the cruelty inflicted upon animals when used for human purposes, and how they are kept. **(3)** The Wikipedia article, *"Vegetarianism"*.

Henry S. Olcott's Role in Reviving Eastern Religions

JOHN BEERS

IN 1880, Buddhism was under assault in the island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). At that time, it was governed by Britain, and young people who wanted to get ahead were converting to Christianity. All accredited schools had to begin the day by teaching one hour of Bible studies. Buddhist marriages were not recognized, and there were only four Buddhist schools in the whole country.

The first president of the Theosophical Society (TS) was an American, Col. Henry Steel Olcott, who served from 1875 to 1907. He lived several years in Ceylon, traveling by oxcart from village to village, teaching Buddhism and establishing Buddhist schools. So he went to England to meet with an official about the religious discrimination in Ceylon. When he left Ceylon, back to India, there were 283 Buddhist schools and 35,000 students. He also performed thousands of healings using mesmerism, not hypnotism.

In his Blavatsky Lecture, delivered in England in October 2007 and published as *Colonel Olcott and the Healing Arts*, author Michael Gomes said that, as President of the TS, Olcott traveled the Indian sub-continent lecturing on behalf of the Society, establishing a network of 87 branches by 1885. . . . He also traveled to Burma and Japan, urging dialogue between the various Buddhist groups. (p. 5)

When he died at Adyar on 17 Feb. 1907, his funeral was attended by representatives of the various regional religious groups. In a letter to a colleague (W. Q. Judge), he summed up his contribution when writing: "If I have worked for the Buddhists, so have I for the Hindus, the Parsis, the Mohammedans, the Jews, and received the blessing of each." (also p. 5)

A quote from another of Olcott's biographers reads:

> Each year on 17 February, Buddhists throughout Sri Lanka light brass lamps and offer burning incense to commemorate the anniversary of the death of an American-born Buddhist hero. In Theravada temples, saffron-robed monks bow down before his photograph, and boys and girls in schoolhouses across the country offer gifts in his memory. (From *The White Buddhist — The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* by Stephen Prothero) ✧

Mr John Beers was attracted to the esoteric philosophy since a young age. After reading *Thought Forms* by Annie Besant & C. W. Leadbeater, he joined the TS study group in Denver, Colorado, and this led him to reside and volunteer at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, CA, since 2023 till the present.

Theosophical Work around the World

International Convention, Adyar

The 150th International Convention of the Theosophical Society (TS) unfolded at Adyar as a living moment in the long journey of a shared ideal. With the theme **"One World, One Life: The Spirit of a New Humanity"**, the Convention felt a collective pause — an invitation to listen deeply to what the present moment and the future may be asking of humanity.

From 31December '25 to 4 January '26, Adyar became a meeting place not only of people, but of perspectives, traditions, and inward aspirations. About 30 countries were represented, with 752 members present and more than 1,000 participants online, forming a circle of reflection that extended across continents and cultures. Whether gathered in the Adyar Theatre, walking the paths of the campus, or participating through digital platforms, members shared a sense of belonging that transcended distance and cultural difference.

The lighting of the lamp, prayers of the religions, and the Universal Prayer during the Opening created a shared stillness in which unity was experienced rather than articulated. The invocation by Tim Boyd, International President of the TS, gently reminded participants that unity does not require uniformity, but calls instead for harmony amid diversity — a harmony born of inner listening. Greetings were delivered by the representatives of twenty countries who were present on the dais. Many more greetings sent by post were read by Marja Artamaa, the International Secretary. A spirit of quiet attentiveness permeated the days ahead, shaping both formal sessions and informal encounters.

The book launches by Tim Boyd and Marja Artamaa added a contemplative and archival depth to the Convention, celebrating both living insight and careful scholarship. *Blavatsky's Collected Writings: Russian Serials* edited by Michael Gomes stands as a testament to rigorous scholarship and the preservation of theosophical thought for future generations. *Adyar: The Masters' Home — The Story of Its History, Land, and People* by Geetha Jaikumar offered an evocative glimpse into Adyar as a sacred, living centre — where history, presence, and purpose quietly converge. *Blavatsky Museum of Arts — Centenary Booklet 2025*, a small and elegant coffee-table book on Theosophy and Adyar — Towards the Light, showcasing thirty selections from the Museum collection, beautifully captured the spirit, landscapes, and legacy of Adyar, allowing its story to speak through images as much as words.

On the Verge of Wisdom by Tim Boyd offered reflective guidance for inner renewal, spirituality in daily life, speaking to the challenges and opportunities of spiritual life in a changing world.

In his Presidential Address, Tim Boyd

reflected on the work of the Society worldwide during 2024–2025, not as a catalogue of achievements, but as an invitation to consider the quality of consciousness with which the work is undertaken. Reports and reflections that followed were received in the same spirit — as expressions of shared responsibility.

Throughout the Convention, Adyar itself emerged as a quiet teacher. The campus — with its Great Banyan Tree, temples of different religions, schools, archives, museum, social welfare initiatives, and ecological projects — illustrated Theosophy in action. Visits were arranged to the Social Welfare Centre (SWC), the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School (OMHSS), the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA), the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD), the Garden Nursery, and the Blue-Green Centre.

At the Olcott School, the bust of Col. Henry S. Olcott, first international President of the TS, was inaugurated on 2 January 2026 by Tim Boyd linking the educational vision of the past with the aspirations of the present. This was done in the presence of over one hundred delegates and Lily Boyd, who works extensively with the school, the Vocational Training Centre and the SWC.

Exhibitions at the Blavatsky Museum ("100 Years Legacy", under the guidance of Erica Georgiades, Bernd Jesse and Elif Kamisli), Art Conservation Laboratory ("Deck of Cards: A Homage to H. P. Blavatsky" by art residents Christine Ödlund and Fredrik Söderberg), Surendra Narayan Archives ("Through Time's Lens: 150 Years of the Theosophical Society", curated by Geetha Jaikumar), and the Adyar Library ("Echoes from the Shelves: Lesser-Known Works of Theosophical Leaders", organized by Jaishree Kannan) brought history vividly to life.

As customary, the inauguration of exhibitions and stalls of the Olcott Education Society and BMAD was followed by an informal reception, offering space for connection and conversation. The day concluded with the Ritual of the Mystic Star, inviting inward reflection.

Convention mornings began with three parallel offerings: Bharata Samaja Puja, Prime at the Liberal Catholic Church, and Yoga, conducted respectively by M. Vijayalakshmi, Pedro Oliveira, and Prem Kumar, offering delegates the choice to begin each day in reflection, prayer, or embodied awareness.

The first public lecture, "Looking through the Window of Eternity", by Shikhar Agnihotri, International Speaker, set a contemplative depth that resonated throughout the Convention. Participants were invited to step beyond the pull of past and future and rediscover the perspective of the "Eternal Now" in daily life, a key to experiencing the oneness of life.

The second public lecture, "Adyar Chronicles: The Living Heart of the Theosophical Society," by Geetha Jaikumar, researcher at the Surendra Narayan Archives, brought history alive not as memory, but as continuity, revealing Adyar as a living centre shaped by devotion, service, and vision.

Short lectures such as "One Life, Many Paths" by Catalina Isaza-Cantor, Inter-

national Speaker, and "A Timeless Message" by Robert Béland (Canada) opened contemplative spaces, reminding participants that truth speaks in many languages while pointing toward a single source.

Dialogue sessions deepened this shared inquiry. In "Preparing for a New Humanity", Tim Boyd and Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, General Secretary of the French Section, explored the inner and outer conditions required for humanity's next step. The dialogue invited attentive listening and collective reflection.

The conversation and Q&A session, "Let's Talk", moderated by Tim Boyd, with Linda Oliveira (former TS International Vice-President from Australia), Marcos Resende (former General Secretary, TS Brazil), and Nancy Secrest (International Treasurer, Adyar), created a space for open and thoughtful exchange. Drawing from diverse cultural and experiential perspectives, the panel reflected on unity, service, and inner responsibility, responding to questions with shared insight and lived understanding.

In "Art, Theosophy, and Adyar", chaired by Elif Kamisli, resident artists Christine Ödlund and Fredrik Söderberg explored art as a bridge between the visible and the invisible, revealing creative expression as a form of spiritual inquiry.

The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) sessions emphasized that brotherhood finds its true meaning in action. Rekha Nahar, Assistant International Secretary of TOS, spoke on "The Role of Service in Shaping the Future", while Nancy Secrest, International Secretary of TOS, reflected on "Being Humanity", highlighting service as an inner orientation rather than an external obligation.

This emphasis found resonance in the Besant Lecture, "Spirituality and Service: Foundations of a Better World," delivered by Deepa Padhi, International Vice-President, reaffirming that spirituality matures only when expressed through compassion and responsibility.

A distinctive highlight was the Theosophy-Science Lecture, "Being, Consciousness, and the Future in an AI-Driven World", by Sangeetha Menon, Professor and Head, NIAS, Indian Institute of Science, explored how our understanding of consciousness and human experience must inform the development and role of AI, questioning whether machines can ever truly replicate or *embody* human subjective awareness and purpose.

The Indian Section Convention included two sessions: the annual report presented by Pradeep Gohil, National President, Indian Section, and a second session featuring K. M. Vanishree, Ananya Pati, Sharayu Wagdeo, Sree Hari Varma, and Shobha Prakash, who shared reflections on the theme, "Reach Within to Embrace the Unity of Life".

Mini talks further enriched the inquiry, including "Inner Unity and Healing for Future Humanity" by Svyatoslav Lipsky, "*Vāsanā* and the World We Inhabit" by James Madaio, and "The All-Pervading Oneness" by N. C. Krishna.

Workshops such as "Peace in Action: A Theosophical Approach to Service and Self-Awareness" by TS Philippines and "Embodied Unity: Experiencing the Hid-





Group Photo: Delegates on the left side (above) and the right side (below) of the Adyar Theatre at the opening of the Convention on 31 December 2025







Top left: Tim Boyd reading the greetings from HH the Dalai Lama. The background photo is from the Dalai Lama's visit to Chicago in 2011

Top right: The new Olcott bust installed at the Olcott School

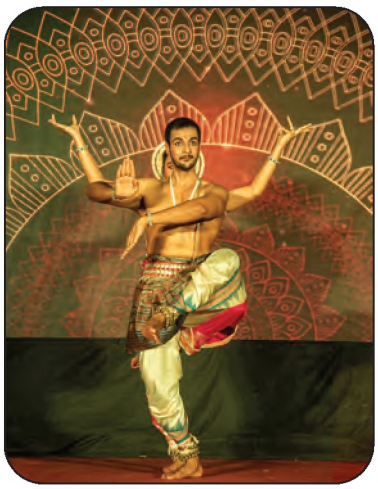
Left: Visit to OMHSS

Bottom left: Global meditation

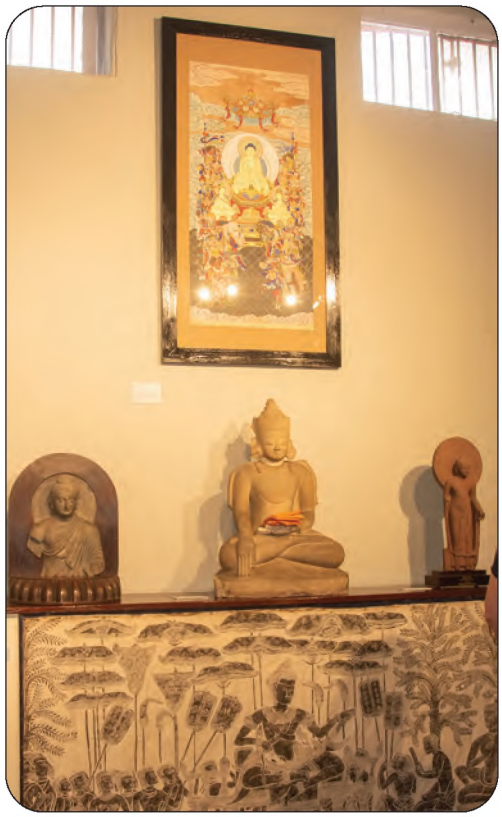
Bottom centre: Odissi dance

Bottom right: The Philippine Section planting a time capsule to be opened after 50 years







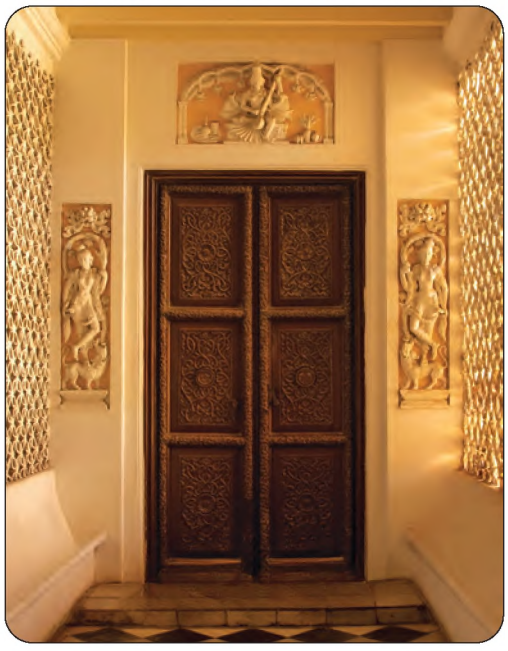




Blavatsky Museum of Arts — 100 years

The Blavatsky Museum of Arts celebrated its centenary in 2025, marking one hundred years since the presentation of *The Messenger* by Nicholas Roerich to the Theosophical Society, to be the nucleus of a future museum in Adyar.

Roerich's articulated vision for the Museum: "Beauty is the Garment of Truth."







Water Ceremony at the Buddhist temple constructed 100 years ago; 64 bottles of pure water brought from various sources around the world such as mountain lakes, rivers, and springs were blended together



The Philippine Section planted three trees, and buried a time capsule

den Energies of the Self" by the World Federation of Young Theosophists invited experiential engagement. Education workshops led by Sonal Murali, ATA Director — "Education for Life: Seeds of Gratitude" and "Education for Life: One Heart and Inter-being" — highlighted education as a transformative force rooted in gratitude and interbeing.

Cultural offerings added a luminous dimension. The Odissi dance "Ekam Sat, Anant Aayami — One Truth, Infinite Expressions" by Rahul Varshney and Mridula, School of Creative Hands, embodied unity through movement and rhythm. The documentary "ONE FIRE — 150 Years of Theosophy," directed by Terhi Ahava (TS Finland), traced the enduring impulse toward unity between science and spirit. One of the evenings was dedicated to a participative session with music, dance, singing, and the message of Oneness of Life — the TS Members' Talent Show.

The tree plantation and time capsule ceremony led by the Philippines Section, the devotional meeting by Chandrika Mehta, the water ceremony conducted by Fatima Martin with meditative sounds by Suneeti Ramesh and team, and the global meditation by Catalina Isaza-Cantor & Shikhar Agnihotri for planetary healing, created moments of shared reverence. Their visual presentation "Adyar, the Multiverse" revealed Adyar as a living field of consciousness.

As in the past few years, the Bangalore City Lodge organized a canteen at the Bhojanasala for Indian cuisine, in addition to the Leadbeater Chambers catering. Their services were greatly appreciated.

On the last day of the Convention new members were welcomed by President Tim Boyd. As the Convention drew to a close, his talk "What is New? A Question Worth Asking" invited renewed inquiry — as a fresh way of seeing life itself. With gentle clarity, he emphasized joy as a quiet yet transformative indicator of right relationship with life, suggesting that when consciousness is aligned with truth and compassion, joy naturally arises as both a guide and a responsibility in shaping the spirit of a new humanity.

The closing session and vote of thanks by the Convention Officer, Shikhar Agnihotri, that included the pictures of all those who contributed towards the Convention, gave a glimpse of the army of people, including volunteers at various levels and degrees, without whom this convention would not have gone as smoothly as it did.

Finally, after the closing chant by Jaishree Kannan, Tim Boyd declared the Convention closed, with a feeling of sacred peace and joy permeating the whole atmosphere. The 150th International Convention will be remembered both for its scale — over 1,700 participants worldwide — and for its depth, warmth, and quiet joy. It reaffirmed that the vision which gave birth to the Theosophical Society 150 years ago remains alive in the human consciousness.

In a world searching for meaning amid rapid change, the gathering at Adyar offered a simple yet powerful reminder: When we recognize the one life within, the world reveals itself as one family. ✧

SHIKHAR AGNIHOTRI

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