

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: *Echium candicans*, the Pride of Madeira, native to the island of Madeira and the Canary Islands, is also known as the “Tower of Jewels”. Its essence is said to enhance, among other positive feelings, the sense of the profound in the silence, and the feeling of self-acceptance. Taken on the California coast by a long-term member of the TS in America.

This journal is the official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky on 1 Oct. 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this journal.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

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To the 147th International Convention of the Theosophical Society, Adyar
(*In-person & on Zoom from 31 December 2022 to 4 January 2023*)

IT is a joy to warmly welcome all the delegates present at Adyar and online at this 147th International Convention, especially since after four years we are once again hosting an in-person Convention in our campus, particularly now with several recently renovated beautiful gardens. Let us now turn to those Great Ones whose compassionate care and blessings our Society has been enjoying during all these years. Please rise:

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

It is a pleasure to declare this 147th Annual Convention
of the Theosophical Society (TS) open.

In order to give us time to complete the renovation of Leadbeater Chambers (LBC), in 2019 the Indian Section was gracious enough to host the event at their Headquarters in Varanasi. A month after the end of that Convention the world shut down because of the global pandemic. All of our work in progress halted and our focus at Adyar turned to protecting the health and safety of our workers and residents. It would be fair to say that we did a good job. With only one resident contracting the virus during the peak of Covid activity, Adyar was one of the safest places on the planet.

During the time that the pandemic was raging, we were planning. In the three years since the advent of the pandemic

we have not been idle. The renovations at LBC are completed, new classroom buildings have been constructed at both the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School (OMHSS) and at the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA), the boys' hostel at OMHSS is up and running, across the campus we have upgraded and installed new gardens (Library building, Admin building, LBC, entrance gate, and most notably the Medha Gautam Garden in front of the Headquarters building). The New Quadrangle complex is nearing completion of its extensive renovations. One of the buildings at the Social Welfare Center was demolished and is also nearing completion.

Probably the most significant develop-

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ment during this past year was the signing of a long-term lease for the Damodar Gardens corner of the TS campus. For the past 80+ years the 14-acre plot of land has been the home to successive first-class educational efforts. For the first 40 years The Besant School, founded during the administration of George Arundale, occupied the space. The next 40 years was The School run by the Krishnamurti Foundation India. In June of this year we signed a long-term lease arrangement for the construction of a high level private school with the Shiv Nadar Trust (SNT). The arrangement took a full three years to finalize. Although the TS has no involvement in running the school, one of the more difficult aspects of the process was finding a partner whose ideals and ethos would be compatible with ours — a fully vegetarian campus, ecologically respectful, alcohol and dissection free, integrity in business operations, and so on. All of these requirements are the norm for SNT across the numerous schools they operate in India.

The motivation for the lease arrangement was to utilize the land for the highest benefit to the TS. The lease will provide a significant and necessary financial support for the work of the TS for years to come. It will also be a valuable addition to the educational and cultural life of the larger community.

The highlights mentioned above might appear to relate solely to externals — buildings, gardens, income streams, but we need to look deeper. Annie Besant described Adyar as the “Masters’ home”. It is a place of power and presence passed down to us for the use of future generations and for the benefit of humankind. If you value something, it should show in how you treat it. It has been our view that this place should be maintained with respect. Outwardly our touch should call forth a beauty in our surroundings reflective of the inner beauty of those who work through this place and this movement. Our thoughts and actions should seek to uplift and maintain this space for future generations and as yet unknown uses.

* * *

The Work around the World

In **AFRICA**, the **East and Central African** Section, composed of four countries, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia, had some members joining the online talks organized by other Sections, but most could not because of high cost of infrastructure and internet connectivity. The 49th annual convention was held in April 2022 at the Nairobi Lodge, on “The

World at the Threshold of Change” with the option for members to participate on-site or online. The guest of honour was Navin B. Shah, chairman of the Pan-African Theosophical Federation. The keynote address was delivered by me. Prof P. Krishna gave a public lecture on “Freedom from the Self” and Charlton Romero on “Papillon: On the Wings of Change”.

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Attendance in Lodge meetings in **South Africa** was low due to Covid-19. Since August there were visitors in Johannesburg and Pretoria but no new members. The website was revamped to advertise Theosophy, announce Lodge programmes, and attract new members. Meditation classes are planned at several Lodges, including weekend retreats. The focus is on HPB's *Voice of the Silence*. Reading material was sent to members each month.

West Africa faces serious financial challenges, and measures are being taken to attract new members and retain them via social media, by placing short write-ups on the main issues of life and how Theosophy addresses them. The Annual Convention that has not been held since 2017 will take place in December 2022 and it will concentrate on strategies to energize the Section. Three new members joined the Section in 2022.

In the **AMERICAS**, the TS in **Central America** consists of the Teotl Lodge and the Blavatsky Study Centre. Courses were conducted on *The Secret Doctrine* by HPB, *At the Feet of the Master* by J. Krishnamurti and *Light on the Path* by Mabel Collins. The study was broadcast on Facebook. An introductory course on Theosophy was conducted, and conferences and discussions on Radha Burnier's *Human Regeneration* were held.

The TS in **Argentina** continued dissemination of Theosophy using online platforms. Facebook following went up from 15,000 in 2021 to 35,000 in 2022. The Virtual Study Group continued its work

during the summer with only a short break at the end of the year. Lodges returned to face-to-face meetings. A summer school was organized in January on "Spirituality and Self-Transformation — How do we create an opening to renew ourselves and live fully?" It was a beautiful experience after two years with no on-site activity. A winter school on "The Path of the Theosophist" was held in July at the San Rafael Theosophical Center. The National Meeting was held in Río Cuarto on "The Mission of the TS through Time", with attendance from all over the country. Four books were printed in Spanish during the year and one is under publication.

There are three Centres and five Branches in **Bolivia**, carrying out fraternal work focusing on study, research, and dissemination. The National Library was officially inaugurated in September. Most of the books were inherited from Boris de Zirkoff via his disciple, Dora Crespo.

The TS in **Brazil** has 33 Lodges and 24 Study Groups. Despite the restrictions imposed during the pandemic period, virtual work brought satisfactory results in terms of the dissemination of Theosophy and the addition of 82 new members. National and international events were held such as the 41st Theosophical Summer School in a hybrid format on "Karma and Regeneration — Lessons for the Present Moment", as well as the 28th International Theosophical School and a Winter Seminar on "Paths to the Encounter of the Self", both with 139 attending. The virtual format facilitated worldwide participation and access to international speakers with

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live translation. Study groups, meetings, and other events continued mostly online with some Lodges and Study Groups resuming their on-sight meetings. *Sophia* magazine's 94th issue came out after 20 years of circulation. A website is being developed to enable the new theosophical school project.

In **Canada**, the preparatory work for the website, a Facebook page and YouTube channel was done to introduce theosophical teachings to new people and train members all over the country. The Annual General Assembly and Convention were held online. A seminar on A. E. Powell's *The Solar System* was conducted.

In **Chile**, in-person activities resumed for members since September 2021. "Basic Theosophy" courses for newcomers and non-members were conducted. After five classes the attendees had the option of joining the TS. The motto for the year was "Compassion, Inner Work to Life". Commemoration of official TS celebrations was done in-person and online. The three lodges continued their work basing their studies on *First Principles of Theosophy* by Jinarajadasa, *The Key to Theosophy* by HPB, and *The Science of Yoga and Self-Culture* by I. K. Taimni. Some members gave voluntary presentations on different subjects. The national public conference was held in August 2022. A members-only study group was focused on *The Secret Doctrine*. Some members joined the Spanish courses of the School of the Wisdom at Adyar.

The study groups in Bogotá, **Colombia**, broadcast their weekly activities on-

line to other cities. Different theosophical books and subjects were studied. The online activities of the Inter-American Theosophical Federation and Spain were followed. Several introductory courses were held for newcomers, who later became active members of the TS and serious students of Theosophy. Online meetings were held weekly with talks by special lecturers, worldwide TS members, and other spiritual/esoteric societies. The quarterly magazine, *Selección Teosófica*, completed issue #409 and was made available globally. Gabriel Burgos Suarez writes weekly about a topic of interest for the students of Theosophy; 48 texts have been published so far in the *Colombian Theosophical Pamphlet*.

There are four Lodges in **Costa Rica** and despite the pandemic the membership rose by six. The Lodges promoted the study of books, delivery of lectures, and online international memorial day celebrations, facilitating global speakers and attendance. An "Introductory Course on Theosophy" was held online too. A new quarterly magazine, *Sila — Revista costarricense de Teosofía* was born and two issues were published.

Though studies in Lodges and other onsite activities in **Cuba** were affected, interchange of information and theosophical studies continued via WhatsApp groups, Facebook, and some in-person activities could also be held. The online quarterly, *Revista Teosófica Cubana*, was published without interruption. The Annual Convention was held in January on "The Yoga of Beauty". Official commemora-

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tions of the TS were celebrated. The Summer School was held in July, on the theme, “Returning to the Great Sources”. The studies were suspended during the month of August and each Lodge offered a public conference about different theosophical teachings on Saturdays. In August a special celebration honoured the 70th anniversary of of Lodge Devenir.

Members in the **Dominican Republic** participated in the commemoration of the official dates with the Inter-American Theosophical Federation. About 40 students attended the online introductory and advanced courses in Theosophy offered using the Socratic methodology. In November, Gabriel Burgos gave a talk, “Life After Death”. Seminars were held on “The Keys of Inner Knowledge” and “The Awakening of the Consciousness” in October. “The Maturity of the Soul: Fulfilling the Purpose of Life” was facilitated by Isaac Jauli and Enrique Reig. Weekly Healing Rituals were performed. Construction of a center for theosophical study was started in October on land donated by a family of Theosophy students.

The **Mexican** Section has 12 lodges and 4 study groups which meet once a week. Thrice a week, two Lodges and a study group hold public talks. Intense work on dissemination of Theosophy was done via the <sociedadteosofica.mx> website, two Facebook pages, <teosofia.blavatsky> and <teosofiamx>, and three YouTube channels, Teosofia en México, Sección Mexicana de la Sociedad Teosófica, and Sociedad Teosófica en México. Also, the magazines, *Teotlsofia*,

Dharma, and *Duda* were published.

The two lodges in **Peru** conducted their studies, celebration of important days, and public talks online. Sixteen public talks were held during the year. Two courses were offered: “Basic Course of Theosophy” in November and “Basis of Esoteric Philosophy” from February to April.

Most meetings in **Puerto Rico** were held online. The Agency offers a Sunday conference on varied themes related to Theosophy. The Lodges studied *The Seven Dimensions of Man* by Pablo Sender and *Self-Culture* by I. K. Taimni. Members also participated online, in seminars by Gaspar Torres Martinez from Krotona and the Inter-American Theosophical Federation.

In the **United States**, there were many discussions about the best options to expand outreach and achieve goals among the Section, Lodge and study centre leaders. In-person meetings have resumed along with the online option. Speeches, lectures, workshops, classes over a month, study groups, and so on have gone online, some streamed on YouTube, adding up to about 5,000 participants during the year. The AV department produced about 185 new video programs on Theosophy and related subjects, available through the website, YouTube channel, Facebook page, and Vimeo channel. The TSA site <archive.org> had almost 30,000 hits and <Theosophy.wiki> had around 40,000 page views per month by 15,000 users. A data storage tape library was implemented to store backups of all documents in the Section. The Olcott Memorial

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Library reopened to the public in September. *Quest* magazine carries articles focusing on theosophical content, and Section activities. TPH in Wheaton produced 16 audiobooks available through Amazon/Audible. The Prison Program continued with over 500 completions since its inception.

The Branches in **Uruguay** studied *The Secret Doctrine* and *Principles of Learning* by J. Krishnamurti. Regular video exhibitions and group discussions were done. A shared, online library with Spanish books and magazines was maintained. No public conferences were organized, and members were invited to attend conferences organized by the Inter-American Federation and other Spanish-speaking countries. The Association continued to focus on three lines of activity: collection of tickets for donating wheel-chairs, collection of plastic caps to donate to animal shelters, and Chi Kung classes for a healthier and more comprehensive life.

In **Venezuela** the lodges meet weekly and half an hour of meditation for peace is held in every meeting. The two Study Centres studied the following books online every week: *The Bhagavadgītā* by Annie Besant and Swami Vivekananda, *Quantum Physics and Emotions* by Ana Belén López Solano, *The Mahabharata*, and *The Secret Doctrine*.

In the **ASIA-PACIFIC** region, **East and South-East Asia** consists of four countries: Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and Myanmar. Although there is no physical presence in China, it is the area

of greatest growth as a result of dissemination by the **Singapore** Lodge. It had weekly Lodge meetings and conducted “A Course in Theosophy” twice last year for popularizing Theosophy and the induction of new members. The Lodge was focused on a Chinese website, a public blog, Asia Theosophy, with over 1,000 followers, a Facebook account, an online bookstore, book translation, and video lectures in Chinese and Chinese subtitling. “A Course in Theosophy” was broadcast in Chinese. The Selangor Lodge in **Malaysia** was open every Saturday to members and the public. Members took part in online meetings of the Philippines.

The second half of 2021 in **Australia** was still severely affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. In 2022 there was a new sense of optimism and a gradual revival of activities across the Lodges, Branches, and Groups. The Australian membership, including the many volunteers involved in committees and subcommittees have striven to keep the mission of our Society alive and well despite the many challenges of the past two years. In April 2022, the first School of Theosophy since 2019 was conducted at the Springbrook Retreat Centre in Queensland. Linda and Pedro Oliveira presented the classes, which contemplated selected verses from *The Voice of the Silence*. Planning for the annual Australian Convention to be held at St Mark’s College at the University of Adelaide in January 2023 is underway. This will be the first national Convention to be held since 2020.

The book, *The Practice of Theosophy*

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in Bangladesh, was published in October 2020. Some members of the TS in **Bangladesh** joined the online activities of Adyar, the Philippines, India, and others. The Lodges in Bangladesh organized joint meetings of the members.

Admission fees and annual dues from members were abolished in **India** to encourage youth membership. The evolution of online communication during Covid-19 enabled around 132 programs such as lectures, discussions, seminars, and so on, and better attendance, especially from young members. The publishing of the monthly *Indian Theosophist* was started in the Hindi language also, increasing the readership in north India. The Dr Radha Burnier Award for “Theosophist of the Year” went to U. S. Pandey, President of UP & Uttarakhand Federation. The 130th National Convention was held online last December presided by Dr Deepa Padhi and inaugurated by me. Dr Annie Besant’s 174th birth anniversary was celebrated in October 2021 with Linda Oliveira speaking on “Annie Besant and the Way of the Warrior”. The second annual “Dr Radha Burnier Lecture” was done by Dr Deepa Padhi also in October on “Radha Burnier and Practical Theosophy”. The North India Study Class was organized online for three days also in October with me speaking on “Personality and the Inner Life: Tuning the Soul’s Instrument”. The 146th Foundation Day was celebrated online last November on “Wisdom: The Inspiration of Founder’s Challenge”. Adyar Day was observed on-line in February on “Theosophy and

Truth”. The 98th Easter Conference was held in April on “From the Known to the Unknown”. White Lotus Day was observed in May. There were no in-person workshops or study classes. The Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali, could conduct only two camps during summer due to travel restrictions. The Young Indian Theosophists Group organised 50 online sessions. Adyar Day was celebrated in February. The website <theosophy-india.org> gives Section information and details of upcoming programmes. The TOS rendered services directly to needy communities this year. Voluntary work was better than earlier years. Both physical and online events were conducted.

All the events of the TS in **Indonesia** continued via online.

In **New Zealand**, there were meetings focused on exploring Theosophy, Science, and Meditation themes. The annual convention was replaced by online seminars, every Sunday from January to April and June to July, with several international presenters, on “Science and the Ancient Wisdom/Theosophy”. The School of Theosophy was held in August on “Exploring Meditation Practice and the Science of Self Realization”. Immersion Weekends happened in September on “Everything Arises and Everything Passes”. Branch seminars focusing on core areas of Theosophy continued. Several members received scholarships to attend national events. “Theosophy in Today’s World”, an online course comprising seven short video lessons exploring theosophical perspectives, was available free : <udemy.com>.

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TPH, Auckland, published *Initiates, Initiations, and the Path, Bible Allegories Unveiled*, and *Poems of Bliss*, all by Geoffrey Hodson and *Mystical Christianity*, an ebook on Theosophy World. *Theosophia* continued to be popular worldwide.

The Philippine National Convention was held online in November, on “Living the Theosophical Life in the World Today”. The THEOxSophia talks started in February and take place every month, with short talks followed by discussions. The TOS meets monthly to inspire and exchange ideas in the service area. Regular online joint Lodge meetings continued monthly with international participation. There were FreeSpace Youth Center activities, monthly guided meditations, and community yoga too. The Russian Wisdom School included speakers from the Philippines with translation into Russian. Some Lodges also conducted online activities. Regular issues of *The Theosophical Digest*, *The Philippine Theosophist*, and *Peace Ideas* continue to be published. The Singapore Lodge was given license to print a few Geoffrey Hodson books. Online classes change to in-person next year. Service activities like feeding programs and calamity assistance continued. The propagation work continued via the website, Facebook, and YouTube.

In **EUROPE**, the three Lodges in **Austria** offered weekly lectures on subjects based on classical theosophical teachings and related subjects. Lectures are regularly placed on the TS Austria website. In July–August some members attended the summer school of the German TS (Hartmann

group). They also get the German *Adyar* magazine published thrice a year.

The Lodges in **Belgium** continued publishing newsletters and organising meetings, online and in-person. National activities included White Lotus Day, Founders Day, Adyar Day and Annie Besant Day. Study groups discussed works from Besant, Krishnamurti, Taimni, Barboroka, and Aryel Sanat on a regular basis. Healing and peace meditations were conducted in cooperation with Belgian TOS. Dr Barbara Hebert, General Secretary, USA, gave a talk in June on “Theosophy in Action: Dealing with Life’s Difficulties”.

In **England and Wales**, there were 28 online Sunday-evening lectures attracting an average of 50 people, including non-members. Prof. Ravi Ravindra addressed the first actual meeting at the headquarters on the *Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali*. An online monthly Link meditation during full moon was happening since September. The Lodges and Centres continued to hold public meetings and private study groups, some online and some hybrid. The 39th Congress of the European Federation (EFTS) took place after a gap of two years at the University of York on “Healing Oneself, Healing the World”. The three International Officers of the TS participated — Marja Artamaa and Nancy Secrest in person, and I online — as well as delegates from across the world, including young members. The event was live-streamed and can be viewed on YouTube. Another event was the Spring Conference on “Tranquillity and Transformation”. The Trans-Pennine

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Conference took place after a gap of two years entitled “Madame Blavatsky; The Light Bringer”. The newly styled quarterly magazine, *Esoterica*, came out in September.

The main event of the year in **Finland** was the summer school in Kreivilä in July, with Pablo and Michele Sender, USA, on “The Masters of Wisdom and the Path of Discipleship”. The Summer School had guests from Estonia, Sweden, Ireland, and Italy. Other events were a course on “Music, Meditation, and Health” and a symposium, “Love Unites”. In Estonia, the Annual Winter Seminar was held in Tartu in January and the Autumn Study Camp in Aegviidu in August. The international convention was held online.

Members from Finland and Estonia participated in the Youth Gathering at Naarden in June and the European Congress in York. Public lectures continued every Sunday throughout the year excluding the Christmas season. The library was open on Sundays. Young members and friends continued regular meetings in Helsinki and online.

TOS in Finland organized a spring festival to raise funds to support the Olcott Memorial High School, the Social Welfare Centre, and the Boys’ Hostel at Adyar. Tri-weekly Newsletters, a Facebook page, and the quarterly *Teosofi* magazine communicate with members and friends. *The Letters from the Masters of Wisdom, First Series*, by C. Jinarājadāsa, was published in the Finnish language, including audio material on Soundcloud.

In **France** bi-monthly hybrid courses

and online meditation sessions attracted a core of interested participants. Members participated in-person in a silent retreat on “Discovering Happiness through Freeing Oneself of Fear” in April. Founders Day, Adyar Day, and White Lotus Day were celebrated. Online studies with the Belgian and Spanish members on the Mahatma Letters continued. A study group on fundamental theosophical teachings for new members was launched in 2021. National Convention on “How to Grow Spiritually in a Changing World?” took place in June. Online presence includes Facebook, YouTube and weekly e-newsletters. “Editions Adyar” ships theosophical and spiritual books in French globally. The library was opened to the public in October. Their magazine *Le Lotus Bleu* had ten issues.

The Southern and Northern Meetings in **Germany** took place again without Corona. The main event was the Summer School in July with lectures on the First Stanza of Dzyan. The program had many facets: talks on “The Work of Jesus Christ”, “The Pineal Gland — Our Third Eye”, the *Mahabharata* as an example of the causes of war, “The Mysteries of an Afterlife”, and “The Constitution of the Inner Man” by H. P. Blavatsky. Study groups also took place on “The Stanzas of Dzyan” and on “Tarot as the Hero’s Journey — a parable for man’s journey through life”. The magazine, Adyar, is published thrice a year. A special publication of the translated Convention 2021 talks is planned for December 2022.

Till April 2022 only online joint Lodge meetings were held in **Greece**. Since May

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2022 hybrid meetings were held in Athens. The TS official commemoration dates were celebrated online. On White Lotus Day, there were speeches on HPB's life and passages were read from the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *The Light of Asia*. The quarterly magazine, *Ilisos*, is published regularly. Annie Besant's and C. W. Leadbeater's, *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. III, was published in Greek. A new Lodge, Hyperion, was formed in September 2022.

There is one operating Lodge in **Hungary** and monthly meetings are held. They have started disseminating Theosophy in Slovakia and the Hungarian-speaking areas of Romania and Transylvania. The TOS supported the Ukrainian refugees. It also operates a Virtual Healing Group. There were fifteen public lectures. The YouTube video "The Hidden Side of Our World" offers over a hundred lectures and has 2,300 registered members. Three new audiobooks were published. Many contemporary theosophical articles were translated to Hungarian. Information and help was provided to members on building contacts around the world. *Practical Spirituality*, by John Sell, is being published in Hungarian.

Members in **Ireland** had weekly online meetings with study notes, messages, and quotations from inspiring texts. They could join TS programmes online, receive e-magazines, and had access to the regular communications from Adyar, European School of Theosophy, TS in Philippines, Krotona, TS in Ukraine, and the Russian TS. Thirteen new members found the Society through the <theosophy

ireland.com> website. In May the 15th All-Ireland Theosophical Convention on "Thought-Power and its Higher Potential" was held in Dublin.

In-person activities were restarted in **Italy**. The website, <teosofica.org>, attracted many visitors. Presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and so on, was well-structured and informative, including TOS updates. The YouTube channel does live-streaming and host recording of events. The monthly e-newsletter covers 4,500 subscribers. The Young Theosophists' group is active. The TOS promotes projects in Italy, Ukraine, et al. The books published were *Education as Service* by J. Krishnamurti, *Invisible Helpers* by C. W. Leadbeater, and *I Am — Life impersonal* by Joseph Benner. The 107th Congress was held in June in Vicenza on "Theosophy and Spiritual Masters". The Ascona Theosophical Seminary was organized in March, in collaboration with the European Federation and the Swiss Agency on "There Is No Way to Peace; Peace is the Way". Two editions of the introductory course on Theosophy and the TS were organized during 2022 with 70 participants. A recurring event, "Wednesdays with the TS", aiming to improve the contact with the outside world, had the participation of a hundred people over 18 meetings during the year.

The TS in **the Netherlands** works closely with the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden, the "European Home" of the TS. All national activities have been on the theme "Exploring the Powers Latent in Humankind",

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the third Object of the TS, since 2019: “Working with Energies” in October 2021, “Death as Part of Life” in February, and “Life after Death” in April. “The Supernatural” will take place in October. In June the International Seminar was held at ITC Naarden on “Exploring Powers Latent in Humankind” as also the Silent Retreat, “Spiritual Powers in Humankind”, with Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu. The website <theosofie.nl> helps members and general public with information. A bi-monthly newsletter is mailed to more than 1,000 subscribers. In September a special book, *Zijn is (Being Is)*, by Jaap Vos, artist and graphic designer, was published. *Theosofia*, the quarterly magazine, has articles and activity summaries of Lodges and centres.

In **Norway**, Stroemmen, the local group, and Dharma Lodge held a lecture series related to the course programme from “Theosophical World Resource Centre”, divided into twelve lectures. There are some individual members too. Some of the studied topics included the Three Objects of the TS, the Constitution of Man, John of the Cross, Sacred Geometry in Dreams, Reincarnation, Death and After Death, and The Upanishads.

The traditional commemorative days were celebrated in **Portugal** and regular fortnightly activities continued both online and in-person by Lodges and Study Groups. These sessions included traditional public talks, panel discussions, and group discussions on a wide variety of themes. The website continues to be a good reference for interested persons.

A regular newsletter was published and social networks used to reach the larger public.

An all-**Russian** online lecture series continued successfully with 51 meetings during the year, including 10 with international speakers. It began with a project called “Reading H. P. Blavatsky’s Articles Together”. A meeting was held with TS Ukraine themed “On the Way to Peace” in April, showing concern about the war. The 10th All-Russian Theosophical Conference was held in April. The weekly online meditation course “Theosophy and Life” continued. A new monthly project, “Musical Meditations”, with classical music and elements of astrology was started. The Russian translation of *The Theosophist* magazine is published regularly. In July “Wisdom School 2022”, a joint event with TS in the Philippines was held, dedicated to the Gurus of Humanity and the Spiritual Way. The Theosophical Forum in Smolensk had a Nature summer camp in June. The first theosophical meeting in Moscow was dedicated to the New Year. In November 2021 the National Congress was held on “The Importance of Theosophical Fellowship”. Over 400 new videos were uploaded to the channel <youtube.com/Theosophy>. Other social networks include Facebook, Vkontakte (Russian version of Facebook), and Telegram.

The membership in **Scotland** remained constant despite challenges. Public meetings were resumed and attendance at public meetings became normal in response to a varied and interesting programme covering subjects related to Theosophy such as “Quantum Physics

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and Human Consciousness”, “The Spiritual Dimension to Performance Art, Astrology, Alchemy, Sacred Geometry”, and “The Powers Latent Within”.

Slovenia, with 4 Lodges and 2 Study Centres, continued their work online so that members from all Lodges could attend the 32 meetings which were held. All Memorial Days were celebrated online viz., Annie Besant’s birthday, Foundation Day and Adyar Day. The White Lotus Day celebration was the first opportunity for the members to meet physically. The magazine *Theosophical Thought* is now in digital format and the website is <teozofskodrustvo.si>.

In **Spain**, basic courses were conducted and texts made available in Spanish. Several Branches combined study with meditation and retreats. The TOS did active service. Annual activities included silent retreat, Iberian days, and summer school. The 15th Silent Retreat was held online in December with 75 participants on “The Secret Keys to Spiritual Growth”. The Iberian Days (Jornadas ibéricas) were hosted by Portugal in April, on “Who Are We?” with a hundred participants from Portugal, Spain and other Sections. Their Section’s centenary was celebrated during the Summer School with 70 in attendance.

The free quarterly magazine, *Tidlös Visdom* (Timeless Wisdom), continued in **Sweden**. Activities included study groups, lectures, member gatherings, and commemorations of international TS dates. The summer school was held near Stockholm on “To Live in the Now”. The

bookshop in Stockholm operates thrice a week with a summer break. The Facebook group and the website, <teosofiska samfundet.se>, continue to be active, as well as the new YouTube channel. The Section supports a school project in Goa, India, called “Mango Tree”, for children from the slums.

The European Theosophical Seminar in Ascona, **Switzerland**, was held after a gap of two years on “There Is No Way to Peace. Peace is the Way” in March, partnering with Italy. Lectures, discussions, and a Q&A session were presented. Internet activities include articles on *Ticino’s* blog/magazine <teosofia.ch>, Facebook <facebook.com/groups/teosofi/>, and Twitter <twitter.com/teosofia_ch>. The Italian theosophical magazine and the books, *The Fire of Creation* (Van der Leuw) and Annie Besant’s *The Discipleship Trail* were distributed free. The Groups met weekly online and have resumed monthly in-person meetings. Books such as *Self-Culture* by Taimni and J. Krishnamurti’s *The First and Last Freedom*, among others, were studied.

In spite of the war, theosophical work continued in **Ukraine**. All Branches held meetings and classical theosophical literature was studied. In November, the 18th National Convention on “Cycles of Awareness” took place online. “Herald of Light Day”, the 191st birth anniversary of HPB, was celebrated in August. From October to March the lectures, “Ancient Wisdom for the Curious”, were uploaded on YouTube. The Facebook page, active since 2016, has over 2,000 subscribers.

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A School of Lecturing Skills was started to encourage young lecturers and improve existing lecturers of the Society. A new Telegram social network was established to attract more audience. Scientific Group was active during the year. Two issues of the bilingual (Ukrainian-English) e-magazine *Theosophy and Science* were published. The e-magazine, *Svitoch*, had six issues. An e-newsletter and the website, <theosophy.in.ua>, continue. A joint project with Russian theosophists for the translation into Russian and e-publication of *The Theosophist* continues. TOS activities included assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons, residents of territories liberated from occupation, children, disabled people, the wounded in hospitals, and animals. Weekly healing rituals are conducted, as also a weekly specially designed ritual to help the souls of the people killed in the war. A group for psychological help works via Telegram. Group meditation is also held.

At the **International Headquarters** in Adyar, the **Adyar Library and Research Centre** has a long history of Eastern and Western cultural studies and research in philosophy, science, religion, and art. Fulfilling the vision of Col. Olcott, its founder, the Centre hosts a collection of magnificent, old palm-leaf manuscripts. Currently, the main activity is digitizing and enabling easy access to scholars. *Brahma-vidyā — The Adyar Library Bulletin*, vols. 85 and 86, and Adyar Library Series nos. 129 to 134 were published during the year, 1,000 books were accessed and catalogued, and 1,200 books

were added to the collection. Providing access to document copies via post was started. Homage was paid to Mrs Parvati Gopalaratnam, former Librarian, who passed in August.

About 162 students in the **Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA)** from Nursery to Grade 5 were back with much enthusiasm in the campus, transitioning from online to in-person class work. A priority was maintaining the connection with Nature, as an integral part of school life and attending various workshops. Celebration of Learning was the first major event. Grades 1 to 4 showcased their learning in geography, art, history, environmental conservation, ecology, languages, and nutrition, enthralling visitors by their confidence and ease. Guests picked up several copies of the Zentangle Birds Calendar, Nature Journal Log, a collection of poetry titled “Rhythm, Rhyme, and Reason”, all done by the students. The new academic year (2021-2022) began in January by celebrating the school’s third birthday, being held on campus for the first time. The festivities took place under the Banyan tree with a recital of poems, a special birthday song in Tamil, and a dance performance. On India’s 75th Independence Day, students put together a number of performances including a mime on the freedom movement and a song on what the term freedom means. A number of field trips, a student exchange program, interactions on waste management, soil health, and composting were other highlights of the student experience. The Academy is building classrooms

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for Grades 5 and 6 for the coming year.

Though the **Blavatsky Museum** remained closed, the “Dr Maria Montessori Collection” was revised and rearranged for occasional visitors. A long-felt need was satisfied with a collection of digitized texts and catalogues offering greater insight into the displayed items which include the Mughal and Rajput paintings, and the Indian Renaissance canvasses, all from the Venkatachalam Collection. More research on them is on the cards.

The Olcott Education Society (OES) continues to support the following activities: At the **Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School** the 75th Indian Independence Day was celebrated by distributing prizes to the toppers in the 2021 public examination. Sixth graders went to see the parade of vehicles at the Light House in Chennai. Class 12 students were given career guidance by students from Jain College. Awards were presented to seven talented students recognized at the South Indian level in the areas of martial art, memory, and dance. A software program, MI Kids, that improves students’ ability to speak and read reopened in February after Covid-19. It catered to 35 children, who were given food and taught rhymes, the alphabet, picture colouring, etc. Parents were apprised of children’s safety and hygiene. **The HPB Hostel** was open in December and on a regular basis from June, with 10 students of the School. The Hostel was shifted closer to the School for their safety and close monitoring. Breakfast and dinner were provided by the hostel. **The Vocational Training**

Centre reopened in March. New admissions were done in June and classes resumed. The 12 new students from poor backgrounds were taught cutting, tailoring, embroidery, and so on. Emblem bags were made for Convention use.

For prospective students of the **School of the Wisdom**, a set of suggested reading material is available on the TS website in English and Spanish: “The School of the Wisdom” by Jinarājādāsa and Radha Burnier, “An Unending Path” by me, “Freedom of Thought and Freedom of Society”, “Freedom of Thought: Is it Essential?” by Linda Oliveira, “Why Freedom of Thought?” by Pedro Oliveira, “What is Truth?” by H. P. Blavatsky, and others. During the year, all activities were organized online with free attendance. Though programmes were meant for members, around 10% of non-members attended. There were seven courses in English, each with six to eight classes of two hours each. In October 2021 Linda and Pedro Oliveira conducted classes on “*The Voice of the Silence*: Inner Preparation for the Bodhisattva Path.” Ven. Olande Ananda Thera talked on “Mindfulness in Daily Life” in November, and conducted a 3-month meditation class on “Keep on Being”. In January, P. Krishna spoke on “Right Living in Modern Society”. Vic Hao Chin gave classes on “An Introduction to the Ageless Wisdom” in July. Radha Raghunathan taught “The Fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta” in two parts during August-September.

The Spanish classes started in February with Esteban R. Langlois conducting

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classes on “Theosophy in its Sources: the Great Teachings of Esoteric Philosophy through the Religions and Philosophies of Antiquity”. In March, Ricardo Lindemann taught “Yoga-Sutra as the Science of Self-Knowledge”. Finally, Juliana Cesano gave a three-month meditation class focusing “Meditation: Why and How According to Different Traditions”. Joma Sipe, from Portugal, designed a beautiful completion certificate for students attending 80% of the classes, and explained its symbolism. A worldwide team worked to update the website, manage the student list, organize translators, and hosting, make the banners, and so on.

During the last Convention in December 2021, the **Surendra Narayan Archives** made a presentation on “Adyar Archives — One Hundred Precious Years”. The rich history of the Archives was narrated using visual media. In February, during the anniversary meeting, two of Fritz Kunz’s rare audio recordings were played for the audience. About 93 spool tapes have been digitised for sharing worldwide. Enquiries and requisitions were received from around twenty scholars for documents and photographs.

The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) is present in 36 of the 59 countries where the TS is active and has several outreach avenues. The links international.theoservice.org and facebook.com/tosinternational provide information. Though physical meetings have resumed online talks and meetings continued due to their convenience. Ironically, this has allowed us to reach many more people than localized, physical programs did. TOS online programs were presented by India, the Philippines, Argentina, the USA, Ukraine and Adyar. The major area of activity this year was the assistance to refugees from Ukraine. The outpouring of help, good wishes and financial support was overwhelming. Assistance was also given to flood victims in the Assam region in India. The TOS India set up a Young Theosophists TOS group in Odisha region and opened a charity shop there. Assistance with various women’s issues, educational and scholarship efforts and youth involvement remain central issues for many groups worldwide. Most are also active in animal welfare. Almost all countries have healing groups.

TIM BOYD

Perfection is not the prize in a race where we compete for the winning; it is a prize that belongs to every one of us sooner or later, earlier or afterwards, according to our will and our effort; but sure alike for us is that perfection that shines above our heads today. We also will accomplish it and share it; and then to a younger, an infant humanity, we will bring the strength of conscious divinity, and feed it with the bread of life.

Annie Besant, “The Ideals of Theosophy”, Lecture delivered at the 36th TS Annual Convention, Varanasi, India, 30 December 1911

Universal Brotherhood: The Need of the Hour

DEEPA PADHI

IN the hymns of the *Rigveda* one finds the concept of Universal Brotherhood:

Let us move together,
Let us come to know our minds
together,
Let us share like sages of the past,
That all individuals together may enjoy
the Universe.
Unite our intentions,
Let our hearts be inseparable,
Our minds as one Mind,
As we truly know one another,
Become One.

Universal Brotherhood is the key concept of Theosophy and forms the first Object of the Theosophical Society (TS). It is best expressed in the Universal Prayer composed by Dr Annie Besant, the second international President of the TS. If one understands this prayer in its true sense, one realises Universal Brotherhood. The last two sentences of the prayer read:

May each who feels himself as one with
Thee,
Know he is therefore one with every other.

Here, “Thee” refers to the One Divine

Source, Consciousness, the one source from which everything emerges. That one absolute Consciousness is the originating point and the culminating point of all beings and things.

We know we are not physical bodies having souls or consciousness, but consciousness having physical bodies. I am a soul or consciousness, so are you, and so is everyone. Therefore, in this sense, there is no “other”. The *Maha Upanishad* states:

*ayam bandhurayam neti
gananā laghuchetasām
udāracharitānām tu
vasudhaiva kutumbakam*

This means, “this is my friend, the other is not”, which is the thinking of a narrow-minded person. For those who are magnanimous, the whole world is but one big family.

What scientists were talking about as the global village in the 20th century, our ancient sages had believed millennia ago, as one cosmic family.

In 1880, Mahatma Koothoomi wrote:

The term “Universal Brotherhood” is no

Dr Deepa Padhi is international Vice-President of the TS and President of the TOS, Odisha Region, India. Excerpt from her “Radha Burnier Memorial Lecture”, slightly modified and condensed, delivered at the 131st National Convention of the Indian Section at Varanasi on 21.10.2022.

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idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us. . . . It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for humankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*. (*The Mahatma Letters*, ML-4)

Madame H. P. Blavatsky has said: “It is because there is one soul common to all men [and women], that brotherhood . . . is possible. Bring men [people] to rest on that, and they will be safe.” It was her belief that there is a divine power or consciousness in every man which rules his life.

Krishna says in the *Bhagavadgītā*: “There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me, O Dhananjaya. All this is strung in Me, as clusters of gems on a string.” (7.7) There lies an inherent bonding of divine kinship among human beings, among all other living creatures, like animals, plants, and inanimate things like earth, water, air, minerals, and so on. If this brotherhood is accepted universally, most of our social evils, global conflicts, and crises will disappear. Diversity is the essence and beauty of life. We are spiritually one but physically many and different.

At present we are living in such a globalized world that, in one day, one can have breakfast in one country, lunch in another country, and dinner in still another. Through the advancement of science and technology, the world has become a global village. But unfortunately, in spite of globalization, war, terrorism, racism, gender inequality, envi-

ronmental imbalance, and pandemics are the major challenges facing the whole world today.

The Russia-Ukraine war is a burning example that even with the advancement of science and technology, people are fighting each other knowing fully well the dreadful global consequences. Each one of us is responsible for such wars, misery, destruction, and disharmony that take place because of our greed, competitiveness, and hunger for power. Why is this happening? Because we are doing what we should not be doing. Humanity is now facing the “Duryodhana (of the *Mahabharata*) Syndrome”. Duryodhana expresses his weakness by saying: “I know what is good and right (*dharma*), but I have no inclination for it. I know what is bad and wrong (*adharma*), but cannot resist it.”

At present, most people are suffering from this syndrome because they have become spiritually bankrupt. People in general do not know who they are, where they have come from, where they want to go, and how they should interact and behave with others in this interconnected world. It is high time, they are aware of all these and learn how to live globally and peacefully with others. Theosophy is the right knowledge (Ageless Wisdom) and the Theosophical Society is the right forum to impart this knowledge to spiritually ignorant people.

First of all, we have to accept the fact that there is diversity in Nature’s creations and we need to discover unity in diversity. Everyone has their own way of living.

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From a practical standpoint, we have no right to judge a person on the basis of their attire, the way they look, the way they speak, the way they live their life. One should not have any problems with persons who are in a living-in relationship, gays, or transgenders. They too are human beings and have the right to live in this world as per their choice as long as they do not harm others. We have no right to judge them. Similarly, people from different religious beliefs have their own ways of living and doing rituals and prayers. We should not say anything negative about them. We need to accept others as they are. Acceptance and tolerance are essential qualities for peaceful co-existence.

Theosophy speaks of the need for human beings to rise above humanity and extending fellowship to plants, animals, even to the inanimates, because every created thing and being partakes of the same essence — the Universal Consciousness. We should know that all things and beings in the universe are interconnected and interdependent. However small and insignificant they may be, they should not be ignored. If a tiny ant meets a premature death, it will disturb the balance of the entire cosmos. All living forms in Nature live by collaboration, cooperation, accommodation, and exchange. Our happiness and peace is interconnected with that of others.

Recently the Covid-19 pandemic taught the world that one cannot remain safe if others are at risk. The coronavirus

outbreak in the city of Wuhan, initially infected eighty-thousand people, but more than 228 countries got affected and six-hundred million people were in isolation in their homes due to the disease. Because of the interconnectedness, the whole world suffered from the dreaded disease. At the same time, because of the feeling of brotherhood, people survived through the invention of vaccines and the untiring effort of doctors, and health and frontline workers. Disasters and pandemics often remind us that we all belong to one planet as brothers and sisters.

The Law of Karma also has a role in brotherhood, as it proves that one cannot harm another without harming oneself. We need to be conscious of our thoughts, words, and actions, so that we do not create negative Karma through them. Sometimes the question arises regarding how to know the difference between good and bad Karma. To me, good Karma is that which is created when we do good to others or help others selflessly, and bad Karma is that which is created when we do harm or hurt others directly or indirectly for some selfish purpose.

All our external crises are nothing but different facets of the fundamental inner crisis, which, as Fritjof Capra says, is “a crisis of perception”, and therefore needs a change in our vision, thought, and values. What is this crisis of perception? It is the narrow and wrong belief of the individual about himself and the world around him. For example, out of arrogance, human beings think that they are

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the highest creation having intelligence, and that other life forms exist only for their enjoyment. This is an erroneous perception. And with this perception and belief, man has been exploiting Nature for his own interest to maximise his comforts, luxuries, and pleasures of life.

In the present scenario, we feel the need of Universal Brotherhood more because of the increase in social evils like violence against women and children, religious intolerance, wars, and so on. Similarly, there should not be any man-made division between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, higher and lower social status, and so forth. All should be treated alike, as we are all essentially one. It is high time that we change our narrow, individual perceptions, thoughts, and values.

Often a question arises: Can universal brotherhood be attained? I would say, yes. Transformation of an individual at the inner level can transform society on a larger scale. Therefore, we must focus on our own self. This should start with ourselves as individuals, and our families. It should manifest in every action of ours in relation to other members of our family. Gradually we need to expand ourselves, our consciousness, to include our neighborhood, then our countrymen, then the whole of humanity, and ultimately embrace the whole of Nature, animate and inanimate. It will be an

awakening to the experience of interconnectedness.

Man is a part of the whole cosmic order which runs by its own dynamics. Being intelligent, man has to serve the whole, both animate and inanimate, because by serving the whole, the part is taken care of. The whole does not get meaning from the parts but, the parts get meaning from the whole.

Therefore, to think and care for the so-called “others” is to think and care for oneself. We can have a peaceful life if only we allow others to live in peace. In other words, “live and let live” should be the guiding principle for our day-to-day life in the present times.

With the development and advancement of science and technology in the material world, if people cultivate, at the same time, spiritual values within themselves like altruism, compassion, love, empathy, tolerance, acceptance, and so on, then there will be peaceful co-existence of all living forms and Universal Brotherhood can be achieved. Humanity cannot be served without cultivating these virtues.

This is what the Mission Statement of the TS aims at, as approved by its General Council: “To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life.” ✧

The beauty of genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds, or silver, or gold.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Hidden Side of *The Theosophist* — II

MARY K. NEFF

HE [Master Morya] fills two pages with answers to three correspondents: “J. K.”, “Mr Joseph Wallace”, and “Miss Chandos Leigh Hunt (Mrs Wallace)”. A summary of the first will illustrate:

“J. K.” — Your letter headed, “Under which ‘adept’ Theosophist?” will not be published, for the following reasons:

1. Personal abuse of the editor, however amusing to the latter, does not interest the general reader.
2. Our journal is not concerned with, and carefully avoids everything of a political character; therefore such vilification as a low and vulgar abuse of Russia . . . cannot find room in its columns.
3. For that same reason, we must decline to allow the author of “The Adeptship of Jesus Christ” to soothe his ruffled feelings by expatiating upon “the political object” of the Theosophical Society.
4. British and American laws having provided against the violation of the postal enactments intended to secure the purity of the mails, the Journal would risk paying the penalty for sending indecent matter by

book-post. The coarse paragraph in the said article . . . comes directly under that law.

5. THE THEOSOPHIST, devoted to Oriental Philosophy, Art, Literature, Occultism, Mesmerism, Spiritualism and other sciences, has not pledged itself to reproduce burlesque parodies or circus-clown poetry.

6. THE THEOSOPHIST publishes only articles written and sent by *gentlemen*.

Another “Brother” who sometimes took part in the work of THE THEOSOPHIST was Djwal Khul, then an Initiate, now a Master. The December 1881 issue had reviewed Wm. Oxley’s *Philosophy of Spirit*; and in March 1882, Mr Oxley replied in a letter to the Editor, on which Master KH remarks:

The article is penned by the Manchester seer — Oxley. Having received no reply to his summons to KH, he criticizes — mildly so far — the utterances of that “Internal Power”, for which new title I feel rather obliged to him. At sight of the gentle rebuke, our blunderbuss Editor failed not to explode. Nor would she be soothed until Djwal Khul, with whom the famous

Ms Mary K. Neff (7 Sep. 1877–10 Dec. 1948) was a long-term member of the TS in America, a lecturer, and historian. After teaching for 15 years in Akron, Ohio, USA, she traveled in India, learning Hindi and Urdu, followed by 8 years in Australia. Originally published in *The Theosophist*, Oct. to Dec. 1923 issues.

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review was concocted, (one by the way which, seen by you, ought never to have been permitted to see the day by you), was authorised, under the safe *nom de plume* of “Reviewer”, to answer (by correcting some of his blunders) the Seer, in a few innocent footnotes.¹

1. “What says that living Representative, Koot-Hoomi (whether a mortal man or an Internal Power matters not for my present purpose)?”

2. Of the bits which “ought never to have been permitted to see the day”, perhaps these are two:

“Even the name of the living Koot-Hoomi, a purely Aryan, Samskr̥t name, and one moreover mentioned at length in the ‘Padma Purana’, which gives it as one of the thirty-six R̥shis who were the authors of Sm̥rti, was for a considerable time regarded as a non-Aryan name . . . And people who refuse to believe even in a *living* man, their own countryman, unless that man exhibits himself for their delectation in the *maidans* and *bazaars*, are still less likely to open their arms to a ‘Mahatma’ of Western origin, who, to boot, controls an English medium . . .”

“The suggestion that the *Mahābhārata* might prove to be the last Book of the Wars of Jehovah, as reference in the Hebrew Scriptures, ‘where a Book or Books which are not found in the Canon’ is distinctly made in Numbers XXL, 14, is novel and might prove to contain more truth than is now generally supposed.”

But the matter did not end with these “innocent footnotes”. In the May issue

Mr T. Subba Row reviewed Oxley’s book “from the Esoteric and Brāhmanical standpoint”, and Mr Oxley, when replying to this second review, made the rather astounding statement in the September 1882 issue:

For instance, I have had three visits by the astral form of the venerable Koot Hoomi, through a sensitive whose linguistic organism was used by the astral form to speak to me, first in Bengali and then in my own language. On the last occasion, I enquired, “Are you conscious of your connection with your physical organism, which I presume is now in India; because in your last visit you said that if you could succeed in maintaining the consciousness all the way back, then certain results would follow? My reason for asking this question is this: an account is recorded of the visit you made to Mr Eglinton,² and that this was in accordance with pre-arrangement, and the evidence seems to point to the conclusion that you were conscious at both ends of the line.”

The reply was: “In my first visit I was not successful; in the second hardly more so; and in the present one it is still doubtful.”

“How so? Is it more difficult in a subjective form to me to maintain a continued consciousness, than it was to project your astral form and *solidify* the same for the time being, when you appeared to Mr Eglinton on board the *SS Vega*?”

The significant answer came: “The two cases are different. In the one case, it was a matter of *efflux*, and in the present it is one of *influx*.” And then followed an expla-

nation I need not repeat. The statement may come that this was the work of some vagrant.

There is a footnote appended by Mme Blavatsky as editor:

We feel extremely sorry to acknowledge that Mr Oxley was right in his foreboding. Far from pretending to be informed of all the doings and actions of our venerated Brother Koot-Hoomi, and notwithstanding our surprise — since the language given is certainly not that of the Koot-Hoomi we all know — we were preparing to allow the above extraordinary statement to be published without comment, when we received the following from our Brother’s favourite Chela.

Then follows the Chela’s statement on behalf of Master KH:

I am commanded by my beloved Master, known in India and in the Western lands as Koot-Humi Lal Singh, to make in his name the following declaration, in answer to a certain statement made by Mr Oxley and sent by him for publication. It is claimed by the said gentleman that my Master Koot-Humi

(a) has thrice visited him “by astral form”; and

(b) that he had conversation with Mr Oxley, when, as alleged, he gave the latter certain explanations in reference to astral bodies in general, and the incompetency of his own Māyāvi Rupa to preserve its consciousness simultaneously with the body, “at both ends of the line”. Therefore my Master declares:

1. Whomsoever Mr Oxley may have seen and conversed with at the time described, it was not with Koot-Humi, the writer of the letters published in *The Occult World*.

2. Notwithstanding that my Master knows the gentleman in question, who once honoured him with an autograph letter, thereby giving him the means of making his (Mr Oxley’s) acquaintance, and of sincerely admiring his intuitional powers and Western learning — yet he has never approached him, whether astrally or otherwise; nor has he ever had any conversation with Mr Oxley; nor could he under any circumstances, even had there been such conversation, have expressed himself in the terms now imputed to him.

To guard against all possible misapprehension of this kind in the future, my Master will undertake to hold no communication henceforward with any medium or seer, without authenticating that communication by means of three passwords which shall be made known to Messrs A. O. Hume, President Olcott, and A. P. Sinnett, Vice-President of the Simla “Eclectic Theosophical Society”; so that they may be enabled to declare explicitly that my Master cannot be the author of any statement attributed to him in which they do not find these words,

By order,

GJUAL-KHOOL * * *

One might suppose this precaution unnecessary, that the Masters had naught to do with seers and mediums; but this was not so. True, Master KH says:

In those days, you [Sinnett] were yet

The Hidden Side of *The Theosophist* — II

hesitating to see in Occultism or the “Old Lady’s” phenomena anything beyond a variety of Spiritualism and mediumship. For the first time in my life [toward the end of 1880], I had paid serious attention to the utterances of . . . “media”. . . . M. knew all about them; but since I had never had anything to do with any of them, they interested me very little.³

But on the other hand, in 1883, he declares:

Suffice then for me to say that “Ski” [the “guide” of Mrs Hollis-Billing] has more than once served as a carrier and even a mouthpiece for several of us.⁴

And HPB, on 21 July 1882, writes:

KH and M. and the Chohan say that the Emperor of his [Stainton Moses’s] early mediumship *is* a Brother, and I will assert it over and over again; but assuredly the Emperor of then is not the Emperor of today.⁵

As late as 1884, Master M. gives an amusing and satirical account of a séance which Sinnett attended in Piccadilly, over old S.’s mouldy bookshop; and reminds him of the above pass-words (sic):

Spooks worked remarkably well, nothing abashed by my presence, of which neither W. E[glinton] nor his bodyguard knew anything. My attention was attracted by their forging HPB’s handwriting. Then I put aside my pipe and watched. Too much light for the creatures coming from a Piccadilly street. . . . Poor entranced wretch. . . . His astral ticks fabricated that letter *of mine* through means of their own. . . . As

for all of you, you did not watch very keenly while he was guided to place paper envelope between the leaves of a book and when he laid it upon the table, or you would have seen something very interesting for science. . . . Your memory is not good. Have you forgotten the agreement made at Prayag [Allahabad], and the pass-words [sic] that have to precede every genuine communication coming from us?⁶

In April 1882, a whirlwind burst upon the devoted Theosophical Society (TS). The first great controversy in which the infant TS had engaged took place in America between the Spiritualists and the Theosophists, and as Master KH says:

The battle kept raging hot and fierce to the very day of departure. . . . Ransack the Spiritualistic literature, if you will, till the *year 1877*. Search and find in it, if you can, one single word about occult philosophy, or esotericism. . . . *This* was the first war cry.⁷

The second skirmish took place in India in 1882, when the split occurred between the TS and the Arya Samaj. In America the Founders had been the attacking party, in India they were attacked. It was the alliance with the Samaj that had drawn them to Hindustan, and “Dayanand stamped the movement with the impress of Aryan nationality”;⁸ but it was not destined to last. Of course, the real cause of disruption was the ambition of Swami Dayanand to figure as head of both Societies, and his jealousy of the growing fame of the TS in India; but the ostensible cause, the second “war cry”, was the

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nature of God — Personal God, or Abstract Principle of the Universe; and for some time THE THEOSOPHIST was much concerned with “P.G.” and Dwaitism, or Adwaitism. In this philosophical battle, the Regent of India, Master Jupiter, took up the cudgels for his Society, in an article in the Supplement of the June THEOSOPHIST, entitled “A Mental Puzzle” and signed, “One of the Hindu Founders of the Parent Theosophical Society, Tiruvallam Hills, May 17”. He opens with a very telling contrast of statements made in “the last two numbers of Pandit Dayanand’s organ — *The Ārya* — and abandons them to the readers in the hope that someone may be able to solve this mental puzzle”. The following will serve as specimens:

Ārya of April 1882

The Founders of the Society (our esteemed Brothers and allies) are the first and staunchest champions of the Vedas and the ancient philosophy of Āryavarta.

The Society is the most powerful ally that the Aryan religion and science have at the present time in the West.

Therefore the cause of the TS is the cause of the Arya Samaj, and every insult offered to the former our esteemed Brothers and allies, the Founders of the TS is equally painful to the latter.

Ārya of May 1882

The alliance between the Ārya Samaj and the Theosophical Society has been broken off because the head Theosophists are new converts to Buddhism

and no more for the Vedas. They came to India as students, but have set themselves up as teachers, by establishing a Society of their own (!?) which has proved no practical good to India.

The reader should also know that Swamiji was never a Fellow of the TS (!!!) nor ever expressed a desire to be one. The only relation which he suffered to have been made consisted in his accepting to be their Instructor in the Vedas.



Adyar (circa 1882)

In a footnote all the particulars of the Swāmi’s joining the TS, with dates of his diploma and initiation, are given; also places and times of his public meetings with the Founders and his public speeches supporting the TS. The ground being thus cut away under the feet of this argument, next the philosophical basis of it is shown to be caused by a contradiction of their position on the part of the Samajists, not the Theosophists, in another clever contrast taken from their journal:

The Vedas teach us that our thoughts, words and deeds are the authors of our fate and of our future state. There is no

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stern deity punishing innocents, or an overmerciful one forgiving sinners.

The highest aspiration of a Yogi is God, and they who have no faith in a God, as defined in the Vedas, which contain all the sublime doctrines of Yoga Vidyā, can never become Yogis.

The Master ends his long and telling article with the assertion that:

The PARABRAHM of the Vedantins and the ADI-BUDDHI of the northern Buddhists are identical. Both are Abstract Principles, or *non*-entities, Moksha and Nirvana being their immutable states; hence the re-absorption of the human spark of Parabrahm, or Adi-Buddhi, called by the vulgar “soul” — into the Parent Flame whence it proceeded — an end so eagerly sought for under the synonymous terms of “Moksha” and “Nirvana”.

In THE THEOSOPHIST of October 1881, there had appeared an article on “Death, by (the late) Eliphas Levi”; and in July 1882, Mr D. Khandalavala of Poona, put some questions on seeming discrepancies between the teachings of Levi and those given in *Fragments of Occult Truth*. At the foot of this letter, when it reached the editor at Bombay by post, were the words:

Send this to Mr Sinnett. Having now received all the necessary explanations from me, he will not refuse me the personal favour I now ask him. Let him enlighten his brother-theosophists in his turn, by writing an answer to this for

the next THEOSOPHIST, and sign himself — “A Ley Chela”.

To which HPB added, before sending it on to Mr Sinnett:

And now he [KH] must needs precipitate here too! *Very* much obliged to him anyhow, one trouble less on my shoulders. Found the precipitation on opening the wrapper.⁹

In due course, Mr Sinnett replied to HPB:

I began to try to answer N. D. K[handalavala]’s letter at once, so that if KH really meant the note to appear in this immediately “next” THEOSOPHIST for August, it might just be in time. But I soon got into a tangle. Of course, we have received no information that distinctly covers the question now raised, though I suppose we ought to be able to combine bits into an answer.¹⁰

Evidently he could not “combine bits” satisfactorily; for he returned the MS. to Mme Blavatsky with a postscript:

As you may want to print the letter in this number, I return it herewith, but hope that this may *not* be the case, and that you will send it me back again, so that I may duly perform my little task with the help of a few words as to the line to be followed.¹⁰

And she received it with the humorous stricture:

Why you sent me back the MS. of Khandalavala is more than I can tell. KH says you *do* know and have to know, and that it is only your viciousness that prevents

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you from admitting that you *do* know *but won't* tell. To tell truth, it is not KH who says so, but I know he *must think* so, and that's the same thing. However, he carried it off in *disgust with* you, I feel sure of it. Good Bye.

Nobody's H. P. Blavatsky¹¹

And it was the Master who finalised the matter, as is shown by his remark to Sinnett:

. . . when I wrote for you the materials for your answer to Mr Khandalavala's letter that you had sent back to HPB.¹²

The letter and the answer thus furnished were published in the November issue of 1882, and called "Death Immortality". It is interesting to find that the answer is introduced by three stars in the form of a triangle. When one looks through the early issues of the journal with seeing eyes (as in the case of the folio edition of Shakespeare, knowing the cyphers), secrets are revealed: ∴ for a Master; ∴ for an Initiate; even the degrees of Initiation being sometimes marked, as when in THE THEOSOPHIST of September 1882:

We, the undersigned, the "Accepted" and "Probationary" Hindu Chelas of the HIMALAYAN BROTHERS, their disciples in India and Northern Cashmere, respectfully claim our right to protest against the tone used in the above article and the bold claims of H.X. chela etc.

(Signed)

DEVA MUNI ∴ ∴

PARAMAHAMSA SHUB TUNG ∴ ∴ ∴

T. Subba Row, B.A., B.L., F.T.S. ∴ ∴ ∴
Derbhagiri Nath, F.T.S.

S. Ramaswamier, BA, F.T.S.

Ouala K. Deb, F.T.S.

Nobin K. Bannerjee, F.T.S.

T.T. Gurudas, F.T.S.

Bhola Deva Sarma, F.T.S.

S. T. K. . . . Chary, F.T.S.

Gargya Devi, F.T.S.

Damodar K. Mavalankar, F.T.S.¹³

In August 1882, Master KH wrote to Mr Sinnett:

To reconcile you still more with Eliphas, I will send you a number of his MSS. — that have never been published, . . . with my comments all through.¹⁴

However, the MSS. went instead to Mr Hume, who translated them from the French for THE THEOSOPHIST; for when Mr Sinnett reminded the Master,

Memo: At convenience to send APS those unpublished notes of Eliphas Levi, with annotations by KH,¹⁵

the Master replied:

Sent long ago to our Jakko friend [Hume, of Simla].¹⁶

He later wrote: "In the forthcoming [November] THEOSOPHIST, you will find a note or two appended to Hume's translation of Eliphas Levi's *Preface*, in connection with the lost continent."¹⁷

There are really a number of footnotes attached to the article, which is called "Gleanings from Eliphas Levi: Extracts from the Introduction to the *Dogme de la Haute Magie*". The notes are of great

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interest; for even in such terse form the Master throws a penetrating light into abstruse questions on dim old myths of the Magi, Atlantis, the god Pan, and so on; as an illustration:

Cupid, the god, is the seventh principle, or Brahm of the Vedantins; and Psyche is its vehicle, the sixth principle, or spiritual soul. As soon as she feels herself distinct from her “consort” — and sees him — she loses him. Study the “Heresy of Individuality”, you will understand.

(To be continued)



Initiation in the Eleusian Mysteries
(Wikimedia Commons)

Endnotes

1. *The Mahatma Letters*, pp. 274–5.
2. Not the Master himself, but one impersonating him by his consent and to carry out his purpose — a long and complicated story.
3. *The Mahatma Letters*, p. 426.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
5. *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 22.
6. *The Mahatma Letters*, pp. 431, 432.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 272, 271.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 416.
9. *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 364.
10. *The Mahatma Letters*, pp. 125, 126.
11. *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 28.
12. *The Mahatma Letters*, p. 189.
13. The article referred to is “C. C. M[assey] and *Isis Unveiled*,” by “H.X.” [A. O. Hume], who states, among other opinions, that he considers it a “sin on the Masters not to communicate all the knowledge they possess to the world”. Master

KH says that the names in capitals are those of the confidential chelas of the Chohan himself and that the “Protest” was published by his order.

14. *The Mahatma Letters*, p. 134. Master KH once remarked of Levi’s book: “No wonder you think it cloudy, for it was never meant for the uninitiated reader. Eliphaz studied from the Rosicrucian MSS. (now reduced to three in Europe). These expound our Eastern doctrines from the teachings of Rosencreuz, who, upon his return from Asia, dress them up in semi-Christian garb, intended as a shield for his pupils against clerical revenge. One must have the key to it, and that key is a science per se. Rosencreuz taught orally. St Germain recorded the good doctrine in figures and his only cyphered MS. remained with his staunch friend and patron, the benevolent German Prince from whose house and in whose presence he made his last exit — Home.”

15. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 156
17. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

The Gift of Gratitude

CARY GARDNER

GRATITUDE lies at the heart of the spiritual quest. We must stretch out to the vantage point of the immortal soul to glimpse the gravity. The debt we owe to our preceptors is profound. We should all be devoted children of Mother Earth.

Humanity is on an immense pilgrimage, one that goes back millions of years. There is a trailhead, there are sign posts, campsites, and a destination. We have the sun, moon, and stars to help guide us along the way. But the journey is impossible without guides who have walked this way before. It is for them that we owe the most profound gratitude. Their experience of the journey, the maps they provide, their warnings of danger, the preparatory disciplines, and a clear vision of the goal, all make it possible for humanity to climb toward its evolutionary destination.

There is a joy and lightness for those whose hearts are filled with gratitude. Why is this? Where would we be without parents? What would life be like without friends? Our homes come from the trees and minerals of the earth. Our food comes from the sacrifice of plants and animals that live here with us. Our minds

are enriched by our teachers who make it possible to read, speak, write, calculate, and sing. In fact, there is nothing about us that cannot be linked to a source greater than our personal self. Gratitude awakens joy.

Gratitude is the recognition that each one of us participates in a vast chain of being. A chain of being so pervasive, that it defies description and transcends words. In the light of these connections, to appreciate the contributions of others to one's own life is in a sense a prerequisite to walking the Path. Gratitude and discrimination are the two walking sticks of the Spiritual Path. And with each progressive mile upon the path, gratitude increases, devotion deepens, and the pilgrim soul naturally discovers an ever-expanding sense of the self. One begins to see oneself in others and others in oneself. The spiritual sojourner is drawing a larger circle blurring the lines between what we call "the self" and what we erroneously call "the other". Gratitude is central to this process.

There is another word we use for gratitude which has lost its luster and is widely misused, and that is Love.

Mr Cary Gardner started studying Theosophy in 1974. Since then he has been participating and speaking at several ULT and TS Lodges, and guiding theosophical study sessions from his California home.

The Gift of Gratitude

Gratitude is an expression of love. One of the reasons the heart of gratitude is joyous is because this state of mind signifies a rapport, a union of sorts, between the self and the other. The loathsome mask of separative consciousness has been revealed. How we think of ourselves is critical. Theosophy teaches us: "All that we are is a result of what we have thought." Our evolving conception of the self is central to the alchemy of internal transformation.

We are not our names. We are not our bodies. We are not our likes and dislikes and we are not our selfish desires. We are much much more than this. Persona means mask. We are immortal souls. The soul refers to wholeness, completeness, fullness, and connectedness. When we love, we transcend divisions and move a little closer to the no-ownership sense of the self within. And this is why it is so important to raise our children with a sense of gratitude for all that is given to them. And we can only do this by setting a good example ourselves.

It is with immense love that we are given the teachings concerning walking the Path. Adi Shankara reminds us that the Great and Peaceful Ones, "having crossed the ocean of embodied existence, freely aid all those who seek to cross it". We all know the sacrifices a parent makes in raising a child. The sleepless nights, the skinned knees, the emotional struggles abound. How much more profound are the sacrifices made on our behalf by Spiritual Parents, members of the Guardian Wall, soldiers in the Army

of the Voice to borrow the language of *The Voice of the Silence*. The analogy of parenthood only gives us a glimpse. The Mahatma Letters are very clear on this point. Enormous sacrifices are in order for any real Guru to take on a *chela*, or disciple. For this reason the student must be ready, preconditions have to be met. Our teachers are essentially those who wait.

So, they provide us with the steps that lead to this distant goal of universal self-consciousness. "If you would know us study our philosophy. If you would serve us serve our humanity." This is the invitation. The philosophy of the Wisdom Tradition, of Theosophia, is synthetic, universal, impersonal, and both Imminent and Transcendent. It is both incredibly simple and enormously complex at the same time. But above all it is transformative. We have the *Bhagavadgītā*, The Sermon on the Mount, *The Tao Te Ching*, *The Dhammapada*, *The Golden Verses*, The Golden Rule, the Kaballah, just to name a few. In our cycle we have *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, *Letters That Have Helped Me*, all shedding much needed light upon life's journey. We have much to be grateful for. Much more than we can possibly use in a single lifetime. So, the burden lies with us and not our teachers.

If we have oriented our thought and directed our mind to appreciate what we have been given, we cannot help but feel overwhelmed. It is natural to want to give back, to make a contribution, to stand up and be counted. This mental

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posture, if sustained, leaves little room for the petty desires of the personal consciousness. Gratitude erodes the coarseness of selfish desire. It dismantles separateness. When we do the math we cannot fully reciprocate the kindness, there is too much to account. So, we pay it forward as best we can, seeking out those who need encouragement, a smile, a hand all along the way, knowing full well that our work in this regard is a fledgling effort to say thank you for what we ourselves have been given.

If our heart aches for the pain and suffering of our fellow man there is no shortage of ways to serve. Service takes a multitude of forms, but for the student of Theosophy service always includes high ideas, noble ideals, purified motivations. The life-changing ideas of Theosophia are difficult to share if they are not reflected in our conduct. They are best shared not so much by words but by embodiment.

Why do we respect the work of the Mother Teresas, Mohandas Gandhis and Martin Luther Kings of this world? Because they made every effort to embody the very ideas they espouse. The people in our lives who have made the most profound influences are generally those people of integrity who live by what they say. It is important to note that noble heroes and great teachers never claim infallibility. The wisest amongst us readily admit to error. Nevertheless a cynical world hungers for noble examples of humility, selflessness, and magnanimity.

The Voice of the Silence exquisitely

states: “So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.” We are on the path together. We can learn so much from each other. We can gain so much encouragement from each other. We owe a debt of gratitude to our fellow students as well as to our teachers. The good works of our sisters and brothers in the noble theological task of making this world a better place should inspire us to do better and to do more.

So today we take the time to show our gratitude. Devotion is rooted in gratitude. And if we are wise we will take the time every day and eventually every moment to be grateful. It should become a way of life, a mental posture of the soul, signs of a life well lived. We should lean into the idea of gratitude. Although it may seem simple, gratitude is the light that leads the Teacher to the student, the student to the Teacher.

Gratitude is a state of grace, a rapport and a communion with the Self within. The Teacher is not really outside of us — that is an illusion we are taught — but in a mysterious way, permanently and unshakably resides within. Krishna tells us in the *Bhagavata Purana*: “The SELF within is the Guru par excellence.”

So let us follow the advice recommended by Mr Rogers, that beloved teacher of pre-school children on TV for so many years, to take a silent minute to honor those, as he would say, who “loved us into being”. ✧

On Courage: *Om Tat Sat* — I

MARGARET BOVE

THE definition of “courage” according to the Oxford English Dictionary is: “ability to face danger; intrepidity; bravery; valour; determination to act on one’s beliefs.”

With immense sorrow on a physical level, enveloping in empathy and suffering the heart centre of Mother Earth and all humanity, the question arises: “Why this continual pain, physical, emotional, mental? Why the continual suffering inflicted on humankind?”

Although difficult to accept on a physical level, in Reality, the “suffering” is PURE, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, because by suffering we learn and grow spiritually. If daily life is easy and ordinary, no significant progress is made; every day is apathetic without any significant change.

The soul knows the exact nature of the various tests and trials necessary for its particular growth before incarnation in a physical body, and patiently waits for the right circumstances to present themselves, that is, country, race, sex, family, religion (or no religion), and so the learning process begins. A few lines from the “Hound of Heaven” (or the Guardian of the Mys-

teries) by Francis Thompson (1859–1907) are relevant here:

Designer Infinite!
must Thou char [burn] the wood
Ere Thou canst limn [paint] with it? . . .
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His Hand outstretched
caressingly?

Nothing is born without loss. All pains are pangs of birth. Life is a transition and a learning. A quotation from Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–1892) reads:

That life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom
[darkness],
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom
To shape and use.

When the opportunity arises and the decision is made to reincarnate, the soul takes the bull by the horns and decides to face new experiences in order to progress along the path of perfection, not for personal satisfaction but with pure altruism. The soul knows that the ultimate goal of incarnation is purification and illumination, illumination for a purpose —

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to be eventual vessels of service ready to collaborate in the Divine Plan.

The greatest courage of all and of every human being derives from the prenatal innermost centre and is the decision of the soul to reincarnate in a physical body with all the risks involved. The Great Ones, exquisite Beings of Light and Love, the essence of kindness, understanding, and sensibility, have already undergone the experience as superheroes undergoing all kinds of initiations and supreme tests.

Think allegorically of the courage in the symbol of Jesus being crucified. The pilgrimage of life itself is from Bethlehem to Calvary. How many of us are willing to undergo only a few of the experiences of initiation and to be ready to have all and everything against? It is not a question of the fear of failure but being afraid to TRY. In one of his letters Master Koot Hoomi (KH) encourages the reader not to give up easily, and says specifically “TRY” three times.

When beginning the initiatory process and referring to the ancient Celtic mysteries, humans can be likened to hares. Hares are known for their courage. They live on the Earth and are one of the few animals that are not afraid of fire, which is Love. They leap through fire in a forest and do not run away, even if they die. These are the qualities necessary to begin a conscious process of initiation. Are our hearts and souls ready for this wonderful gesture? From a practical point of view, what is the use of being on this planet if we do not do at least something worthwhile? Quoting from Master Morya (M.): “The purpose

for existence, the real meaning of life on Earth, is not ‘getting’ and ‘having’, but ‘giving’ and ‘serving’.” (*Light of the Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*, p. 279.)

In moments of solitude and peace, a radiant sunset, a calm sea, a place of beauty in the midst of Nature, when our thoughts are in the clouds, wondering who we are, what is the reason for all this, where are we going and what are we seeking; in these moments of serenity and security, we may have a glimpse of our real purpose in life, hidden deep within our hearts, the purpose that could be the theosophical password “to live for others”, to enter into their turmoil of pain and insecurity, to comfort, to heal, to help within our utmost possibility.

These are the true aspirations and what our soul is yearning for — the peace that passeth understanding in forgetting self and the realization that we are ONE. This is the ultimate goal when viewing the beautiful sunset, the blue sea, Nature in all its splendour. In this silence we find the music of the soul and we know that our purpose on Mother Earth is, as said by Master M., “to serve humanity” and be available as vessels of rescue to our fellow men.

When we go beyond time to our original pristine state, entering another dimension, indeed we know we are ONE and that our ashes of ages ago and of numerous past incarnations are mixed together to be remodelled with the ashes of who could have been our previous close relations, fathers, mothers, sisters, lovers, and so on. Therefore some of the

ashes for our future incarnations will possibly be those of our present family and friends and so-called enemies, who are not our enemies at all, but part of us. So if we go to war we are fighting against ourselves and perhaps our previous loved ones — it is our heart fighting against our own liver, in other words, fighting against ourselves.

In a seminar, the late Radha Burnier, our much-loved former International President, said that “it was not easy to find the ashes for the birth of the Buddha”. How many really pure ashes are to be found? We are also linked to beggars, tramps, criminals, perverts, robbers, slanderers, even murderers, who could have within them a part of the ashes of our previous incarnations. Maybe, in the past, we were not as respectable as we appear to be today and made many mistakes; therefore we should not judge anyone because probably in our past incarnations we made the same, if not worse, mistakes that we think we see in others.

Think of those we love deeply in this incarnation and the heartbreaking idea of losing them. In past incarnations, deep love in all kingdoms was the only really positive reason for living, even going back to prehistoric caveman times. As our ashes are all mixed together, the people fighting against each other throughout the world today are possibly fighting, killing, and maiming those they loved in previous lives — mothers, fathers, children, lovers, and so forth, because we are linked irrevocably together with our ashes. We are ONE and always will be ONE. Apart from being self-inflicted cruelty

and ignorance, war is sheer foolishness!

In February of each year, on the day after the Carnival called Ash Wednesday in certain Christian countries throughout the world, a religious ceremony is performed when ashes are placed by the priest between the eyes of the members of the congregation — a reminder of what we were and what we will be. Quoting from the Bible, *Genesis*, 3:19: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” This could be interpreted that after a lifetime of hard work and suffering, one returns to the ground as ashes, the place of origin.

With second sight (the so-called Third Eye), one can SEE how all is joined together by the etheric *nadis*. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) said in the Three Fundamental Propositions that



The shared aura of the family

“there is no dead matter or space in the etheric”.

We are linked as human beings and also to all other kingdoms — animal, mineral, vegetable. The delightful vegetable kingdom where, according to second-sight information, the fairies are “tipsy with delight to be looking after the flowers” and the heroic trees are capable of destroying themselves in order to save other trees. The flowers and the trees are here already expressing their inherent love, which is the basis of creation. The starry heavens, the solar system, and the planetary spheres are all manifestations of Great Spiritual Lives and the interrelation between them is as real and effectual as the relation between members in the human family.

Ideally, with a 6th root race evolution, knowing that we are all part of ONE mixed-ash family, we could trust, communicate, comfort, uplift, and love each other with the same lack of boundaries and spontaneity that we have with our present close family and friends. Friends are said to be flowers in life’s garden, having attained to the highest level of evolution in the vegetable kingdom.

In loving ourselves as Divine Beings, *knowing* we are Divine Beings, is found the joy of being in harmony with all and everything, because ourselves are themselves. How wonderful the blissful, indescribable feeling of being in love with every man and woman in the world knowing that we are a part of them and they are a part of us. These are the moments when time ceases, when we

hold Eternity in our hand in ecstasy, together with the One who will understand the sounds of the “music of the spheres”, and the dance of Shiva embraces us in One Eternal Whirl of Beauty and Balance, hugging us with the heart and caressing our brows with soft, soothing serenity. But we are “strangers in paradise” and the sweet mystery of life is still to be revealed.

The spiritual evolution of the 6th root race will arrive eventually and part of the mysteries of life and death will be common knowledge — the third eye will be open, giving inner sight, and we will communicate and reproduce telepathically. It is a shame that we cannot *see* the unity of all and everything *now!* There would be no more wars. OM TAT SAT (Om is the sound of Brahman or the ultimate reality, Tat is the mantra of Shiva, and Sat is the mantra of Vishnu, which can also be interpreted as truth.)

If, at any time, we feel a sense of failure or inadequacy on the physical plane, not having attained to our life expectations, reflecting and despairing on our weaknesses or mistakes, we can restore our sense of worth by remembering our prenatal gesture to reincarnate with the very best of intentions. Mistakes in past lives, also during this lifetime, were necessary in order to grow and we are not the same as we were. It takes courage to admit mistakes, to be humble, and to apologise. Admitting one’s weaknesses is already taking the right path to resolving them with the knowledge that planet Earth is not yet a sacred planet and it is easy to deviate.

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A guilt complex is to be avoided and excluded. Live joyously and peacefully in the NOW as implacable karma will adjust every situation. Karma can be eliminated in many ways, sometimes without even noticing, just perhaps remembering a bad or particularly good day (because there is also good karma). The Buddhist monks, when difficulties occur, sing songs of praise and thanks, knowing that karma is being dissolved.

Karma is not accepted or known by the majority of the population for various religious and other reasons, however, the saying of the Italian Neapolitans,

Il Signore è lungariello, ma non è scordariello (“the Lord takes a long time, but does not forget”) could be perceived as an intuitive and subconscious knowledge of karma. All world leaders should have knowledge of karma. The saying, “reaping what one sows”, could also be interpreted as karma. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (the Bible, *Galatians*, 6:7). “All sufferings of man are due to the suffering he has inflicted on others under the Law of Cause and Effect”, which is karma. (*Light of the Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*, p. 405.)

(To be continued)

The only tyrant I accept in this world is the “still small voice” within me. And even though I have to face the prospect of being a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority.

Non-violence and cowardice are contradictory terms. The first is the greatest virtue, the latter the greatest vice. The first springs from love, the latter from hate. The first always suffers, the latter would always inflict suffering. Perfect non-violence is the highest bravery. This conduct is never demoralising; cowardice always is.

Mahatma Gandhi

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