

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

Dematerializing Spirituality

TIM BOYD

IT has been said in many traditions that if we are able to hear, and our eyes are open, we can obtain wisdom from a flower, or even a stone. It is all a matter of what we find to be of value in our own consciousness. In the early stages of our inner growth, we look for information, for descriptions of the inner life, and names for the different things we encounter in our studies. Perhaps we move beyond that and start to look for something more. Often the thing that we seek the most we would describe as “knowledge”. We have been trained to think that in some way knowledge is power. Everything we see seems to indicate that there is some truth to that, certainly at one level. But when we start to talk about Theosophy, we really need to move our vision to a different level.

Even though the word “knowledge” is used in many different ways, when we speak about Theosophy we are talking about wisdom. But we have difficulty distinguishing between knowledge on the one hand and wisdom on the other. Wisdom could be described as the perception of what is real. Knowledge is of a much lesser order, of a mental nature. So when we are seeking wisdom, necessarily there has to be some shift in

the way we position our consciousness.

Openness to wisdom is important in every age, but perhaps now is a very special moment. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) made the point many times that the teachings she brought, that we have come to know as “Theosophy”, were intended for a time beyond her lifetime. She said that they would not be capable of being understood until another century had passed. She was aware that her work was to prepare the mind of the world.

HPB also did not make any confusion about the fact that these teachings were not her own, but that they were given to her. In *The Secret Doctrine* she says that she presents a bouquet of flowers, and the only thing that is hers, is the string that binds them together, and that the teachings were given *through* her by her Teachers. She also made the point that when we read these teachings, as with *any* book we read, if we attend to it closely, the consciousness of the author can be uncovered. In the case of *The Secret Doctrine* and her other works, she said that she was not even the author, but the secretary, or amanuensis for a higher consciousness.

We are living in a time of turmoil. Everywhere, things that have been regarded as

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normal culture are changing. Not too long ago, all the materials that we had to think about were provided to us just by virtue of the particular culture and place we lived in. Our religion was prescribed by birth. The way we dressed, the way men, women, and families related, the economics of the area, they were all passed on from generation to generation, changing slowly. Today, everywhere we look, those customs are breaking down. There is a certain global culture creeping in that is having an effect around the world.

One of the things we witness that is changing so rapidly is something to which many of us have not paid any attention. We have to believe that the Masters and Great Beings could anticipate certain changes, although it is not spoken of in our early literature. A cause that is having one of the greatest effects in the world today is that for the first time in human history, the majority of people on the planet are living away from the natural world and concentrating in urban centers. More than half of the world's population lives in urbanized environments.

The effects of being removed from the normal cycles of the natural world have consequences. Many have asked, what is the greatest invention in history? Some say it is the computer, but others point out that it is the invention of the light bulb which has had the most profound effect on human society. This is because it has enabled a complete reversal of the natural cycles that had existed before human civilization. Now, human work schedules determine our daily cycles of life. What

is required in this age more than at any other time in our known history is not a return to wisdom, but an actual new opening to wisdom.

In the third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* she talks about one of the grand cycles indicated in the Ageless Wisdom, the necessary pilgrimage of the soul. The downward aspect of that cycle, the journey of the soul into incarnation in matter, is depicted in the story of The Prodigal Son, The Hymn of the Pearl, and other wisdom stories — incarnation, forgetfulness, and then the all-important moment of awaken-ing, of remembering. Now, what we need to consider is, “what next?”

Much of what we talk about in theological teachings is a process that we are undergoing. Sometimes the phrase “human regeneration” is used, at other times “transformation” is used, often a bit loosely. Normally our thinking along this line is that it is a gradual process, predictable. As we approach it from the avenue of study, meditation, and service we think in terms of a gradual stepping up that occurs. It would seem that this is an incorrect idea. We tend to associate it with cycles of Nature, which we also imagine to be gradual, but this also would seem to be incorrect.

In quantum physics there is a well-known observation about the behavior of the electron circling around the nucleus of the atom. The terminology normally used for the change in the orbit of an electron from one level to another is “quantum leap”. Even a limited con-

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sideration of quantum physics, shows that there are many things which do not conform to our ideas about how the world works. To us they do not make sense, and conflict with our perception of how the world actually functions. This quantum leap is one of those areas that seem very strange to us.

The way the electron functions is: as a certain amount of energy is radiated into it, it shifts to another orbit, but not by gradually passing across the intervening space between orbits, but from one level to another completely, immediately, without crossing this other territory. One moment it is in one place, the next, someplace completely new: it is odd from our point of view.

Even as great a man as Albert Einstein, a genius by any standard, did not fully comprehend and could not accept during his lifetime the nature of quantum physics. Faced with such clear and repeatable observations as this quantum leap, he refused to accept the assertions of quantum physics. In a debate with Nils Bohr, one of the founding minds of Quantum Mechanics, Einstein is famously quoted as saying: "God does not play dice with the Universe." The idea is that the Universe is not some random sort of occurrence. The less well-known response that was made to Einstein by Nils Bohr was: "Who is Dr Einstein to tell God what to do?"

Transformation is more like this quantum-leap nature. Another example with which we are much more familiar is the caterpillar turning into a butterfly. We often point to this as a primary ex-

ample of a profound transformation, but how does it take place? From the time we are children we are told that the caterpillar goes into the cocoon and then changes, coming out as the beautiful butterfly. Have any of us ever opened a cocoon? As a young person, I did to try to figure out what the mystery was. What I found was remarkable and completely conflicted with my expectation. I expected that looking into the opened cocoon I would see the caterpillar and, gradually, wings would come, the legs would change, then it would get the antennas and brilliant color. I anticipated that I would be seeing a process of gradual unfolding. That was my expectation, but it was not in any way what I found.

When I opened the cocoon, I did not see either caterpillar or butterfly, it looked like a pudding, an undefined jelly, something that had no body, no shape, or wings, just a mass of thick liquid. What this transformation process involves is the complete dissolution of the previous form in order to come together in a higher form. This is not the normal way of viewing this subject, but when we speak about wisdom, this is a more appropriate line for us to follow.

From the theosophical point of view, we are all aware of *buddhi* and *manas*, the latter being the mind that functions at both a higher and more concrete level, and the former being the plane of intuition, where we comprehend Unity, Oneness. For example, in our normal way of functioning, much like the sun, *buddhi* is always shining. When we provide the

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opportunity for it, it can shine onto the screen of the mind. The problem, of course, is that our minds are always disturbed and in constant motion. So the light that is always shining is very rarely perceived at our level.

In all spiritual traditions, there are deep stories that try to indicate something of this deeper nature. All of the great teachers that have appeared on Earth have chosen to communicate their message of transformation in stories. At our level, we end up referring to these stories as scripture, so we call it the *Gītā*, Koran, Bible, Mahabharata, Ramayana, all of these story books we call scripture. The great teachers were great because they were very much aware of who it was they were trying to communicate to — us.

The legend says that when the Buddha had his experience of enlightenment, he recognized very quickly that it could not be communicated to people like us. So he decided he was not even going to try. Fortunately, he changed his mind, and for the remainder of his life much of the way he taught was in giving us symbols and stories that could ignite our imagination, knowing that it is only by the imagination that anything comes into being.

Many spiritual traditions speak about the Divine Mind, which brings the universe into being; it imagines a world, and the world comes into being. The problem we have is that we try to make the stories into material things, into histories that are factual, that can be proved, and in so doing remove ourselves from the potency of the imagined world.

Blavatsky and the lineage that she represents made every attempt to discourage this materializing tendency of our mind when addressing spiritual matters. She and her teachers would use material symbols to try to give us images to carry us to that next level. The very first stanza in *The Stanzas of Dzyan*, upon which *The Secret Doctrine* is based, reads like the stories that our mother or father would tell us when we would go to sleep at night: “The eternal parent, wrapped in her ever-invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities.”

What is an “eternal parent”? What is an “invisible robe”? How long is seven eternities? It goes beyond the capacity of our thought. At the very beginning we are required to move beyond, to use these symbols to move to some other level. Hopefully, it is something that allows the mind to become *quiet* in the presence of what it cannot grasp.

HPB also used terms in speaking about the Absolute, something about which nothing can really be said. She wanted to distinguish that we are not talking about even the quality of *being*, but described it as more in the nature of “Be-ness”. In a way it could seem as if it is a distinction without a real difference, but it expresses the idea that these are not materializable. These concepts have no capacity to contain the wisdom, so it is always trying to prevent giving us anything we can grab hold to.

Blavatsky also talks about the Root which, much like a plant’s root, is unseen. The spiritual traditions of the world ap-

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pear from this one Root: one in Iran, one in India, one in Egypt, one in Greece, and so on, seemingly separate plants, but all drawing from the same Root. Not just the religions, but really *everything* that appears, that has appearance, draws from this one Root. She tries to communicate that what we see are the many appearances, but are unaware of the shared Root. She goes even beyond this, because a root is something we can think about and materialize very easily. So when she speaks about the source of all, she talks about the “rootless Root”. In a way, she is unkind to our minds. Even though she recognized this, theosophists from the beginning have attempted to materialize these teachings, and in trying to attempt this, have minimized them, and *have missed the point*.

One of the great occult stories that speak about this transformation from the moment of awakening to the moment of illumination is the one about Plato’s cave, which is remarkable in terms of its occult significance. The story begins in the darkness of a shadow world, of normal material misperception; progresses through the stages of enlightenment and their effects on consciousness; and ends with the self-sacrificial necessity of service.

It is a story that describes a process of elevation, of encountering what could be described as our *buddhic* awareness. It is a history of our unfoldment and of the many light-bringers who have come into the world: Giordano Bruno, Jesus, Ramana Maharshi, Appolonius of Tyana, and countless others.

One of the beauties of association with Theosophy is that it describes not just ideas, but how they can actually be applied in daily life. For people such as us, a practice is necessary, even for those who are enlightened. Jesus continued with his practice of prayer and meditation; Tsongkha-pa, with his illumination, continued to model the need for practice. The importance in this particular moment is that this awareness has to find expression in us as individuals, and then within those circles within which we function.

There is a story, a work, that is waiting to find its unique expression through each one of us. The only thing that prevents its appearance in the world are the obstacles which we place in its way. The point of practice is not to find or add something new to ourselves, but to remove the obstacles to the shining of the light of *buddhi*, which is ever-present in every moment. ✧

Only when there is clarity together with a deep concern for the good of all beings, is the search well begun. Finding out what is spiritual is itself the leading of the spiritual life. For the great truths of life are not external facts but dimensions of consciousness.

Radha Burnier
No Other Path to Go

The Real Work of the Theosophical Society

N. SRI RAM

Heaven-Born Wisdom

A person may be extremely learned, absolutely sure about certain things, yet unable to get on with his or her family. Would you call such a person wise, or might he or she be lacking in wisdom? Surely, knowledge of the ordinary sort will not make a person wise. We may be versed in theology or science, but that will not enable us to think rightly on matters that pertain to our own life or our relationships with people. If we have a touch of true wisdom, we will know that it has a different flavour from knowledge of facts, of which we make conceptual images of things, like drawings or paintings on the walls of consciousness. They are there only to look at, but the person in their midst is making the same motions. Surely that is not the mark of wisdom.

Wisdom belongs to the soul and it has a different quality and fragrance, something out of this world, heaven-born. All these words sound rather poetical but I feel they are strictly true. With regard to matters we may call spiritual, what sounds poetical can also be true. It can be the poetry of truth — not mere

fancy. The whole test of wisdom lies in whether we are acting according to the truth of things, or to various fancies, imaginings, and illusions that we may be cherishing. If we act in conformity with the actual facts, at the physical or psychic level, or any higher or deeper level, then we are acting wisely. But if we pursue a will-o'-the-wisp, a phantom, an illusory light, we are not wise. How a person acts, thinks, and feels really answers the question whether he is wise or unwise.

Action should not be understood as referring merely to the overt acts, the transactions with other people, what we do in the external world in a visible manner. "Action" is a very large term; it is of various sorts taking place in the human body: chemical, electrical and so on. We are unconscious of it. There is also the action of thought, of emotion and feeling. There is action at every level of one's being, the action of the total being of man, comprising all levels. Life means action. . . .

Dimensionless Point

Then there is philosophy, which is really a system of thought based upon

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actual facts of physical Nature as well as the facts pertaining to the psychic being of man. The facts which we perceive are ordered in a certain structure of thought that is built up, which is in harmony with and explains those facts, and reveals the relations between them. The activity taking place in what we call philosophy is like constructing a noble piece of architecture that has to stand on the ground of truth or facts, and suit the ground, and harmonize with it.

What we call truth has all these different aspects and extends from the centre that is within our innermost being, to the periphery, the outer limits of the world we live in or, perhaps, the universe. Since it covers such an extraordinary range, there are different sections and aspects of truth. Theosophy, as far as we are concerned, means an understanding where there is a measure of harmony among these different aspects. How can we know this extraordinary expanse of truth, which is limitless, with so many aspects, some of them subtle and profound? Is it possible to know this truth, seemingly absolutely beyond us in every direction? . . .

There is that extraordinary faculty of pure knowing — call it *Buddhi* if you like — which is true intelligence as distinguished from mere intellect. It is possible for it to know, or at least begin to know in truth, not merely see things as they appear, but to know them as they inwardly are. That requires a change in oneself, to come to that condition in which one seeks nothing, does not try to conquer worlds, and has given up every attempt at self-

magnification. When we remain wherever we are, but in such a condition of receptivity, of humility, the truth from every side pours into our hearts. . . .

The required change is that the intellect which merely plays with ideas has to be so changed, so enlightened, infused with a certain pure quality, that it becomes an instrument of the pure Knower, and is not just the crude intellect which merely works out various sequences of facts. It has to be one which knows the quality of a thing, and does not merely deal with quantities and numbers by comparison.

Sometimes people quote from one of the Mahatma letters: “The crest wave of intellectual advance must be taken hold of and guided into spirituality.” How can you lead an intellect which is dogmatic, neutral with regard to moral issues, incapable of any aesthetic appreciation, an intellect which is cold and hard, into spirituality? It has to be first melted, transformed and shaped into a pliable and sensitive instrument which can probe the inner truth of things. It becomes then an extension of the Spirit, belonging to that nature of man which is essentially a nature of love, of openness, and sensitivity, non-egoistic and non-possessive.

The intelligence of such a nature is luminous and penetrating. Also, when this nature manifests itself, life assumes an extraordinarily beautiful aspect. All quarrels, resentments, and grudges come to an end. Then each person will meet all others as partners in truth. In this way alone, there can be a new era, a new world. ✧

Our Work for the 21st Century

VICENTE HAO CHIN, JR

WHAT is our vision for the Theosophical Society (TS) by 2099?

In order to look forward, it is helpful to look backward. It has been 143 years since the founding of the TS. The worldwide expansion of the TS reached its peak in 1928, when its membership reached 45,000 with highly active and dedicated members throughout the world giving lectures, writing books, establishing schools, forming leagues for various purposes, and so on. After 1928, however, the Society consistently declined, so that today it has just around 25,000 members, or a drop of 44%. During the same period the world population has ballooned by 350% to 7 billion people. Our publishing work has declined. So few young people are joining the Society. Almost all our magazines are for our members, not for the public.

For the past 90 years or so, the TS has mostly focused on solidifying its teachings — quite unsuccessfully, because theosophical literature today has become divided into two main factions. Lodges and sections tend to be inward-oriented

— being concerned mainly about the activities among its members. We have been very weak in bringing Theosophy and the theosophical life to the public to help solve the problems of humanity.

Are we becoming less and less relevant to the problems of the world?

It is no exaggeration to say that the past century has been quite a disappointing period, because the Mahatmas intended the TS to be a movement for the entire world, not just for a few thousand members. We need to be reminded of the exhortation of the Mahachohan:

For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, and so on, we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana . . . which is, after all only an exalted and glorious *selfishness*, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by

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Our Work for the 21st Century

it, which constitutes the true theosophist.
(*Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*,
Chron. Ed., Appendix II)

We are now in the first quarter of the 21st century. What work direction should we focus on in order to arrest our decline and make the Society a vibrant movement that will have an impact on civilization and world thought? There are many such directions that can be identified, and the General Council has listed about forty of them. For now, allow me to focus on five areas that I think are important:

1. Globalize Theosophical Work
2. Programs for the Public (Applied Theosophy)
3. Establish Theosophical Schools
4. Draw Young People to Theosophy
5. Work Towards Religious Reform

1. Globalize Theosophical Work

For a century or more, theosophical countries have tended to work like separate islands of an archipelago. They are so absorbed with their own internal problems and goals that they hardly synergize as a global family. No Section is strong if the global TS is weak. Many Sections have died or are dying without being helped or saved by either the international headquarters or other Sections.

China, Hong Kong, and Korea have disappeared from the theosophical map. Had we supported our Lodge in Hong Kong thirty or so years ago, and kept it dynamic, it would have been our gateway to reviving the TS in China, the land where one quarter of the world lives.

Sri Lanka is just a stone's throw away from Adyar. It used to be one of the strongest Sections in the world, having more than two hundred schools established by the TS since the time of Henry Steel Olcott, our Founder/President. Olcott himself is officially considered a national hero of that country. And yet today only one Lodge remains in that former bastion of theosophical philosophy, and it is now gasping and trying to survive. We need to make theosophical work a unified global mission. One for all and all for one. To build this, there are three strategic directions that need to be attended to:

a. Annual International Strategic Planning and Review

This aspect of the work has been started under our current President, where he has involved many members of the General Council. We hope that it will be sustained permanently as part of our global work. We have limited manpower and resources and we need to identify and review what would be our work priorities that will create optimum impact upon individual and social transformation. The strategic planning group becomes in effect a high-level think tank of the TS, composed of leaders who are in touch with what is happening to the entire theosophical world.

This previously untapped group effectively expands the number of volunteers who are helping the international officers perform their global work — not just limited to the staff in Adyar. Because they are active leaders of the various TS coun-

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tries, there is a high level of synergy that makes possible many things that cannot be done by any single Section. This group that plans, implements, and reviews our priority projects will make a pivotal difference in the future of the TS.

b. Through Projects, Increase Budget for International Work

In 2017, the budget of the TS for “Propagation of Theosophy”, including the offices of the international officers, was 4 million rupees, or about US\$58,000. This is dismally tiny for a global organization in 55 or 60 countries. We often hear it said, “we don’t have the money” to increase this budget, but this is not true. It is not the money that we lack. We lack worthwhile projects or programs. We need to remember that *it is money that follows projects* and not the other way around. That is, if there are worthwhile projects launched, then money will come. If we have the money and have no projects, then the fund will just dry up.

Let us take a few examples that will demonstrate this principle: In 1993, a small school in Bhubaneswar, India, for tribal children was set up with 125 students. It was a free school and survived only by the generosity of donors. Because it was seen as something worthwhile and noble, the school grew with increasing donations coming from various sources. Today, after 25 years, it has grown to become a huge institution with 26,000 students, all staying in free dormitories, with free meals and tuition. The school serves 100,000 meals every day. This is the Kalinga Institute of Social Scien-

ces, with a yearly budget of 760 million rupees (US\$11 million), all coming from donations.

In 1922, a group of Freemasons in Louisiana, USA, decided to put up a hospital for crippled and burnt children. For forty years, it persisted in this thankless work to serve these unfortunate children. In 1962, the work had grown such that three more hospitals were built. Today, it has 22 hospitals in various parts of the United States. This is the Shriners Hospitals for Crippled and Burnt Children, with an annual budget of US\$500 million all coming from donations or earnings from donated endowment funds.

In 1865, ten years before the TS was founded, a Protestant minister and his wife decided to preach to those of very low social status in east London, such as prostitutes, beggars, alcoholics, and so on, by helping uplift them in various ways. Their persistence despite hardships attracted the attention of many people who started volunteering for this mission, and donations in larger and larger amounts started to pour in. This became the Salvation Army, thriving by volunteers and donations. Their current budget is US\$3.7 billion every year. *Every year.*

We are not comparing ourselves with other organizations. It is not even about the amount of money that these organizations are able to raise. It is about *possibilities*. These organizations started small or with almost no money. But they had worthwhile projects. Money just came in because people who had the money identified with these worthy projects.

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This year, the TS President and General Council have identified international priority projects. These should be sustained and promoted. If they are worthy, then the budget of the TS will just naturally grow. There will be volunteers who will come forward. At the same time, it is important that there is a permanent team of coordinators who will follow up on these initiatives as well as offer to volunteer.

c. Systematically Train Dedicated and Competent Theosophical Workers

The TS in America has a program of training people, especially young ones, to become potential workers, speakers and leaders of the Society. This is not just a one-time training session but a program that is sustained year after year. It is proposed that Adyar should set up a similar training program for young theosophists who are willing to work for the cause of the great teachers of humanity. Different sections can make nominations from among their members. A curriculum can be designed, supported with adequate materials, methodology, and the opportunity to have internship or practicum. In the future, our own theosophical colleges in the Philippines can offer a Master's degree in Theosophy as a formal way to train workers, speakers, authors and leaders. It should be run not like an academic institution but more like an ashram — a seedbed for leaders who live the theosophic life. We must be careful, however, that such a formal training does not nurture dogmatic speakers and writers who will make Theosophy look like another set of religious beliefs. H. P. Blavatsky,

in nurturing future successors, warned:

I do not refer to technical knowledge of the esoteric doctrine, though that is most important; I spoke rather of the great need which our successors in the guidance of the Society will have of unbiased and clear judgment. Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart.

(The Key to Theosophy, Conclusion)

2. Programs for the Public (Applied Theosophy)

The TS must offer programs that will benefit the general public — men, women, children, parents, teachers, public servants, professionals, and so on — not just its members. What we must offer is not just a philosophy or idea. It is the application of philosophies or ideas as solutions to human and social problems. This, in fact, is the mission of the TS. The Mahachohan has pointed out:

To be *true*, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. . . . and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first one to confess *that must* be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives *truth* and nothing but the *truth*.

(The Mahatma Letters, Appendix II)

We need to remind ourselves: *Ideas are not powerful unless translated into practices that can transform.*

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Who will demonstrate that theosophical ideas can be transformative? The theosophists, of course. Setting up long-term programs that will have an impact on people and society can be difficult. But it is the only way to make ideas transformative. What are examples of such public programs?

a. The Theosophical Order of Service

This is perhaps the most important existing avenue for applied Theosophy for the public. The Mahatma KH wrote (*italics added*):

The first object of the TS is philanthropy. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist — “not for himself but for the world he lives”. This, and philosophy, the right comprehension of life and its mysteries, will give the “necessary basis” and show the right path to pursue.

(Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, Series I, no. 45)

. . . our Society is not a mere intellectual school for occultism, and those greater than we have said that he who thinks the task of *working for others* too hard had better not undertake it. *The moral and spiritual sufferings of the world are more important* and need help and cure more than science needs aid from us in any field of discovery. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (*Ibid.*, No. 46)

The Mahachohan asks:

Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans . . . *and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and despised, the lowly and the oppressed, to take care of themselves and of their*

hereafter the best they know how? *Never*. Rather perish the TS with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of occultism.

(The Mahatma Letters, Appendix II)

That *we* the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, . . . should ever allow the TS to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few *with no thought in them for the many*, is a strange idea, my brothers. (*Ibid.*)

It is clear: our work is to benefit the “teeming millions” who may not be interested in high philosophy or esotericism. However, TOS work is not just about food or medical attention or relief. It is ultimately about human development — dignity, self-esteem, selfless service, moral development, social harmony, peace, and so on. Like the TS, the TOS needs to synergize the different efforts so that there will be a greater impact on a world-wide scale. There can be one or two or three common advocacies across nations that can help change global opinion, attitude or policies on a certain matter. Examples are women’s welfare, vegetarianism, animal welfare, education, literacy, character building, parenting, and so on.

b. Meditation for the Public

Another way to benefit the public is by popularizing the practice of meditation. It is universally acknowledged that meditation is a transformative practice that can change individuals and societies. There are many meditation movements that have

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done exemplary work along these lines, such as Zen, Vipassana, mindfulness, and Transcendental Meditation. The TS should be similarly engaged since meditation not only brings about personal integration and equanimity in individuals, but it is also an essential foundation of the spiritual life. Let us choose one or two classic meditation approaches that the Society can popularize through the hundreds of Lodges around the world. This has been chosen as one of the priority projects of the General Council and we hope this will soon become a common feature of our Lodge work.

c. Self-Transformation Seminars

Self-Transformation Seminars have been conducted in twenty countries and has been effectively used by TS Sections and Lodges for their public work. Many outside organizations have requested for it — schools and universities, government units, non-government organizations, religious groups, civic associations, and even the military. It has been offered as a foundational training for the spiritual life.

The Seminar can thus be used as an offering of TS Sections and Lodges to help benefit individuals, organizations, and institutions for personal and social transformation. Facilitators have already been trained in ten countries. Systematic training can be done more widely.

d. Public Magazines on Applied Theosophy

Today there are very few theosophical magazines that are intended for public circulation. Among these are *Sofia*, *Theo-*

sophical Digest, *Quest*, *Peace Ideas*, *Wake Up India*, and *Researches Relevant to Theosophy*. They need to be multiplied because they are essential to bringing applied theosophy to the public mind, otherwise we are just trying to convince the converted.

It is proposed that more and more public magazines, whether printed or digital, should be issued out in as many languages as possible around the world. Here, synergy is again essential. Sections do not have to invest so much editorial time and effort to start such a magazine. They just need to translate or reprint good articles from existing public theosophical magazines and publish them regularly.

3. Establishing Theosophical Schools

The key to the future lies in our youth and children. When they change, the world changes. The most powerful institution that can influence the young is the school. It can be more powerful than parenting and media because it can reverse parental miseducation and the harmful values of television, internet, print media, and movies.

If we want Theosophy to have enduring influence, we must establish schools as well as influence the world's educational systems. H. P. Blavatsky stressed the importance of this work:

If we had money, we would found schools.
. . . Children should above all be taught self-reliance, love for all men, altruism, mutual charity, and more than anything else, to think and reason for themselves.
. . . We would endeavour to deal with each

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child as a unit, and to educate it so as to produce the most harmonious and equal unfoldment of its powers, in order that its special aptitudes should find their full natural development. We should aim at creating *free* men and women, free intellectually, free morally, unprejudiced in all respects, and above all things, *unselfish*. And we believe that much if not all of this could be obtained by *proper and truly theosophical* education.

(*The Key to Theosophy*, sec. 13)

At present, there is a renewed interest in starting schools in various countries, particularly Philippines, India, Argentina and Brazil.

4. Draw Young People to Theosophy

In my travels to many theosophical countries, I have observed a common pattern among many Lodges — the average age of theosophical members is disturbingly high. In one recent lecture tour, I observed that the average age of the audience attending is about 65 years old, with no attendee younger than 40 years old. Many Lodge leaders have bewailed the absence of young people in their midst. Some are closing down activities or selling part of their properties because they do not foresee successors who will take their places. How can we expand theosophical work when we are shrinking our Lodges or Sections?

The world has changed, and the traditional dissemination approaches are not reaching the young people effectively. Many seniors do not know how to use computers, browse the Internet, create

Facebook accounts, send emails, or use WhatsApp or Twitter. The languages of the classic books are no longer appealing to the modern generation. We need to create new approaches to dissemination, and young people understand this better than seniors do.

Part of the problem is the tendency of seniors not to give wider rein to younger members to do their bit or do things in their own way. As a result, the youth shy away from theosophical gatherings because they get bored. They find the meetings irrelevant to the issues that face them or the atmosphere is too restrictive.

5. Work for Religious Reforms

History has shown us the harm that popular religion has brought to the world — inquisitions, wars, terrorism, genocide, intolerance, mutual hatred, and so forth. The longest war in history was the Crusades between Christians and Muslims. One of the cruelest institutions was the Inquisition, when religious leaders permitted horrific torture in dealing with suspected heretics. The worst form of violence today is religious terrorism — the indiscriminate killing of men, women, and children regardless of nationality, race or religion.

The Mahatma KH had strongly pointed out that two-thirds of the evils of the world come from religion, and only one-third come from human selfishness. Belief in anthropomorphic gods has been making people slaves to sacerdotal authority. He wrote:

Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its

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own sake, and to walk in life relying on himself instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery.

(The Mahatma Letters, letter no. 88)

The Mahachohan and the Mahatma KH have declared that: “The Theosophical Society was chosen as the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity.”

(The Mahatma Letters, Appendix II)

This work must not be forgotten. We need to point out religious superstitions, incongruences, contradictions, and conflicts with common sense and our sense of ethics. This inward moral sense must be an important foundation of future religions, rather than “revealed” dogmas. It is important to disseminate a wider knowledge of the reality of mysticism and the mystical experience as the core of religious experience. The TS must help bring about a world where religions foster love instead of intolerance, exclusivity, hatred, and violence. It must promote non-sectarian spirituality and mysticism.

The above are five important work

directions, among many, that we need to give primary attention to in this century. What can be our vision of what the Society can do for humanity? HPB expressed her dream:

The [Theosophical] Society . . . will gradually leaven and permeate the great mass of thinking and intelligent people with its large-minded and noble ideas of Religion, Duty, and Philanthropy. Slowly but surely it will burst asunder the iron fetters of creeds and dogmas, of social and caste prejudices; it will break down racial and national antipathies and barriers, and will open the way to the practical realization of the Brotherhood of all men. . . .

If the TS survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years — tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that Earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now!

(The Key to Theosophy, Conclusion)

Are we now in such a heaven? If not, then we have a lot of work to do ahead of us. Let us hold our hands together and do it! ✧

Modern education is developing the intellect, offering more and more explanations of life and theories, without the harmonious quality of affection. Therefore we have developed cunning minds to escape from conflict; hence we are satisfied with explanations that scientists and philosophers give us. The mind — the intellect — is satisfied with these innumerable explanations, but intelligence is not, for to understand there must be complete unity of mind and heart in action.

J. Krishnamurti
The Book of Life

Theosophy in the Modern World

CLEMICE PETTER

WHEN we talk about Theosophy, what do we mean by it? Is it that we are talking about a set of books? Or is it a fixed doctrine with fixed ideas about life, man, and the Universe? If it is a fixed view of somebody or of a group, it means it is going to be outdated at some point in time because a person or a group of people express themselves according to the language and the customs of the days in which they live. This means that if we have a certain number of books written at a certain time in human history and we call that Theosophy, we are making a deadly mistake.

For example, if we go to books written by Annie Besant in the last century, when humanity was facing different problems, when we had not yet seen the horror of the Second World War and did not even think that human beings were capable of building up such a cruel and inhuman philosophy as that developed by those who believed in superiority and inferiority among human beings, when we had not seen the horrendous effect of the atomic bomb. If we go to those books looking for answers to problems of today's world, we will see that they fail to

address the problem properly because the language of those answers were given for the human beings of those days.

We know that the human psyche is changing constantly and that to understand and be able to meet the demand of new generations we cannot be stuck in past ideas or understandings. We need to move and learn to let go of what no longer applies. We need to understand the present scenario in the world. To complain and say how marvelous it was when people used to pay respect and have consideration towards tradition and religion will not help. This is because we cannot change what has been put in motion, and the driving forces behind the present world situation is ourselves, it is me and you. The way we live, the things we believe in are supporting what is going on in the world.

So if we say that Theosophy is a set of rules about how to live or that it is the only thing that can help us out of the present chaos, I would say that we are right and also wrong. We are wrong when we take Theosophy as a fixed idea, or something that can be defined and kept to be applied as the same permanent solution to every

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problem. But we are right because if we can come upon Theosophy, which also means wisdom, if we can grow inwardly to a certain degree of understanding about ourselves, which is life itself, then we may face day-to-day challenges in a completely different way.

Maybe we can also ask what is the role of the Theosophical Society (TS) in the modern world. The answer to this question is important because most of us, members of this Society, would like to help the world to become a better place for future generations, and here we can add that the future generation is us, because in us, here and now, live the past, the present and the future of humankind. So, we are interested in living in a better, more compassionate, humane world. We are working for humanity, which is ourselves, to come upon a wiser way of life, so that we can develop our human capacities to their fullest.

To find out the role of any organization in the present world scenario we need to see what the organization has to offer to the world. We should not take for granted, at any point in time, that what we are offering is what the world needs, we should watch closely and question the quality of what we are offering. This is because it has been historically proven that when we take anything for granted, we go to sleep, which means we are no longer watchful, we become careless and full of ourselves. And this has been the way that many spiritual organizations have started to die. So we should not fall into the same trap over and over again. We

need to be aware of every step on this road and of everything we do or say, and to keep the Society alive, breathing fresh air all through its existence.

What can lead to wisdom is the same at any time; it does not change, it is eternal and immortal. Being out of time, it comes from a dimension which is free from changes and transformations, which can occur only in time and space. When we human beings, who live psychologically in the dimension of time and space, try to take that which is not from our dimension, we make the mistake of thinking that it can be brought into time, and with this mistake we freeze, crystallize the flowing waters of an endless river. There is no way that we can bring wisdom into the dimension of time, this is because the nature of the dimension in which wisdom is born is everlastingly flowing, its nature is whole, subtle, and cannot be confined to a frame, whereas the nature of the human mind is harsh, divisive, it lives in definitions and conclusions.

So what is the role of a society such as the TS at any time? It is to provide the flowing waters of the endless river of wisdom to those who are thirsty. One cannot force those who are not thirsty to drink water, and in the same way wisdom cannot be imposed.

The TS is and was always meant to be an oasis in a desert of dry-hearted people. To come upon wisdom the first requirement is to have a heart capable of love, that is sensible to the suffering of the world. So it is also the role of a society that aims to help humankind,

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to show the way of goodness, loving kindness. And there is no better way to teach other than by example. To plant a seed of care into the human heart we need to ripen the fruit of goodness in us in a way that when it explodes, its seeds are carried by the wind into the four corners of the world.

Human beings have only one problem, and that is ignorance; it is the source of all human misery. The ignorance that we are talking about is not the ignorance of the man who does not know how to read or write, but the fundamental ignorance about ourselves. Who we are, how our mind works and how it is constantly creating illusions of separateness. We read in books about the unity of life, but we are not capable of seeing it. It is out of this blindness, of this ignorance, that human beings are creating the world in which we live, a world of brutal confusion, of increasing destruction and degeneration.

To help humanity to overcome this primary ignorance, we need to overcome it first in ourselves; we need to form a group of people who really see the importance of overcoming this basic ignorance of unity. We often say that the TS is meant to help humanity, but we easily forget that to give something to humanity, we need to have it in us. We talk about wisdom, and we know that it cannot be given to another; it has to be worked out by each one. So maybe all we can do to help those who see the need for transformation and are willing to walk the thorny road of self-knowledge, is to keep the door open with clean water for

the thirsty traveller. If we want to build a house with bricks, we need bricks. Similarly, if we want to have a wiser humanity we need wise men and women.

The present situation in the world is really appalling, we have developed so much technology and our mind tremendously, we have filled our life with the things of the mind and completely neglected the heart. This imbalance is destroying our environment, is making it impossible for life in the planet. We need to correct this imbalance before it is too late. We need to develop sensitiveness. It is not about becoming emotional, after all, emotions are part of the mind. To develop the heart means to look at ourselves and understand what we are. There is no other way, there is no shortcut, we need to take the responsibility of what is going on in ourselves, therefore in the world, and see that the ideas and beliefs of separation are creating the chaos in which this that we call “modern society” is caught.

To develop a holistic way of life, one that recognizes that everything is connected and interdependent, is the only way out of the destructive behavior that human beings nourish from time immemorial. So the role of a society that talks about helping humanity in this crucial turn is to set the example and be a living body of human beings living together in peace and harmony with each other and with the world around them. To be an oasis of peace in the midst of a restless world we need to *be* peace. There is no other way.

The work of the members of such a

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society is not the attitude of someone who knows and will teach, but that of openness, to learn at each moment with *life*, with everyone with whom we are in touch. To learn the art of life is the most difficult of all tasks, because it is a never-ending movement. So before we can talk about being a light to the world, we need to light up our own self, we need to be a light to ourselves. So the work is not out

there, it is in here. After all there is no such thing as “out” and “in”. All is in us, and it is only by being aware of the forces that are setting us into motion from within, that it is possible to turn the direction around. The turning point lies within, and that is the awareness of what we are in reality. It is only self-perception, the awareness of what is, that has the power of radical transformation. ✧

“All students should understand something about investigations into the superphysical, in order that they may avoid the blind credulity which accepts all, on the one side, and the equally blind incredulity which rejects all, on the other . . .

Our one great danger, as HPB (Madame Blavatsky) recognised, is the danger of getting into a groove, and so becoming fossilized in the forms of belief that many hold today. . . . The Society is intended, always has been intended, to be a living body and not a fossil, and a living body grows and develops, adapting itself to new conditions . . .

Nothing could be more fatal to a Society like ours than to hallmark as true, special forms of belief, and look askance at anyone challenging them. . . . If the Society is to live far into the future, as I believe it will, it must be prepared to recognize now, quite frankly and freely, that our knowledge is fragmentary, that it is partial, that it is liable to very great modifications as we learn more and understand better . . .

. . . Generations far into the future, ourselves in new bodies, will still be extending the limits of the unknown; we do not want our limbs to be fettered then by appeals to our present researches, exalted into scriptures, used as walls to bar our onward progress then.”

Annie Besant
Adyar Pamphlet, No. 36, 1913

Prayer: Its Nature, Types, and Efficacy — II

LILY CHONG

Classes of Prayers and How They Are Answered

Let us see how prayers are classified and how they will be answered. When someone utters a prayer of *Class A*, that is, for *worldly advantages and physical necessities*, there are several means by which his or her prayer may be answered. Such a person has a conception of God as the supplier of his own needs, in close and immediate touch with his daily necessities, and he turns to God for his daily bread as naturally as a child turns to his father or mother.

A typical instance of this is the case of George Müller, of Bristol, before he was known to the world as a philanthropist, when he was beginning his charitable work, without friends or money. He prayed for food for the children, and funds for the immediate needs always came in sufficiently. What had happened? His prayer was a strong energetic desire, creating a form energized by the intensity and earnestness of the prayer. The desire gives the form its *life and directing energy*. That vibrating, living creature has

but one idea, the idea that ensouls it — help and food is wanted — *and it ranges the subtle world, seeking.*

A charitable person desires to give help to the needy, is seeking the opportunity to give. The desire-form therefore finds its target and acts upon her. It rouses in her brain, vibrations identical with its own — George Müller, his orphanage, its needs — and she sees the outlet for her charitable impulse, draws a cheque, and sends it.

Quite naturally, Müller would say that “God” put it into the heart of such a person to give the needed help. In the deepest sense, that is true, since there is no life, no energy, in the universe that does not come from the One, but the intermediate agency, according to the divine laws, is the *desire-form created by the prayer.*

The result can be obtained equally well by a deliberate exercise of the will, without any prayer, by a person who understands the mechanism concerned, and the way to put it in motion. Such a person thinks clearly of what she needs and creates a thought form. Then by a deliberate

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exercise of her will, she would either send it to a definite person, or to range the neighbourhood and be attracted by a charitably disposed person. There is no prayer here, but a *conscious exercise of will and knowledge*.

Most people, however, are ignorant of the forces of the invisible worlds and not used to exercising their wills, concentrating their minds, and sending out an earnest desire. They find it easier to pray than to put forth their own strength by deliberate mental effort. They would *doubt their own power*, even if they understood the theory, and doubt is fatal to the exercise of the will. That the person who prays does not understand the machinery he sets going, does not in any way affect the result.

It is like a child who stretches out his hand and grasps an object. He does not need to understand anything of the working of the muscles, nor of the electrical and chemical changes set up by the movement in muscles and nerves, nor does he need to elaborately calculate the distance of the object; he wills to take hold of the thing he wants and the apparatus of his body obeys his will though he does not even know of its existence.

So it is with someone who prays, unknowing of the creative force of his thought, of the living creature he has sent out to do his bidding. He acts as unconsciously as the child and, like the child, grasps what he wants. But this is not the only way in which prayers of this class are answered. Someone temporarily out of the physical body and at work in the

invisible worlds, or a passing Angel, may hear the cry for help, and may then put the thought of sending the required aid into the brain of some charitable person. Very many prayers are answered in this way, the *link between the need and the supply being some invisible Intelligence*. This is part of the ministry of the lower angels, and they will thus supply personal necessities, as well as bring aid to charitable undertakings.

However, we know that sometimes, although we are in great need and pray hard for something, our prayers are not answered. Why? Well, the failure of prayers of this class is due to another hidden cause. Every man has contracted debts which have to be paid; his wrong thoughts, desires, and actions have built up obstacles in his way. *A debt of wrong is discharged by a payment of suffering*; he must bear the consequences of the wrongs he has done. For instance, someone condemned to die of starvation by his own past wrongdoing, may hurl his prayers against that destiny in vain.

The desire-form he creates will *seek but will not find*; it will be met and thrown back by the current of past wrong. Here, as everywhere, we are living in a realm of law, and forces may be *modified or entirely frustrated* by the play of other forces with which they come into contact. For example, two similar forces may be applied to two similar balls; in one case, one other force may be applied to the ball, and it may *strike the mark* aimed at; in the other, a second force may strike the ball and send it *entirely out of its course*. And so

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with two similar prayers: one may go on its way, unopposed and affect its object; the other may be flung aside by the far stronger force of a past wrong. One prayer is answered, the other unanswered; but in both cases the result is according to law.

Let us now consider *Class B*, that is, *prayers for help in moral and intellectual difficulties*, when we are morally distressed or having difficulties understanding something spiritual. This kind of prayers has a double result: first, they *act directly to attract help*, and second, they *react on the person who prays*. How? First, they draw the attention of the Angels and the disciples working outside the body, who are ever seeking to help the bewildered mind, and thus counsel, encouragement, and illumination are thrown into the brain-consciousness, thus answering prayer in the most direct way.

Second, ideas are suggested which clear away an intellectual difficulty, or throw light on an obscure moral problem, or the sweetest comfort is poured into the distressed heart, soothing its disturbances and calming its anxieties. And truly, if no Angels were passing that way, the cry of the distressed would reach the “Hidden Heart of Heaven”, and a messenger would be sent to carry comfort, perhaps an Angel, ever ready to respond on feeling the impulse bearing the divine will to help.

The second result is that the prayers react on the person who prays. This is what is sometimes called a *subjective answer* to such prayers. His prayer places his heart and mind in a *receptive attitude*, and this *stills the lower nature*, allowing

the strength and illuminative power of the higher to stream into it unchecked.

The *currents of energy*, which normally flow outwards from the Inner Man, are, as a rule, directed to the external world, and are utilized in the ordinary affairs of life; but when this brain-consciousness turns away from the outer world and directs its gaze inwards, it becomes a vessel able to receive and to hold, instead of a mere conduit-pipe between the interior and exterior worlds. In the silence obtained by the cessation of the noises of external activities, the “still small voice” of the Spirit can make itself heard, and the concentrated attention of the expectant mind enables it to catch the voice of the Silence, that is, the voice of the Inner Self.

Let us now consider another kind of Class B prayers, which are slightly different from the earlier kind, as it is somewhat higher in nature — these prayers are *seeking spiritual enlightenment and growth*. In this case help comes from without and even more *from within*. All helpers, whether angelic or human, will respond. They are always most eagerly seeking to forward spiritual progress, seizing on every opportunity offered by the upward-aspiring soul. Moreover, the longing for such growth liberates energy of a high kind, calling forth an answer from the spiritual realm. Once more the law of *sympathetic vibrations* asserts itself, and the lofty aspiration is answered by a vibration synchronous with itself. The divine Life is ever pressing from above against the limits that bind it, and when the upward-rising force strikes against those limits

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from below, the separating wall is broken through and the divine Life floods the Soul.

When a man feels that inflow of spiritual life, he cries: "My prayer has been answered, and God has sent down his Spirit into my heart." True — yet he rarely understands that such Spirit is ever seeking entrance, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." (Rev. 3:20) The general principle with regard to all prayers of this class is that *the more we submerge the personality and the greater we aspire to the Divine*, the greater will be the response from the wider life within and without us. The trouble is that we separate ourselves.

If we cease the separation and make ourselves one with the greater, we find that light and life and strength flow into us. When the separate will is turned away from its own objects and set to serve the divine purpose, then the strength of the Divine pours into it. It is like if you swim against the current, you will make slow progress; but with it, you are carried on by all the force of the current.

In every department of Nature, the divine energies are working. *When we align ourselves with the forces of Nature, they will aid us along tremendously.* Hence, in prayer, the divine energies work for the man who, by his prayer, seeks to work as part of the Divine.

Now we come to the third class of prayer. The highest form of prayer in the previous Class B, when the aspirant prays for spiritual growth and enlightenment, merges into Class C. Here, prayer loses

its asking character, and becomes either a meditation on, or a worship of, the Divine. The lower mind is stilled so that the Spirit escaping from it, rises into contemplation of the divine Perfection, and reflects within himself the divine Image.

"Meditation is silent and *unuttered* prayer, or, as Plato expressed it, 'the ardent turning of the soul towards the divine; not to ask for any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer), but for good itself — for the universal Supreme Good.'" (H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 10)

This is the prayer that, by this liberating of the Spirit, is the means of union between man and the Divine. By the *working of the laws of thought* a man becomes that which he thinks, and when he meditates on the divine perfections or virtues, the spirit is freed, separateness is left behind and union with the Divine is achieved. He gradually reproduces in himself that on which his mind is fixed. Such a mind, shaped to the higher, frees the Spirit, and it leaps upward to its source.

Prayer is thus lost in union and separateness is left behind. Worship also, from which all petition is absent, and which seeks to outpour itself in sheer love of the Perfect, is the easiest means of union with the Divine. The consciousness contemplates in mute ecstasy the image of perfection. The man as a free spirit thus soars upwards into realms where the limits of the intellect are transcended, and feels and knows far more than he can tell in words on his return. *Such prayer is the prayer of the mystics, sages, and*

saints who can rise to great heights of communion with the Divine. Such prayer irradiates the worshipper and brings to him the reality which no words may convey to those who do not know it.

So, how should we pray?

When we understand the nature of prayers and how they are answered or their effects, we can better understand the necessity of prayer, especially of the loftier kind, for all who study the higher life.

For the student of Theosophy, prayer should be of the kinds grouped under Class B, that is, *for help in moral and intellectual difficulties and spiritual growth, and he should endeavour to rise to the pure meditation and worship of the last class, avoiding altogether the lower kinds.* For him the teaching of Iamblichus, that is, the Master Hilarion, the Chohan of the 5th Ray, is useful:

- ◆ Continual exercise of prayer nourishes the intellect.
- ◆ It is the divine key which opens us to the higher worlds.
- ◆ It does not cease till it raises us to the summit of all, and it.
- ◆ It purges the soul of everything base and low, and purifies it, lifting it into Divinity.

Prayers for the Departed

We should just briefly consider prayers for the departed. There is no doubt that prayers will definitely help them, especially if they are ignorant. For, what is a prayer for the dead but an expression of an earnest wish and loving thought for those who have passed on before us?

We who study Theosophy know well

that in physical life such wishes and thoughts are real and objective things — storage batteries of spiritual force which will discharge themselves only when they reach the persons towards whom they are directed; there is no difference in their action when that person no longer has a physical body.

The prayer or the strong loving wish for a particular departed always reaches him and helps him. This is part of the way the great law of cause and effect works. Even the earnest general prayer or wish for the good of the dead as a whole, which is normally offered by the religious orders, has produced effects to help the departed, though it is likely to be a vaguer and therefore a less efficient force.

Should we pray to those departed for “lucky numbers” or help for our business, for health, for our children to do well in exams? These are selfish prayers and will only pull them back. We should pray for the departed, as with those living, to move on:

- ◆ for *perfect rest* from all earthly thought and care, so that their progress towards the heaven-world may be undisturbed; and
- ◆ that the *perpetual light and joy of the divine love* may shine upon them from the higher and more spiritual part of their own nature, drawing them ever upward, so that their progress may be rapid.

Healing Prayers

Lastly, how should we pray for our dear ones or friends who are suffering from some illness? We should concentrate our thoughts on the Lord Christ or the Lord Maitreya, depending on our faith, or the Great Healer of the World. We then

Prayer: Its Nature, Types, and Efficacy — II

reverently enter that presence in thought, drawing the sufferer mentally into that presence also. We visualize the sufferer as radiantly healthy and flooded through-out his whole nature with the golden, glowing, and healing Life-force. The following or similar prayer may then be uttered with powerful intent: “May the healing power of the Lord descend upon *so-and-so*. May the healing angels en-compass them.”

After a pause during which the thought is powerfully yet reverently centred upon the Lord, his outpoured healing power and the healing angels, the meditation may be closed with the words: “May the light of his love enfold them forever. Amen, or Aum.” Healing angels have been found to continue their ministrations for at least 24 hours after such an invocation. Regular practice by this or similar methods will quickly demonstrate that angelic cooperation in spiritual healing can be efficacious.

We are warned against the exercise of *personal will* to attain desired results. Once the healing power has been invoked, with the fullest faith, the results should be left to *karma and the evolutionary needs of the individuals*. Surrender to the divine will and the Great Law by uttering such words as “according to the Divine Will”. The occultist learns to work without thought of results. Under no circumstance should he use his will

power and occult knowledge to obtain by force *personal, material benefits for himself or for others*. Such would be grey, if not black magic, bringing dire results.

Conclusion

Out of such study and practice of prayer, one inevitable result arises, as we begin to understand and the wider range of human life unfolds before us:

◆ We see that by knowledge our strength is much increased, that there are forces around us that we can understand and control, and that in proportion to our knowledge is our power.

◆ We learn that Divinity lies hidden within ourselves, and that nothing that is impermanent and fleeting can satisfy that God within each one of us.

◆ We understand that only union with the One, the Perfect, can still our cravings. Then there gradually arises within us the will to set ourselves at one with the Divine.

◆ We cease to seek vehemently to change circumstances, and to throw fresh causes into the stream of effects. We recognize ourselves as agents rather than actors, channels rather than sources, servants rather than masters, and seek to discover the divine purposes and to work in harmony with them.

When we have reached that point, we would have risen above all prayer, except that which is meditation and worship. ✧

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The Mahatmas and Monetary Matters — Early TS Years

RAMKUMAR SINGH

IT may sound strange to some how a Mahatma can be concerned with monetary matters! But it is a hard reality; money is needed to function in the world. A good cause like the Theosophical Society (TS) also needs a supply of funds. It is interesting how the Mahatmas extended helping hands to the Founders and a few others in the early years until the TS became a self-supporting entity in its home called “Adyar”. There are 18 instances of such cases which I have gathered here that are worth sharing with you along with the references:

1. On 15 October 1878, in New York, Mahatma Morya (M.) gave H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) gold coins for postage needs. (HPB, *Collected Writings* [CW], vol. 1, p. 412)

2. On 30 November 1878, in New York, H. S. Olcott’s (HSO) sister, Belle Mitchell, escorted Mahatma M. for a walk and drive, and visited Macy’s department store. She was out with him from noon to 4 pm, and M. materialized some Indian rupees. (Ibid., p. 423)

3. On 10 December 1878, Mahatma M. borrowed \$100 from HSO. (Ibid., p. 429)

4. In New York, M. deposited \$1,000 in a bank account of HSO. This was to reimburse HSO for lost income while undertaking some work for the Mahatmas. A bank employee confirmed to HSO that it was deposited by “an Asiatic”. (HSO, *Old Diary Leaves* [ODL], vol. 1, p. 436–7)

5. In 1879, the Founders moved from New York City to Bombay [now Mumbai]. The Mahatmas paid the household expenses until the Society became self-supporting. (Ibid., p. 437)

6. Mahatma M. gave 100 rupees to relieve HSO’s sister, Belle Mitchell, who “with six small children” was “starving in America”. (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* [ML], chron. ed., p. 364)

7. In January 1882 M. mentioned in a letter written to HSO that he will give him “Rs 172 more to send” for some purpose. (C. Jinarājadāsa, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series [LMW-2], Letter No. 35, p. 77)

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The Mahatmas and Monetary Matters — Early TS Years

8. In November 1882 Mahatma Koot Hoomi (KH) writes in a letter to Mohini M. Chatterji directing him to go to Bombay to attend the TS Convention as “the delegate of the Bengal Society” and promises: “I will pay your journey, if the Society of Calcutta refuses doing it.” (*LMW-2*, p. 107)

9. Mahatma KH sent Rs 500 to HSO toward expenses for the first international Convention of the TS at Adyar in 1883. (Josephine Ransom, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, p. 186)

10. Mahatma M. sent Rs 100 to HSO for the same purpose. (*Ibid.*)

11. In February 1883 Mahatma KH sent Rs 150 to HSO for making a Buddha stupa [shrine] at Adyar. (*Ibid.*, p. 177)

12. Mahatma KH gave money to A. P. Sinnett to be given to various traveling chelas. (*ML*, a few letters)

13. “A Master” sent the first donation of Rs 100 for starting a fund for instituting the T. Subba Row Medal [awarded for major contributions to Theosophical literature]. (Sven Eek, *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*, p. 672)

14. HPB sent money to Gerry Brown via Western Union Telegraph. She got it from John King (a Mahatma?) (*HSO, ODL*, vol. 1, p. 442)

15. HPB had access to money “when she actually needed it and when it was right that she should have it”. (*Ibid.*, p. 436)

16. All Adepts have access to funds

for emergency use. There are hidden treasures, guarded by elementals, by “maya”, or “illusion”, who respond to certain coded passwords known only to “authorized users”. (*Ibid.*, p. 438, and HPB, *CW*, vol. IX, p. 116–117)

17. HPB carried a box for a few years while traveling, not knowing its contents, given to her by her Master, Mahatma M. It contained 23,000 francs. It was to be given to a man in Buffalo, NY State, a few years later. When the man got this money he was about to kill himself with a gun [due to a financial crisis], so his suicide was averted. This man must have been someone very close to the Mahatma, it seems. (*HSO, ODL*, vol. 1, p. 440)

18. A. P. Sinnett lost his job as editor of the *Pioneer* in Allahabad, India, when the newspaper was bought by missionaries who disapproved of his interest in the Society. The Mahatmas tried to keep Sinnett in India. They contemplated the floating of a new paper, the *Phoenix*. It is interesting how everyone, up to the Chief (The Mahachohan), was interested. The venture somehow failed to get off the ground. Even Rabindranath Tagore and the Maharaja of Benares showed interest. Ultimately Sinnett moved to London in 1882. (*ML*, p. 335–423)

One may be amazed how a venture can fail in which there is the involvement of “higher beings”. But that is the mystery — their world has quite different rules than ours, of which we know very little.

Theosophy: A Path of Self-Discovery

KRISTA UMBJARV

WHILE trying to understand how people outside of the Theosophical Society (TS) perceive Theosophy or theosophists, I have often come across a view which considers Theosophy to be rather theoretical, not having much to do with daily life, and theosophists are thought to study and read much. Maybe you have had a similar or a different kind of experience, but it seems to be true that in the TS, knowledge is often considered as something that is to be sought and acquired. Usually, those who know more and especially those who know and are experts in *The Secret Doctrine* are respected for their knowledge.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) had said that the path of Theosophy is one of *jñāna-yoga*, or the yoga of knowledge and wisdom. In another place she has also said that Theosophy is not for mental slugs. Hence, it seems to be all natural that people who are in the TS have an inclination to study and acquire knowledge. We try to progress by studying, learning and asking questions. The concepts we form on the way will shape the basis of our understanding of what

Theosophy and the spiritual path mean.

Although on one hand we are encouraged to study and learn, on the other the Masters have said that one of the most difficult tasks on the path is to unlearn. Unlearn what? Does it mean that we should unlearn or forget all our acquired knowledge and information? Or does it mean unlearning the affirmations, convictions, and beliefs that we have formed based on this knowledge and the general culture that we have begun to take as a norm?

Because of the way we believe the ego or self to exist — it is constantly seeking psychological security — knowledge and studies are no exception as possible means to provide it. In fact, the ego can use anything to reinforce its existence provided it is allowed to do so. Knowledge and studies can serve like bricks that we add to the walls of our castle of security so that they could be higher and higher and make us safer. Often I have met people who have told me that they feel that they do not know enough. Although from a certain standpoint it may be true, from another angle it seems to imply that in the background of the mind there is

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an idea that a day would come when they will feel they know enough, that a certain level of security has been achieved. I wonder whether such a day will come, although more knowledge may be accumulated.

Michael Ramscar, a psycholinguist, has shown that with increased knowledge the human brain works slower. His research also showed that highly educated people (with a PhD degree), or the ones who have supposedly more knowledge, were worse in creating or learning associations between things that are not usually related. In other words, according to the research, people with greater education and knowledge had more difficulties in actually learning than those who were less educated. At first sight, these findings are unexpected because, according to common logic, one would tend to think that more knowledgeable people have greater learning skills.

Yet this is explained by what science has discovered in the past hundred years about learning; namely, that learning is not only sensitive to things that are associated, but also that learning is sensitive to things that dissociate from one another. What does it mean practically? More simply, it would imply for instance that the more we have read such theosophical literature, where Theosophy has been described as something unchanging and permanent, the more difficult it would be for us to create the association that Theosophy is constantly changing and should be expressed in the form that responds best to current conditions.

Another neurological study, this time

with highly trained sportsmen, showed that their skill was related to the fact that years of training had created a shortcut of neural pathways in a certain region of their brain. This strenuous training had not only created a shortcut, but the years of practising had also made a vast number of alternative neural pathways to disappear.

So what does it mean to be expert or specialist in something? Based on the research, it seems to imply that when a certain kind of knowledge or skill has been acquired, and the more it is anchored, the more difficult it would be to acquire something different of the same sort. This again implies that a kind of crystallization is very probable. In our context, expertise in theosophical literature might lead to crystallization of its ideas and concepts. This might create a circle of habit, where a thing or an idea is thought to be true because there has been repeated exposition to it and at one point we just stop asking questions about it. So instead of dealing with real life *as it is*, we might, in certain cases, be juggling only with concepts and ideas.

In the letters from the Masters we can find many personal instructions given specifically to their recipients. There are not too many instructions given to all members, but one of them was given in a letter to Francesca Arundale. Since it is an instruction, it does not say “would you please do this, or try”; instead, it says clearly what should be done:

You should, even as a simple member — much more as an officer — learn that you may teach, acquire spiritual knowledge

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and strength, that the weak may lean upon you, and the sorrowing victims of ignorance learn from you the cause and remedy of their pain.

“Simple member” means *every single member* of the TS. Does it not imply that we, as TS members, should then really know the cause and remedy of the pain to be able to give relief, and not as book knowledge, or some nice and round theory or concept, but *as a reality*?

There are people who sometimes say that they do not really suffer, that sometimes there are problems in life, but fundamentally everything is fine. Yet we can observe that wherever there is belief in a separate self, there is suffering. Whether one is aware of it or not, is a different matter. It is as if we were born with a splinter in our finger and, having always lived with it, we think that it is a normal part of life. It is only when the splinter has been pulled out, that the suffering it caused can truly be understood.

To recognize human suffering and to see its cause and also remedy, we have to inevitably look at ourselves, because we cannot help others unless we can recognize it in ourselves, looking truly at what *is*, and not imagining what we think is there or would wish to be there.

A while ago, when I was discussing with some people about observing oneself, a person told me that when one really looks at oneself, it hurts; that it is so difficult to truly do it, because it hurts. But it is normal that it hurts, because it means we deal with something that is real, because we touch a sensitive point

of our being. It does not mean that hurting or suffering is the only way of learning, because it is not, but that, when it occurs, it shows that we are dealing with the facts. If looking at ourselves, our tendencies, and so on, we always feel secure and comfortable, we should really ask ourselves whether we are not playing with some pebbles in the periphery of our being, never touching the heart of the matter, or what is real in that present state.

When we truly look inside and see things in ourselves that hurt, it is often considered as a sign, or point of weakness, partly because it does not correspond to the idea of what the ego has made us think of ourselves in its incessant building-up work. Yet when we look at it more closely, we can see that in our present state this so-called point of weakness can become a point of deep strength. This is because we may learn that every single human being who still has some ignorance left, whose ego is constantly trying to reconstruct itself because its nature has not yet been completely understood, goes through the same experience, the same process, the same pain though with some variations, some nuances. We will then see that what we consider as our experience is not something personal, but universal.

Every time we see in ourselves a disturbing emotion, fear, insecurity, and so forth, we can at the same time recognize that this is what humanity is going through. We can see and recognize the causes of humanity's pain in ourselves. In the measure that we have recognized pain and its causes in ourselves, we can

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see it truly in others when we meet them. We do not have to be a seer to know; it is enough to look into their eyes, behind appearances, to see sadness, fear, insecurity, desire, anger, and so on. This does not mean that we label a person for being this or that, but that we recognize suffering and its causes in others as we have recognized it in ourselves. Having been able to see the process in ourselves will naturally bring about compassion, because we know what it all means. Eventually, we reach a point where it is no longer personal suffering, but the suffering of humanity that is seen in this particular way. Thus by observing what we are and how we function, we discover the world at the same time. This looking will be an unceasing and ever-deepening process.

In the TS, when we try to do our part, do we share something that is safe and sure for us and give what we wish to give, or do we look deeply with care and sensitivity, and try to give what is

actually needed? Do we share theories and concepts, as nice as they may be, or do we try to provide a solution? Some-times it is asked, how to present Theosophy in a way relevant to the current world. What seems to be needed is a medicine to heal the pain and suffering, because they still exist. Similarly, they existed when the Master's instruction was given, and in the same way they will continue to exist in the future, because human conditioning does not change as quickly as one would like.

All human beings seek happiness and try to avoid suffering. The question is how we define it, be it consciously or unconsciously. HPB expressed the same idea in an explicit way:

No spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through the bulk of Humanity. It is only when the whole of Humanity has attained happiness that the individual can hope to become permanently happy — for the individual is an inseparable part of the Whole. ✧

Man has acquired great knowledge in the fields of science, technology and in all temporal, material fields and by it he has provided himself with all that is necessary for living a more comfortable life. But the misery of the mind — the inner body — does not seem to be decreasing.

Samdhong Rimpoche
Buddhist Meditation

**ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**

Adyar

Theme: "Truth and Beauty: A Field Beyond"

31 December 2018 to 5 January 2019

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Sunday, 30 December

8.00 am General Council Meeting
2.00 pm General Council Meeting

Monday, 31 December

8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
 OPENING OF THE CONVENTION
 Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*

3.30 pm Reception

5.00 pm THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE LECTURE
 "Origin and Evolution of Species: Beyond Darwinism"
 Prof. P. C. Kesavan
 Emeritus Professor,
 M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, India

7.30 pm Ritual of the Mystic Star

Tuesday, 1 January

8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
 SHORT LECTURES
 "Truth, Goodness and Beauty"
 Dr Deepa Padhi, *International Vice-President, TS Adyar*
 "Search for Truth and Glimpses of Beauty on the Spiritual Path"
 Mr Abraham Oron, *Israel*

9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I
 Address: "State of the Indian Section"
 by Mr Pradeep Gohil, *General Secretary, Indian Section*

5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
 "Panca Niyamas — The Five Laws of Cause and Effect"
 Ven. Ananda Olande, *Sri Lanka*

7.30 pm Blavatsky Bungalow Inauguration

Convention Programme

Wednesday, 2 January

- 8.00 am Devotional Meeting
Ms Chandrika Mehta, *India*
- 10.00 am SYMPOSIUM
“Truth and Beauty”
Mr Shikhar Agnihotri, *India*; Dr Barbara Hebert, *USA*;
Dr Isaac Jauli, *Mexico*
- 3.00 pm PARALLEL SESSIONS
Meditation workshop, Ven. Ananda Olande
Mission Statement discussion
Chanting workshop, Mr Harihara Raghavan
Sacred Spiritual Songs in Hebrew with English translations,
Mrs Daphna and Mr Shmuel Koren
- 5.00 pm BESANT LECTURE
“Is Conscience Dead?”
Mr Gopalkrishna Gandhi,
Former Governor of West Bengal
- 7.30 pm Dance Program
Dr Padma Subramaniam

Thursday, 3 January

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
PANEL — “Our Work: A Field Beyond Thoughts”
Prof. C. A. Shinde, *Adyar*; Ms Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, *France*;
Mr Minor Lile, *USA*; Mrs Clemice Petter, *Adyar*;
Mr Pedro Oliveira as Moderator, *Australia*
- 9.30 am INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II
“Spiritual Self-transformation”
- 3.00 pm THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE
“Beyond Suffering”
Ms Nancy Secrest, *TOS International Secretary, USA/India*
Mrs Suvralina Mohanty, *India*; Mrs Svitlana Gavrylenko, *Ukraine*
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
“Panca Niyamas - The Five Laws of Cause and Effect”
Ven. Ananda Olande, *Sri Lanka*
- 7.30 pm RENOVATION UPDATE
Upcoming Projects, Mr Michiel Haas, *the Netherlands*
Visual Tour of Adyar, Mr A. Sureshbabu, *India*
Hosted by Mr Tim Boyd, *TS Adyar*

Convention Programme

Friday, 4 January

- 8.00 am Universal Prayer and Meditation
SHORT LECTURES
“Expressing Compassion through Truth and Beauty”
Mr Erwin Bomas, *Point Loma, the Netherlands*
“The Experience of Beauty as Pathway to Your Higher Self”
Mrs Kathy Gann, *USA*
- 9.30 am QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- 3.00 pm PARALLEL SESSIONS
Meditation workshop, Ven. Ananda Olande
Mission Statement discussion
Chanting workshop, Mr Harihara Raghavan
Sacred Spiritual Songs in Hebrew with English translations,
Mrs Daphna and Mr Shmuel Koren
- 5.00 pm PUBLIC LECTURE
“A Path to Beauty”
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
- 7.30 pm EVENING PROGRAMME

Saturday, 5 January

- 8.00 am Prayers of the Religions
CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION
Mr Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
- 9.30 am Admission of New Members
- 3.00 pm Youth Forum

OTHER ACTIVITIES

EXHIBITIONS:

SERIES DISPLAY — Some of the actual Mahatma Letters as seen in C. Jinarajadasa’s
Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, vols I & II

MUSEUM — Prominent people associated with the Theosophical Movement

BLAVATSKY BUNGALOW — Historical pictures of Blavatsky Bungalow

LIBRARY DISPLAY — Old manuscripts and rare & old books

Theosophical Work around the World



International President, Mr Tim Boyd, inaugurating the new building of Malleswaram Theosophical Lodge in the city of Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore), India, on 13 October 2018, prior to the celebrations on the occasion of their centenary



Mr Tim Boyd and members of the Karnataka Theosophical Federation (KTF) release the centenary souvenir of the Malleswaram Lodge on 14 October, during the 109th Annual Conference of the KTF. Standing to Mr Boyd's left is Prof. C. A. Shinde, and to his right is Mr B. V. Thippeswamy, President of the KTF

Theosophical Work around the World



As part of the Theosophical Society's Foundation Day celebration on 17 November at the international headquarters, Adyar, students of Bala Vidya Mandir Adyar and Sprouts Montessori performed varied songs on unity, children, life, and song



The energetic children's choir performing on Foundation Day at the TS Adyar Main Hall, under the direction of Mr Srinivas Krishnan (Photographer for Foundation Day: Mr Kriyang Karia)

Theosophical Work around the World

India

International President of the Theosophical Society (TS), Mr Tim Boyd, inaugurated the new building of Malleswaram Theosophical Lodge in the centre of Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) on the morning of 13 October 2018, followed by the centenary celebrations of the Lodge on “Theosophy and the Theosophical Society”. He released the centenary souvenir of the Lodge and gave an inspiring talk on the theme.

A small but dedicated team of members was instrumental in constructing the much larger two-storied new structure for the Lodge, with generous contributions from inspired supporters. The old building, which gave way to the new, had been constructed in 1916. Mr B. V. Thippeswamy, President of the Karnataka Theosophical Federation (KTF) spoke on “The Awakening of Intelligence”. In the evening, Dr L. Nagesh, National Lecturer, led the panel discussion on “Theosophy — Synthesis of all Religions”, with four members participating in the panel.

The next morning Mr Boyd inaugurated the 109th Annual Conference of the KTF, releasing several theosophical books — two reprints and two translations into the local Kannada language. He then gave a thought-provoking inaugural address. Prof. C. A Shinde, National Lecturer and Librarian of the Adyar Library and Research Centre, gave a talk on “The

Art of Living and the Art of Loving”. Mr Boyd delivered the valedictory address in the evening. Over 450 delegates from 53 Lodges all over Karnataka and beyond participated in the Conference.

Adyar — Foundation Day

The 143rd Foundation Day at Adyar on 17 November had a special program this year, starting with a one-hour children’s choir concert led by Artistic Director Mr Srinivas Krishnan. Coming from Bala Vidya Mandir and Sprouts Montessori schools, 94 children sang with bright clear voices melodies by Adele, A. R. Rahman, Arijit Singh, Bruno Mars, Josh Groban, and Rabindranath Tagore. The day was dedicated to the founding of the TS, but the concert also included a celebration of the international Children’s Day. The audience of around 285 included parents, many friends, and residents of Adyar.

After the concert, the Foundation Day celebration continued with an audience of about 80 with the traditional programme, which was introduced with touching words by Mrs Clemice Petter. Mrs Sonal Murali then gave an impressive speech on “Seekers after Truth”. Ms Jaishree Kannan closed with a beautiful chant, followed by participants offering flowers in memory of the Founders, H. P. Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott. It was a morning of energy, sincerity, and dignity.

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