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Editor

S. SUNDARAM

A STEP FORWARD

There have been certain outstanding personalities in human history who stood by what they considered to be true and just. With unflinching courage they fought against the adverse circumstances and set examples for others as to how a person should endure pain and hardship and perform his *Manava Dharma* in a sincere, dedicated and true manner.

The month of May reminds us of three great seers of humanity—Lord Buddha, H.P.B. and J. Krishnamurti. They were visionaries and as it is said the visionaries are able to perceive the whole picture in totality. Their life and teachings show that though suffering and miseries are fact of life their causes can be located and way to remove them is also available. Their teachings if understood and followed in right perspective then the world can definitely be made a better place to live in.

It is pertinent that an individual's intrinsic moral force must guide and shape his mental make-up and his external activities. For this our effort must be to observe carefully, our every thought and action in their totality, and thereby understand and go beyond narrow personal considerations and outlooks. It is necessary to awaken the moral force lying within, which alone should guide thoughts and action in the right direction. And this can be done effectively and in a meaningful way only when one is sincerely following his inner conscience.

So we must ponder over the question as to what is preventing us from doing so? What are the factors and forces that overpower us and prevent us from having right attitude and perspective and from taking right step at the right moment. Giving serious thought to these and several such questions may help us to solve the problems, tension and aggression by proper understating and goodwill.

As once I mentioned: 'Let us be aware and awakened to what the great ones stood for, what they lived for— not caring for achievements, nor worrying about success or failure but putting their best efforts and energy towards a noble mission; all the while being aware that they were serving the Supreme One'.

In this ongoing journey let us keep asking ourselves whether we have been able to enrich our knowledge and deepen our wisdom and whether these reflect in our day-to-day dealings and activities? When we will realize and become awakened, accountable and responsible for our ideas, behaviour and conduct - then only, even if we are alone, there will be a positive, effective and lasting impact of our thoughts and actions.

THE RIVER DELTA

RECENTLY I was in California for a programme to engage in a public conversation with Michael Murphy, a brilliant man who has led a remarkable life. Although he is an author of a number of books which have been influential in the field of contemporary spirituality, he is probably best known for his role in founding the Esalen Institute. Esalen was started in 1962 and has been a force in the Western world in developing the teachers and the conversation about human potential and peak states of human experience — what the TS might describe as the 'powers latent in man'. Most of today's prominent teachers in the field of contemporary spirituality have made their way through Esalen's doors at one time or another.

It was a two-hour conversation that could have gone on much longer. One of the fascinating features for me was that although the evening was sold out, it was not an audience that had more than a passing familiarity with Theosophy or the Theosophical Society. As is necessarily the case for anyone exploring contemporary approaches to spirituality, many of them had come across the TS or its literature, but for a variety of reasons it was not enough. Some of them in their study of Theosophy found themselves turned off by the difficult Victorian English that was common in our early literature. Some others who had studied a little more ran into difficulties correctly understanding the challenging ideas around races and rounds. A couple of people had problems with some of the early Theosophical teachings which addressed the concept of root races and with the way these ideas were later distorted in the development of some racist doctrines in Nazi Germany.

During the question-and-answer part of the evening a gentleman asked me a couple of probing questions. He was a man who clearly had delved into a study of the TS's history and at least some of the teachings. His introduction to the first question called attention to a number of prominent people who had left the TS to pursue other approaches to the Ageless Wisdom. He pointed to Rudolf Steiner, who left the TS taking with him most of the German section of the TS to form the Anthroposophical Society. He brought up the separations of J. Krishnamurti after disbanding the Order of the Star, of William Quan Judge, and others. After outlining some of the history of these highly

regarded people the question he asked was, 'For an organization that promotes unity, truth, and brotherhood, how could you explain so many "schisms"?' From the manner in which the question was framed it was clear that it was not merely about TS history, but about the credibility of the TS in advancing some of its high ideals. I got the impression that my questioner had already made up his mind about it.

As someone who frequently finds himself speaking to groups of people, one of the things I have encountered over the years is that during question-and-answer sessions often people ask 'leading questions' — those that walk you through a person's beliefs or knowledge, eventually leading you to the answer that confirms those beliefs. These are always wonderful opportunities to 'step outside of the box' and look at things from a different point of view.

On one occasion during the Buddha's life a woman approached him with such a question. Her only child had just died. In her grief she carried the dead child to her neighbours asking them to give her some medicine to revive him. The neighbours pitied her seeing that the child was clearly gone. They felt that she had lost her senses. At length she found a man who told her, 'I cannot give you any medicine for this child, but I know a physician who can', and he sent her to see the Buddha. In her desperation she came to him with one question in mind, 'Can you give me a medicine that will bring my child back to life?' It was a simple, straightforward question that demanded an equally straightforward answer — either it was 'yes', or it was 'no'.

The Buddha responded that he would make her such a medicine, if she could bring him the one necessary ingredient, a handful of mustard seeds — the most common seasoning in Indian cooking at the time. In her joy the woman jumped up to procure it. He then told her that the only condition was that the mustard seed had to come from a household where no one had lost a child, husband, wife, parent, or friend. She went from house to house in the village. By the end of the day it became clear that no such household existed. She buried her son and returned to the Buddha with a changed level of inquiry. In place of the request to give a medicine to alter the cycle of birth and death, she now asked to know about the nature of life, death, and impermanence.

In responding to my questioner that evening a strong image came to mind. It was that of a great river at the point where it meets the sea — like the Nile, Ganges, or Mississippi River deltas. Seen from high above such deltas resemble a tree, with a number of branches flowing through the sediment the river has carried along in its journey to merge with the

sea. Where smaller rivers and streams flow into the main river they are called tributaries; where they branch out at the entrance to the sea or ocean they are called distributaries.

Each of the individuals involved in the various schisms were, like HPB, subject to the influence of their personalities. Many of them were also sincere and intuitive people who had been affected by some profound insight resulting from their exposure to the wisdom tradition. Through their lives and vision countless people have been exposed to some of the nuances of the One Tradition that Theosophy embodies.

The Theosophical Society came into being as the most recent expression of the Ageless Wisdom tradition. Much like a river, it brought life-giving waters to a contemporary context that had become arid from the materialistic tendencies of scientism and the superstitious urgings of the religions of the day. Both the wisdom of Theosophy and the vehicle for its expression in the world, the TS, came into being through the agency of H. P. Blavatsky.

There is no organization that can fully contain the wisdom of the ages. There is no form that remains static. There is no individual's mind that responds in the exact manner as another's.

HPB once commented that 'the world is man living in his personal nature'. The teachings of Theosophy were intended for that world. They have been presented in full knowledge that they would not, could not, be fully comprehended, or faithfully followed; that its meaning would necessarily be distorted, but that its reintroduction to the current of world thought was the greatest hope for an alternative to the 'degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism' that characterized its time.

In my conversation with Michael Murphy, and the interaction with those gathered, it became clear that in 2015, 140 years after the founding of the TS, its profound teachings are not yet understood or fully appreciated, but its influence is growing stronger. Though dimly understood by many, its ideas, like a river, are slowly but surely moving humanity towards a deeper experience of truth. The societal influence the TS exerts is largely because of the way it has been interpreted and expressed by the many prominent people who have been exposed to its teachings. To my optimistic eyes the process is slow; the results are imperfect, but the end is certain.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, April 2015)

RADHAJI ON THE ESOTERIC SIDE OF J. KRISHNAMURTI

J. Krishnamurti (K) was a very important influence in the life of Radha Burnier (Radhaji). When she was born, K was about 28 years old and a good friend of her father, N. Sri Ram. Because of this friendship, K entered into Radhaji's life when she was still a child. She once told me a little anecdote that illustrates this early relationship. For one of her birthdays, when she was a little girl, K gave her a tricycle. Radhaji said she could still remember how much fun she had as she rode it around, while K and her father talked on the porch of her house.

After K dissolved the Order of the Star Radhaji lost contact with him for some years until one day, when she was a teenager, she went to listen to one of his talks. Radhaji said in those early days she did not really understand what he was saying, but she was nevertheless drawn to his presence. After the talk she felt the need to be by herself in silence, and started to walk away from the crowd along a dirt road. Suddenly, she saw a big fancy car stop by. When the dust cleared, the back door opened and there was K, with a big smile, calling out to her. She was very surprised he had recognized her. And from that day on they shared a beautiful and deep friendship.

I was always interested in knowing about Krishnamurti through the eyes of somebody like Radhaji. When she visited Argentina in 2004 I prepared a series of questions about him and his relationship with the Theosophical Society (TS), for which I had the assistance of some friends in the Society. We interviewed Radhaji at our Theosophical Centre in San Rafael and the result of this interesting conversation was published in *The Theosophist*, in August, 2005.

In the present article I will share four short personal stories Radhaji told me about K. The first one is written from a recollection of a conversation I had with her during the visit to Argentina I mentioned. The other three stories were told one evening, in late September 2006, to a small group of members that were having dinner with her at the Indian Section, Headquarters of the TS, at Varanasi. Once the dinner was over

*Currently living and working at the National Centre of the Theosophical Society in America.

I went to my room and wrote everything down, as accurately as possible. It is from these notes that I reproduce the stories here.

In all fairness I must confess that during this dinner I asked Radhaji why she did not publish these stories. They were very meaningful to me and I thought many others would feel the same. She told me she would not feel comfortable doing so because K was reluctant to let people know about this aspect of his life. Although many similar stories have already been published in different biographical accounts, I respected her feelings and kept them for myself. Now that Radhaji has passed to peace I share these stories, hoping they may bring the sympathetic reader a feeling of affection and closeness to these two great souls.

1. A curious offer

One day, during the course of her visit to Argentina, a group of TS members were about to have lunch with Radhaji at a residence. She finished reading a local newspaper she had requested and was waiting for the food to be ready. I sat next to her and asked if she had time to answer a question in connection to Krishnamurti. She nodded with a smile, and her eyes sparkled, which seemed to happen every time I saw her talk about him. I began by mentioning the following account found in Pupul Jayakar's biography of K:

The atmosphere was pulsating, strong, alive. At one point he said, "They found me two angels—I have gathered many more through the years." He was laughing; there was great laughter, and in between he kept on saying, "I am very serious." He had not laughed like this in years. "Now I find that I can do without some of them." He turned to Radha and said, "Can I give you two?" He was laughing, joyous, but deeply serious, suggesting something.¹

I asked Radhaji if this report was true. She told me that when the conversation started, Pupul was somewhere else in the house and did not hear the whole thing.

2. The Garden of Remembrance

Radhaji was eventually elected as International President and K fulfilled his promise to visit Adyar. They went to her house and then decided to walk around the compound. They started on the beach where he was "found", and when coming back they walked along the Adyar River that K liked very much, especially during the rainy days.

When they walked by the Garden of Remembrance Radhaji told him it was there where they had buried the ashes of “Amma”. K looked around and said, “Something is wrong.” He then asked, “What ceremonies are being performed on the grounds?” (Here Radhaji commented that although people believe that K was against ceremonies, what he actually denounced was the *dependence* on the ceremonies). She started describing the different ceremonies one by one: “BharataSamaj”², “Liberal Catholic”, “Co-Masonic”, and so on. K answered to each in turn, “That’s all right, that’s all right.” Radhaji finished enumerating them but K kept on saying “Something is wrong.”

At this point Radhaji paused and then said that when John Coats was International President there was a member with knowledge in architecture who wanted to help. He was given the task of improving the Garden of Remembrance and the Buddhist Temple. The Garden has two pillars: one dedicated to Surya and another one to Annie Besant. The architect decided to reposition the pillars, and when digging to move the one dedicated to Surya they found a container buried with magnetized stones inside. J. Coats called Radhaji by phone and asked her what they should do. She advised to put everything back the way it was.

Now, coming back to the story, when she told K about this, he exclaimed, “That’s it!” adding that magnetized objects, once placed somewhere, should never be disturbed. According to Radhaji “he could see that the magnetism was not there anymore.” Then K asked her to get seven stones “with the colors of each of the Rays”—remarked Radhaji—which he would magnetize to help the compound. He also directed that they should be buried in a central place.

Radhaji procured the gems and put them inside a pendant that said “J.K.” This was placed in a metal jar and buried in a proper place.

3. A conversation on the beach

On another occasion Radhaji and K were walking on the beach at Adyar and the conversation turned to a certain person. When he asked her who this person was, she answered that although he had met her once, he would probably not remember her. As Radhaji remarked, K did not have a good memory for these things. A little later K asked her if this person lived at such and such address. Radhaji said, “Yes”. Then he asked if her sister lived in such and such country, was named so and so, and if she worked for the Krishnamurti Foundation there. Radhaji, surprised, said he was correct, and then asked him, “Krishnaji, how do you know this? You never remember any of these things.” But he did not answer. He only smiled and kept walking.

A few days later, when K was leaving Madras (now Chennai), Radhaji and a group of people were with him at the airport. Before departing he called her away from the group and told her, “What happened the other day was not memory—I saw it in your mind.” Radhaji replied that at the time of the conversation she was not thinking of the sister of this person, but he said, “It doesn’t matter, everything is there, in the mind.”

4. The power of affection

The last story goes back to the time when Radhaji was younger, before she became President of the TS. K was scheduled to attend a meeting at one of the Krishnamurti Foundations and then to give a talk to those present, in a small auditorium. He invited Radhaji to attend it. At the time she was not a Trustee of the Foundation, and was not sure it was her place to be there, but she told him that if he was inviting her she would certainly go. When she arrived some people got upset and asked her pointedly, “What are you doing here? Aren’t you a member of the Theosophical Society?”

This attitude troubled Radhaji and when K started his informal talk she was feeling upset. During the course of the talk (which was most likely a kind of dialogue with those present) he turned to Radhaji and said something to her. She told us she did not remember what his words were, but she never forgot how, suddenly, her inner reaction to what had happened completely vanished. At the time she thought this could have been a coincidence, or something produced by her own mind.

When the talk finished K started walking towards the exit. As he was passing Radhaji he approached her and asked, to her astonishment, “Is your problem solved?”

Radhaji told us, “All this was done with so much affection that even today I feel moved when recalling it.” And as she finished her story, you could indeed see in her eyes the love and devotion she held for this remarkable human being.

References:

1. Pupul Jayakar, *J. Krishnamurti: A Biography*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986, p.380
2. This is a reformed, non-sectarian Hindu ceremony performed at Adyar and at the Indian Section HQ. The first to officiate at the ceremony was J. Krishnamurti in 1925.

T.K. NAIR*

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY
(VAJRA)**
Co-founder of The Theosophical Society

HPB was born close to midnight in the early morning of August 12, 1831, in the Ukrainian Town of Eksterinovslav. Her father was Peter A. von Hahn, retired as Colonel. HPB inherited her silvery curly hair and vivacious, good-humoured, carefree temperament from him. Her mother, Helena von Hahn d/o Princess Helena Partovna Fadeyev was a scientist and artist.

She was born at a time when cholera was wiping out the entire population of certain areas. It was considered as a bad omen. As she was prematurely born and was in delicate health, the family decided on immediate baptism. But there was a good omen also. According to the old Julian calendar, then current in Russia, she was born around midnight of July 30/31. They believed that such a person was endowed with power over evil forces, including demons and witches.

Her father frequently moved from place to place. So Helena Andreyevna, HPB's mother, sometimes lived with her parents. Thus from an early age she began a life of travel and got wide experience of varying cultures and people perhaps preparatory for her future world travels. She had a brother Sasha who died when he was two years old. When she was three and half, she had a sister Vera.

In 1836, her father's company was transferred to St. Petersburg. It was a great adventure for HPB to travel 900 miles in a horse drawn vehicle as there was no railroad at that time. HPB was called Lyola. They had another brother Leonid in June 1840.

In her childhood, her sympathies and attractions were towards

*National Secretary, TOS, India, and Secretary, Besant Education Fellowship.

** Based on a talk delivered under the auspices of Kashi Tattva Sabha at the Indian Section HQ, Varanasi, on 10 October, 2014.

people belonging to lower class. She had always preferred to play with her servants' children rather than with her equals. She had a dual nature in her; one mischievous and the other mystical. She had the habit of telling people to their faces what she thought of them, something not done in polite society. At the same time she was ready to give everything away to the needy.

She never remembered evil or injury done to her. Years later, one of her students recalled, "One thing was remarkable about HPB. She never bore malice, resented criticism in private, or made one feel that there remained even a trace of annoyance or disapproval in her mind or even a shadow of feeling about anything past..... Everything was just wiped clean out and wholly forgotten once it was past."¹ Her governess Antonia taught her German. She became an expert swimmer with the help of her aunt Cathy and Nadya. Her mother died on June 24, 1842, at an age of 29. After the death of their mother, the children stayed permanently at Saratov with their grand mother, Princess Helena.

Helena spoke of reincarnation even during those early days. Her sister Vera relates: "It was her (HPB's) delight to gather around herself a party of us younger children at twilight, and after taking us into the large dark museum (of her grand mother's house) to hold us there spellbound with her weird stories.... Each of the stuffed animals in the museum had taken her in turn into its confidence, had divulged to her the history of its life in previous incarnation or existence. Where had she heard of reincarnation, or who could have taught her anything of the superstitious mysteries of metempsychosis in a Christian family?" Yet she would stretch herself on her favourite animal a gigantic stuffed seal, and crossing its silvery soft white skin, she would repeat to us his adventures as told to her by himself, in such a glowing colours and eloquent style that even grown up persons found themselves interested involuntarily in her narratives"². Vera relates: "For Helena all nature seemed animated with a mysterious life of its own. *She heard the voice of every object and form, whether organic or inorganic;...*"³. At the age of 14, Helena was galloping wildly across the steppe when the horse got out of hand. It jolted and suddenly swerved sharply, throwing her out of the saddle. Her foot caught in the stirrup, and she hung down, head and shoulders

reaching the ground, while the horse galloped homewards. Many riders have been badly injured or killed in this kind of accident, but it was a miracle that she was unhurt. She said, she felt distinctly around her, “a strange sustaining power” which seemed to hold her up in defiance of gravitation. Even the elders said that she had a wonderful imagination – an inborn faculty of psychometric clairvoyance that opened the door to an akashic picture gallery of the long dead past.

On another occasion Helen wanted to look at a portrait hidden by a curtain when nobody was at home. She dragged a table up to the wall, set a smaller table on top of it and a chair on top of that. Climbing on the chair she could just reach the curtain. Leaning with one hand against the dusty wall for balance she drew the curtain aside. The effect of what she saw was quite startling. She made an involuntary backward movement lost her balance and fell down losing her consciousness. The next thing she knew was that she was lying on the floor unhurt, the tables and chairs were at their places, the curtain again at the face of the picture, there was no evidence of her ever attempting to look at the picture except the mark of her hand on the dusty wall.

According to her governess she was not eager for formal learning, but had a gift for language and music. The books she read widely were about magic & alchemy. They were plenty in her grandfather’s house.

In 1847, the children with Aunt Katherine and a governess went to Tiflis where their grandfather was then living. It was not a happy home for Helena, because of the tyranny of the stuffy governess and firm discipline of grandmother. One of the many visitors who came to their house was Nikifor Vassilyevich Blavatsky, who was the Vice-Governor. Mr. Blavatsky was losing his hair, and to Helena he seemed a very old man; she called him a “plumeless raven”. He was only 40 then.

Several reasons have been advanced by biographers for Helena’s willingness to marry a man she never loved nor admired. Her aunt Nadya gave it as follows: “Helena quarreled with one of her governess who taunted “You will never find a man to marry you; even the plumeless raven as you call him would not take such a spitfire as you for wife.” “That is all you know”, Helena retorted. “I could make him propose

anytime - the next time I see in fact.” Three days later Mr. Blavatsky called and before he left the house had proposed to the seventeen year old Miss Hahn and had been accepted. But she very much wanted to break the engagement. When much of her pleading with the family did not succeed, it was rumoured that she ran away from home following Prince Galitzin who had left Tiflis sometime earlier. The marriage solemnized on 7 July. The same day the bridal couple left for Darachichag (valley of flowers) a mountain resort near Yerivan.

Despite the utter failure of the honeymoon, Nikifor had not given up hope of gaining his conjugal rights. He became more and more forceful, dominant, and insistent. The relationship grew more and more tense. One day she managed to set off on her favourite Cossack horse to Tiflis. Her grandparents sent her to Odessa to meet her father with two escorts. She fooled her escorts and started her journey on “Commodore” to Constantinople in search of the philosopher’s stone that transmutes the lead of human nature into the kingly gold of divine nature. Though there was some problem with the captain of the ship, she managed to land at the city of Constantinople.

She went to London with Russian Aristocrat and friend of her family, Princess Bagration Muhransky. A highly significant event took place in England, on August 12, 1851, her 20th birthday. She relates that one day while walking in the street, her attention was attracted to the colourful and pleasing sight of some Indian Princes. One of them was exceptionally tall. Gazing at his face, she recognized with a leap of her heart the very man she had so often seen in visions, the one she called her Protector. Her first impulse of rushing forward to speak to him was stopped by him with a sign. The next day some inner urge made her to go for a walk in Hyde Park, which was just across the street from Minaret’s Hotel (now Cambridge). She sat down on a park bench alone, thinking about the thrilling encounter of the day before. Unbelievably again here he was now walking with long strides, across the grass towards her. She tried to stand, but he gestured her back gently and sat beside her. He told her that he was in London on an important mission with some other Indian Princes and, of course, knew that he would meet her here and be able to talk to her. He went on to tell her that he had some important things to impart about the future and wanted to

request her cooperation in a great work for mankind that he and others would be starting. She did not care very much about mankind at this time, but she was willing to do anything he asked. He warned her, however, that the task would be far from easy and gave her some idea of the tremendous problems and troubles that would surely come. She must think about it well before deciding he said, and he would see her again somewhere. Meanwhile he would help her whenever necessary as he had done before. Eventually, if she was willing to assist in the great work, she would have to spend time in Tibet in order to prepare for her unique role. From that day her life took on a new significance. Now she began to understand that she was not seeking occult knowledge for its own sake alone, but in preparation for special work assigned to her from some high level. And she had found the man she could truly love, honour, and obey. He was not a fragment of her mind, but real. From London she set off on a world wandering. She travelled into the Red Indian in Canada, Illinois, New Orleans, Texas, Mexico, Peru, West Indies, India, Ceylon, Singapore, and Java and was back in London. In June 1854, she met her “Mysterious Hindu” again. He told her that her destiny lay in India, seat of the mission to come, but later in 28 or 30 years. However, in the mean time, there was no reason why she should not spend time there and get to know the country. It may have been during this period in London or the earlier one, that feeling terribly depressed by her failure to find what she sought, she stood one day on Waterloo Bridge contemplating suicide. But before she could jump her guardian stood beside her. He cleared away her depression by assuring that her search would not be in vain, that she would find her ‘Philosophers’ stone’.

From London she continued her wandering through New York, Chicago, Utah, California, Mexico, and South America, Japan, America, to India. This time she succeeded in going to Tibet. She narrates her experience in India, “*I was as in a dream. I stayed nearly two years, travelling about and receiving money each month – from whom I have no idea and following faithfully the itinerary given to me. I received letters from this Hindu (her Protector) but I did not see him a single time during those two years*”⁴. The India of those days – Kipling’s India — was full of grave dangers to the traveller. But Helena had her invisible

Protector and further more, she often travelled as a man dressed in a man’s clothes (for “I was very thin”, she states.). Before the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 she was ordered to go to Java and then return to Europe. In Europe she travelled in France and Germany. Then towards the end of 1858, nine years after she had left home, she had an urge to see her family and so returned to Russia. She joined the family at Vera’s father in law’s house, on the Christmas and wedding celebration of Vera’s sister in law, giving everyone a pleasant surprise. Her father also was there. According to the family she returned as a “haunted woman”. “Raps and whisperings, sounds, mysterious and unexplained, were now being constantly heard wherever the newly arrived inmate went”⁵. Knocks were heard, movements of furniture perceived nearly in every room of the house, on the walls, the floor, the windows, the sofa, cushions, mirrors, and clocks; on every piece of furniture, in short, about the room. It seems as though she was surrounded by invisible beings for whom she provided a ready source of psychic power. To some extent she could control these manifestations by will, but they were largely quite beyond her control. She found them a great nuisance and often very embarrassing; she knew that she must gain complete control over them, or have them exorcized – or go mad. She was striving to bring the entities involved under the domination of her will and was making some progress in that direction. At that time the craze of spiritualism was spreading over Russia too, despite the condemnation by the State Church and the scientific authorities. Now the news that Helena was a medium spread rapidly and people became very excited and curious and began to visit Yahontov mansion. But her brother Leonid, a strong muscular youth, and her father thought that she had somewhere in her travels learned to play those advanced tricks for social entertainment. One evening the drawing room was filled with visitors. They requested her to try a trick. Finally she consented, warning them that she promised nothing. Then getting one of the men present to test the weight of a small chess table nearby, she fixed her large blue eyes on the table on an intent gaze. After a while she mentioned to the same young man to try the weight again. This time he was unable to move the little table from the floor. Everyone was impressed except Leonid, who, from the look in his eyes, evidently suspected that his sister was acting in confederacy with the young man. “May I try?”, he

asked sardonically. "Please do my dear", she said. He approached, smiling and seized the chess table with muscular arm. The smile vanished when the table refused to budge. He stepped back and carefully examined it. Then he gave it a tremendous kick, but it remained as if glued to the floor. Next he encircled it with his arms and tried to shake it from side to side. The wood creaked but the table did not move an inch. Finally Leonid straightened up and looked with astonishment at his sister. "How strange!" he muttered. After a number of people had tried the experiment and failed, Helena said to her brother, with her casual careless laugh, "Try to lift the table now once more" He approached the little thing slowly, cautiously, paused, took a deep breath, grasped a leg and pulled upward with all the force he could muster. He almost lost balance and dislocated his arm for now the table came up feather light.

She moved to a mansion in Vera's estate at Rugodero with her father and his 9 year old daughter Liza with the second wife. There she found some phantoms in one of the room about which she explained to her sister Vera. Soon she became very ill. A profound wound opened in the region of her heart. She suffered intense agony, sometimes going to convulsions followed by death like trance. A physician was sent for. When on his first visit, the doctor was examining the wound, with Helena lying prostrate and unconscious before him, he suddenly saw a dark, ghostly hand slowly moving at intervals from the patient's neck to her waist. At the same time the room was filled with chaos of noises and sounds from the ceiling, the floor, the window panes and every bit of furniture. The poor man was frightened to remain alone in the room with the unconscious patient. In a few days, however, the wound healed, leaving only an old scar.

After the wanderings of the wild lands of Transcaucasia she bought a house at Ozurgety in Mingrelia. One day she fell ill very seriously. As the doctor who was available at that place could not do much, she was taken in a boat to Tiflis. During the first night they saw — they vowed — the patient glide off the boat and crossed the water towards the forest, at the same time her body was lying at the bottom of the boat. When the same ghostly episode occurred on the second night the boat men were ready to abandon both the boat and the patient. Only the courage of the

man in charge kept them at their post. He wavered himself on the third night when he saw two phantom figures while his mistress in flesh and bone was sleeping before his eyes. But he calmed his terrified companions and brought the boat safely to Kutais. There Helena was met by friends and taken by carriage to the family home at Tiflis. Under the care of her loving aunt Nadyezhda, she recovered. She had been through a great battle with occult forces that had almost killed her, but she emerged from the crisis complete master of those forces.

In 1868 she got a message from her Hindu Protector asking her to wait in the Serbian mountains. As she hoped she was taken to Tibet, to the house of the Kashmiri Adept, Kuthumi Lal Singh. His sister and sister's son also were there. Most of the time her own Guru, Master Morya was also there. She learned to translate old manuscripts of Senzar characters into English. This was in a valley near Shigatze. She also got entry to certain Lamaistic Convents, ancient seats of learning, with the help of her Protector. Apart from the personal instructions from her Guru, she had to practice her *sadhana*, and she got many valuable things from Master K H also. He particularly wanted her to improve her English; a mundane subject. One day he put his hand on her forehead, in the region called the seat of memory and said, "Try to pick out of my head the little I know of the language." She felt a trifling pain and a cold shiver went through her. Every day for about two months after that, he gave her these telepathic lessons in English. He also insisted on that language in conversation though she much preferred French. At the end of 1870, she left Tibet. Just before her departure, Master K.H. wrote a letter in French to her family in Russia. In December 1870, she went to Cyprus and to Greece where she saw the Master Hilarion. In June 1871, she embarked on "SSEunomia" from the port of Piracus for Egypt. There was an explosion in the ship killing 30 passengers. Fortunately she escaped injury, although she was badly shaken and lost her baggage and money. At Cairo, she met Miss Emma Cutting, who 13 years later was to prove the Judas Iscariot of Helena Blavatsky's crucifixion. Helena was short of money and Emma Cutting befriended her with a loan. In the middle of 1872, some "18 moons" after the mysterious letter from Master K.H. to her aunt Nadya, she reached home. Till she received a letter from her Guru asking her to go to Paris in 1873,

she stayed there. Unfortunately, there she got some bad reputation, as leading the life of easy virtue in gay. On receiving another letter, she went to America. It was on this trip that she exchanged her first class ticket to a steerage passage for herself and another lady with two children who were cheated by a travel agent. In July 1873 she reached New York.

In New York, life was hard for Madam Blavatsky for she was short of funds. Money was there 23000 in Francs, but she would not touch it as it was entrusted with her by her Guru, to be handed over to a man in Buffalo in New York State in order to save him from committing suicide. It was 15 years since Darwin's "Origin of Species" had been published and its effect in America was growing in strength. The Evolutionary Theory was live subject of dispute. Some accepted it readily and rejoiced at its blow to the old moribund Church Theology. It provided a scientific basis for the atheism or agnosticism. But offsetting this, spiritualism was growing in strength and in excitement in 1870s. Madam Blavatsky found that she could use the spiritualism for her purpose but did not know **when** and **where** to begin. In October 1874, she saw an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, on "Spiritualistic materialization" taking place at an old farm house near the village Chittenden in the state of Vermont. The journalist was one Col. Henry Steel Olcott. Then she received a message from distant Guru that she must go to the farmhouse for she would meet the man selected to be her partner in the Great Work. The time had come for it to begin.

Madam Blavatsky went to the Eddy Farm with Madam Magnon, a French – Canadian woman. They sat for lunch. Then a man came and sat opposite to her even though there were plenty of other empty places at the long table. Glancing at him swiftly, she got an impression of a high nose with gold-rimmed spectacles perched on top of it, bushy side-whiskers, and rather melancholy but intelligent face. He would be in his early forties, she guessed. After lunch he offered her a light. Suddenly she knew this man was Col. Olcott. They introduced each other. Up to the period of HPB's arrival the figures shown at the séance were either Red Indians or Americans or Europeans. But on the first evening of her stay, spooks of other nationalities came. There was a Georgian, servant boy from Caucasus, a Mussalman merchant from Tiflis, a Russian peasant

girl and others. HPB recognized a person as her own uncle when she mistook him for her own father. And asked him so in English, he answered her in Russian, "No, I am your uncle". She was satisfied that everyone in the audience have heard the word "diadia". Col. Olcott, who was using all sort of tests to verify its genuinity was very much satisfied with the manifestations. It was long afterwards that he came to know that she had worked them by her own developed and masterful power; for she knew that it was her duty to keep alive a belief in the genuineness of spiritualistic phenomena. Otherwise, with the exposure of the fraudulent practices of several well-known mediums, thousands of spiritualists would lose faith and slip back into atheistic materialism. The world is not yet prepared to understand the philosophy of occult science—let them assure themselves first of all that there are beings in an invisible world, whether "spirits" mediums of the dead or "Elementals", and that there are hidden powers in man, which are capable of making a God of him on earth. A well-known physician of New York, Dr. George Beard after visiting Eddy farm, had come out with a bombastic and foolish explanation of the ghost as trickery.

In paging through HPB's scrap book, the following entry is found in her handwriting under the date of July 1875: "Orders received from India direct to establish a philosophic religious society and choose a name for it – also to choose Olcott"⁶. On September 7, 1875, sixteen or seventeen persons joined HPB in her room at 46 Irvin Place to hear a lecture by George H. Felt, an engineer and architect, on "The Lost Canon of Proportions of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans." The talk was enthusiastically received, and Olcott wrote on a slip of paper, "Would it not be a good thing to form a society for this kind of study?" He handed it to William Q Judge, to pass to HPB, who nodded assent. Judge moved that Olcott be elected Chairman and he in turn moved that Judge be appointed secretary. The meeting was then adjourned until the following evening. Bye-laws were decided upon, officers elected. Olcott was chosen President, Dr. Pancost and George Felt Vice-Presidents, HPB agreed to serve as corresponding secretary, Sotheran as Librarian and Judge as Counsel. For a name to the society, turning the pages of a dictionary, Sotheran came across THEOSOPHY, and it was unanimously adopted.

The strength of Theosophy lies in the fact that it is not to be defined. This means that evolution, slowly progressing will bring out new truths and new aspects of old truths thus absolutely preventing any dogmas or “unequivocal definitions”. As a practical, ethical philosophy, however, Theosophy CAN be defined, as Blavatsky indicates in a letter to the 1888 Yearly Convention of the American Theosophists. “Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their stay over the terrestrial or animal passions in them: kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, goodwill to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to oneself are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of goodwill and the converse of this is true also- he who preaches the gospel of goodwill teaches Theosophy.”⁷

It was while they were still at “Crow’s Nest” in the year 1882 that HPB wrote in a letter to Prince Dondukoff Korsakott that she had found the “stone”. Early in 1879 she was still in search of it, but by March 1882, she had found it.

In 1886, HPB’s health condition became very worse. A specialist from London, Dr. Ellis was called. He too had no hope. Countess was nursing. She sat alone by Madam throughout night. For some occult reason or otherwise, the Countess slipped away into unconsciousness. When she opened her eyes the early morning she saw two clear blue eyes watching her calmly, and heard a firm voice say, “Countess come here.” As a reply to the Countess, HPB said, “Master has been here. He gave me my choice to die and be free, or live and finish *The Secret Doctrine*. He warned me of further great sufferings and calumnies if I chose to live”.

In May 1887 the two Keightleys took her to London as the work left for her was not the completion of *SD*. It was the Keightleys who published the *SD* when finished. She started the *Lucifer*, the Light Bringer. In October 1888, an esoteric section of the Theosophical Society was formed, and *The Secret Doctrine* came off the press. A review copy sent to one Mr. W.T. Stead came into the hands of Mrs Annie Besant.

Later HPB completed two more books, *The Key to Theosophy* and *The Voice of the Silence*. Madam Blavatsky again fell ill, this time suffering from bronchitis. At about 11.30 am on May 8, 1891, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky broke the link with her disease ridden body. Laura, Walter Old and C.F Wright were present. In Odessa, Nadya observed her ring becoming completely black and Katharine described seeing her, “Clad in white, with great white flowers on her head.”

In the funeral oration, her private secretary George Mead said, “H.P. Blavatsky is dead, but HPB, our teacher and friend, is alive and will live forever in our hearts and memories.”

References:

1. Bertram Keightly, *Reminiscences of H.P. Blavatsky*, p.25
2. HPB: *Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, by Sylvia Cranston, published by G. P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1993, p.27 (from Sinnett, *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, 37-40)
3. *Ibid*, p.29 (*Ibid*, p. 35)
4. *Ibid*, p.49 (from Blavatsky, *H.P.B. speaks*, 2:20)
5. *Ibid*, p.65 (Sinnett, *op.cit.*)
6. Blavatsky, *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, 1:95: Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, p.79
7. Blavatsky to the American Conventions – 1888-89.

NEWS AND NOTES

Assam

On March 27, 2015, a meeting of the Theosophical Order of Service, Assam Region was held at Guneswari Medhi Vidyapith (High School), Panjabri, Guwahati with Bro Dharendra Nath Chakravarty in the Chair. Bro Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, Vice President, Theosophical Society and Sister Kusum Satapathy, former International Secretary, T. S., graced the function as the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour respectively. Office bearers of the Assam Theosophical Federation and members of local Lodges and some guests attended the meeting. Bro J. N. Patowary, President T. O. S. welcomed the guests and the audience on behalf of T. O. S., Assam Region, especially two guests whose august visit has tremendously encouraged the organizers and the public at large. After the inaugural function, Bro Satapathy delivered a talk on the subject 'Theosophy and Theosophical Order of Service' emphasizing the importance of selfless service with the spirit of universal brotherhood in the widest sense of the term. Thirty two students received school uniforms from T. O. S. organizers.

A study class on the subject 'Practical Theosophy in the light of Yama, Niyama and Paramitas' was held at the Assam Theosophical Federation on the 28 and 29 March with two sessions on each day. The Study Class was conducted by Bro. Chittaranjan Satapathy who explained the subject in great detail drawing apt references from scriptures, illustrious life of former President Dr. Radha Burnier and some memorable personal anecdotes of her predecessors. Bro J. K. Sahu of Utkal Federation delivered a talk on the significance of 'Higher Life' and ways to achieve it. The book captioned '*Yogic Practice: Yama and Niyama*' written by Bro S. S. Varma was studied in detail and the audience interacted enthusiastically to delve deeper into the subject.

Sreecharan Baruah Memorial Lecture was delivered by Bro Satapathy on the 30th March, 2015, in a meeting held at Kalicharan Baruah Girls H. E. School, Guwahati, with Bro Bimal Hazarika in the chair. Apart from a large number of people from the neighbouring area, members of the Executive Committee of Assam Theosophical Federation

and members of Lodges of Guwahati and Nalbari attended the meeting. Speaking on the subject 'Practical Theosophy and World Peace' Bro Satapathy highlighted the central point of the song 'Ki Gabo Ami' by Rabindranath Tagore. Continuing further, he explained the import of the Vedic sloka '*Ekam sad viprah bahudha vadanti*'. A very popular saying of Sirdi Sai Baba '*Sabka malik ek*' was also encompassed in Bro Satapathy's elucidation of the central thought of the lecture. He explained that Theosophy recognizes freedom of thought as of utmost importance to ascertain the truth and the motto of the society There is no religion higher than Truth. Bro Satapathy concluded his illuminating speech with a few words of appreciation of commitment of late Baruah for the welfare of people in general.

M.P. & Rajasthan

Uttar Pradesh and M.P./Rajasthan Federations jointly organized a study camp under the auspicious of Gwalior Lodge. The book studied was *The Ageless Wisdom of Life* by Clara M Codd. It was held on 11-12 April, 2015. The study was jointly directed by Dr. H. S. Dwivedi and Bro. U.S. Pandey the Secretaries of the two Federations. About 80 persons including members of different lodges of the two federations, also of Delhi federation and some non-members participated in it. The camp started in the morning of 11 April with recitation of Universal Prayer. Thereafter Dr. H.S. Dwivedi extended welcome to participants and introduced the subject; Bro. U.S. Pandey outlined the programme in various sessions and explained the significance of the book and the study camp. He also read out greetings received from Bro. Tim Boyd, the International President who had consented to inaugurate the camp, but could not come due to other pressing engagements. Bro. Tim Boyd in his message, while expressing regret in not being able to attend the gathering, conveyed his best wishes and blessings to the participating members. Bro. Ashok Kaul, Vice-president of the M.P./Rajasthan Federation, inaugurated the camp and he mentioned about the significance of the book taken up for study.

On the first day five technical sessions were held. During these sessions different speakers covered the matter of various chapters viz. Dr O.P. Budholia (chapters II to IV), Bro. Ashok Kaul (ch. V to VII), Bro. U.S. Pandey (ch. VIII to X and also ch.XV), Bro. S.K. Pandey

(ch.XI to XIV). In the evening a devotional meet was organized and it was coordinated by Br. S.K. Pandey. On second day, during the first three sessions, different speakers covered the matter of other chapters, viz. Bro. S.S. Gautam (ch.XVIII to XX), Km. Preeti Tewari (ch. XXI to XXIII), and Br. U.S. Pandey (ch. XXIV to XXVI). Thereafter an interactive session was held when some other participants made valuable comments and observations and the questions raised were answered/ explained by a panel consisting of Bro. Ashok Kaul, U.S. Pandey and S.K. Pandey. In the closing session Bro. K.K. Srivastava proposed vote of thanks on behalf of U.P. Federation and Bro. H.S. Dwivedi announced formal closure of the camp. All the participants appreciated the programme very much and made suggestions to organize more such camps.

Royalaseema

Adyar Day was observed by the members of Secunderabad Lodge on 17 February Bro. Babitha explained in detail the significance of the day. Rs.1400/- collected from the members on this occasion were sent to the International Headquarters.

Study classes are held at Secunderabad Lodge on every Wednesday and Friday in which *Text Book of Theosophy* and *Theosophy Explained in Questions and Answers* by P. Pavari are taken up for study. Besides, video screening of various talks delivered during the International Convention 2014 are done and discussed on every Monday.

Uttar Pradesh

The following talks were organized by Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, in March: 'Periodical and unfamiliar changes in Life' by Bro. B.P. Shukla and Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri; 'Man is his own destiny maker' by Bro .M.C. Pandey; 'Evolution of form and life' by Bro. Ashok Kumar Gupta. Besides, a question-answer session on Universal Brotherhood was held on 25 March and 'Address to New Members' by TIM BOYD, International President, published in 'The Theosophist' of March 2015 was also read and discussed.

A two-day study camp was organized by U.P. Federation at Agra

on 14-15 March on the theme "Mahatma Letters". Members from U.P. and Delhi Federation participated in it. The study camp began with recitation of Prayers of All Faiths, followed by Universal Prayer. Bro. L.S. Sengar, President of Nirvana Lodge, Agra, welcomed the participants. Bro. U.S. Pandey, Federation Secretary, offered his greetings and delivered the keynote address in which he outlined the historical background of the letters, concept of 'Mahatma' in Theosophical Society, salient points of teachings given in these letters and their usefulness for serious students of Theosophy in grasping such teachings. He also quoted brief extracts from various letters and covered the contents of Maha Chohan's letter in detail. Some letters from the book *The Mahatma Letters to A.P.Sinnett* (cr. edition) formed the basis of study. Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri, Bro. S S Gautam, Bro. S,K. Sharma, Bro. Gyaneesh Chaturvedi, Bro. Qamar Iqbal, Bro. Devendra Vajpayee and Bro. U.S. Pandey dealt with different letters given in the book. Bro. Devendra Vajpayee proposed the vote of thanks.

National Association for the Blind, U.P. State chapter organized a 'Social Animator Training Programme' at Lucknow for a group of social worker aspirants consisting of young educated men and women. Bro. U.S. Pandey conducted a session on the theme 'Points of Good Conduct in personal and social work' on 20 March as a part of activities in this training programme. In his interaction Bro. Pandey referred to theosophical teachings. Participative and lively interaction with participants was held throughout the session.

Bro. U.S. Pandey delivered a talk on 'Man is his own Maker' in a meeting held at Shankar Lodge, Delhi, on 7 March.

Bro. B.D. Tendulkar, National Lecturer, delivered a talk on 'The Relevance of Theosophy in Modern times' at a meeting organized by Kashi Tattva Sabha on 13 March. Prof. Rajeev Ranjan of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University delivered a talk on 'The System and Significance of Symbols in Sanskrit Literature'. It was held on 3 April. Prof. Sushila Singh gave a talk on Sri Aurobindo in the light of Theosophy on 10 April. The learned speaker tried to show the link between Theosophy and some aspects of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

Indian Section Headquarters

1 Education in the Light of Theosophy and Present Day Challenges

A two-day seminar on “Education in the Light of Theosophy and Present Day Challenges” was organized by the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society on March 14-15, 2015 in the Annie Besant Hall at the Section Headquarters. The seminar was structured in seven academic sessions including the inaugural and valedictory sessions. Dr. Annie Besant’s Adyar pamphlet no. 16 *Education in the Light of Theosophy* (Reprinted 2014 by BEF) was distributed to all the delegates and participants.

In the inaugural session, welcoming the guests, Shri S. Sundaram, General Secretary, Indian Section, said that Theosophy has contributed in a large measure to education. Col. Olcott and Dr. Annie Besant held that education was the reflection of the national spirit of a country. It should aim at the ethical and spiritual evolution of man. Tagore believed that education did not mean merely imparting information but developing logical reasoning and promoting ethical values. Education is not the training of an isolated individual but for the individual living inside the society.

Presenting the theme of the seminar, Prof. Sushila Singh, Member, Besant Education Fellowship (BEF) and Emeritus Professor, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), said when Dr. Besant arrived in India, she was appalled at the state of education. The British regime enforced an education system which distanced the Indians from their collective past. They were not aware of their cultural heritage. She advocated that the students should be encouraged to imbibe the best from both the Orient and Occident. Education needs to be recognized as a science and an environment full of love and fearlessness should be created for the students. Love for nature should be encouraged. Today, students are made to cram things and pass examinations mechanically. There is a lack of accountability in today’s educational and public institutions. The spiritual being is reduced to the level of a material being. Education should inculcate life values for a society, should be innovative and should contribute to social welfare.

She emphasized, the principles of education laid down in theosophy offer solutions to face the present day challenges. Some essential ameliorative measures are ingrained in Annie Besant Thought. She said that education must be founded on knowledge of the past of the country as well as of its present; it must be designed in accordance with the ancient traditions and national habits, and adapted to modern necessities, to meet at every point the growing needs of an ever-increasing nation. Thus, education of the young is an ever evolving phenomenon and process.

Annie Besant called education a national duty. The first and foremost requirement is to understand what kind of men and women our country needs. Then it becomes easy to frame a scheme of education which in turn will create men and women to meet the necessities of the nation. For this, the basic requirement is that every thoughtful man and woman should study the question of education and form a definite and rational idea of education.

Chief Guest, Prof. R.C. Tampi, Vice-President, BEF, said that Theosophy is eternal wisdom or embracing wisdom. Education should prepare man not only for the transformation in one life, but in successive ones to come. As students of theosophy, we must view man as “nurselings of immortality”. Children require counselling and appreciation. The most important of all is that education should be based on love and fearlessness.

Guest of Honour, Shri P.K. Jayaswal, Director of Studies, Indian Section, emphasized that education is a responsibility of parents also. A child should be helped in his growth, in determining his karma. It is a flowering process. Each individual should be awarded his own space and learning cannot be imparted in multitudes. Education needs to be considered from the user point of view and the question ‘who you are’. Unless there is love no one can educate. The system of education should aid the evolution of the child because every person is unique. The most important thing is to pave the way for this revolution to take place. This will bring about the fundamental change.

Prof. Sushila Singh conducted the session and proposed the vote of thanks.

In his Plenary Lecture 'What is Holistic Education?' Prof. P. Krishna, Krishnamurti Foundation, Rajghat, spoke with conviction that any fundamental change can be brought only by education and that education is an empowering process. Present day education is not concerned with the whole of our life. It focuses mainly on the cultivation of academic knowledge and the skills needed to perform a suitable job in society. It is aimed mainly towards the economic development of the country and the material prosperity of the individual. Success in life is equated with having a good job and earning a high salary and it is believed that this provides for a high quality of life.

Is that true? Does the quality of our life depend mainly on the quality of the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the car we drive and the house we live in? What about the quality of the mind? Does that not determine the quality of our life? Can a high salary ensure peace of mind, happiness, good friendship, relationships without conflict, love and a sense of beauty? Obviously money cannot buy any of these; and aren't these the most essential things in life? So why has the ability to earn money become the aim of education? Why is the success of a society measured in terms of the per capita income and the Gross National Product?

Our life has four aspects: The physical, the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual. Unless education aims at achieving excellence in all the four aspects, it cannot be called holistic education. For that, the emphasis in education must shift from economic development to the larger concern of human development. Education must help a student to achieve excellence in all the four aspects of life. Right physical development requires care of the body, cleanliness, exercise, right diet, adequate sleep, and occasionally medicine. The spiritual aspect demands that we live in our body like a guest, carefully looking after it, not ignoring or ill treating it but at the same time not being too attached to it. Intellectual excellence requires cultivating academic interests, a high proficiency in languages, good expression, and knowledge of current affairs, a love of science, mathematics, art and literature. Doing well at examinations should be a by product of intellectual development and not an aim in itself. The emotional development of the child requires the greatest attention from both parents and teachers. The child must grow up in an atmosphere of care and affection, without any fear. Fear is the

greatest enemy of all intelligence and creativity. It creates conformity, dullness and pretence. Right conduct and order must therefore be cultivated without recourse to fear and punishment. Holistic concerns demand that we do not damage one aspect of the child to promote results in another. Competition creates rivalry and promotes egotism; therefore it should not be used as a motivation to promote academic or physical effort. One has to aim at a balanced development of all healthy faculties of the body, mind and consciousness.

The spiritual and cultural development of the child includes the love of nature, music, art, dance and drama. It is essential to cultivate a respect for all life and the realization that trees and animals are our friends, not to be utilized merely for our pleasure. Sensitivity to the beauty of nature is as essential as sensitivity to fellow human beings. Once the child is old enough it is necessary to help him or her have an inquiring mind which is learning both about the external world around us and the inner world of our consciousness. Holistic education must help the student to come upon both knowledge and wisdom. At present education imparts only knowledge, creating a lop-sided development of the human mind. Knowledge is a source of power and power without wisdom is used destructively. All the evils we find in modern society are the consequence of this lop-sided development of the human being. Only holistic education can rectify this situation.

Socrates in the west and Buddha in the east pointed out thousands of years ago that self-knowledge is the key to wisdom since it eliminates disorder and generates virtue. It is a by-product of the quest for truth. Holistic education must therefore promote both kinds of learning: the accumulative learning which is called knowledge; and the non-accumulative learning which comes from discerning what is true from what is false. Academic learning does not transform consciousness. The negative emotions we experience in life arise from illusions in our mind which can be ended by discerning what is true from what is false. This inquiry is a process of unlearning the false and must be an integral part of holistic education. It is as essential to promote this inquiry into the understanding of oneself as it is to promote the scientific inquiry into how nature functions. The essence of religion is the quest for truth; therefore holistic education must aim at creating a mind that is both scientific and religious at the same time.

At the third session, there were two invited Guest Speakers: Sri Sunil Sahasrabudhey, Chairman, Vidya Ashram, Sarnath and Prof. Vibha Rani Dubey, Department of Sanskrit, BHU. The session was presided over by Prof. Rajeev Sangal, Director, IIT, BHU.

Speaking on 'Rethinking Education in Gandhian Perspectives in the Contemporary World', Sri Sahasrabudhey said that we need to take a very fresh view of the possibilities that may be associated today with the desired major and radical changes in education. For this we shall take a brief overview of social and political movements across the world that are creating fresh social spaces and orientations to rethink education in the contemporary world with Gandhian perspectives.

In recent times the world has been witnessing new types of social and political movements, movements of ordinary people led by their own ideas, ways of thinking and practices. It is barely 10 years since world's attention has been drawn by some of these movements which have been laying the foundation of a new political imagination which is neither led, nor nurtured, nor assisted by ideas that have their source in Europe. Those living today are not familiar with public debates and politics of change which do not derive their basics from European philosophy. Our parents had known such phenomena practically everywhere in South. The outstanding case is that of Gandhi in India. After the Second European War that all of us had to fight, thought across the Globe took a nose dive everywhere and it is only now that these new movements are bringing life back to human thought. These are movements of indigenous peoples and farmers in great many parts of the South. Gandhi comes alive with these movements again. His ideas of Swadeshi, Swaraj and Satyagraha seem to find a resonance in these movements. The ideas of these movements belong as if to the same family of thought and philosophy which has been associated with the name of Mahatma Gandhi.

We mention here five instances to focus our attention on what kind of thing has started happening. Bolivian people have risen with their ideas around their concept of *Pachamama*, roughly referring to their traditional understanding of organization of life on Mother Earth. Ecuador has given itself a new constitution built around the idea of *Buen Vivir*, roughly meaning good living, in which there is a central place for Rights of Nature. India has been witnessing a large Farmers' Movement with the lead idea of *Bharat-India* divide with a *Lokavidya* knowledge

movement insisting on re-legitimization and reinvigoration of knowledge in society, that is knowledge with the people outside the university. Then there is also a *Jal-Jangal-Zameen* (water-forest-land) movement for people's control of natural resources. An international farmer's movement, *La Via Campesina* spread across several nations has come up with the idea of *Food Sovereignty* - supply of food to the population being an inalienable right of the local agricultural communities and their need to have control of local resources towards this end. The European students' movement against corporatization of education spread also in US and Canada has been theorized with a new concept of *Cognitive Capitalism* pointing out that the struggle in the factories of the previous era has re-appeared in a new location, namely the university.

These movements are confronting the university as an uncontested and sole location of knowledge. They are challenging as never before the injustices committed in the name of democracy, development, and science. It is the fraternity of these movements that holds the new promise, the promise of their own new world. It is through the conception of such a new world that education, its values and reality, needs to be re-imagined.

Prof. Vibha Rani Dubey focussed on the position of Kalidasa in the tradition of Indian education. She analyzed the meaning of the terms education and knowledge. She emphasized on the need of *Ikigai* knowledge. Listing examples from the Upanishads, she outlined how through the meaning of words one could reach to the ultimate goal, i.e., self-realization. Liberty is a human right. Hence, it is his right to determine which *purushartha* he wants to achieve. Discussing the *guru-shishya* tradition of India, she said both a teacher and a student form a unit. Kalidasa believed that it was the duty of the student to add a new viewpoint to what he had learnt from his teacher. He held that a teacher should not perform his duties for any monetary gain, rather should look upon it as a benediction and perform it accordingly. This is why a mother is the best teacher.

Presiding over the session, Prof. Rajeev Sangal said that today there is a corporatization of education. The aim of education is educating the self. He talked of *Atmavidya* and *Atmajñan*. He referred to Gandhi and explained that rights flow out of duties. Quoting Gandhi he said that he learned his duties from his illiterate mother. The highest

authority in knowledge is that illiterate mother. In recent times he said there is a disconnection between Science and Knowledge. The hierarchy of knowledge structure has been dismantled. For example, the *Lokvidya* has become easily accessible to society through the medium of Internet. The natural resources are being dominated over and new words like food sovereignty has been coined. There is a need for a revolution of ideas by the students. Therefore, one has to be receptive to the inner voice. This will transform the knowledge order dismantling all inequalities and creating a non-hierarchical structure of society. He talked of evolution of the self and the responsibility of teachers in passing on knowledge to the students.

The fourth session was an interactive one with students from diverse disciplines and different institutions presenting their views on the current education system and the challenges it poses. The session was presided over by Prof. A.N. Tripathi, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT, BHU and guest speakers were Mr. Devansh Mittal (Ph.D. Scholar, IIT, BHU), Ms. Shagun (Ph.D. Scholar, BHU), Mr. Nikhil Jain (B.Tech.-Final Year, IIT, BHU), Ms. Prachita Pandey of (MA-Final in the Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya (VKM) and Ms. Shubhangi Srivastava (MA-Final Year, VKM).

Devansh Mittal said one who sets as per the norms of society is considered a successful man. The dreams of students are somewhat materialistic in the beginning. But the monotony of life leads to a re-evaluation of life and its values and success. Thus a pursuit of humanities is commendable. Human beings have certain needs—interpersonal, social as well as pertaining to nature. And that which satisfies these needs is education. In the evolutionary process, what comes after humans is the evolution of their consciousness. Many of the calamities and problems of the world are man-made such as global-warming. It is essential to understand human needs. He narrated his own experience of education and said he is a Lecturer and a PhD student at IIIT-Hyderabad, currently staying at IIT (BHU). His PhD problem includes psychological and sociological studies. Just a few years ago, he himself did not know that he will be doing higher studies and that also in humanities! He had joined B. Tech program at IIIT-Hyderabad (International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad) in 2003, in computer science department. He had not chosen his stream; *he had got this stream*

because he had a good rank in AIEEE (All India Engineering Entrance Examination). He had a notion that those who get good ranks get computer science. He was neither interested nor disinterested in computer science or any other stream as such. For him studies were just a means to get a good job and good livelihood and he believed that getting a good job and good livelihood was all that was needed in life! he had *normal* ambitions, which any *normal* student joining a good technical institution might have, like complete the graduation, get a good job, work in the industry for few years, do MBA, get married, take loans, buy a house and spend rest of the life in repaying the loans! For all these aspirations IIIT-Hyderabad seemed to him a perfect institute, given him rank in AIEEE. He had joined IIIT Hyderabad because the placements and faculty in the institute were/are good, so it was a suitable institute to fetch him *Good Job, Good Package and Good Respect*.

He has been one of the beneficiaries of this system. He got what he desired from his undergraduate college - *Good Job, Good Package and Good Respect*. After his B.Tech, he worked in IT industry for two years, earned a lot of money, visited abroad, and experienced the entire “*Hell of Affluence*”, which most of the students who join colleges, desire for. The reason, he called his life of affluence, a hell, is because it lacked in the very basic thing he needed in his life. In fact, it lacked on the very purpose, he needed this affluence. It lacked Happiness. It lacked peace, fulfilment and joy! His life had become 2/7, which means, in a week, he used to enjoy only two days - Saturday and Sunday, because they used to be holidays! He used to feel, he was living to earn money and not earning money to live. “Life” itself was missing in his life. Amazing thing is, this is not only his personal story, but the story of almost every child who is aspiring to be “*Successful*” in the current system! Frustration kept growing in him, during those two years in which he worked in IT industry.

Things have definitely changed for him now in past few years, after he decided to quit IT industry and join PhD, not in Computer Science, but in Humanities. He now assumes that this change is for better. His personal account very succinctly shows the condition of society we are living in, which constructed our pasts, influencing our present and also shaping our future, without our knowledge!

Shagun gave a definition of theosophy i.e., God - Wisdom, Unity of humanity, understanding the spirituality. Theosophy is a scientific religion and religious science. It lays emphasis on the development of self. Innovative techniques should be encouraged rather than relegate the students to become passive learners. Children must be taught how to think and not what to think.

Nikhil Jain shared his views on present day students' plight. For the students of contemporary times, the path of life is somewhat fixed, he said. Attaining higher education, getting a good job, accumulating wealth and thus being perceived as a successful man. But down the lane, realization set is that "respect" is not commended through wealth. What makes man respectful is the inculcation of values. The current education system resembles the process of mechanization. It is like a factory where raw-material (students) is utilized for the needs of the consumers. Similarly, students are like the finished products which will be somehow absorbed in the society, to prove some utility to the society. Proper guidance should be given to students keeping in mind their capabilities and talent. Nothing should be imposed on them or made mandatory. Compatibility with nature is essential. Our education system should provide enough space and security to explore oneself. It should diminish the set standards about life. It should not encourage any kind of discrimination whether it is based on caste or gender. Inter-disciplinary studies should be encouraged to abolish the set hierarchies among disciplines.

For Prachita Pandey education is a life-long process, from infancy to old age, from womb to grave. Value based education in ancient India is identified with the Gurukula system in which sages and scholars imparted traditional knowledge coupled with religious training. The primary focus of education which was to help an individual evolve into a better version of oneself, shifted to learning of English language. This gave a set back to the 'value based' education system.

At present, what the scholars need to introspect upon is – Are we actually acquiring knowledge and gaining wisdom in the name of "education" that is being imparted today? Education today has become a mechanized system of activities, restricted to merely passing the examination and not understanding the concepts or gaining knowledge. There is lack of quality and values in academic learning. A change in attitude in

education is needed, which should be about deeper engagement with the content and understanding the core basics instead of mere memorizing the facts to pass examinations. In the words of Aristotle – "Educating the mind, without educating the heart is no education at all."

Shubhangi Srivastava focussed on the views of Dr. Annie Besant regarding education.

In his presidential remarks Prof. A.N. Tripathi focussed on the present day challenges and said that modern system should not be outrightly rejected – hierarchical, caste, social and economic development. While building society, individual, his spiritual and emotional being is rejected and the issue has not being addressed adequately by humanities. As a teacher, he was just training engineers not educating them, he said. He expressed dissatisfaction with the present day system of education because he could not incorporate in his teaching what it means to be a humane person. Success should not be the goal and does not give happiness. Search for meaning outside it is absent in present day education. He emphasized on two things – one is that they (the students) are reflecting on the spiritual dimensions, the inner growth of a person, his higher level of satisfaction. The focus is on the individual being and not on his potential. Second, there was a note of unhappiness regarding present day education system. Education is a social institution and is organized in colleges and schools. The purpose is to produce people who are socially productive. To blame the modern system of education and outrightly reject it is somewhat going a bit far. Because it has done some good also. Social evils like casteism, untouchability, dowry system are being eradicated due to it. What it means to be a man, to be human? Success does not necessarily lead to happiness. One should ascertain how one is contributing to the society. Education must necessarily lead to character-building or dharma. A concern for sociality, for the other man, should be included in contemporary moral education.

On day two, the fifth session of the seminar was chaired by Prof. Vibha Rani Dubey. The Guest Speakers were Dr. Niharika Lal, Department of English, VKM and Dr. Indu Upadhyay, Department of Economics, VKM.

Dr. Niharika Lal talked about the need of value-based education and the role that Theosophy and literature play in inculcating values in

the students. She forced the position of education in India and showed how from an exalted position in ancient India, it reached its lowest ebb in British India, where its sole aim was to produce clerks. In independent India, the Government realized the need of a value-based education and included it in its Education Policy of 1986. Enumerating the objectives of value-based education, she pointed out how Theosophy aimed at a holistic development of the students and emphasized on the importance of values. Literature, too, preserved values and tended to promote them in the students.

Dr. Indu Upadhyay said that Indian economy is growing at a rate of 7.5 per cent. It is no longer considered as an underdeveloped economy. The impressive economic growth and economic reforms being vigorously followed also lead to the fear of high growth which is exclusionary in nature. The growth of Indian economy is exclusive in nature. One way to bring about inclusive development is to link growth with health and education. India adopted the policy of universalities of primary education. It was to be achieved by 1960, unfortunately it could not be achieved. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was started for the purpose in 2000. The policy was quite successful in attaining 100 per cent enrolment, but in the process quality of the education started deteriorating. A bad quality of primary education leads to bad quality of secondary and tertiary education. The next challenge towards inclusive education is the parental perception in favour of private institution. These institutions charge higher fees which throw nearly 80 per cent of people out of the periphery of inclusive education. Therefore, it is in the broader national interest that the government should increase the public expenditure on education.

The sixth session (Plenary) of the seminar was chaired by Sri PK Jayaswal. Smt. Manju Sundaram, Former Head, Department of Music, VKM, in her plenary talk spoke on 'Life and Music' and elaborated how music is metaphor for life and perfect symbol for the form and spirit of education. She raised the query what is the meaning and objective of education? Education means to bring peace, stability and the expansion of consciousness. Today, many of us perceive life to be burdensome and try to escape from it. We have become materialistic and this is not a healthy sign. Life should be a union of the physical and the spiritual. A sense of proportion and balance is required and this we can learn from

nature where there is a balance between the two. A balance has to be maintained between activity and repose, power and wisdom. J. Krishnamurti said that educators have to be educated first. Harmony is what music teaches us. Life is music and music is the essence of life. Music is miniature form of all the laws that governs the universe. It is a universal language and expands our consciousness. It not only joins us with the Supreme Consciousness but also reminds us of that connection. It instils discipline, self-control among the students. The seven notes of music teach us inter-independence. It is used as a therapy nowadays. Its importance has been realized and that is why it is now included in the curriculum of IITs and IIMs, so that they can develop sensitivity.

In his presidential remarks Sri Jayaswal said that music is the key to understanding divine wisdom. The whole creation came out of 'Om', the cosmic word. Music gives us the message to be unique but at the same time be in harmony with creation. Theosophy also teaches us the law of harmony.

The Valedictory Session was presided over by Sri S. Sundaram, Valedictory Address was delivered by Prof. R.C. Tampi and the International Vice-President Dr. Chittaranjan Satapathy was the Guest of Honour. In his opening remarks, Sri Sundaram quoted Smt. Radha Burnier saying through educating the poor, we are educating ourselves. He pointed out that emphasis on courses will keep changing. He particularly emphasized that the goals and advancement of a society is intricately connected with the career of an individual. In this connection he referred to Gandhi. The challenge before Theosophical Society today is how to reach out to the government aided or government governed educational institutions with the message of theosophy. In his address Dr. Satapathy spoke on 'Educating the Poor: Contribution of the Olcott Education Society'. He highlighted the pioneering contributions of Col. H.S. Olcott and the Olcott Education Society.

In his Valedictory Address, Prof. Tampi highlighted teaching and learning experience and said that the seminar is an experiment in the idea of education. Offering valuable advice he said that workshop in small groups to discuss particular areas and to go deeper in the issue need to be taken up. He emphasized that education has no boundaries. We need to involve young people and we need to listen to them. This seminar is

just a beginning which focussed on institutionalized education. Informal sector in education need to be considered. Teaching and learning experience should be such that it builds up confidence in oneself. Then the students can start their own line of music, art and choose his or her own way of life and learn to take responsibility. He asked, do we have institution for differently-abled children? Some work is being done in this area but needs to be expanded.

Dr. T.K. Nair, Secretary, BEF, proposed the formal vote of thanks and expressed happiness over the warm response of the delegates, invited speakers and young students to the seminar. He gave out a message that this seminar is just a beginning, a step towards serious thinking and dialogue on the vital issues of present day education and finding solution with the help of theosophy.

Sushila Singh

2. Study Camp

The three-day study camp was held at the Indian Section Hqrs, Varanasi, from 16 to 19 March 2015. Prof. R.C. Tampi directed the study of Joy Mills' book *The Human Journey-Quest for Self-Transformation*. The General Secretary welcomed all the participants on behalf of Indian Section and expressed his gratitude to Prof. Tampi for agreeing to direct the study. Highlighting the relevance of Theosophical Wisdom in self transformation, the G.S. maintained that in theosophy we deal with the loftiest Truth and we must have extreme humility, inner harmony and highest reverence to receive the greatest wisdom which theosophy showers on us.

Prof Tampi elaborating on human journey, indicated that human journey is an obligatory pilgrimage which is sacred, difficult to access with highly placed goal. He further clarified that it is a journey toward transformation that will carry us beyond ourselves; a journey in which the very process of travelling is not distinct from unfolding awareness of our own mystery. It is by the living and working that we ultimately define ourselves as human. He emphasized that essentially three factors are involved in understanding our human state; the Monad the Immortal Self and the Mind. It is the power of conscious choice which the human is endowed with, that leads us towards enlightenment if right choice is made.

The director laid great emphasis on metempsychosis which is one of the three-fold evolutionary streams in production and development of the periodical bases or Upadhis and clarified that metempsychosis refers to the necessary psychological transformation that must take place if we are to win our immortality. Illustrating the means by which metempsychosis/transformations occur that lead to liberation from rounds of births and deaths, he pointed out that it is by returning to one's pristine purity of nature- man could move the gods to impart to him Divine mysteries and it is here on earth in physical incarnation that the metempsychosis must be effected.

Speaking extensively on metempsychosis, the Director reminded the gathering that the pathway to such transformation lies in the willingness of each one of us to flung into mysterious depth of our own human identity. It was further stressed that metempsychosis is an essential process relating to psychological evolution and its importance for us today cannot be overlooked. For it is truly in the change of consciousness of humanity where lies our hope for peace and the full recognition of our brotherhood with all. Human journey with its transformation which every individual must take today even at the risk of losing human status can bring about the world at peace with itself.

Concluding the study on human journey he warned that there is no one to lead us unless we lead ourselves on human journey. The passage that is the human journey is won by our own efforts through numberless external existences and countless internal transformations. When we have won through, we shall see the real embedded in the unreal; we shall behold the light shining through all that is now dark and we shall know our immortality in this transient moment of time.

The study camp ended with thanks from the General Secretary to the director of the study Prof. R.C. Tampi. He urged the participants to keep on thinking on various issues raised during the study and anytime transformation may occur in our life.

Dr. T.K. Nair proposed the vote of thanks to all those who helped and worked hard for the success of the camp.

Uma Bhattacharyya

North India Study Camp

The North India Study Camp at the Section Headquarters, Varanasi will be held from 17 to 20 October, 2015. Bro. Tim Boyd, International President of the TS, will direct the study on **THE THREE OBJECTS**.

The participants are requested to study the following articles:

‘The Purpose of the Society’s Objects’ by Joy Mills,

‘The Three Objects’ by Rohit Mehta,

‘Our Objects’ by Hugh Shearman,

‘The Objects and their Relevance to the Theosophical Life’
by John Algeo, and

‘The Universal Brotherhood of Humanity’ by Edward Abdill.

The aforesaid articles can be found at the following website:

<https://www.theosophical.org/the-society/3-objects?>

Other details regarding the camp will be published in the June, July, and August issue of The Indian Theosophist.

S. Sundaram
General Secretary