

THE INDIAN THEOSOPHIST

MARCH 2017

VOI. 115

NO. 3

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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

Cover Page : **The advent of spring.**

Tim Boyd

NURTURING THE SEED*

I would like to wish each and every one of you the happiest, most prosperous, and healthiest of New Years. To many people there is the thought that New Year is a day just like any other, but I believe it is auspicious that the Convention of the Indian Section starts with this recognized new beginning in our year. New Year is a special day because we choose to make it so. I very much like the thinking that was expressed by one of the great Islamic scholars, when someone made the point that “the Prophet Muhammad is just another man”. The scholar’s response was: “Yes, Muhammad *is* just another man in the same way that a ruby is just another stone.”

On this day we allow ourselves the opportunity to give voice to our aspirations for the year ahead. All our prayers for one another, for this Theosophical Society that has such great meaning to us — and we would hope still retains its meaning and vitality in the world — and our wishes and blessings go out on this day; and it is the Indian Convention that inaugurates this special moment for the theosophical world on 1 January. So it is an important day in that respect.

As we all know, the TS had its beginnings in New York City. It was founded there, but something critical and special happened three years after its founding: the Founders and this movement came to India. It was *only* at that point that this movement began to flourish. These are facts. Something changed when the TS landed on this soil, and in 1882 this same ground where we sit now became its International Headquarters and has been ever since. It is a hallowed place, and it has its own influences.

Someone could ask, “What is so special about this place? This ground is earth just like any other.” To the eye of a botanist this place has horticultural value; to a businessman, it is a financial opportunity; but to the eye, the *inner* eye, of those connected to this theosophical movement, this place is something much more: it is spoken of as “The

*Inaugural address to the Indian Section Convention, 1 January 2017.

Home of the Masters”. I do believe that for those of us who allow ourselves those moments of quiet, which are sometimes difficult when we are attending conventions such as this —in the middle of a thousand of our Brothers and Sisters who, like us, tend to be rather talkative, and also tend to carry cell phones, which also make noise — it can sometimes be difficult to experience genuine quiet. However, those moments do occur when we are quiet, open, sensitive to the vibrations that are here among us *always*, but are somehow concentrated and more available when we come together.

During the course of these Conventions there is always something that is quite remarkable to me. So much work, busyness, and activity precedes these times. This year we even had a cyclone. One of the most destructive and powerful forces in the natural world swept through this place. Certainly Cyclone Vardah did a great deal of damage, but in a sense this crisis — as with every crisis we experience in our own lives and in our work for the Theosophical Society — is also a cleansing.

For whatever reason, each one of us has found our way to the theosophical movement. We can describe it in many ways — for some it was a lecture, a book, a person — but in every case there is an *opening* that occurs within us, an awareness, we can even call it a remembrance of something profoundly present with us at every moment. We remember it, see it, feel it, and when we find that within this movement it is most clearly expressed, we commit. So year after year, for 141 years now, we come to this place, we come together for this brief moment in time, for the opportunity to concentrate, to quieten our minds, to listen with the external ear, but mostly to listen with the internal ear, and perhaps every now and then we have the experience of not just listening, but *hearing* the voice, feeling the presence of that which stands behind this *outer* movement that we describe as the Theosophical Society.

It is a wonderful opportunity that each one of us has had in this lifetime, to connect with this movement once again. No matter how long we live, our time here is brief. Every moment is full, is rich with potential. But potential is a strange thing. Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, made the comment that “an uneducated genius is like silver in a mine”. The potential is

there, but without cultivation, it is unexpressed. We have the opportunity, in each other's presence, to refine these vehicles which we have been given — or more correctly, which we have given to ourselves by our past thoughts and actions — to make them more usable, more transparent, more fitted to the purposes of the great *inner* Founders of this movement.

One of the beauties of this Indian Section is that it is on this soil that the seed for this movement has been planted in the hearts of us as people. Our role is not to become knowledgeable, or wise, or to become good, great, better, or more recognized theosophists. The simple role for each of us is to nurture the seed — to provide the conditions for this seed that is present within us to express and to grow. How we do it is what we talk about in these meetings. These are the things that we will take back with us and try to implement. But the extraordinary opportunity of this Adyar environment is to be able to become still, to feel the presence and that greater life within which we sit, breathe, and move. For the brief moments when we are open and aware, when we allow this deeper presence to fill us, to have its way with us, and to express itself in this world, it is a beautiful thing that we do here together.

I am always honoured to be invited to inaugurate this session. I told Brother S. Sundaram and the contingent that came to my office to invite me, that an email would have been sufficient. But the beauty of it is that for our Indian Section it would not suffice. Person to person is the way that I was invited; and person to person is the way I have tried to communicate in speaking today.

Once again, I am very happy to be here with you. I look forward to doing this in years to come. Thank you, happy New Year, and blessings on us all and our movement.

(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, February, 2017)

Linda Oliveira*

LIVING FROM THE STILL CENTRE**

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

“Where shall I look for enlightenment?”

“Here,” answered the Master.

“When will it happen?”

“It is happening right now.”

“Then why don't I experience it?”

“Because you do not look.”

“What should I look for?” asked the Disciple.

“Nothing. Just look.”

“At what?”

“Anything your eyes alight upon.”

“Must I look in a special kind of way?”

“No. The ordinary way will do.”

“But don't I always look the ordinary way?”

“No.”

“Why ever not?”

“Because to look you must be here. You're mostly somewhere else.”¹

The general human condition is one of immersion in this world of forms, driven by a thirst for the whole gamut of sensate experience. We do not normally inhabit *this* moment. Have you ever considered that we commonly tend to live, act, and function as if we are on the circumference of a large circle, and that this boundary becomes the limit of our experience? *Within* the circle lie all the potentialities of what each of us can, and will, become. Yet most of the time we remain comfortably on the very edge of who we really are. We are “somewhere else”, as the story mentioned; we are not present. A metaphor for this is the fact that we live on the exterior of planet Earth. Curiosity by scientists, deep-sea

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**Talk delivered at the International Convention, Adyar, 1 January, 2017

divers, and others, about our planet and how it works, spawns adventures into hidden places such as underground caves and ocean depths. Similarly, our innate curiosity about inner worlds is inevitably piqued at some stage during the journey through *samsâra* — this seemingly endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. It is when deeper enquiry into life occurs that the boundary we have created starts to thin, and weaken.

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

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

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

Adjusting our Mental Frequency

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

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

This process is similar to turning the dial of a radio. It is only when the dial is centred on the correct frequency that there is real clarity. Any other position on that dial produces static. Similarly, our consciousness is full of static — that is, it is full of thoughts and feelings, many of which are a bit hazy, not well formed. This is partly because these thoughts and feelings are things of the remembered past, or else they belong to a future that is largely the subject of speculation.

The mind is fundamentally lacking in strength. Only by deliberately turning the dial do we obtain clarity — and so it is with the mind. There needs to be a conscious movement of consciousness so that static is diminished and greater coherence can emerge. This involves initially the faculty of concentration; and it is from a quiet, concentrated state that consciousness may deepen.

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

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

Many people are so full of mental and emotional noise that they are afraid of silence. However, meditative practices can help one learn not to be afraid in this way. It is important, too, to learn to be still. Why? Because in this stillness there is no striving, no worry, and no wasted energy. One just *is*. And at times there is an unexpected by-product of

stillness: bursts of fresh new energy enter the system, as if from nowhere. This energy wells up through the still point within. Regular meditators would be aware of this phenomenon. Energy can be produced through exercising the physical body. However, the process we are considering here possesses precisely the opposite characteristic. For it is by *ceasing* to allow thought to exercise itself in the mental realm that energy flows into, and through, the system.

The Bindu

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

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

One of the great memes of the twentieth century was Neil Armstrong's experience of unity when he viewed the earth from the moon. Theosophical author Jack Patterson recounted another such experience that happened to an Australian, Arthur Osborn. He had been reading about *pratyag-âtma* (the collective self) and *param-âtma* (the supreme self) in *The Science of Peace* by Bhagavan Das. Osborn confessed to being confused about the two. The following day he opened the book concerned again at the same page and had a profound experience. His surroundings simply disappeared and he found himself in the midst of a boundless ocean. Around him, innumerable columns of water arose from the water below and united overhead in a misty unity. He said, 'I knew the columns of water to be human beings, who sprang from a common source, and reunited after their temporary separation in a richer unity.' But he observed that the *essence* of the experience was that the water columns were people; he was one of them and they were him. All of these individuals were simultaneously present in his con-

sciousness. He knew that all had arisen from a common source and would reunite after a temporary, apparent separation. The essential point of the whole experience, he said, was UNITY. After returning to his room again in consciousness, he knew that the experience had occupied scarcely any time. Arthur Osborn mentioned that for about ten days afterwards he wanted to throw out love frequently on the surrounding neighbourhood. He was also full of joy and exhilaration. This was not a psychic experience but a profound, even mystical one, presumably a brief but potent touch of *buddhic* consciousness.

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

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

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

But what happens when awareness *leaves* the still point in the centre? It ventures out along one of the lines and only the nature of that separate line can be known. However, the closer we are on that particular line to the point in the middle, the deeper our level of awareness pertaining to that line of perception. Indeed, this is the nature of human consciousness, isn't it? When we are truly tranquil and have temporarily forgotten our sense of separateness, then we are at that still point

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

Self-Subdual

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

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

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

On the one hand, these remarks demonstrated very clearly the enormous challenge in becoming a yogi, that is, living in a completely harmonised state from the still centre within. When the senses are subdued, then all things in the external world appear as equal. The person of the world might consider gold to be superior to earth, as it is precious and valuable. Yet does not a lump of earth hold equal value? For it, too, is a manifestation of the Divine Mind and we need it for our survival.

The text speaks of regarding impartially ‘lovers, friends and foes, strangers, neutrals, foreigners, and relatives’. Let us consider this in relation to the world today. Foreigners the world over are frequently treated with suspicion, not impartiality. We live in an age of terror, racism, and extreme nationalism, all of which bear the hallmarks of hatred,

intolerance, and division. This is hardly impartiality. We live in an age of extreme materialism in which individuals are judged, typically, according to their appearance and perceived wealth; this is not impartial. We also live in an age of refugees; millions of people have been fleeing to new places in an effort to leave despotic regimes, endeavouring to find a better life out of sheer desperation. They are regarded too often as foreigners, rather than brothers and sisters. Then again, how easy is it to regard impartially friends and foes? The normal response is to like friends more and to like foes less — or else not at all. It is supremely difficult to be so harmonious that one is not driven by these kinds of considerations.

Krishna set out for Arjuna, in the *Gîtâ*, the facts of spiritual life, if we may put it that way, through which he demonstrated to Arjuna that it is possible to become fully harmonized through performing his dharma with a certain kind of attitude. At one point, we read from Krishna: “As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the Yogi of subdued thought, absorbed in the yoga of the SELF.” (6:19)

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

Dr Taimni has written:

As our consciousness sinks into greater depths . . . of Reality in its progress from the periphery to the centre, this whole universe around us becomes endowed with greater depth, richness, beauty, and harmony, owing to the removal, step by step, of our limitations . . . our consciousness sinks into the greater depths of our own centre of being.⁷

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

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

This Self-born insight, or state of being, is the ultimate key to the

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

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(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, January 2017)

Partha Sarathi Prasad Sarangi*

SELF-CULTURE IS AN ESSENTIAL PRE-REQUISITE FOR THEOSOPHY**

Theosophy is a search from without to within, a journey from periphery to centre, a retirement from fever and fret of life to a Byzantium of peace and harmony, a pilgrimage from a phenomenon world to a noumenon infinitude, an art where the art and the artist become one and no duality exist. A theosophist discovers seen in the unseen, hears the unheard music of silence, talks with Buddha, listens to Blavatsky, roams freely in the inner chamber of consciousness, deeply falls in love with nature, for whom all sorrows and sufferings are hallucinations, pain is a limitation to realize the esoteric message of life.

Therefore without self-cultivation or purgation from the attractions and allurements with a conviction to dare to tread the path of self-discovery, theosophy is meaningless. Any orthodox approach to theosophy without a touch of humbleness, a spirit of self-surrender, a benign approach to merge in the beatitude of eternity theosophy is a futile exercise; a beautiful flower but has no fragrance.

What is Self-Culture: It is an inner governed principle having an ardent aspiration to discover the vast tranquility of consciousness which has been separated by a veil of illusion or Maya. At the surface we are being constantly thrown apart by the forces of attraction and repulsion, cry and laugh as clowns, full of sound and fury signifying nothing. Self-culture is a process of redefining our approach, reorienting our life with simple living and high thinking and ringing out the old and ringing in the new. A theosophist only acts, never reacts; he never argues because truth cannot be argued, is never afraid of as he has no ambition, nothing to achieve having a spontaneous willingness to perform his responsibilities so beautifully that instead of an actor he becomes a dramatist of his own life and rejoices even with its angularities.

Self-Culture Reveals Truth—A deeper level of self-culture re-

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** Talk delivered in the Indian Section Convention-II on 3 January 2017.

veals that the particles which constitute the building block of the cosmos is also present in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm. The whole universe, this planet earth, the sun, the entire solar system as well as this gigantic cosmos along with its rotating galaxies, nebulae, quasar, black holes and everything which are yet to be discovered from the point of view of esoteric wisdom are nothing but the partial expression of the Absolute, the Logos. Everything in this phenomenon world, from alpha to omega, from the stupendous ever expanding space up to an atom everything which has an existence are simply waves. These waves appear, disappear, are being created, destroyed, formed and deformed by nature but the Absolute is the ocean which is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and these waves or matter are partial expression of the infinitude. A deeper self-culture gives us a third eye to look upon this manifested or Rupa world from the following aspect .

(i) Matter is manifestation of spirit, manifestation is Maya, it is involution which is downward

(ii) Spirit which seeks its free expression from matter is *Vairagya*, that travels upward which we call as evolution.

(iii) The perfect balance or equilibrium that co-exist between the two ; spirit and matter and to understand this blissful co-existence of two opposing forces is the one of the objective of Theosophy Even physically, from an intellectual point of view, this perfect equilibrium of matter and spirit, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, has been identified by science. The positive protons are flawlessly balanced by negative electrons in matter, the centrifugal gravity has been faultlessly balanced by the centripetal forces which come out of earth rotation around sun the whole cosmos from this point of view is nothing but a unique combination of opposites. The pair of these opposites makes electricity.

In the pages of theosophy, we have already experienced that matter in the Adi plane is hardly matter, it is the highest expression of spirit, the principle of *Sattwa*. In the lowest plane that is in the elemental stage, which is below the mineral, the matter is so crude that hardly spirit exists there, which is Tama or inertia. Thus we say God sleeps in minerals, dreams in vegetables, wakes in animals and becomes self-conscious in man. But without self-culture God-consciousness will not be rediscovered by an individual. So from a theosophical point of view, everything in our universe partakes with the divine spirit and even the blade of a grass is moving as behind it stands the divine will.

Self-culture brings harmony: The surface of life is easy to analyze. Its ever fluctuating principles, fragile relationships, fleeting circumstances as well as scientific prejudices which encompass our ego with a tinge of modernity are easy to account for a large number of books, talks and gossips. But the knowledge of life's profundities, its inner secrets determining laws need to be thoroughly cultivated to understand the current flow of materialism. At the surface, we get the secondary laws of nature which are readily available to tide over, the present difficulties, but the solutions come along with intrinsic contradictions and thus it multiplies our desires, cushions our senses, feeds our intellect to defend desires and ultimately frustrations, jealousy, stress and stigmas are the offsprings of a highly techno-savvy society.

As long as through self-culture, we have not churned our senses to some extent put impediments over our desires, killed our inhibitions for truth, the beauty of theosophy will not be revealed. This self-culture transformed a killer thief into a Valmiki, made a passionate sensual lover, a great devotee of God as Tulasidas and remodeled an oppressive monarch as a great lover of humanity like emperor Ashoka .

Self-culture adds beauty to life : "A deeper self-culture adds beauty to life, brings a unique sense of something fundamental in the deepest sense which comes out of the whole of one's consciousness not from the without but from the within a veritable mutation with a quality of newness in each and every aspect of life ." Theosophy is better revealed in the following words

*To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower
To hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.*

Such an approach comes out of a higher mind which is immune from all mechanizations, superstitions, prejudices and pains. Unlike a lightning may be for few moments when our consciousness soars high, it unfolds before us, the unseen beauty which is the sole objective of theosophy. We all know that man is actually a seven-fold being, starting from dense physical up to the monadic level. When our soul is less cultured owing to lack of schooling by nature the soul mostly communicates through dense physical body under the command of *Kama-manasa*. At such a stage mind blanketed by sensual provocations runs hither and thither to gratify his cravings. Operating through lower

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mind knowledge is obtained by information, comparisons, classifications where one answer raises many questions and so we become a talking and walking robot or an etherized patient barren of any beauties of life. But at a certain stage when the ego is sufficiently developed, his higher vehicles are active the senses too become refined and respond to higher vibrations. These borrowed ideas, cosmetic beauty, tailored talks cannot sweeten his thirst. So in search of truth and beauty he turns inward; instead of arguing he believes, lamenting he smiles, talking he listens to the inner voice of silence and self-culture becomes a self-prescribed religion or a quest for beauty.

Law Of Duty: In the descending order of evolution it is the spiritual that transforms itself into material and in the ascending order of evolution it is the material which will be spiritual. Hence everything in the whole universe is in an evolutionary process of being more refined to express their latent spirituality in their respective limitations. All forms even some which are invisible are animated by a divine consciousness or speaking otherwise the minerals, stones, vegetables, animals and all human beings are my brothers. This gives us a greater sense of responsibility to deal with all forms below and above us with love and respect. Our progress from materialism to spirituality is not a straightaway upward journey rather it process through cycles, through ups and downs or through a zigzag path which necessitate a calmness to end our fears and sorrows. We realize this temporary earth cannot have a permanent building nor this temporary body can have a permanent life. Everything is in a stage of being and becoming, so instead of looking at life as a hungry leopard to fall upon every opportunity, rather as an innocent child we surrender ourselves before great divine forces. This self-culture evokes a feeling of universal brotherhood, a deep sense of compassion for everything, a voluntary willingness to energise our divine faculties to forward evolution of matter for expression of spirit.

Man as a finest terrestrial creature must endeavour to answer a rudimentary question that who is he?, or from where he has been from? It depends upon him that how long he will camouflage his identity in the jungle of materialism, put down his natural inquisitiveness in exchange of sensuality, defend his ignorance by some scientific prejudices .If not today then tomorrow his inner urge will turn him inward, he will meditate in the secret valley of his deeper mind to regain the lost paradise of truth and beauty. Theosophy starts at this point, through self-culture it will unfold before us rare treasures of nature.

Bengal

Sri Gautam Nandi (Diploma No. 58662) passed to peace on 16 December 2016. He was Secretary of Bengal Theosophical Federation. He had studied Theosophical literature right from his student days. He was the first Secretary of Bharadwaj Lodge. Besides, he was a good speaker on Theosophical themes as well as on the subjects related to TOS. The news of his passing away was received at the Section HQ on 18 December. May the departed soul rest in peace.

Bombay

A set of 6 Dani Notebooks, printed with the Universal Prayer & inspiring quotes were distributed to about 110 students of one Municipal School at Nana Chowk and two schools of Seva Sadan at Gamdevi, on 9 December 2016.

Anand Lodge, Juhu, revitalized on 21st November 2016: The members of Anand Lodge with their family members and friends gathered in a freshly painted Anand Lodge premises in Juhu Theosophical Colony. Bro. Navin Kumar, who had taken the initiative in activating Anand Lodge convened the meeting. The Prayers of All Religions and the Universal prayer were recited.

Bro. Navin Kumar welcomed all the members of Anand Lodge, which had received its Charter on 14 December 1928. He spoke about the Theosophical Society, Theosophy, and Freedom of Thought which are always printed in '*The Theosophist*'. He added that one has to study and endeavour to live Theosophy. The spirit of Theosophy has to be shared with family and friends. There are Theosophic Vibrations in Juhu Theosophical Colony and it is good that children of members want to join Anand Lodge. Sis. Farida Lalan, a senior member, was requested to chair the meeting.

BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya in his address said that at the Lodge Meetings at a specific time persons with similar thinking gather to think together for spiritual pursuits and for the good of humanity. Give responsibility to members to read or give a presentation followed

by discussion. Inquirers should be encouraged to attend the meetings and when they are ready make them members. A person has to do his duty. He mentioned that Dr. Ajay Hora was the first to rush to give medical help to a TC, when he was injured due to a train accident. The members of the TS should have concern for human and all other beings.

Bro. Noor Baig offered to reach out to persons interested in Theosophy and even to organize a camp at a convention centre in the midst of Nature. He suggested that the meetings should have more dialogue.

Sis. Aban Patel spoke about rich heritage of Theosophical literature given to humanity by The Masters through the Light Bringers HPB & HSO, Annie Besant and other leaders. To study Theosophy lot of reading is needed, but it is better to read little at a time and ponder over it.

Bro. Rustom Dalal sharing his personal experiences said that Theosophy comes to you, when you are ready. Late Sis. Mehra Dhalla made him a member, and gave him the duty of Librarian. That gave him a chance to read many books on Theosophy.

Sis. Farida Lalan proposed to make meetings interesting with discussions. She also said that one needs to learn about HPB, a human being, yet so perfect.

Bro. Nilesh Mehta appreciated the good start and asked the members to keep it up.

Sis. Mahazaver Dalal spoke about the purpose of Juhu Theosophical Garden Society, which was later named after Annie Besant as 'Vasanta Theosophical Co-operative Housing Society'. She also explained the role of Anand Lodge to make the VTCH Society vibrant with the Theosophic Life.

Young Nimit Mehta said book knowledge is not enough; I want to learn from the experiences of TS Members.

Bro. Navin Kumar proposed the vote of thanks, especially to Sis. Zenobia Khodaiji for organizing the meeting, getting the room painted and hosting the evening with Tea & Dinner.

The 88th Federation Day celebration of Anand Lodge, Juhu, was held on Sunday 11 December 2016. It was attended by 35 members of Anand, Vasanta, Ganesh, Jyoti & Blavatsky Lodge and interested friends. The meeting was opened with the Universal Prayer. Sis. Farida Lalan was requested to take the Chair. Bro. Navin Kumar conveyed the greetings of the International Vice-President Dr. Chittaranjan Satapathy and the Indian Section's General Secretary Bro. S. Sundaram. He distributed a pamphlet prepared by him with Objects of the TS, Theosophical Society, Theosophy & the Truths conveying that 'Theosophy guides the evolution, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence'. BTF's President Bro. Vinayak Pandya said the purpose of Lodge Meetings is individual's development with study of Theosophical books, discussion and sharing of thoughts. He requested BTF Vice-President Dr. Ajay Hora to conduct the study of HPB's book *The Key to Theosophy*.

Dr. Ajay Hora, before starting the study of the first chapter of the book, speaking about the formation of VTCHS, said that where the TS emblem is today, i.e. at the entrance from the sea shore, sitting at that very spot Dr. Annie Besant had said, *Aura of this Land belongs to the Masters*. Dr. Hora advised us to start and end the day with Meditation, even of two minutes, as it will guide us to serve humanity and help the Great One in evolution of humanity. About the study he quoted Radhaji's words, "I keep *At the Feet of the Master* near my bed. Before going to sleep I read 3-4 pages and then ponder over it." He invited youngsters to meet him even at his residence to ask questions and to learn Theosophy.

In latter half of the meeting thoughts were shared: Bro. Navin Kumar quoting from Taimni's book said that before a meeting preparations for the study are required. Bro. Noor Baig urged to have dialogue pertaining to Theosophical Guidelines for current scenario. He also said from student (with knowledge) one has to become a Disciple (live Theosophy). Bro. Rustom & Sis. Mahazaver Dalal reported about an enquiry of a Unity Youth Lodge member that TPH magazine "Wake Up India" can facilitate youth to view current affairs in the light of Theosophy. Bro. Dalal added that I respond to Bro. Tim Boyd's question 'What is the concept of Theosophy', Radhaji's answer was 'It is to help create better human beings'. Sis. Farida Lalan asked Brethren to prepare short

presentations on HPB's life, personality, books/writings and work for the next meeting. Young inquirers wanted to learn about TS & Theosophy with relevance to present-day life. Bro. Taral Munshi said that as for a gardener knowledge of horticulture is not enough, he has to put his hands in the soil to plant & nurture plants and flowerbeds, so also one has to live Theosophy. His message in Hindi was, '*Insan, Insan se Kare Insaniyat ka vada*'. The meeting ended with the vote of thanks by Sis. Farida Lalan. All enjoyed cutting the 88th Foundation Day cakes and lunch hosted by the organizer of the event Sis. Zenobia Khodaji.

Christmas Ceremony by Maitreya Round Table was performed on Christmas Day 25 December 2016 at Besant Hall: The beautiful ceremony conducted by Officiating Knight Rashna Jehani was to herald Goodwill & Cheer with Hymns 'Abide with Me', and 'O! Come all ye Faithful'. MRT members spoke about significance of Christmas and the Christmas Ceremony. Bro. Navin Kumar thanked them on behalf of Blavatsky Lodge.

Support Convention was jointly organized by BTF & Blavatsky Lodge at Besant Hall. Blavatsky Lodge Entrance, Lobby and Besant Hall were decked with Christmas decorations by Sis. Navaz Dhalla to welcome brethren and friends. Support Convention 2016-17 was held to be in tune with the 141st International Convention at Adyar from 31 December 2016 to 5 January 2017.

The programme started in the morning with the Prayers of All Religions and the Universal Prayer. To attune all to the Convention theme 'Beyond Illusion: A Call to Unity' the Mystic Star was performed. This beautiful ceremony with its Spiritual teachings leads to a feeling of oneness, at a pause during the ceremony, Sis. Navaz Dhalla shared an article on the significance of the Ritual of the Mystic Star. Blavatsky Lodge President Sis. Kashmiri Khambatta read out the Presidential Address of International President Tim Boyd, delivered at the opening of the Convention on 31st December 2016. She also shared information about the activities during the Convention at Adyar like Social Welfare Centre, Vocational Training Centre, Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School, Adyar Library & Research Centre, Beauty Without Cruelty, The International Order of the Round Table and the Bharat Samaj Temple.

The Ritual ended with the Invocation to the Master and the closing ceremony. This was followed by fellowship at the pooled lunch with the tasty spread shared by Brethren.

The participant Brethren, Members & Friends interested in Music gathered in the evening on 3rd January in Besant Hall. Master of Ceremonies Sis. Aban Patel, on behalf of the Bombay Theosophical Federation and Blavatsky Lodge TS, welcomed all and wished them a Happy New Year. The Universal Prayer led by Blavatsky Lodge President Sis. Kashmiri Khambatta was recited. Before starting the programme she appealed for medical help for the surgery of Ganpat, Blavatsky Lodge's attendant, which later in the evening was well responded.

Sis. Aban Patel explaining the purpose of the evening said that the theme of the 141st International Convention held at Adyar in 'Beyond Illusion: A Call to Unity' - what is that unites us all? Today in this hall there are people from all walks of life. They follow different religions, speak different languages, dress up in different styles, then, what is the factor that is uniting us all? It is none other than Music & Singing. Music has no language. The music that comes together, unites us all in one. It soothes our nerves, it inspires us, even unborn babies in their mothers' womb respond to good music. Music encompasses all the Creations of the Creator in Unity. Hence, today, let us all unite with music and enjoy. This was followed by a programme in which a number of members rendered songs, recited poems and played tunes on musical instruments.

Thanks to Sis. Kashmiri Khambatta's son and our member Firdaus, the members at the evening meeting were able to see the Opening ceremony and listen to Sis. Linda Oliveira's short talk on 'Living from the Still Centre'.

The Support Convention was closed with words of appreciations by Bro. Navin Kumar.

In the meeting at Blavatsky Lodge on Sunday 8 January 2017, BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya, who with Dr. Ajay Hora and Sis. Urvi Hora had attended the Convention at Adyar said that it is always an experience to attend International Convention at Adyar, the Masters'

abode. In spite of the havoc caused by a cyclone, the Amphitheatre was prepared and other arrangements made to receive the Convention Delegates.

Utkal

“Gita Jayanti” was celebrated at UTF Hall, Bhubaneswar, on 12 December 2016. Bro. B.B. Palai, Sis. Purnamasi Pattnaik, Bro. Ashok Pattnaik, Bro. Satayabrata Rath, Sis. Swarnalata Das and Sis. Sharmistha Pattnaik recited the entire sacred book.

A day-long study class was held on 25 December at the Headquarters Hall in Bhubaneswar. The book studied was *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol.-I) by Col. H.S. Olcott. Bro. Satyabrata Rath, Bro. Ashok Pattnaik, Bro. P.K. Mahapatra, Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra, Bro. R.C. Pattnaik, Sis. Swarnalata Das, Sis Purnamasi Pattnaik and Bro. B.S. Mohanty delivered talk on different chapters relating to the early days of Theosophical Society and various phenomena shown by HPB.

Prof. Sahadev Patra delivered an illuminating talk on 3 December. He spoke “Vipassana” in the joint Lodge meeting held at Cuttack Lodge. He emphasized on and said Self-contemplation will make oneself successful in Meditation. Bro. B.S. Mohanty presided over the meeting and gave the introductory address which was based on “*Sati Pathaana Sutta*” of Buddhist literature which teaches that on attaining wisdom one can make an end to the human suffering.

“Gita Jayanti” was celebrated in the meeting hall of Barabati Lodge, Cuttack, on 12 December 2016. Prof. Sahadev Patra and Bro. S.S. Pati delivered talk on “Srimad Bhagavadgita” and stanzas from Bhagavadgita were recited in the meeting. Members of Cuttack Lodge and Barabati Lodge participated in the celebration.

Dr. Prafulla Kumar Das, Retd. Prof. of Odia, delivered a talk on “The Achintya Vedaveda”. The meeting was held on 7 January and presided over by Bro. B.S. Mohanty.

Uttar Pradesh

Sri Amitab Bhattacharya delivered a very informative talk on ‘The Holistic Philosophy of Life in Rabindranath Tagore’s writings’. It was held under the auspices of Kashi Tattva Sabha on 3 February.

Bro. V. Narayanan, Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya, Bro. S. Sundaram and Smt. Manju Sundaram gave their impressions regarding the talks and other programmes held during the 141st International Convention at Adyar from 31 December 2016 to 5 January 2017. This meeting was organized by KTS on 7 February.

The members of KTS are studying *Theosophy Explained in Questions and Answers* by P. Pavari in the meetings held on every Tuesday.

Indian Section Convention-I

The 125th Indian Section Convention-I was held at Adyar on 1 January 2017. The General Secretary (GS), S. Sundaram, welcomed the International President Mr. Tim Boyd, Vice-President Bro. Chittaranjan Satapathy, Federation Secretaries and the delegates. The General Secretary read out the greetings received for the occasion from a few members of the Section. The Federation Secretaries conveyed greetings on behalf of their respective Federations.

The Chief Guest Bro. Tim Boyd inaugurated the Convention.*

The GS then presented the Annual Report for the year 2015-16 giving a general survey of the work done during the year under review. It was followed by the Treasurer’s Report presented by Bro. P.S. Panchakshari.

Bro. Chittaranjan Satapathy, International Vice-President, chaired the Convention.

The Indian Section Convention-II was held on 3 January, 2017, in which short talks were delivered on ‘**Self-preparation is an important aspect of Theosophical Work**’ by Bro. O.P. Aneja (of Noida Lodge), Mrs. Nandia Kuldip (Life Member of the Indian Section) and Bro. Partha Sarathi Prasad Sarangi (of Bhubaneswar). The talks were very much appreciated by the delegates.

Indian Section Headquarters

The support convention was held at the Indian Section HQ on 31 December 2016 and 5 January 2017. Bro. Jwala Prasad Mishra spoke on the theme of the International Convention “Beyond Illusion: A Call to Unity”. He explained the importance of Unity. He stated that the divi-

*The text of his Inaugural Address is given on page 105-107.

sions made by man in the name of caste, creed, nationality and religion are mere illusions. These lead to disarray and confusion. As a Theosophist one should propagate the idea of unity and brotherhood. When an individual accepts and adopts the idea of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which means the whole world is one family, then only he starts working for the upliftment of society. Unity is the key to all-round progress. It is not an easy task, because bringing people together is difficult due to personal agendas, egos, power struggle and negativity. Despite of these difficulties everyone should do his bit in bringing unity in society.

Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, in collaboration with Kala Prakash and INTACH, organized a programme on Saint Poet Kabir on 21 January 2017. The theme was *Kahe Kabir Samujhaye*. Smt. Manju Sundaram delivered a very thought provoking talk on Kabir's teachings and it was followed by a few devotional songs rendered by Mrs. Gouri Guha of Canada.

Adyar Day was observed at the Section Headquarters on 17 February. The programme started with the Universal Prayer followed by the Adyar Song beautifully rendered by the students of Vasant Balika Vihar. Before that, Smt. Manju Sundaram informed about the background of the aforesaid Gujarati song composed by Smt. Mugdha Ben Hora. Smt. Manju explained the content of the song in Hindi. Bro. V. Narayanan delivered a short talk on the significance of the occasion. Some of the students, who had come to attend the function, did not know about the history of the International HQ. Bro. S. Sundaram told in brief about the significant aspects of the place and how it was selected as the International Headquarters of the TS. Rs. 550/- were donated by the members which will be sent to the International Headquarters.

Change in Venue of the Study Camp

The study camp on "Philosophy of the Bhagavadgita in the Light of Theosophy", which was to be held at Gwalior will be held at Agra on the same dates that is 24-26 March 2016.

For details contact: Bro. U.S. Pandey, Secretary, U. P. Federation- Mob. No. 09451993170.

HIMALAYAN STUDY CENTRE, BHOWALI SUMMER PROGRAMME OF STUDY CAMPS — 2017

	Dormitory 6 persons	Old 24	Deluxe 20
1. 20 April to 26 April-2017 Indian Section's Study Camp on 'Self-Realization through Love' [<i>Narad Bhakti Sutra</i>] of I. K. Taimni By Prof. C A Shinde	3100	3450	3800
2. 29- 30 April and 01 May -2017 ES Retreat by Prof. C A Shinde	1500	1650	1800
3. 03 May to 12 May 2017 Karnataka Federation's Study Class on 'The Teachings of J. Krisnamurti' Director B. V. Thippeswamy and others	3900	4350	4800
4. 15 May to 19 May -2017 Indian Section's Study class on 'Wisdom of Upanishads- from 'A Theosophical Perspective' By Dr. Chittaranjan Satapathy	2300	2550	2800
5. 22 May to 28 May- 2017 Telugu Federation's Study Class on 'Treading the Occult Path' in Telugu [<i>AadhyaathmikaPrasthaanaPravesam Prayaanam</i>] The Camp will be jointly conducted by Dr. PLN Prasad and KVL KanthaRao.	3100	3450	3800

6. 31 May, 01,02 June 2017 EST Retreat by Prof. R C Tampi	1500	1650	1800
7. 04 June to 06 June 2017‘TOS — WORKERS’ Training Camp Organized by the TOS India, Director Bro. B L Bhattacharya National Director TOS India	1500	1650	1800
8. 10 -11 June 2017 Uttarakhand Lodges’ Study Camp, Book for Study- ‘At the Feet of the Master’ Director Bro. S.K. Pandey, National Lecturer, Indian Section, TS.	1100	1200	1300

- a) This programme will enable you to reserve train tickets.
- b) Members are requested to remit the above mentioned amount in February-2017 by cheque/ or deposit in the name of Indian Section, Theosophical Society, Varanasi, in Vijaya Bank, SB Account no.718301010005045, IFSC Code- VIJB0007183.
- c) Accommodation in [i] Dormitory- 6 persons, [ii] Old Rooms -24 persons, [iii] Deluxe Rooms- 20 persons.
- d) Accommodations will be on ‘first come first basis’ for each of the categories.

SOUTH INDIA CONFERENCE

The 94th South India Theosophical Conference will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, Chennai, from 14 to 16 April 2017. It will be on “Theosophy – Defining the Indefinable”. Members of the Theosophical Society (TS) in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates, and are requested to study the following books:

1. *The Key to Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky
2. *How to Study Theosophy*, by H. P. Blavatsky
3. *Ancient Wisdom*, by Annie Besant
4. *Divine Wisdom*, by N. Sriram
5. *Human Regeneration*, by Radha Burnier

The Charges per delegate are as follows:

1. Registration Fee: Rs 130/-.
2. **Accommodation** at Bhojanashala and New Quadrangle will be provided free of cost.
3. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner will be arranged at the Leadbeater Chambers’ (LBC) dining hall. You are requested to write to the Superintendent, LBC, for the necessary arrangements. Bills can be settled at the time of departure.
4. Delegates wishing to register are requested to send a cheque for Rs.130/- favouring “Treasurer, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020”.
5. Delegates will have to provide information of the date of arrival, date of departure, and contact number besides details of Lodge & membership.
6. All correspondence regarding Registration should be addressed to Convener c/o, The International Secretary’s Office, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020.
7. For accommodation at LBC, delegates will have to write to the Superintendent, LBC, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020.
8. For any clarification or for booking accommodation through email, you may write to the following email id: acco.hq@ts-adyar.org.
9. Last date for receipt of application at Adyar is 1 April 2017.
10. In the event of cancellation there would be no refund of Registration fee.

**94th SOUTH INDIA CONFERENCE
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
ADYAR, CHENNAI 600 020, INDIA**

1. Name: Mr/Mrs.....
2. Nationality:.....3. Date of Birth.....
4. Address
5. E-Mail:.....
6. Phone/Mobile Number:.....
7. Occupation (if retired, former occupation):.....
8. Date of Joining the T.S.....9. Diploma No.....
10. Section / Federation / Lodge to which attached and whether now in good standing as a member:.....
11. Proposed duration of stay in Adyar:

From:To:

12. Details of person(s) accompanying:-

Sl.	Name	Age	Member (Y/N)	Relationship

13. Special Request, if any:
14. Recommended by

Signature

Signature of applicant:

Date: