

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

In normal thinking the Golden Age is a period of time, always in the distant past, or future, never now. When rightly seen as a state of consciousness this possibility is ever present. For us it seems to require a process of unfoldment — from ideas to experience, from teachings to insight, from self-absorption to the altruistic heart. At every moment the organ of consciousness that we call the heart is without limit in its capacity to understand and connect.

## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

To the 142nd Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society  
Adyar, 31 December 2017

I am very happy to warmly welcome all of you to this 142nd International Convention at our Adyar international headquarters, and I wish you a very pleasant and inspiring time while you are here. Let us rise to invoke the blessing of our elder Brethren, who are ever ready to guide and help those who are unselfishly dedicated to the good of other living beings:

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

The year 2017 marks the 142nd anniversary of the Theosophical Society's founding. Longevity is universally regarded as a good thing because it indicates a connection to some vitalizing principle that extends the lifespan beyond the normal range. Whether it is the person who reaches 100 years of age, or the organization that outlasts

its contemporaries, what is the "secret" for long life is always a question.

There are countless examples of great people and movements who appeared on the scene for a moment, did their work, and departed, whose only lasting mark is on the hearts and minds of the people they touched. There are also examples of long life where people, institutions, or

organizations have limped their way into the future, mimicking vitality, but forgetful of their reason for being — cut off from the life force that gives meaning to the years. There is an expression that a parrot can live to 100 years of age but, in the end, he is still a parrot.

While longevity is potentially a great blessing, its value is determined solely by how that time has been used. From the perspective of the Theosophical Society (TS) and the movement that came into being with its founding, it is not enough to merely endure. The purpose of this movement is transformation, at a deep level, described by the poet D. H. Lawrence as “freeing oneself from the endless repetition of the mistake which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify” — the mistake of separation, imagined independence, and isolation that has been the hallmark of human behavior and the wellspring of the array of problems we have come to regard as normal to the human condition.

Every year we come together as an international body to remember our roots, our invisible/hidden connection to a shared vitalizing source, and to draw strength from that remembrance. If approached as a mere reminiscence, or a fond looking backwards to the “good old days”, our time together is wasted. Not only is our time squandered, but the enormous sacrifices of those who preceded us and who have made this moment possible are diminished by our failure to properly understand.

The TS has its Three Objects which have given direction from the outset. However, the reason for its existence is

stated in a manner different from its Objects. In *The Key to Theosophy* H. P. Blavatsky, the Society’s principal founder, makes the statement that the TS was founded for two main reasons: 1) “to assist in showing to people that such a thing as Theosophy exists”, and 2) “to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities”. During the lifetime of the TS these goals have been approached along different lines. Initially there was a focused resistance to the limitations of the science and religion of the day. The outline of an alternative, a Divine Wisdom, a Theosophy, capable of spiritualizing and humanizing both individuals and their institutions, had to be presented in a manner that could be grasped by those rare high and open minds. Wisdom needed to be reduced to knowledge in order to gain access to popular thought.

Having succeeded in the initial goal of showing that such a thing as Theosophy exists and having established a globally shared language for the consideration of the Ageless Wisdom, the focus of our work has fully entered into the realm of “studying and assimilating its eternal verities”. The progression from teachings to insight and from student to exemplar justifies the existence of the TS. No new fact or increment of knowledge is required to address the mounting issues of our time. The outline of the wisdom teachings that we have been given exceeds our capacity to comprehend. In the words of Albert Schweitzer: “Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the *only* thing.”

## **SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE (SWC)**

The Social Welfare Centre runs a day care centre cum Nursery School for small children of working parents from low income families. This year the centre took care of sixty children who were provided with nutritious food, milk and fruits. The children were taught numbers, alphabets, rhymes, colouring pictures, action songs, exercises, and dance. The children were also taken

for visits to various amusement parks.

Dr R. Revathy visited the centre regularly for conducting health check-up, and also provided guidance to the parents on health care for the children.

On Adyar Day dresses were donated by TOS, Adyar. Convention delegates are invited to the cultural programme and Exhibition at the SWC on 1 January 2018 from 1.30 to 3.00 p.m.



## **VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE (VTC)**

The Vocational Training Centre was started on 1 January 2000 with the motto uplifting women in the society.

Tailoring is an art and gives immense satisfaction to women. It is a great stressbuster and also can make them financially secure. The centre has been offering a one-year certificate course in tailoring and embroidery and it is proud to have benefited more than 700 students in the last 18 years.

Students are well-trained in the art of tailoring as they are introduced to many related activities as part of the course — preparing albums & records, selection of fabric, pattern-making, dress designing, workshops and training, educational visits and maintaining stalls. Every year, deserving candidates are selected and rewarded with sewing machines as a token of appreciation and encouragement.

The next batch will commence on

17 January 2018. This course is offered free for the underprivileged students

The Vocational Training Centre and Social Welfare Centre, wings of the Olcott Education Society contribute to the Convention by the display of stalls, exhibitions and cultural programmes.

**Stalls:** Inauguration on 31 December 2017 at 10 a.m. by Mr Tim Boyd, International President.

**Venue:** TS Campus, adjacent to the Enquiry Office.

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Products on sale include:** Woven materials — carpets, mats, towels, napkins, kitchen towels, table mats etc. Bags and covers — TS emblem bags, Adyar Banyan Tree bags, *kalamkari* bags and purses, jeans bags, patchwork bags, wire baskets, cushion covers, pillow covers. Dresses — umbrella & wrap-around skirts, short kurtis, palazzos. Customised ethnic dressed dolls.



## **OLCOTT MEMORIAL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Col H. S. Olcott established many free schools for boys and girls from the lower strata of society. After his death two of these schools, formed in 1894, were named Olcott Memorial Schools, which were later merged into one school for children in the Adyar area. The school continues to provide free education to underprivileged children, and emphasizes value education and good citizenship apart from excellence in academics, sports and crafts. The school has 378 students on the rolls now — 143 girls and 235 boys. All the students are provided with free textbooks, notebooks, stationery supplies, lunch and two sets of uniforms.

The year saw a generous donation of Rs 3.5 crores towards a corpus fund from a patron, Wipro Cares, who has been supporting the school with annual contributions in the past few years.

Nalandaway Foundation, an NGO involved in integrating art and academics to improve learning abilities, reinforce positive behaviour and help children

be creative, has been supporting the primary teachers with training and provision of resources. Rotary Club of Chennai Mitra organized a digital education session for the teachers, and also sponsored the Teachers' Day celebration.

In the Grade 12 exam conducted by the State Government, 45 of the 51 students who appeared, passed with a stellar performance by S. Prashanth (199 out of 200 in Commerce stream). In the class 10 exam 36, out of 46 students who appeared, passed. The performances of the students were better in both the exams when compared with the previous years.

The students continued to perform well in sports and games like carrom, kabaddi and handball at the zonal and district level. Dr R. Revathy continued to ensure the health of the children by holding regular health check-ups. This effort was supplemented by Rotary Mitra who organized a special eye-screening camp for all the students.



## **EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM**

Dr Annie Besant was often called by her contemporaries as "A Diamond Soul". The more cuts a diamond has, the more it shines. So was Annie Besant. Symbolically, like a diamond, she radiated sturdiness, power, resilience, great integrity and lasting glow. She was indeed an evolved soul, most lofty in her quest. With a bright clarity of thinking and pro-

found wisdom she spearheaded a movements involving thousands of people all over the world. In India she did a huge service in the field of politics for women and children in education and for society at large. As the President of the Theosophical Society, too, she bore great responsibilities. Dr Besant was such an inspiring, charismatic leader

that people were ever ready to join her in her movements. She was indeed a vibrant leader who inspired thousands of people. Being a gifted, great orator, people thronged to hear her golden voice. **Adyar Archives and Museum** proudly presents this exhibition as a humble homage to a great soul. The exhibits and texts highlight what Dr Besant will always be remembered for what she did for India a hundred years ago. She started Women's Indian Association at that time. She played a very active part

in the Home Rule Movement which was started in December 1916. Along with B. P. Wadia & Dr G. S. Arundale she was interned in Ootacamund. When she was later released thousands of people welcomed her back to freedom. In the same year she also started SPNE (Society for the Promotion of National Education), devoted to spreading education in India. Last but not least, she was elected the first woman president of the Indian National Congress, which is celebrating its centenary this year!



## **ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE**

Founded by Col. H. S. Olcott in 1886 with his own small but valuable collection of books and manuscripts, the Centre has gone on to focus on the revival of the study of Oriental literature, philosophy and religion, and encourages scholars in Indian studies. The Library extends its services to research institutions, universities and scholars in India and abroad, and supplies copies of manuscripts and other rare collections on request. A journal, *Brahmavidya*, which presents studies on religion, philosophy, culture, and various aspects of Indology, is published and widely circulated among scholars globally.

The work of digitization of manuscripts and rare books that was initiated a couple of years back has been completed. Two pamphlets were published and twelve books have been selected for new publication. The re-

search affiliation with the American Institute of Indian Studies continued this year. The special exhibition of photographs, on the flora and fauna of Adyar by Prof. A. Chandrasekharan started last year, was continued through the year, with over 2000 visitors.

The Library was used by 1268 registered readers and 260 borrowers who consulted 3404 books, and borrowed 387 books and 359 manuscripts. 2000 books were catalogued, 2500 books were checked, 220 books and 429 manuscripts were scanned. Book acquisition numbers: 6 purchased, 402 received as gifts (from President's and Secretary's Offices, TPH Adyar and Wheaton, Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan, Siddha Yoga Research Centre, and many anonymous donors), 408 accessed, 611 catalogued and added to the collection. Conservation statistics: 605 hard-cover and 595 soft-cover books repaired, 700 bound, 79

photocopied, and 1250 wrapper-pasted.

The Library has achieved much during its over hundred years of existence but there is still much to be done. An Adyar Library Endowment Fund was created in 1986 to enable members of

the Society as well as others interested in supporting its activities. Its aim is to promote understanding among men and nations through knowledge of the higher aspects of their respective cultures.



## **THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF THE ROUND TABLE**

In 1908 G. H. Whyte established the Order of the Round Table for the purpose of developing the qualities of the soul, and the spirit of brotherhood and chivalry among the young. It has since then spread to different parts of the world. The Order strives through colourful and music-based ceremonies to inculcate the virtues of Joy, Friendliness, Helpfulness, Courage, and Righteousness in young minds starting from the age of five. Members are involved in many kinds of activities, but they meet regularly for ceremonial work.

Many famous theosophists have held the highest office of "Senior Knight", like Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, G. S. Arundale, Rukmini Devi, and so on. Young minds are sensitized through social work in association with The Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) to

understand the Oneness of Life in its myriad forms — living and inanimate.

The main objective of the Order of the Round Table remains to promote brotherhood, first among its members, then around the world. Therefore, the Order expects its members to extend their feelings of brotherhood to all, without distinction of race, religion, sex, social rank, political opinion, and so on.

The Round Table ceremonies belong to three major categories: the core ceremonies, the drama ceremonies, and the symbolic ceremonies. The Flower Ceremony, one of the latter, was performed this year by the Table members on 30th December 2017 afternoon.

Interested well-wishers may contact the Secretary, phone no. 99001-01756), or email <csn53@rediffmail.com>.



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**Number of delegates registered as of Saturday, 30 December: 899**

## **BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY AND BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY**

The Chennai Centre of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) and the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD) of the Theosophical Society (TS) have again organized a stall during the Annual Convention this year. On display are easy-to-read posters that give extensive details about the suffering and death inflicted upon innocent animals at factory farms, in the cosmetic industry, and so on. BWC is an international educational trust dedicated to the total abolition of abuse to animals. It is a way of life which causes no creature of land, sea or air, terror, torture or death. It opposes the commercial exploitation of all animals, believing that they too have the right to live in dignity and enjoy the same care and consideration as humans. Anyone may become a BWC member. Life membership of the BWC costs Rs 300 (Rs 600 outside India).

The Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary cares for the welfare of the animals on the campus, both domesticated and wild. The core value of “the one life” in all creatures, big and small, human and non-human, is central to its work and operations. It focuses on providing compassionate care and medical treatment for street animals and organizes periodic adoption drives for abandoned animals, in addition to animal birth control surgeries to restrict the animal population in Chennai city.

All are welcome to visit the stall from 31 December 2017 to 5 January 2018. The Poster Exhibition is open for 24 hours during this period. The stall will be manned only on two days, on 31st December and 1 January, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, during which time membership subscriptions may be made. T-shirts and non-leather wallets are on sale. The stall was inaugurated by Mr Tim Boyd, President of The Theosophical Society, after the opening of the Convention.



**The entire universe and everything in it, animate and inanimate,  
is His. Let us not covet anything. Let us treat everything around  
us reverently, as custodians. We have no charter for dominion.  
All wealth is commonwealth. Let us enjoy but neither hoard nor  
kill. The humble frog has as much right to live as we.**

*Ishopanishad*

# THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

## MISSION

Our mission is to disseminate Theosophical literature by increasing the number, availability and readership of the publications of the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH) and the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC).

We work towards this mission by distributing more extensively both in-house publications as well as selected compatible publications of other reputable publishers and ensuring customer satisfaction, in conformity with the best international publishing practices and the ideals of the Theosophical Society.

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The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), Adyar, welcomes you to the 142nd International Convention and to the sacred and serene ashram of Adyar.

TPH appeals to you to contribute your best to the cause of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society by buying its books, and subscribing to the journals published by TPH and the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC). Theosophical publications and journals make a precious gift to your friends and relatives, spreading awareness about our great organization, that attempts to mould world thought towards universal brotherhood, harmony and peaceful coexistence.

**Discount Sale from 29 December 2017 to 6 January 2018**

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## OUR PRESTIGIOUS JOURNALS

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### ***The Theosophist* (Monthly)**

**A journal for all serious students of Theosophy**

Started in 1879, with HPB as Editor, *The Theosophist* has continued without a break, linking each succeeding President with readers throughout the world. Articles in the journal represent the views and insights of leading Theosophists worldwide. The President's draws attention to recent and important trends in the world from a Theosophical point of view.

### ***Adyar Newsletter* (Quarterly)**

*Adyar Newsletter* brings up-to-date news to members about the International Headquarters. You can keep in touch, wherever you are, with events, publications, programmes of the School of the Wisdom, the work of the departments, information about Adyar's wonderful trees and other aspects of Nature, personalities who visit or stay, educational activities and brotherhood in action through welfare work.

### ***Wake Up India* (Quarterly)**

The journal of the New Life for India Movement, a movement for Right Citizenship, Right Values and Right Means, focuses attention on current issues of social, environmental and ethical relevance and sensitizes the public on these matters.

### ***Theosophical Digest* (Quarterly)**

This magazine, published by the Theosophical Society in the Philippines, contains very interesting and illuminating articles with insights into the higher life, practical wisdom, and Eastern and Western philosophies. It is of interest to students of Theosophy as well as to the general public.

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*Either for yourself or as gift subscriptions to your friends and relatives. Subscriptions to our journals will be accepted at the TPH and at the Adyar Bookshop, and are much appreciated.*

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