

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As humans we are complex beings. Every moment there are multiple inner and outer voices calling for our attention, and the powerful habits we have cultivated over time continually propel us from one sensation to another, one thought to the next, and from judgement to judgement. Duality and the oscillation between its poles is the predominant feature of our reality. Whether we name it maya, samsara, or illusion, it has become our conditioned response for seeing the world.

Great teachers have come among us to exemplify another possibility. Our own occasional experiences of unselfishness and a transcendent peace confirm for us the truth of their perennial teachings. There is another way to see and experience the world, another vision that exceeds our habitual view. Seeing the habits of our minds breaks our bondage to them. "To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood" is our invitation to see anew. It is a call to unity.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To the 141st Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society
Adyar, 31 December 2016

On this opening day of the 141st Convention of the Theosophical Society (TS), I would like to warmly welcome you all at Adyar after another year of challenging and important work around the theosophical world. On this occasion, let us remember the many members all over the world who are with us while watching via webcasting, and those in spirit though not in body, who like the rest of us seek wisdom for the sake of others. Let us also open our hearts to the Holy Ones who show the way to all those who seek selflessly, and guide every person who is prepared to learn. Please rise:

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.

I am very glad to open this 141st Annual Convention of the TS.

The eighteenth century poet, William Wordsworth, captured a sense of the human dilemma when he wrote, “the world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.” In his time the invasive pressures of “the world” were being powerfully expressed in the Industrial Revolution that was changing the face of long-accepted social, economic, and political structures in Britain. Gandhi expressed the same idea very differently when he said that “to a hungry man, a piece of bread is the face of God.” Whether it is the pre-occupation with “getting and spending”, providing nourishment for our bodies, or checking and responding to an endless stream of email and text messages, we find our attention absorbed by an outer world whose reality is continually confirmed by our needy involvement with it. Everywhere we look we see the conflict, limitation, and unhappiness that are the necessary result of our conviction that we are separate from each other and from the natural world. HPB described our condition as the “heresy of separateness”. What we experience as normal and real, is viewed in the Ageless Wisdom tradition as fundamentally unreal. It is the *mâyâ*, the illusion, that binds us to an unrelenting cycle of suffering and need.

There is something which lies beyond illusion. Though our experience of it is weak, our remembrance dim, still it lives on the periphery of our awareness, always waiting for those moments when the grip of our illusory attachment weakens. At those moments it

makes its presence known in a brightened perception of the present moment. So different are these momentary experiences from the dreary norm that they become the touchstones for our life’s direction. In the words of Albert Camus: “In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” Illusion and reality are part of one fabric.

The prevailing quality of our forays into reality is a sense of expansion and connection. The more profound the experience, the deeper the awareness of an all-pervading, undivided consciousness — the sky encompasses both clouds and earth; though space seems to divide, in reality it connects, defines, and pervades all things. We live, move, and have our being within that consciousness which not only unites, but is Unity itself.

Although the voices of religion, philosophy, and contemporary science are calling out for us to deepen our awareness of the power of unity, the only call which we can truly hear and respond to is that muffled voice within us — the voice of our own Higher Self. In its still, small tone it continually calls out through the intervening layers of our busyness and worldly involvement to look beyond illusion.

The Theosophical Society’s emphasis on the primacy of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity is in a sense the means and goal of our practice. At whatever level we are able to see, and then engage with the separative tendencies of our mind, we lift a little of the heavy karma of this world. In

At the Feet of the Master the statement is made that “though a thousand men agree upon a subject, if they know nothing about that subject their opinion

is of no value.” Both value and power flow into the world as our study and practice verge onto genuine inner experience.



SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE (SWC)

The Social Welfare Centre (SWC) 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 74 children, who were provided with nutritious food, milk and fruits. The children were taught numbers, alphabets, rhymes, colouring the pictures, action songs, drill and dance.

Dr R. Revathy visited the Centre regularly for conducting health check-

ups and also provided guidance to the parents on health care for the children.

On Adyar Day dresses were given by TOS, Adyar Branch. TS Members from Finland visited the SWC and donated educational materials, mats, dresses, play things, and so on for the children.

Delegates are invited to a cultural programme and exhibition at the Social Welfare Centre on 1 January 2017, 1.30 to 3.00 p.m.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE (VTC)

The Vocational Training Centre comprises the weaving and tailoring units. These units contribute in three different ways to the 141st international Convention as detailed below. The inauguration of the stalls will be done by the international President at 10 am on 31 December.

Stall: The stalls go with the display and sale of thread carpets and mats, cotton mats, napkins, and kitchen towels made by the weaving unit.

The contribution of the tailoring unit for sales includes hand bags, shoulder bags, hand purses, inskirts, and also

kids' bags. Theosophical Society emblem bags and Adyar Banyan Tree bags are highlights in this convention.

Handicraft items like hand-made greeting cards and wired baskets are also included for the sale.

Exhibition: The theme of the exhibition, inspired by the theme of the Convention, is “Textiles of India” and will be inaugurated on 1 January 2017 at the Social Welfare Centre, adjacent to the main gate. VTC designs, drapes, and displays of the textiles of 14 states of India in this exhibition.

Cultural Programme: This year

nineteen out of thirty students are graduating on 1 January 2017. VTC presents Cultural Programmes as

“Costumes of India” and “Dances of India”. VTC welcomes all to grace this occasion.



OLCOTT MEMORIAL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

The Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School continues to provide free education to economically underprivileged children. This year, the school has 410 students — 159 girls and 251 boys. As before, students are being given free textbooks, notebooks, stationery supplies, morning porridge (*kanji*), lunch, and two sets of school uniforms.

Apart from the regular health check-up conducted by Dr R. Revathy, friends from Rotary Mitra organized an eye-screening camp. Guidance and counselling continues for the children and parents, and they are provided advice and support in dealing with problems — both academic and emotional. Special classes are conducted for children with learning disabilities. An awareness talk on substance abuse and its consequences was given to sensitize students.

Seventeen teachers have completed the British Council program on English Language Teaching and English Proficiency Building. The former headmistress, Mrs B. Lakshmi, was given the Nation Builder Award by Rotary Mitra. Nalandaway, an NGO involved in integrating art into academics, supports

primary teachers by training them and providing them resources like activity cards and art supplies. Dr Thirumalai and Mrs Sasikala have been appointed as the Director and Academic Adviser of the school respectively.

Students raise vegetables and fruits in a special garden plot allocated for them. In sports, students qualified in handball, kabaddi, and a “strike and pocket” table game (carrom), similar to billiards or table shuffle-board, at the zonal and district levels. They also participated in an art and mural painting workshop and an inter-school drama festival conducted by the Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI). In academics, the pass percentage was 74 for Classes X and XII Board exams.

Volunteers from various organizations conduct classes on value education and English, and engage the students in many meaningful activities. Donor-agency representatives who visited the school and interacted with students and teachers were very impressed with the school environment and the facilities offered, and have promised more support in the coming years.



ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

It was with the intention of reviving the study of Oriental literature, philosophy, and religion, and encouraging genuine scholars in Indian studies that Col. H. S. Olcott established the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC) in 1886.

The work of automation, scanning, and digitization of manuscripts taken up last year has been continued, and new equipment has been added for scanning paper manuscripts, books, palm-leaf photography and digitization. Rs.185,000/- was sanctioned by the Executive Council to purchase a camera, RPS copy stand, 4 TB backup system, lights with stands, and so on. The Dabur group donated Rs.98,000/- for the purchase of two scanners, and Prof. Rama Subramanyam donated a camera worth Rs.46,000/- for book and palm-leaf manuscript digitization work.

Besides the regular display room exhibition, this year a special exhibition of photographs on the flora and fauna of Adyar by Prof. A. Chandrasekharan was arranged for visitors. The exhibition continues all through the week including Sundays, but except Mondays and public holidays. Timings are from 9.15 am. to 4.45 pm. Over 2,000 persons,

including many Chennai students visited the photo exhibition.

The American Institute of Indian Studies did research work in affiliation with ALRC this year.

During the year, ALRC was used by 929 (out of 1,846) registered readers and 274 (out of 720 registered) borrowers. They consulted 3,149 books, and borrowed 409 books and 436 manuscripts.

Acquisition of books: 19 purchased, 968 accessed, and 1,500 catalogued and added to the Library collection. Gifts received: 949 books, mostly from the President's Office, TPH, Secretary's Office, TPH Wheaton, and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Samathan.

Conservation of books: 725 hard-cover books and 520 soft-cover books were repaired, 7,000 bound, 500 photocopied, and 750 wrapper-pasted, besides fumigation work.

Cataloguing of books and manuscripts: 3,000 books catalogued and entered, 2,000 books checked, 41 books scanned, and 263 manuscripts scanned.

A one-day seminar, The Challenges of Interreligious Learning, Specifically Hindu-Christian, in the 21st Century, by Professor Francis X. Clooney, SJ, will be held on 10 January 2017.



Number of delegates registered as on Friday, 30 December: 798

BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

The Chennai Centre of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) and the Animal Welfare Centre 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 and enjoy the same care and consideration as humans.

The Animal Welfare Centre of the TS 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.

Anyone may become a member. Life membership of the BWC costs Rs 300/- (Rs 600/- outside India). All are welcome to visit the stall from 31 December 2016 to 5 January 2017. 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. The stall was inaugurated by Mr Tim Boyd, President of The Theosophical Society, after the opening of the Convention.



THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF THE ROUND TABLE

The Order of the Round Table was established in 1908 by G. H. Whyte 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 Kindness, Compassion, Courage, and Righteousness in young minds right from the age of 5. 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 2016 afternoon.

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



THE BHARATA SAMAJ TEMPLE

Theosophy is a way of life that helps elevate the quality of life of the human being. It proclaims Truth as the highest way of life, and greater than all the religions. At the same time, it acknowledges that all religions practised in the world have their relevance and hence importance to various segments of society and humanity. Therefore, every major religion has its own temple or church consecrated in the Theosophical Society Adyar campus.

The temple of Sanâtana Dharma, or Temple of Light, as it is generally known, is located between the Library Gate and the Bhojanasala. Dr Annie Besant laid the foundation stone of this architecturally beautiful, non-sectarian shrine in 1922, and J. Krishnamurti inaugurated it in 1925. It is called the Jyotirâlaya or “Temple of Light” as it

contains no idol, only a flame. The puja is performed daily at sunrise around 6 a.m. There is no specified priest; any sincere and knowledgeable member can perform it and return with renewed solar energy.

It is a simplified and compact form of nature-worship. The Sanskrit scholar Pandit A. Mahadeva Sâstri rearranged the Vedic mantras of the *sandhyâ-vandana* and added a few from the worship practised in Hindu temples. Nature is highlighted, not any god or goddess; the Gâyatri mantra is chanted, not *stuti-s* to personal gods. It is an ode to Nature and the environment. It first invokes the Fragrant Smoke, then the Fire-god Agni, Water, Light in the form of the Sun, and then the Supreme Spirit (Purusha). It ends with blessings to all and a short meditation session.



*om bhûr-bhuvah svah
tat-savitur-varenyam |
bhargo devasya dhîmahî
dhiyo yo nah prachodayât ||*

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 will 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 140th International Convention and to the sacred and serene 'ashrama' 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 2016 to 6 January 2017

OUR PRESTIGIOUS JOURNALS

***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 and readers throughout the world. Articles in the journal represent the views and insights of leading Theosophists worldwide. The President's column 'On the Watch-Tower' 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.

Subscribe to Our Prestigious Journals

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.

Printed at the Vasanta Press, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India