

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I welcome all of you heartily to this 135th Convention. It is very good to have all of you here, a symbol of a united world in which there are many differences, but a fundamental unity.

A Convention is a time not only for lectures, even though much can be derived from listening to lectures. With heart and mind open, one can rise to higher levels, by really listening. But apart from that, there is all of nature around us, beautiful in every way. Even the worms and little creatures play a role in keeping everything going, and we must express our gratitude to them. With profound gratitude to everyone present, to all creatures nearby, and the many people and forms of life which are to be found around us, we begin this Convention.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To the 135th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society
Adyar, 26 December 2010

It is a great privilege to welcome all of you to this 135th Convention of our Society. I hope you will enjoy Adyar, apart from benefiting from the Convention. It is a special occasion every year which enables us to meet together, and to exchange ideas and learn to be closer friends. Let us rise to pay our respects to those Great Beings who have been good enough to see that the Society started with their blessings.

May those who are the embodiments 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.

What did the Mahatmas intend when they promoted the founding of the Theosophical Society? We cannot know exactly what was in their minds, but we do know that they spoke about the need for the work. In fact they seemed to have regarded it as a 'forlorn hope', but worth putting energy into because it is fundamental for human progress. One of the Mahatmas wrote to Sinnett: 'I will send you an essay showing why in Europe more than anywhere else, a Universal Brotherhood that is an association of "affinities" of strong, magnetic yet dissimilar forces and priorities, centred around one dominant idea, is necessary for successful achievements in occult sciences. What one will fail to do — the combined many will achieve.'

The purpose behind this is not to abolish different or dissimilar activities, but to create a sense of unity, a common purpose. There are religions, cults, communities in which people are strongly united; so much so that they do not encourage differences of opinion. But the Theosophical Society was meant from the very beginning to bring together diverse elements, people of different races, or preferring a particular religion, speaking different languages, with various cultural and educational backgrounds, yet united by common ideals and aims. It is easy to feel sympathetic to people who agree with us, or agree with any opinion that a particular leader has. But that is not what Universal Brotherhood is intended to be. Dissimilarity must flourish, but there must be oneness, cooperation in working for the progress of humanity, and of all other

creatures. We who pledge ourselves to the spirit of Universal Brotherhood must work to bring about that spirit in any part of the world where we are working, and then only we will be fulfilling the aim of the Theosophical Society.

From time to time differences become seemingly important, and people who are speaking about Universal Brotherhood do not feel that brotherhood even towards some fellow members, colleagues or workers is necessary. Is it possible for them to be friends, even if there are differences? Can we learn to feel that differences are not very important, and therefore remain without resentment or aggressive opposition to those who differ from us? Can we differ and yet come together as friends to find a common solution to world problems, which means agreeing to disagree, and continuing to work together? If such a spirit were in the Society it would become much stronger and develop the work it needs to do much better.

A second very important point is the question of authority. In Letter No.10 the Mahatmas speak about how authority in churches or church-like organizations makes abject slaves of people. This attitude makes for total incompatibility with the work of the Theosophical Society.

Some modern scientists agree with Theosophists that all of evolution works to develop more and more intelligence. Of course intelligence in the worldly sense, ordinary intelligence, is not meant, because there is such a thing as spiritual intelligence, which is understanding based on the absolute

unity of existence. When consciousness is at the level of unity it sees everything in a different light. The growth of intelligence is obstructed when people are encouraged or even forced to believe what they are told. Therefore, in the Theosophical Society we are not called upon to believe, but to examine everything freely for ourselves. HPB wrote that this attitude will bring about real understanding. But we must not lose this sense that we are one body of people sharing noble ideals. Perhaps, this teaching is both 'profound and practical'. Therefore as members of the Theosophical Society we must be careful not to be attached to superstitions, to fixed ideas, or to all that is demanded by our environment or to truth in a particular place. This means any idea, simply because it is part of the racial prejudice or religious thinking around us. To be inwardly free is the mark of a Theosophist.

So a Theosophist must understand that he must free himself of all that holds the mind back, and at the same time have a genuine desire to bring about the brotherhood of humanity and suitable institutions that will advance the world.

This is what is needed for the Theosophical Society to make itself known in the world, and to arrest the attention of the highest minds. It is not enough to have nice friendly relationships between all of us from different parts of the world, but one that is based on free thinking and the approach to questions of life. Only this will make humanity move forward.

In one of the letters from the Mahatmas to Sinnett it is said that human nature has not changed for millennia, because of prejudice and the general human tendency which makes people unwilling to alter their way of life. But members of the Theosophical Society must make this Society dynamic; not clinging to old patterns of thought. Though members belong to many religions even if they are not practising them, still the mind remains conditioned by old ideas and beliefs. Many members think that one of the Objects of the Society exists in order to bring people of different religions — Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jews, etc., together. This is only a partial truth, but in reality what the second Object of the Society tries to encourage is that Hindus should be true and not pseudo-Hindus; Christians should be really Christian, and not pretending to accept the teachings of Christ; and so on. If this Object is applied all superstitions and wrong thoughts would be eliminated from every religion, and people will become true Christians, Muslims, Hindus, etc. Unity will become a reality then, and all of them will be taught the same perennial truths, although some part of every religion will have to be discarded.

How many of us have the courage to free ourselves from the superstitions and wrong thoughts of our community and our religion? How many have the courage to realize that merely following authority does not lead to true religious consciousness. This is in fact the essence of one of the resolutions

passed by the Society and printed in *The Theosophist*. We must be seekers for the Truth and find out what is true. When we find out — although it may be what others have discovered — we will know it for certain and know this is the Truth. We have to concentrate our vital magnetic force against the hostile currents of prejudice and fanaticism. Those who know what union is, understand that truth is not an idea, but it comes from the ardent desire to know it for oneself. To be a true worker for the Theosophical cause, a true Theosophist, means rejecting all ideas which are pernicious, like a thought-made God.

HPB wrote that to be a Theosophist one may not necessarily recognize the existence of a special God or Deity. In fact this is a highly divisive idea, and gives the opportunity to some to exploit others. Rejecting such ideas can be profoundly religious if there is a recognition of the Divine Presence, that of living Nature which is everywhere.

We may say that if members are true to the Objects of the Society, the Theosophical Society would not be religious in a conventional sense, but truly religious because of a great sense of reverence and respect for everything in manifestation. That Presence is everywhere, it is needless to say. The Theosophical Society is meant to be an instrument for the upliftment of human consciousness which is imprisoned now by fear, superstition, old patterns of thought, and so on. The symbology of the *Bhagavadgita* is the confrontation between old ways of thinking, conditioned by fellow men and women, culture,

tradition, etc. It is a new way of thinking, to bring which an awakening has to come into being. This happens only when the mind has detached itself from old patterns and ideas. HPB tells us: 'He who abandons the old and trodden highway of routine and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought, Godward, he is a Theosophist.' He is an original thinker with an inspiration of his own. Our Society needs, not so much to enrol new members, but to be an important agent to new levels of thought, to humanity as a whole.

The solitary path is not the path of self-will, or a determination to abandon the old for the new made by the lower mind. It is the path to the sacred, the eternal, the imperishable, which may be called God. What the Theosophical Society needs is not merely to enrol new members, but to leaven the thought of humanity as a whole. Members of the Theosophical Society must be among pioneers in whatever field they are working. The Society will lose its importance and its energy, if the members are satisfied with action at a pedestrian level. It is amazing to look back and to see what could be done by outstanding Theosophists like Col. Olcott. Not only was he able to achieve many things outwardly, but he kindled the nobility and thoughtfulness of thousands of people whom he addressed. It was a very real question for him to unite the world in every possible way by breaking down barriers of the mind, and holding up Universal Brotherhood. He was a man whom the Adepts said they could trust under all circumstances.

Can we as members have something of those qualities, that spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of mankind at every level?

What one person cannot do, many can, as the Master says. Together,

jointly, we can bring about changes in the world that mean real progress. For that to happen our feelings must be right, and we must cooperate and work together for the common ideal of humanity's progress and perfection.

SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE FOR WOMEN

The three major contributions of the Social Welfare Centre and Vocational Training Centre for Women during the Convention are a stall near the Enquiry Office, an exhibition at the Social Welfare Centre and a cultural programme by the children of the Social Welfare Centre and students of the Vocational Training Centre.

The Social Welfare Centre is located to the right of the Main Gate as you enter the TS compound. The Day Care trains eighty children aged between two and five years in classroom and outdoor activities. The Vocational Training Centre for women trains twenty students (women) in cutting, designing, drafting paper patterns and estimating cloth requirements for children's and ladies' dresses. It offers a one-year certificate course.

Both the Centres are displaying their products for sale at their stall by the Convention Enquiry Office. Products include handicrafts items (greeting cards, wire baskets, terracotta vases);

woven items (napkins, table mats, jute mats, yoga mats, meditation mats, cotton carpets and tailored items (emblem bags, travelling bags, ladies' handbags and purses). The stall opened on Sunday, 26 December 2010.

From 27 to 30 December the SWC and VTC will also hold an exhibition on their premises. Children's creative activities, charts and models of teaching aids will be displayed. Importance is given to physical, language, intellectual, personal, and social development. Basic stitching, embroidery, cutting and sewing items as well as albums, charts and models — what is learnt in the classroom — will be displayed.

All the Convention delegates are welcome to attend the cultural programme on Monday, 27 December 2010 from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. It will include a number of dances (action song, kollattam, Gypsy and folk dances, drill) and speeches by the VTC students. A certificate ceremony will also be held.

**The Self of matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet.
One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.**

The Voice of the Silence

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.

We will work towards this mission by more extensively distributing 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 our parent organization — the Theosophical Society.

The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), Adyar, welcomes you to the 135th 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.

OUR PRESTIGIOUS JOURNALS

The Theosophist

A monthly 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* (Published 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* (Published 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* (Published 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.

Support Our Prestigious Journals

Lend your support in the form of subscriptions — either for yourself or as gift subscriptions to friends and relatives. Subscriptions to our journals will be accepted at the TPH and at the Adyar Bookshop, and are much appreciated.

THE ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Dr K. N. Neelakantan Elayath, the noted Sanskrit Scholar and Indologist, has been appointed as the Director of this Centre. He was already working as Hon. Professor of Sanskrit in the Adyar Library and Research Centre for a few years. He was the former Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Calicut (Kerala), his special interest being Sanskrit Language and Literature, Vedanta and Indian Philosophy.

The manuscript library and stack room has been made more weatherproof by installing a new AC system in place of the old one. Medical Manuscript Research Centre consulted our Library and referred to about 4365 palm-leaf manuscripts during the year.

Recent publications include:

- Brahmavidyā* Adyar Library Bulletin, Volume 71 (2007)
The Dialogue of Plato and the Upaniṣad-s by N. Kazanas
Bādarāyaṇa and Vyāsa as Authors of the Brahmasūtra: A Historical Analysis by S. Sankaranarayanan
Vedic and Mesopotamian Interactions by N. Kazanas
Spiritualscape of Upaniṣad-s by R. Balasubramanian
Disciples of Śri Śaṅkara by S. Sankaranarayanan
Vedic Vāc and Greek Logos as Creative Power: A Critical Study by N. Kazanas

Recent reprints include:

- Studies on Some Concepts of Alaṅkara Śāstra* by V. Raghavan
Pratyabhijāñāhṛdayam translated by Kurt. F. Leidecker
The Number of Rasa-s (ALS. 23)
The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita (ALS. 39)

134 books were purchased during the year, 919 books were accessed and 645 books were catalogued and added to the Library collections. 973 books were received from various sources as gifts, most of them from the President's Office, TPH, the Secretary's Office, TPH Wheaton, and Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan. Scholars from various universities used the Library, including scholars from Pondicherry, the University of Madras and Universities in Germany and other countries.



OLCOTT MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Olcott Memorial High School, the educational arm of the Theosophical Society, is a free school for the urban poor that has existed for more than a hundred years. It was started with the belief that all children deserve access to education. As early as 1894, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott pioneered a movement for the education

of the most underprivileged sections of society by establishing several Panchama (Harijan) schools in and around Madras (Chennai). The teachers were Theosophists who had rejected the system of caste and untouchability. After Olcott's death in 1907, the school on the Theosophical Society grounds was renamed in his honour as the Olcott Memorial High School.

Today, this coeducational Tamil medium school teaches 1st to 10th standard and serves around seven hundred students. OMHS students come from socially and economically disadvantaged families. OMHS provides free education, school materials, uniforms and nutrition to all students.

Please visit the School on Wednesday, 29 December, from 1.30 to 3.00 p.m., for a programme of cultural activities and a photography exhibition by OMHS students.

COLONEL OLCOTT ON INDIA

As the unrestful ocean has its flux and reflux, so all throughout nature the law of periodicity asserts itself. Nations come and go, slumber and reawaken. Inactivity is of necessity limited. The soul of Aryavarta keeps vigil within the dormant body. Again will her splendour shine. Her prosperity will be restored. Her primitive philosophy will once more be interpreted, and it will teach both religion and science to an eager world. Her ancient literature, though now hidden away from the quest of an unsympathetic West, is not buried beyond revival. The hoof of Time, which has stamped into dust the vestiges of many a Nation, has not obliterated those treasures of human thought and human inspiration. The youth of India will shake off their sloth, and be worthy of their sires. From every ruined temple, from every sculptured corridor cut in the heart of the mountains, from every secret Vihara where the custodians of the sacred Science keep alive the torch of primitive wisdom, comes a whispering voice, saying: 'Children, your Mother is not dead, but only sleepeth.'



H. P. B.
gave to the world
Theosophy,
H. S. Olcott
gave to the world
The Theosophical Society.
Each was chosen by the
Masters:
which brought the greater gift?

Annie Besant

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