

## THE RITUAL OF THE MYSTIC STAR

The Ritual of the Mystic Star was created in 1917 at the behest of Dr Annie Besant, by C. Jinarajadasa. The keynote of the ritual is the profound truth of the essential unity of all religions, the awareness of which is urgently needed in the world today. Another important aspect of the ceremony is the inclusion of representative professions or skills and their contribution to humanity's progress towards brotherhood and peace. The ritual begins with censuring and the 'Six Remembrances' of Buddhism. It then goes on to invoke the four Devaraja-s, who are the Lords of the four elements, with the five points of the Star standing for Power, Beauty, Wisdom, Love and Joy. The complementary professions are Judge, Craftsman, Scientist, Healer and Servant. These ten, with the Thurifer and Starbearer, comprise the twelve participants around the circle. Ten of the participants carry tools of 'daily labour' during the ceremony. The ritual highlights the important teachings of the great World Teachers and other Messengers of the

Brotherhood of Adepts. Each teaching is marked in the ritual by lighting a candle and pledging one's faith in the name of each messenger of truth.

An important and interesting part of the ceremony is the reading of the 'Greatest Blessings' in Buddhism. The altar cloths used have special colours that represent the signs of the Zodiac, the universe, the colours in the aura of the Lord Buddha and the colour blue, which is associated with the Bodhisattva Maitreya. The blue star cloth also carries an image of the Star. The invocation to the Master of The Great White Lodge is the climax of the ritual, and it is marked by the lighting of the tallest candle in the centre. This is followed by the distribution of holy water to the congregation, which has an active participatory role in the ritual. The ritual concludes by invoking the 'Powers that be', asking for peace in the world.

The ritual was held at the Headquarters Hall on the evening of 26 December. It was led by Mrs Manju Sundaram.



Number of delegates registered by noontime on Monday, 27 December: 1,417.

## THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The English General Secretary has sent a report full of optimism. They are selling Tekels Park but will continue to have some programmes there. Their magazine *Insight* has been discontinued and articles will be put into another magazine called *Esoterica* which goes to many besides the Theosophical members. The Summer School was held in Liverpool, where the chief speaker, Mr David Roef, gave talks on the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*, etc. The Section has undergone a good measure of self-renewal and a sense of purpose, we are told.

Both members and the public are attending meetings in Wales. Colwyn Bay Lodge has been revived after a break of about ten years. Mrs Maureen Atkinson visited the area.

In Scotland it was reported that they had a very encouraging year with an increase in the attendance at Lodge meetings, and they intend to strengthen the vitality and visibility of the Lodges in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

The membership in Ireland is said to be growing steadily, and good work has been achieved. Belfast Lodge held regular weekly meetings and Phoenix Lodge in Dublin held monthly meetings. A number of enquirers and sympathizers are said to have attended the all-Ireland Convention, where Miss Mary Anderson's presence was much appreciated.

In Sweden the membership is small, with about one hundred and fifty members. Mr Curt Berg who was a strong

pillar of the Society passed away during the year. This year they did not have a summer school, as some members attended the World Congress.

Norway does not have sufficient members to form a Section, but two Lodges have been holding meetings, and it is to be hoped that in the future new members will join and the Section be re-established.

The Icelandic Section is now under a new General Secretary, Ms Anna Valdimarsdottir, who says that there were fifty-one talks which were advertised in the main newspapers and open to the public. On Saturdays they open with a meditation followed by informal talks and refreshments. The Theosophical Society is publishing an Icelandic translation of *Seek Out the Way* and a book by Sigvaldi Hjalmarrsson, *A Kind of Silence*. At its General Meeting, the Section decided on a new name which will be used within the country only.

The Finnish Section held public lectures in seventeen towns and regular Lodge meetings in twenty-two towns. Miss Mary Anderson was the chief guest at the Summer School. Two programmes were held at Kreivila, on 'Change your thoughts — you change your life'.

The Belgian Section has ninety-seven members in eight Lodges. Three Lodges have their programmes in the new headquarters building in Brussels, while the others function as usual. The Flemish branch in Ghent is very active

as are the two in Antwerp. The Centenary of the Section will be held in June 2011 in the new headquarters building.

In France, the 111th Convention, on the theme 'Tradition and Revolution', was held. The building was renovated so that it is more useful. The magazine *Le Lotus Bleu* is sent to Belgium and other French-speaking countries.

There are ten Lodges and nine Study Centres in the Netherlands with a total membership of four hundred. The General Secretary says there is close cooperation between the Theosophical Society and the International Theosophical Centre. The publishing house, bookshop and library are open and available to the public.

In Germany, a new Lodge has been formed, which means there are seven Lodges. The Summer School had Miss Mary Anderson as Guest-speaker.

A new Lodge with twelve members has been formed in Ascona in Switzerland, where a seminar took place on Fraternity, Compassion and Liberation. The Lodge in German-Switzerland had to be dissolved.

Mr Theodoros Katsifis was again elected as General Secretary of Greece. During the year Mr Ricardo Lindemann gave an inspired lecture at the Ypatia Lodge. The magazine *Ilisos* was published regularly. A new study group named Procris was founded on the Island of Cephalonia. Kabeiros Lodge was chartered at Alexandropolis. An increase of forty-three new members added to the total membership, which is now two hundred and seventeen.

We already mentioned the Italian Section at the beginning of this report. A great deal of energy in the Section was spent in organizing the World Congress. The General Secretary, Mr Antonio Girardi, has been re-elected for a further three years. Book sales increased by 17%. Lists of new books and new issues are given in their magazine *Rivista Italiana di Teosofia*. The Theosophical Order of Service in this country has been successful in a variety of activities including making 'teddies' for children who have suffered tragedy.

The General Secretary of Spain gave some talks including speaking at Lodges in Portugal. The School of the Wisdom was held in August with Mr Martin Leiderman as guest speaker. The *Bhagavadgita* and a book on *The Essentials of the Masters* by C. Jinarajadasa were published.

The Theosophical Society in Hungary has a membership of forty-one, and has been trying to expand, although it is a difficult task in a country formerly under Communist rule. Three Lodges are active. Two of them have studied Theosophy. The Society has been able to publish translations of Powell's work on *The Solar System* and Annie Besant's *Esoteric Christianity*.

Mrs Breda Zagar has been elected as the new Regional Representative for Slovenia. At the school in Buda, *The Noble Eightfold Path* was studied by all the Lodges and a Winter School at Soncek was entirely dedicated to 'Working for Adyar'. The Lotus Lodge in Croatia has twenty-two members and

six applicants. There is still only one Lodge in Croatia.

There are four Lodges and more than seventy members in the Ukraine. The keynote for study was 'Science and

Spirituality'. In Kiev, about sixty persons from Russia and Ukraine took part in a conference. All the groups celebrated White Lotus Day, and several members attended the World Congress in Rome.

## **NATURE AND US** ***(Session II of Theme)***

*(Summaries of Talks delivered on 28.12.10)*

### **Miss Dianne K. Kynaston**

The talk explored the concept of what is Nature, not just in its physical manifestation but across the various planes of consciousness.

The physical manifestation of Life is an end result of what happens on the other planes or levels of consciousness. Each of them interact on each other. The physical form provides the vehicle or outward expression of the forces of the Astral, the concepts or intelligence of the Mental and the ideals of the Buddhic and higher states.

The Hermetic axiom of 'As Above, So Below' has a very real application to our understanding of the world around us. We are very much a part of the world of Nature, from its highest to its lowest level of expression, so by making an effort to try and understand who and what we are, we begin to comprehend what the Cosmos is all about.

This is a long and slow process which takes place over many lifetimes, for there is an incredible amount to understand about the Life processes. Our first step in this process is to comprehend that we are part of Nature,

not a separate entity that stands apart from it.

What we think, feel and do has a major impact on the world that surrounds us, not just in the area near to us, but across the whole planet, and even out into the solar system. Modern sciences such as Quantum Mechanics, Chaos Theory and Ecological Research constantly draws our attention to the fact that we are having an effect on the world all the time, with every breath, with every desire, with every movement. This notion places a great responsibility on us all to evaluate and modify our behaviour, not only to simply have the least negative effect, but to have the most positive effect.

We are told again and again in spiritual literature that as each one person achieves higher states of consciousness, so too do all sentient beings move towards those states. We are not only One Humanity, we are One Life, in its multiplicity of expression and we are each responsible for the Evolution of the Whole towards Unity and Harmony.

## **Mr M. P. Singhal — Nature: Biodiversity and Human Welfare**

The United Nations has declared the year 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, which is the variety and variability of living organisms on the earth including all plants, animals and habitats. It is considered vital for the evolution of life and for sustaining the life systems of the biosphere.

At present more than 6.5 billion humans, approximately one million animal species and 0.36 million plant species depend on the air, water and land of the earth. In the beginning, thick forests covered about half of the land surface. Today, 33% of those forests no longer exist. During the twentieth century, more than 50% of our rainforests, which are the abode of a large number of plant and animal species, were felled.

Species are divided unequally among the world's habitats. 50–90% live in tropical regions. The more diverse a habitat, the better its chance of surviving a threat because it is more likely to make a balancing adjustment.

The Earth Summit of 1992, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, resulted in a

treaty signed by one hundred and eighty nations for the preservation of biodiversity. Ecosystems have to be preserved for preserving biodiversity. Phillipe Feldmann, an environmental scientist, said: 'Biodiversity is a life insurance policy for humanity.'

The rapidly growing world population; clear cutting of forests; soil erosion; air, water and land pollution threaten many species, leading to their extinction. The threat to ecosystems also comes about from the scientific and technological revolution that has empowered man to manipulate nature.

We are unable to see the adverse consequences of our actions on climate change, ecosystems and biodiversity. Reducing this loss is a gigantic effort. By taking action now, we can help conserve biodiversity. In our own little ways in our daily lives, we can help by conserving water and energy and trying to reduce emissions of green house gases and CFC (chlorofluorocarbon). Let us avoid the cutting down of trees; rather, let us plant more if we can and be loving and kind towards all life on Earth.

## **Mrs Avantika Mehta**

There is a saying attributed by Plato which is full of significance; it says 'God geometrizes', a proclamation of the Divine Wisdom, that there exists a God of the Universe and that all Nature is a creation by him after a plan. What seems 'a casual concourse of atoms' is the resultant diagonal of the energies of the Logos, and their quantity

and direction as they operate are determined by him at each moment of time.

What is the meaning of Nature? In ancient India, in a very graphic form, the ideas of One who builds and unbuilds and builds again. This mighty personage is called Prajapati, the 'Lord of Creatures'.

The Divine vision towards Nature begins in several ways. *One way is by the*

*worship of Nature. Another approach is by the study of Nature.* Whether it be biology, astronomy, physics or chemistry, we will come to the vision of a Divine Mind at work.

*The third way is by loving Nature.* In the worship of Nature, there is, as it were, a little barrier between Man, the Worshipper and Nature, the object of worship, but when we come to the love of Nature, then Man delights in a kinship with the sky, the clouds and the animals. Each little thing in Nature speaks of a brotherliness, the tenderness of a younger brother towards an elder one.

We are like waves, missing the ocean in our perception. Therefore let us be like a tree. The tree gives shade even to he who cuts its branches. It asks for no water from anyone though it may be withering for want of it. Rain and storm and the burning rays of the sun make it suffer yet it continues to give sweet scented flowers and delicious fruits. Patiently, let us serve others ever, as a tree.

*The fourth approach to Divine vision is by refashioning Nature.* Inspired by a particular sunrise or sunset, one paints a picture. Though the real sunset or sunrise is never the same even for a second, yet man's creation is a picture of that permanent Nature which does not change.

By study and observation we begin to feel the rhythm of life. This rhythm

becomes obvious to us with an understanding of Theosophy. How life comes into being, possesses a form and grows within it and then, when it has come to the limit of its growth, vanishes, and then, after an interval, comes back again. The rhythm is not mechanical, not merely a crashing fate but the Dance of Life.

Nature is a living power; if we look carefully at the clouds, at the hills and the waves and so many other things, we shall see they are not merely things of matter. They are life veiled indescribably in matter. Nature then reveals to us a little of Her meaning.

It is a wonderful mystery that life reveals; all the majesty of the world is ours and all its joys are somewhere hidden within us. Nature has given them all to us, and we shall find if we seek the Divine Vision of Nature, with that Divine Vision comes at-onement with Man, God and Nature and the realization of that indescribable truth, that the All returns to the All.

In one of the Theosophical classics, *The Voice Of the Silence*, invaluable to aspirants on the spiritual path, it is said that if we help Nature and work with Her She shall 'regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance'. A feeling of friendly sympathy towards animals, plants and even minerals, Nature-spirits and deva-s is important for the progress of man. We are not apart from Nature but we are *one* with Her.

**Chelaship is an educational as well as probationary stage and the chela alone can determine whether it shall end in adeptship or failure.**

*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*

## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, ADYAR**

The traditional Midnight Mass was celebrated on Christmas Eve at 11.00 p.m. by the Rt Revd Pedro Oliveira, Bishop Commissary for India. He was assisted in the service by the Revd P. J. John, Deacon of the Church of St Michael and All Angels, and Server, S. Lusua. The service was preceded by lively renditions of well-known Christmas carols, which served as a fitting preparation for the Holy Eucharist. A number of delegates from India as well as from overseas were in attendance. In his sermon, Bishop Pedro spoke about the birth of Immortal Love within the human heart as the central message of the Christmas season. Such birth causes a profound transformation in consciousness and dissolves once and for all every form of separation, selfishness and self-interest.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Christmas Day was also well attended, with many taking part in Communion. This service was also celebrated by the Bishop Commissary who, in his sermon to the congregation, explored the initiatory dimension of the Christmas mystery — which is to be born into a consciousness of profound unity of all that lives.

The devotional Office of Prime is being held every day during the Convention at 6.30 a.m.



## **BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY**

Started in 2001, this is one of the leading animal dispensaries in South Chennai. The Dispensary receives animals for treatment from places at a considerable distance from Chennai, like Mamallapuram, Sriperumbudur and Manali, Ennore, in North Chennai. Dogs, cats, poultry, lovebirds, pigeons, parrots, kingfishers and owls have been treated at the Dispensary. Cows, sheep and goats have also received treatment and, occasionally, horses, a camel and an elephant. 8739 cases have been treated in 2010 so far, including 894 minor operations and 61 animal birth control surgeries. No outreach programme could be undertaken during this period due to the prevalence of swine flu in Chegalpattu area and also due to the floods in the region. The Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary is looking forward to the purchase of an X-ray machine and an Ultrasound machine which will greatly facilitate diagnosis on site. For those wishing to help the Animal Dispensary, donations can be sent to the Animal Welfare Fund, Treasury, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020.



## BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

The Chennai Centre of Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC) and the Animal Welfare Centre of the Theosophical Society are again organizing a stall during the 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 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.

Anyone may become a member. Life membership costs Rs 300/- (Rs 600/- outside India). All are welcome to visit our stall from 26 to 30 December. Visiting hours are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. T-shirts, calendars and information pamphlets will be on sale. The International President of the Theosophical Society, Mrs Radha Burnier, inaugurated the stall on 26 December 2010.

## THE SCHOOL OF THE WISDOM

*5 January to 9 February 2011*

Theme: **Inquiry into the Nature of the Self in the Upanishad-s**

Director: **Dr Ravi Ravindra**

Many sages in India have stressed the importance of discernment between Self and non-Self, and they have said that the major characteristic of a basic human ignorance is the blurring of this distinction. What is the Self? How can we approach the understanding of the Self? How do we distinguish this from the usual many manifestations of self? The Upanishad-s regard the aim of human existence to be Self-realization and they present a model of a free, bold and non-sectarian inquiry into the nature of the Self. This course will draw upon the insights of the principal Upanishad-s in an exploration of the Self.

**Dr Ravi Ravindra** is Professor Emeritus at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada, and the author of a number of books including *Yoga and the Teaching of Krishna*, *The Yoga of the Christ* and *Whispers from the Other Shore*. He has directed a number of sessions of the School of the Wisdom in the past.

Applications, providing membership details and a recommendation from the General Secretary or main Officer of the Theosophical Society in the applicant's country of residence, to be sent to: The International Secretary, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India. Tel: (+91 44 ) 2491 2474 and 2491 7198, or by email: [study.hq@ts-adyar.org](mailto:study.hq@ts-adyar.org).

---

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