

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Compassion necessitates responsibility. Responsibility assumes compassion. Both are the natural expression of a mind that has some experience of a reality beyond separation. It is not our work to become compassionate, but to remove those barriers to the ever-present and completely unforced expression of our nature, which is compassion itself.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To the 140th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society
Adyar, 31 December 2015

Dear Brethren, welcome all to the 140th Convention of the Theosophical Society, after a trying period of climate-related emergencies experienced in one way or another by almost all of us in the recent past. Let us offer together a moment of silence in memory of those who have lost their lives in these tragedies, wishing them a peaceful transition, also in giving thanks that the damages suffered by others were not worse than what they were, and in hoping for a return to normalcy in general as soon as possible, for all those who have been seriously affected. Please rise for the invocation to the Great Ones who protect the Society with their energy and strength:

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 140th Annual Convention of the TS.

Little needs to be said about the appropriateness of the theme for this year's Convention: 'Compassion and Universal Responsibility'. There seems to be a growing perception that our world, the network of relationships

we have created, is becoming less caring, more brutal, and insensitive. Certainly this is the feedback received from popular media sources. Whether or not this perception is accurate, it is affecting the outlook and responsiveness of people around the world and within our Theosophical Society (TS).

During the history of the TS great shifts have been witnessed in the structures of society and the knowledge that supports those structures. The world has changed profoundly since the founding days of the TS. The long list of global changes during the past 140 years includes colonialism, human and civil rights, national independence, world wars, massive technological advances, nuclear threat, economic depressions, large scale human migrations, and ecological challenges. In the face of such challenges many people feel paralysed by a sense of powerlessness and insignificance. Others feel energized and seek out ways to make their presence felt. Still others find themselves searching for some serene haven, safe from the onslaught of the world. For many the life of the spiritual seeker seems to provide such a hiding place from the troubles of the world. This is not, cannot be, and never has been the choice for members of the TS.

Although so much of the change in the world is revealing itself in visible and tangible ways, always the root is hidden — out of sight and beyond the reach of surface attempts at ‘fixing’ the problems. The level of causes is necessarily unseen. It is on that

level where we find our work.

One of the prevailing truths that has become clear across disciplines is the fact of the radical interdependence, not only of the people of the world, but of all life. Social science, psychology, economics, quantum physics, biology, ecology, and normal common sense are now magnifying this awareness that all things are inextricably interrelated and are continually affecting each other. From the human perspective, our most potent tool in this world of effects is thought. A mind that can link itself to its higher, hidden potentials, powerfully affects its environment. Examples are familiar to us in people like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and many other high-minded, loving people of less renown.

So much of the condition of the world today derives from what H. P. Blavatsky described as ‘the heresy of separateness’ — the conviction that reality is composed of countless separate, isolated atoms, or beings, or worlds. There is an expression that, ‘You must not only learn the truth; you must suffer it.’ If our experience of the Ageless Wisdom reveals anything to us, it is that consciousness is the ground of reality. Whether it is the limitations of the strict material world view, or the expansiveness of some higher perception, essentially it all arises from consciousness.

This realization is liberating and provides a direction for our work in the world. The theme for this year’s Convention seems to focus on two things, compassion and responsibility,

but the distinction is only apparent. The two are inseparable. Compassion necessitates responsibility. Responsibility assumes compassion. Both are the natural expression of a mind that has some depth of experience of a non-separate reality. It is not our work to *become* compassionate, but to remove

those barriers to the ever-present, and completely unforced expression of our nature, which is compassionate.

The overall membership for the Theosophical Society based on the information received so far stands at 25,933, a two per cent drop from the 26,497 reported last year.



MUSEUM EXHIBITION: The Theosophical Influence on the Paintings of Mrs Florence Fuller (1867 – 1946)

The Museum will be open during the Convention every day from 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm. It holds a unique collection of memorabilia from several Presidents of the TS as well as other leaders. It

also displays a significant art collection, including paintings and statues. Delegates are kindly requested not to take photos inside the Museum and to switch off their mobile phones or tablets.



SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE (SWC)

The Social Welfare Centre (SWC) runs a day-care centre cum nursery school for small children (2 to 4 years) of working parents from low income families. This year the Centre took care of seventy-two children who were provided with nutritious food, milk and fruits. The children were taught colouring, numbers, alphabets, rhymes, songs, drill and dance. The children were also taken for visits to the park and the zoo outside. Dr R. Revathy visited the Centre regularly for conducting health check-ups and

provided guidance to parents on health care for their children.

On Adyar Day, the Theosophical Order of Service, India, gave donations of clothes for the children. Members from Finland who visited the SWC donated toys, mats, educational materials, and clothes for children and teachers.

Visit: Delegates are invited to a cultural programme and exhibition at the SWC on Friday, 1 January 2016, 1.30 to 3.00pm (adjacent to the Main Gate).



VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE (VTC)

The Vocational Training Centre (VTC) will be having a stall during the Annual Convention. It will be inaugurated on Thursday, 31 December 2015 at 10.00 am.

The Weaving Unit is exhibiting around 100 items for sale in the stall such as carpets, meditation mats, napkins, kitchen towels and much more.

The Tailoring Unit has for sale TS emblem bags (ladies and gents), travelling bags, handbags, greeting cards, wire baskets, artificial jewellery, terracotta jewellery, etc. Around 40 varieties of hand embroidery stitches are also for sale in the Stall.

A regular one-year Certificate Course

was introduced in the year 2000. The Course content includes cutting, crafting, designing, pattern-making, layout and estimation of cloth requirement for ladies' and children's clothes. Every year the VTC conducts an exhibition displaying models of dresses, records, albums and handicraft made by students.

This year 18 students are graduating and will receive their certificates on 1 January 2016.

Inauguration of Stall: 10.00 am on 31.12.2015 (next to Enquiry Office).

Cultural Programme: On Friday, 1.1.2016 at SWC, 1.30 – 3.00 pm.

Timings: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm till Thursday, 5.1.2016.



OLCOTT MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

The Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School continues to provide free education to economically underprivileged children. This year, the School had 483 students (197 girls and 286 boys.) Another significant addition in the School is a kindergarten (KG) class which has been started in consultation with the Chennai Montessori Training Institute. The programme has been established with funding from Wipro Cares.

As before, students are provided with free textbooks, notebooks, stationery supplies, lunch and two sets of uniforms. This year we have been able to get funding for buying school bags. The morning *kanji* (porridge) is now more nutritious due to the addition

of milk. Apart from the regular health check-ups conducted by Dr R. Revathy, Rotary Club Mitra organized a Dental 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 for children who need extra help were conducted regularly. Bala Vidya Mandir School, Gandhinagar, Adyar continues to provide one qualified English teacher.

On 3 August, to commemorate the birth anniversary of Col Olcott, a children's book called *Olcott Thatha*, written and illustrated by some of our Class XII students, under the guidance

of students from George Washington University Art Therapy Programme, was released by the School Secretary Prof. C. A. Shinde. Four of the students created a Powerpoint presentation on their study of the Liberal Catholic Church inside the TSociety campus.

With the support from Sir Beliappa and Verizon Corporation, 17 of our teachers underwent training from the British Council on English Language Teaching and English Proficiency Building. The School's Ecology Club won a Rs 20,000 cash prize which was utilized for undertaking various related activities in the School.

The students participated in several zonal and district level sports tournaments with a spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie.

The school children participated in Art and Mural painting workshop, inter-school drama festival and in a singing competition conducted by Radio Mirchi. Two students were selected in music competition Subash from class 11B and Prem from class 7B. Now they are being trained by A. R. Rahman, a World-renowned Director and Composer.

Volunteers from various organizations conduct classes on value education, English and engage the students in many meaningful activities. The School was visited by officials and volunteers of donor agencies who interacted with the students and teachers. The visitors were very impressed with the environment and the facilities offered. They have promised more support to the School in the coming years.



ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Col H. S. Olcott established the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC) in 1886 with the main aim of reviving the study of Oriental literature, philosophy, and religion, and encouraging genuine scholars in Indian studies. ALRC functions under the guidance of the international President of the Theosophical Society Mr Tim Boyd.

Recently the work of automation, scanning and digitization of Manuscripts has been undertaken. Mr Jaikumar has been appointed to work in the Library and to look after the automation of the Library.

Sri Vishnu Mohan Foundation and

the Adyar Library and Research Centre together conducted a one-day seminar on the theme *Adhikāritvam* in 2014 and a three-day seminar on *Liberation Through Arts* in 2015.

Mr Jay Ramesh, research scholar of Columbia University, has been affiliated to the Library to work on his research project titled 'Representing Sacred Space in Medieval South Indian Literature' and the Director of the Library is his research guide in India. Scholars from various Universities used the Library.

A pilot project of scanning 10,000 palm-leaf manuscripts was completed

in September 2015. They are now available in a digital format for easy reference.

This year's ALRC Publications included *Brahmavidya*, The Adyar Library Bulletin Volume, 78-79, 2014-15 (Radha Burnier Commemoration Volume), *Descriptive Catalogue of Mss. on Astronomy and Mathematics* by Dr K.V. Sarma, *Samnyasavicarrah* by Dr S. Bhuvaneshwari and *Vivekamukurah* by Mrs Padma Padmanabhan, and Several reprints.

During the year, 347 books were purchased and 2,575 books were accessed, 1,376 books were catalogued and added to the Library collection. The ALRC received 2,238 books from various sources as gifts. Most of these

were from the President's Office, the TPH, Secretary's Office, TPH, Wheaton, and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan. Dr Radha Burnier's own collection of books have been kept for reading in a special room in the Library. The Library was used by 1,846 Readers and 720 Borrowers who consulted 7,564 books, and borrowed 1,096 books including 42 rare books and 68 manuscripts.

Conservation and preservation was continued with several hundred hard cover and soft cover books being repaired and bound.

Visit: During the Convention delegates can visit the Display room at the Adyar Library and Reseach Centre.



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 2015 – 5 January 2016. The Poster Exhibition is open for 24 hours during this period. The timing for information, sales and membership subscription is 10 a.m. to 12 noon. T-shirts, calendars, non-leather wallets and information pamphlets will be on sale. 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 International Order of the Round Table was founded in 1908 by Herbert Whyte, and since then has spread to different parts of the world. It is a ceremonial organization where one can be admitted from the age of four. The ceremonies are based on the teachings of the great spiritual teachers of the world. Aspects of nature and the symbolism behind these also form the content of some ceremonies. There are four ranks among the members, with special qualities attached to each. A newly initiated person is called a Page (kindness); he goes on to become a Companion (helpfulness); then follows Squire (courageousness); and finally one becomes a Knight (righteousness).

The Round Table members always have an empty chair which they salute. The empty chair symbolises the Higher Self who is the God within or, in other words, the Ideal Man. The salute is an action involving the heart, head and hand. This means that it is the whole being that one dedicates to the service of the King.

The activities of the Round Table include ceremonies, philanthropic work, study, gatherings, trips and cultural programmes.

On Wednesday, 30 December 2015, the Round Table members performed the Flower Ceremony at the Headquarters Hall at 3.00 pm. The Flower Ceremony highlighted the significance of Nature in all its various forms.

Greetings were given on behalf of the following Round Tables from members who were present: Maitreya Round Table, Mumbai; Bhargava Round Table, Bengaluru; Vasanta Round Table, Chennai; Compassion Round Table, Hyderabad, and from England and New Zealand. Richard Bayley from England, Senior Knight of the Order, sent greetings to the Indian Table, as does Shirin Pomeroy, Chief Knight of England. Feroz from England mentioned that the theme for the 2015 Summer Camp was 'Live the Legend'. He said that they have about 65 members in the South of England, and meet at various Tables, in different places for instance, Coventry in January, and London in March.



The spirit of this Society consecrates itself to the intrepid and conscientious study of Truth, and binds itself to suffer nothing to stand in the way.

Henry Steel Olcott

Number of delegates registered Wednesday, 30 December: 846

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 2015 to 6 January 2016

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.

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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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