

Theosophical Order of Service

Mumbai Region

22A, Sagar Sangeet, S. Bhagat Singh Road, Colaba, Mumbai-400 005

23rd December 2018

Dear Sis. Nancy & Family,

RESUME OF THE COLLOQUIUM - EDUCATIONAL TRAINING CAMP, DEOLALI: 7th NOV. TO 11th NOV. 2018

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It is with a great sense of elation that we are presenting a resume of our Annual Colloquium in which 57 delegates from Mumbai plus nearly a dozen of our members and sympathisers from the Nasik region participated in the deliberations organized by Theosophical Order of Service (T.O.S.) Mumbai Region. We had children as young as six years old, sent by their parents to learn to live independently, and senior delegates, the eldest being 85 years old, who lived harmoniously during the five days we spent together amidst the tranquil environs of the Leslie Sawhny Centre in Deolali.

Gaiety amongst delegates, delight in discovering each other's potential, and relief to be away from the fast paced city life was the experience of most participants whilst dwelling on the theme '***The secret of happiness is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less***'.

We are beholden to the Great Ones for guiding our deliberations and to our late Bro. Rusi Toddywalla for training us so effectively that we were able to shoulder the responsibilities of the Colloquium that he masterminded for nearly five decades. We also appreciate the cooperation of our Special Dignitaries who graced our proceedings, and our Patrons and well-wishers who sent us their blessings and inspiring messages. Each day we had one important session amidst a plethora of other activities.

With warm regards and hearty good wishes to you and all for **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY PEACEFUL, HAPPY AND FRUITFUL NEW YEAR**, from Sis. Freny Toddywalla, Bro. Minoo Gandhi, Bro. Purvez Gandhi, and self,

Yours In HIS SERVICE,
Parinaz M. Gandhi
Convener
T.O.S. Colloquium

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HEALING GROUP RITUAL: Collectively invoking benevolent forces through the Healing @@@@ @@@@ @@@@ @@@@ Group Ritual led by Sis. Thrity Dalal, on 7th November, the delegates created a conducive environment to radiate thoughts of love, peace and strength to those in pain and distress. The Chairperson Sis. Nooshafrin Irani remarked that *just as we consult a doctor in times of illness, through prayers and devotional songs we can appeal to God for His blessings*. A person immersed in prayers can reduce blood pressure, depression, anxiety and other ailments. **When we say prayers, it means we are allotting time to God and seeking to be attuned to the Higher Forces.**

INAUGURATION OF THE COLLOQUIUM: A harmonious atmosphere was created when ##### we started our Inaugural session with the Prayers of all Religions, the Universal Invocation and a devotional song on the morning of 8th November. Sis. Berezida Gandhi read the uplifting messages and greetings we had received from: Respected Governor of Maharashtra CH Vidyasagar Rao, International President of the Theosophical Society and Theosophical Order of Service Mr. Tim Boyd, Ex-Attorney General of India Mr. Soli Sorabjee, Eminent Environmentalist and Art Curator Dr. Pheroza Godrej, Renowned Trustee of Sir J. J. Parsee Benevolent Institution Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, P.R.O. to the Governor of Maharashtra Mr. Umesh Kashikar, International Secretary T.O.S. Ms. Nancy Secret, Ex-International Secretary T.O.S. Mrs. Diana Chapotin, National Director T.O.S. India Mr. Birendra Bhattacharyya, National Secretary T.O.S. India Mr. K Sivaprasad, President T.O.S. Maharashtra Region Mr. Sanjay Pote, Secretary Bombay Theosophical Federation Mrs. Mahazaver Dalal; Our very valuable, generous and sympathetic overseas sponsors Mrs. Margaret Pertusini & Mr. David Maidment from London, Ms. Vicki Jerome & Mr. Reg Ford, other kind sponsors from New Zealand and Mrs. Jer & Mr. Tehmul Homavazir from Canada; Outstanding personalities like Justice Ashok (Retd.) and

Mrs. Anita Agarwal, Mr. Babulal Todi, Ms. Shernaaz Engineer, Mr. Vinay Sanglikar, Dr. Vatsal Parikh, Mr. Natwarbhai Desai, Mr. Vispi & Mr. Xerxes Dastur and our very devoted members Mr. Mahadeo Desai, Mrs. Firoza & Mr. Zinoo Master, Mrs. Tehmina & Ms. Meherangiz Baria, Ms. Rashna Antia, Ms. Nilufer & Ms. Jasmine Boywalla, Dr. K.L. Madhok, Mr. Rayomand Nilgiriwalla, Ms. Maya Lalwani and Mr. Hrishikesh Sharan.

What we get can fetch us temporary enjoyment but what we give would bring us permanent happiness, stated Sis. Parinaz Gandhi, President of the T.O.S. Mumbai Region, reminding those present that ***the greatest wealth we can acquire is contentment***. Even a simple hollow piece of wood like a flute can create divine music for those who know how to derive happiness from it.

"I am because we are", reminded the Chief Guest Maj. Gen. Cyrus Pithawalla (Retd) urging those present to develop the quality of unity and rendering social service as an act of Sanatan Dharma or duty for it is in sharing that we receive. The gaps in our fingers are meant to extend a grip or support to others in need. ***More than the receiver, it is the giver who should feel blessed for being offered an opportunity to help.***

If we focus our energies on the essentials rather than the extraneous factors, we would be more fruitful, remarked the Guest of Honour, Cmde. Aspi Marker (Retd). Whilst it is good to be efficient, it is better to be effective. If we are able to enhance our usefulness to others whilst depending on minimal resources, we could play a more meaningful role.

There are some individuals who are happy if their bare needs are met by minimal work whilst there are others who continually seek greener pastures in the hope that they will derive greater satisfaction later, observed Bro. Purvez Gandhi, Chairman of the Colloquium Committee. He thanked our Revered Guests that morning and special invitees, particularly Sis. Suhasini and Preeti Ghodke, as also Bro. Arvind and Sis. Hemlata Rathod who along with Bro. Jamshed Kotwal gave us melodious music.

SYMPOSIUM: In this increasingly materialistic world, our wants keep increasing but we ***** have to train our mind to find satisfaction and happiness in small things, urged Sis. Sujaya Wadekar, the Chairperson of the evening Symposium on the theme of the Colloquium: ***"The secret of happiness is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less". It was the Greek philosopher Socrates who had propounded this concept of minimalism***, stated the Convener Sis. Rashna Jehani referring to the consumerist attitude that makes us want to keep shopping instead of pursuing a simple lifestyle that can only come with a change of perception.

Others who participated in the Symposium were Sis. Suhasini Ghodke, Bro. Vijay Magar, Sis. Thrity Dalal, Bro. Jamshed Kotwal, Sis. Firoza Shahlori, Sis. Aloo Shroff, Sis. Shahnaz Irani, Bro. Minoo Gandhi, Sis. Gulbanoo Merchant, Sis. Homai Palamcoat, Bro. Noshir Mistry, Sis. Pervin Driver, Sis. Preeti Ghodke and Sis. Benaifer Gotla.

The salient thoughts they shared: Happiness is given by God but we don't know how to experience it. It can be found within us. There is a constant conflict to seek enjoyment. We should cherish the precious gift of life given to us. ***Inner fulfillment brings happiness and little deeds of kindness to those in distress bring greater happiness.*** We need to discipline the mind. Regeneration of the mind is required every moment. Restful sleep can be enjoyed irrespective of whether we reside in a hut, a cottage, a flat or a big palace. We need to work hard with zero expectations. The quest to acquire more is only to post the accomplishment on social media. ***We should share our possessions by helping the unfortunate with compassion.*** We forget to value what we have and don't know what we want. ***Whilst competition can help us to improve, we have to remind ourselves not to compare or be jealous.*** Enjoyment is temporary but happiness is durable like time shared with loved ones, the beauty of nature, the fragrance of fresh earth after the first rains. We should learn to enjoy everything, even pain.

YOUTH DISCUSSION: ***Whether we are pointing out mistakes to others or others find faults with us, we should always turn the exercise into a learning experience***, stressed the Chairman Bro. Farhad Dalal at the Youth Discussion on 9th November on ***"No one is your friend or foe, all alike are your teachers". Just as difficulties in life always have a lesson for us, we have to learn to say thank you to our so-called enemies for giving us an opportunity to improve***, stated the Convener Sis. Niyosha Gandhi.

The youngsters participating in the Youth Discussion were: Sis. Berezida Gandhi, Sis. Nayna Kanabar, Sis. Nushafreen Irani, Sis. Rashna Jehani, Sis. Janvi Kudtarkar, Bro. Ashfaque Khan, Sis. Panafsha Driver, Sis. Vanita Gawde, Sis. Sushma Kale, Sis. Maria Sheikh, Sis. Sakshi Mistry, Sis. Astha Ghumare, Bro. Bradley Dias, Bro. Nawaz Sayed, Sis. Krutika Munde and Bro. Saish Shellar.

As expressed by them: ***We can change our life by changing our attitude.*** We learn when we move out of our comfort zone. Stop, look, listen – ***keep your eyes and ears open so that you don't miss any signs or guidance.*** ***We can learn from everyone, even a child or an uneducated person.*** People come into our lives for a purpose. We have to take an interest in others and learn from everyone. ***Don't judge people. We mistakenly think that those who praise us are our friends and those who give well-meaning advice are our enemies.*** Our so-called foes help to improve us. We should be receptive, retain whatever criticism is necessary for our improvement and let go of the rest. Learn from Nature and every experience at every opportunity. The journey of learning never stops. If we don't learn from mistakes, we will keep repeating them. We must try till we succeed and face whatever life brings us. ***Whilst seeking success we should be prepared for failure. Harbour love and goodwill towards your critics. Believe in yourself.***

VALEDICTORY FUNCTION AND DELEGATES' ART EVENING: Devotional and pop songs, classical, folk, Bollywood and Liquid-popping dance styles, Skit and Magic Show were on display at the Delegates' Art Evening on 10th November when our delegates, and students and friends of Vikas Mandir harmonized their talents to entertain the audience. Bro. Farhad Dalal served as the vivacious compere for the evening.

Chief Guest, Bro. Arvind Rathod, Vice Chairman of the All-India Disabled Rehabilitation Educational Institute, appreciated the strong ties that T.O.S. has with their Vikas Mandir School and remarked that the theme selected for the colloquium each year serves to inspire its members and society. Guest of Honour, Sis. Ritika Kalani lauded the commendable work that is being done by the T.O.S. Mumbai Region.

SOCIAL WELFARE WORK: A trip to the Vikas Mandir School for the Disabled was an eye-opener for our young and old delegates who take their physical and mental faculties for granted. We interacted with the differently abled children by tossing balloons, distributed food items, as also essentials like tea powder donated by Bro. Vijay Dalal, purchased handicraft items made by the disabled students and gave donations to expand their work.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Besides regular assemblies, prayers and devotional songs, we had Yoga sessions on two occasions and an opportunity to 'Go green' by having the gardeners at Leslie Sawhny widen our knowledge on the beauty of nature witnessed at the Leslie Sawhny Centre. Indoor and outdoor games promoted fraternization among the delegates. We also visited the shrines of Sai Baba in Shirdi, Khandoba Mandir in Deolali and Mukti Dham in Nashik to recharge our spiritual batteries.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE COLLOQUIUM: An hour was spent on the last morning to give the delegates an opportunity to express their views on the Colloquium. Sis. Frey Toddywalla who had played a major role in organizing the meet expressed her gratitude to the Great Ones and Bro. Rusi Toddywalla whose blessings enabled us to have a successful colloquium. Urging the delegates to carry home at least one good thought from the Colloquium, she added that to live is to serve and we must have the humility to learn from everyone.

The young leaders of the seven groups were invited to share their views when they expressed the confidence they have gained at the Colloquiums over the years and the opportunity to interact with their Group members. It was good to see the delegates nurture and take care of each other. Whilst punctuality is stressed at all our sessions, some delegates need to take it more seriously. Rules laid down should be respected by all with self discipline, especially by the elders who should set an example. The Youth Discussion should be more interactive with limited reading of speeches by participants.

The leaders were then invited to call upon certain other members of their respective groups to give their feedback. They stated: The dignity of the main conference room should be maintained at all

times. It was good that the seniors helped the youngsters with their speeches. Yoga sessions introduced for the first time were a welcome addition. A campfire could be included at a future colloquium.

IMPORTANT FINDINGS:

1. Just as we consult a doctor in times of illness, through prayers and devotional songs we can appeal to God for His blessings.
2. What we get can fetch us temporary enjoyment but what we give would bring us permanent happiness. The greatest wealth we can acquire is contentment.
3. More than the receiver, it is the giver who should feel blessed for being offered an opportunity to help.
4. The gaps in our fingers are meant to extend a grip or support to others in need.
5. If we focus our energies on the essentials rather than the extraneous factors, we would be more fruitful.
6. There are some individuals who are happy if their bare needs are met by minimal work whilst there are others who continually seek greener pastures in the hope that they will derive greater satisfaction later.
7. In this increasingly materialistic world our wants keep on increasing but we have to train our mind to find satisfaction and happiness in small things.
8. Inner fulfillment brings happiness and little deeds of kindness to those in distress bring greater happiness.
9. We should share our possessions by helping the unfortunate with compassion.
10. Whilst competition can help us to improve, we have to remind ourselves not to compare or be jealous.
11. Whether we are pointing out mistakes to others or others find faults with us, we should always turn the exercise into a learning experience.
12. We can change our life by changing our attitude.
13. Don't judge people. We mistakenly think that those who praise us are our friends and those who give well-meaning advice are our enemies.
14. Just as difficulties in life always have a lesson for us, we have to learn to say thank you to our so-called enemies for giving us an opportunity to improve.
15. Keep your eyes and ears open so that you don't miss any Divine signal or guidance.
16. We should be thankful to God and be content with what He has given us.
17. If we accept every verdict of the Almighty gracefully and share whatever we have with the less privileged we will always remain happy.
18. Happiness resides not in possessions, and not in gold, happiness dwells in the soul.
19. There is enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.
20. 'More', once attained, gives brief pleasure but eventually becomes a burden.
21. As we lose ourselves in the service of others, we discover our own lives and our own happiness.

**With the Blessings and Guidance of the Great Ones
may we always tread the Path of Righteousness
and lead a life of Service and Sacrifice
realizing that there is always more joy in giving rather than receiving,
so that we can succeed in making Brotherhood a Living Reality and
forming a union of all who love in the service of all that suffers.**

