



THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

Its Mission And Its Future

THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PVT. LTD.

Theosophy Hall, 40 New Marine Lines

Mumbai 400 020

First edition 1947

First reprint 2016

Printed by Madhav Bhagwat at Mouj Printing Bureau, Khatauwadi, Girgaum,
Mumbai, 400 004, and published by D. S. Parajia, for Theosophy Company (India)
Private Ltd., Theosophy Hall, 40, New Marine Lines, Mumbai, 400 020

This e-text is courtesy of www.ultindia.org, formatted and updated Nov 2016 & June 2019

Page numbers are at the top of the page & are the same as the hard copy.

THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

Its Mission And Its Future

The stream of thoughts and queries regarding the United Lodge of Theosophists grows ever larger, so that it has become imperative to place on record some account of its origin, History, Work and Purpose.

Many of these inquiries come from the members of the various existing theosophical, mystical and occult organizations and associations, who are beginning to question the validity of the claims made by their leaders. Other inquiries come from ex-members of such bodies who left them because of sectarian pretensions and corruptions, but who have remained firmly loyal to the fundamental principles of Theosophy, and whose desire it is to find an association of Theosophists which is true to the original impulse of The Theosophical Movement. Still other queries come from those to whom both Theosophical teachings and Theosophical history are new and absorbing subjects of interest.

With the hope of informing and assisting all who may be or who may become interested in Theosophy, the Theosophical Movement, and in Theosophical study and work, the following statement has been prepared.

The Theosophical Movement

The United Lodge of Theosophists is an integral part of The Theosophical Movement, which has the whole of Nature for its object, and concerns itself with Evolution in all its aspects, visible and invisible.

It should be clearly recognized that there is a very great difference between the Theosophical Movement and any Theosophical Society.

The Movement began far back in the night of Time and has since been moving through many and various peoples, places and environments. It is to be found in all times and among all nations. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great Movement is to be discerned. The Theosophical Movement is moral, ethical, spiritual, universal, invisible save in effect, and continuous.

A theosophical society is a visible organization, a body of students working in more or less harmony and understanding. Hence organizations of Theosophists must vary and change in accordance with place, time, exigency and circumstance. Being made by men for their better co-operation, organized theosophical bodies must change from time to time as human defects come out, as the times change, and as the great underlying spiritual Movement compels such alterations.

The real unity and prevalence—the real internationalism—of the Theosophical Movement are, therefore, not to be looked for in any form of organization, but are to be

found in the similarity of aim, of aspiration, of purpose, of teaching, of ethics.

All who love Brotherhood are parts of that great whole denominated The Theosophical Movement. The Movement is aided by working organizations, but is above them all, for its unity does not consist in the existence and action of any single organization, but depends upon the similarity of work and aspiration of those in the world who are working for it. The Theosophical Movement has been called that “Universal Lodge of free and independent Theosophists which embraces every friend of the human race.”

In accord with the spirit of the Theosophical Movement, the United Lodge of Theosophists “regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization; and it welcomes to its Association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.”

The real and enduring Objects of the Theosophical Movement, the real purpose and duty of Theosophists and theosophical societies, are fully and definitely set forth in *Five Messages to American Theosophists*, by H. P. Blavatsky.

Masters and Their Messengers

The Theosophical Movement cannot be understood without the recognition that MASTERS exist as facts in nature, not merely as ideals; and that They take an active

part in “the government of the natural order of things.”

Evolution is to be regarded as threefold—spiritual and mental as well as physical, Man and Nature as something more than visible matter. They are a Trinity of Spirit, Soul (or Mind) and Body, or Matter. “Evolution,” then, is the orderly development under Law of the triune nature of the immortal spiritual being, through a long series of reincarnations. Just as Man has developed an intelligent, self-conscious Soul immeasurably above that of the creatures below him, so also there are evolved Beings whose Intelligence is as much beyond man’s as man’s exceeds that of the black beetle—as was once suggested by Professor Huxley.

These Masters or *Mahatmas* (Great Souls) work for the race in many different ways. At different epochs they have appeared as great sages, philosophers, reformers, teachers; and, at larger cyclic intervals, as Saviours and Founders of the various great religions. This will explain:

(a) The myths and legends which grew up concerning Them and which were subsequently crystallized into the different religious dogmas, such as Divine Incarnations, “immaculate conception,” “revealed religion,” “vicarious atonement,” “miracles,” and so on;

(b) the fundamental identity of the Ethics and vital Principles underlying all religions.

In its primary sense The Theosophical Movement relates to these Elder Brothers of humanity and to the fact that mankind has never been without Their help. In its secondary sense the Movement refers to those Adepts and *Chelas* (Disciples) of the Great Lodge of Masters

who live and work in the world, known or unknown to those among whom they work. The third aspect of the Movement concerns itself with all those men and women whose desire and effort it is to serve their fellows.

The United Lodge of Theosophists “is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion. The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.” It seeks to promote Unity of aim, of purpose, and of teaching among all who call themselves Theosophists, in order to realize as quickly as possible Unity of thought, will and feeling, which is the first step in the formation of a nucleus of that *universal* brotherhood which the Masters exemplify.

For a concise account of Masters, Their Wisdom Religion or Theosophy, and Their Message to humanity in our times, *Echoes from the Orient*, *The Epitome of Theosophy* and *The Ocean of Theosophy*, all by William Q. Judge, should be carefully studied. For an exhaustive study of the same subjects, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, both by H. P. Blavatsky, are the original treatises.

The Parent Theosophical Society

The direct public effort of the Theosophical Movement for the nineteenth century and the ensuing one hundred

years, was inaugurated by the formation of the Parent theosophical society at New York City in 1875, by H. P. Blavatsky, with whom were associated William Q. Judge, Henry S. Olcott, and others. The Parent Society had three great Objects, corresponding with the three Sections of the Theosophical Movement. These objects are:

I. *To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour*—the separative distinctions most universally made in the world.

II. *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study*—in order to detect the vital principles common to all of them and thus do away with sectarianism and exclusiveness.

III. *The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man*—to destroy the ideas of “special creation” and “miracles” by the recognition of the reign of Law in everything and in every circumstance, and the recovery of the Spiritual and Psychical knowledge and powers of the immortal Ego.

The Parent Society was thus to serve triple purpose:—

(a) An association for mutual help, tolerance and study on the part of all its Fellows;

(b) A vehicle for the impartation and dissemination of those teachings of Theosophy which constitute the message from the Masters to Humanity in this, our cycles; and

(c) A training School for those who might make it

their prime determination to fit themselves to be the better able to help and teach others by becoming *Probationary Chelas* (disciples) of the First and Second Sections of the Theosophical Movement.

Of those who become Fellows of the Theosophical Society, assent to the First Object was the sole requisite; but those who aspired to become Probationary Chelas were required to take a formal Pledge of devotion to all Three Objects of the Society, as well as to certain other requisite conditions.

The basis of the T.S. was *democratic*; its Government was conducted through a Constitution, By-laws, Officers, Dues, etc. The basis of the “esoteric school”—the Probationers—was *patriarchal*; its government, the voluntary obedience of the Probationers to the Rules and Discipline of the School.

The platform of the T.S. was an *open forum*; the Fellows were free to profess or reject, to study or not to study, any system of thought or subject whatever. The platform of the “esoteric section” (or school) was the study and promulgation of Theosophy and the pledge of each Candidate to “endeavour to make Theosophy a living power in my life.”

The existence of the “esoteric section” was originally kept secret but in 1888 in the fourteenth year of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky pronounced that Society a “sham” and a “dead failure” so far as its devotion to its First Object was concerned, and thereupon publicly announced the existence of the “esoteric section” for the benefit of all who might wish to join in the endeavour to

restore the Society to the lines originally laid down.

Disruption of the Parent Society

H. P. Blavatsky died in 1891, and thereafter dissensions and discords increased, until by 1909 there were in existence scores of alien associations, some of them having identical names, and all of them deriving whatever of good was in them from the original inspiration of the Theosophical Movement. Thus, in a third of a century the Theosophical Movement of our time suffered the same vicissitudes as befell in three centuries following the mission of Jesus—and as had befallen every prior public effort of the Great Lodge, so far as the “Third Section”—the world at large—was concerned.

The basic cause of the disruptions and divisions in the “Third Section” of the Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century was the same as that of all former failures—disputes over “successorship,” even where other and minor causes were in evidence. Those who were attracted by the nature of the Messenger, H. P. Blavatsky, and by the Theosophy she taught, were all *students*—probationary disciples of more or less proficiency and devotion in the understanding and application of her Message. Some were ambitious to lead; many others equally desirous of having someone to lead them and to rely upon as an Authority.

It should have been self-evident and evident from the teachings of her Theosophy that H. P. Blavatsky could no more bequeath to another her nature, knowledge and powers than could Buddha, Plato or Jesus pass on theirs.

Once the idea of “apostolic succession” is set aside, a clear perspective is obtainable of the Movement of Theosophy, of the principal persons—past and present—engaged in its study and promulgation.

The United Lodge of Theosophists is not *a* or *the* “theosophical society.” On the contrary, it is a *School of Theosophy—an informal and wholly voluntary association of Students of Theosophy*, and is no more concerned with the various theosophical organizations than it is with similar societies and sects of the various popular religions. It deals only with *individuals* who are, or may become interested in Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement.

Students interested in the history of the vicissitudes of the Parent theosophical society and its degeneracy into sects and sectarian teachings and practices, should consult *The Theosophical Movement, A History and a Survey*, an authentic and verifiable record of fact and philosophy from 1875 to date.

Robert Crosbie—Founder of U.L.T.

The United Lodge of Theosophists was born from the Theosophical experience and lifelong devotion of Robert Crosbie to Masters, Their Message, and Their Messengers. Robert Crosbie (1849-1919) became convinced at sixteen that Truth can never be found in sectarianism. From then on his life became a search for that which was lost. He investigated mesmerism, hypnotism, spiritualism, mystical writings and philosophies until he came in contact with Theosophy after the return

of Madame Blavatsky to England in 1887.

By her instruction he placed himself under the direction of William Q. Judge. Mr. Crosbie was one of the earliest American members of the E.S.T.S. His connection made and the link regained, Mr. Crosbie worked unceasingly for the Movement in its exoteric and esoteric channels. He was for many years the mainstay of the Lodge in Boston, Mass.; was by Mr. Judge placed in charge of the E.S. members in Boston, and ultimately of New England.

His connection with both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge was close and intimate, but so carefully guarded that few ever suspected the relation to be more than casual and incident to the routine of Theosophical propagandum. During all the troublous period 1893-96 Mr. Crosbie shared to an extent unknown and undreamt of by others in the burdens and the confidence of Mr. Judge. At the Convention in April 1895, which was held at Boston, Mr. Crosbie's quiet but effective work was largely instrumental in the results achieved—the formation of The Theosophical Society in America to replace the former American Section, and the adoption of a programme of pure Theosophical endeavour.

On the death of Mr. Judge in 1896, Mr. Crosbie did what was possible to induce those most prominent in the T.S.A. to heed the dying words of Judge—"There should be calmness. Hold fast; go slow." But the same influences held sway as had produced all former wrong courses. Ambition and the desire to lead on the part of the few caused Mrs. Katherine Tingley to be heralded to the membership as the "successor" of Mr. Judge, as

Mrs. Besant had claimed to be the “successor” of H.P.B. As ninety-eight per cent of the members accepted the representations made, Mr. Crosbie could only go with the majority if he would not desert the work built up by the sacrifices of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge before him.

Then ensued two painful years of rivalry—first between the T.S.A., under the leadership of Mrs. Tingley, and the Olcott-Besant society; then of violent dissensions between Mrs. Tingley and those who had been responsible for foisting her upon the confidence of the members of the T.S.A. This latter war of clashing ambitions and pretensions to apostolic authority, culminated in the Chicago convention in February 1898, where, by the vote of more than ninety per cent of the delegates, the name of the T.S.A. was changed to that of “The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society”; and a new constitution adopted giving to Madame Tingley absolute autocratic control over all the activities of the society. A handful of the delegates—those who had originally vouched for Madame Tingley—“bolted” the convention, and thereafter called themselves the T.S.A.

Of all these events Mr. Crosbie was a witness and, as before, found no way open but to abide by the decision of the majority. For the ensuing six years he worked to the fullest extent possible to keep alive the spirit of fraternity and theosophical propagandum. By 1904 the once strong membership had dwindled away under the lurid management of Mrs. Tingley until there remained but a few hundreds out of many thousands. Further efforts being useless, Mr. Crosbie left the Tingley society

and removed to Los Angeles, California.

He was then a man of 55, forsaken by fortune, friends, and opportunity; hated and despised by those he had tried to befriend. Two years were spent in struggles for a livelihood, and then, in 1906, he set about a resumption of Theosophical efforts undaunted, undismayed, undiscouraged by anything that had been or that was to be endured. A newspaper advertisement brought replies from a number of members and ex-members of the various societies. Conferences were held and finally, acceding once more to the wishes of the majority, a charter was obtained from the T.S.A. and meetings began in a small room in February 1906.

Two years later the T.S.A. changed its Constitution and its name, calling itself “The Theosophical Society”—a name already in use by three distinct and differing associations. Through the efforts of Mr. Crosbie the Los Angeles Lodge opposed the changes and decided to continue as before. Thereupon those who had earlier assisted in the formation of the Lodge resigned. There remained Mr. Crosbie and seven others, four of whom were new to Theosophy and had, consequently, never been connected with any of the societies.

Origin and History of the United Lodge of Theosophists

Under Mr. Crosbie’s guidance this small nucleus at once set to work to acquire a Theosophical Education as the basis for an enduring solidarity. Meantime public meetings were held twice each week. Simple talks on pure Theosophical fundamental teachings were given by

Mr. Crosbie; applications made to all the problems of life; questions answered in terms of the teachings. By the spring of 1909 a solidarity and Understanding had been achieved sufficient to warrant a sustained attempt, not to add one more to the already existing sectarian Theosophical societies, but to practise and disseminate the idea of Unity among individual Theosophists at large, regardless of organizational affinities or differences—a definite procedure which should carry out the lines known to and worked for by Mr. Crosbie from the beginning. For he clearly saw that Theosophy itself was neglected while leaders were being followed, and that no possible union among Theosophists could ever come on the basis of personalities: there was the reef on which the Society had foundered, and a basis must be found which, excluding no persons, might be broad enough to include the members of any and all organizations.

A Declaration of principles and policy was accordingly drawn up from statements of Mr. Judge and a phrase used by him—“the united lodge of theosophists”—was adopted as the name for the association.

The Parent Lodge was founded on the 18th of February, 1909.

Individual study and impersonal work were inculcated by Mr. Crosbie as the sure path of the true Theosophist striving to hold fast to the basis and method of the lines originally laid down in the Letters of the Masters, the “esoteric section,” and the “Five Messages” of H.P.B. to the American Theosophists—the path shown and exemplified by Masters, Their Messenger and her

Colleague. Thus was the Parent United Lodge of Theosophists firmly established.

The movement progressed slowly and surely. By 1912 sufficient growth and strength had been achieved to begin the publication of the magazine *Theosophy*, the first number of which was issued in November of that year. [In India *The Theosophical Movement* began its publication in 1930 and its programme and policy are the same as those of its Los Angeles contemporary]. This made possible the undertaking of three very important objects:—

1. The republication of the old magazine writings of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge which had been suffered by the various societies to go entirely out of print.
2. The reissue and circulation of the books of Mr. Judge which were almost entirely unknown to the coming generation of theosophical students.
3. The vindication and restoration of the calumniated reputations of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. by making their writings once more accessible to students, and by the dissemination of the actual facts of theosophical history— facts everywhere ignored, forgotten or perverted.

The publication of the magazines, the issuance of the books, the public meetings, the correspondence in connection therewith, went on hand in hand with individual study and group meetings of the Associates to maintain their solidarity, to fit themselves better to care for the ever-increasing inquiries and demands for theosophical help and direction.

All this work was maintained on purely constructive lines. Propagandum was assiduously kept free from the taint of speculation. The philosophy of Theosophy was presented in its purity. The facts of history were given with exact accuracy and accompanied by verifiable citations from original sources.

Mr. Crosbie died in 1919. During the entire life of the United Lodge up to that time, his had been the inspiring heart, the guiding mind, the living example of impersonal devotion to a Cause. The ten years of U.L.T. and the seven years of the magazine under his guidance are the record and the witness of the faithfulness with which he followed the Path shown by the teaching and exemplified by the life of H.P.B. and W.Q.J.

A collection of letters he wrote and the talks he gave has been published under the heading *The Friendly Philosopher*; and his answers at *The Ocean of Theosophy* study class have been made available in a companion volume to the text-book.

In those years the impetus spread until individual Theosophists the world around became Associates of the Parent Lodge, readers of the magazine, students and workers for the Theosophical Movement. No distinction was ever made by Mr. Crosbie and those united with him in this work between Associates of U.L.T. and non-members. No attempt was ever made to proselyte for members or to build up an organization of any kind. The position taken from the beginning and steadfastly adhered to was that in Masters, Their Message, and Their Messenger is the true Path of the Theosophical Movement

which must be found, studied, assimilated and followed by all those who love Brotherhood and who aspire to become true *Theosophists*. Hence the continuous work of the Associates of U.L.T. was to acquire and spread knowledge of the teachings of Theosophy as the *sine qua non* condition of that *nucleus* of Universal Brotherhood which was and is the First Object of the Theosophical Movement.

Since the death of Mr. Crosbie the work begun and nourished by him has been continued with unabated and undeviating devotion to the strict line of the original impulse and the original teachings. In the years that have gone by the number of individual Associates has enormously increased; other bodies of students have been formed in various centres with the same Declaration; the writings of the great Messenger and her Colleague are more than ever in demand; a great turmoil of search and inquiry has become evident in the various theosophical and other mystical and occult societies; and the tide of the Movement shows everywhere the rising signs of a *return to the Source*.

The story of the wreck of the parent T.S. in India is a tangled web. The wreck started with the departure of H.P.B. from India in 1885. The work of the Adyar Society was given a different direction; it deviated from the original programme of H.P.B. and her Masters and therefore did not receive the benefit of the Original Impulse. The study of the philosophy taught by the Masters of H.P.B. fell by degree into total neglect; only a few individuals earnestly studied the books of H.P.B.

and fewer still tried to promulgate the grand verities they taught. If the Teachings of the Messenger were neglected, the very existence of those of her Pupil and Colleague, W. Q. Judge, remained unknown to the general run of Adyar members. His name was besmirched while he was alive and his memory allowed to fall into oblivion after his death in 1896.

The task of the study and promulgation of the Message of Theosophy as recorded in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge was undertaken in India in 1929 in the city of Bombay where H. P. B. began her labours in 1879. The first United Lodge of Theosophists was established on the 17th November 1929 at 51, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay.

Individual Preparation

Some brief account of the methods pursued in the parent United Lodge of Theosophists may serve as a help to others in their efforts to acquire a Theosophical education and forward the work of the Theosophical Movement.

Individual Study and Work are recognized and inculcated as the first foundation stone to be laid, and the methods of U.L.T. therefore afford no attraction to the self-seeker. Each student has to see for himself if he is not to remain a mere drone or a follower of some Authority. "To the mentally lazy or obtuse Theosophy must remain a riddle."

In the process of learning, each Associate finds out for himself how much he has to *unlearn*. In attempting to

work for Theosophy, each Associate finds out for himself that before teaching it is first necessary to *learn*. “It is not high learning that is needed, but solely devotion to humanity, faith in the Masters, in the Higher Self, a comprehension of the fundamental truths of Theosophy and a little, only a little, sincere attempt to present those fundamental truths to a people who are in desperate need of them.” Self-reliance and the development of the intuition—two of the main factors in the evolution of the individual Soul—are absolutely contingent upon the Associate’s own efforts to understand and apply the Teachings of Theosophy in all directions. Each Associate is therefore constantly encouraged to pursue a *definite* course in overcoming one of the most prevalent defects of the race-mind—much reading and little thought. That course is—

A thorough apprehension of the Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, and a continuous effort to perceive their *universal* applications. For this purpose the pamphlet entitled *Texts for Theosophical Meetings* and other pamphlets enable the individual Associate to form clear and clean mental perceptions and conceptions, and at the same time to free his mind from many inherent preconceptions.

Second, the study of the more extended teachings in the light of the Fundamental Propositions—this being the Platonic method continually insisted upon by H.P.B. For this work *The Ocean of Theosophy* and *The Key to Theosophy* are constantly employed. The first is the true condensation of *The Secret Doctrine*; the

second an invaluable aid to the study of the workings of one's own consciousness. Thus it is possible to begin to *realize* the identity of the universal and the particular in the principles and processes of one's own nature. In the individual's study and application, the magazine writings of the Teachers, and the compendious works, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* will naturally be more and more drawn on as that storehouse of thought from which he can unfailingly correct his misapprehensions and misapplications, and steadily enlarge and enrich his mind with the Wisdom of the Masters—become himself in some degree an embodiment of it.

Although all cannot be teachers, yet each Associate can familiarize himself with the main Theosophical doctrines and promulgate them to those who are enquiring. "There is hardly a Theosophist in the whole Movement unable to help it by correcting erroneous impressions of outsiders, if not by actually propagating the ideas himself." The sad fact is that thousands in the world associate the name of Theosophy with the absolutely spurious teachings of latter-day claimants and false psychism, instead of with the Message sent to the world direct from the Masters through H.P.B.

It is only as the Associate, by study, application and efforts at promulgation, gains conviction and knowledge of his own, that he becomes in heart and spirit a Disciple.

Class Methods of Study and Work

Hand in hand with individual efforts on the part of each Associate to fit himself to be the better able to help and

teach others, must go that *collective* work without which all individual attempts are foredoomed to be barren or selfish. Hence Associates are constantly encouraged to consistent regularity in attendance at all meetings of the United Lodge. This is taught as a primary matter of individual responsibility; as a means of readjustment and stimulus through contact with other minds similarly imbued; as a place to meet inquirers into Theosophy and for repeating for the benefit of others what has been garnered by private study and reflection.

All meetings of the United Lodge of Theosophists are strictly for the purpose in hand—the study, practice, and promulgation of Theosophy, free from side issues, contentions, gossip, worldly or personal matters. Social activities have no part or place in the Lodge programme, the whole aim being Theosophical work, not play. On this principle a new and true basis of social communion is gradually becoming established.

All study classes are presided over by some older student, and one or another book is used as a text to follow. Years of experience have proven that for general purposes *The Ocean of Theosophy* most nearly meets the requirements and limitations of the average mind; but classes are also held in *The Key to Theosophy*, and in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Notes* thereon. The classes are regularly announced at the public meetings and all who wish are welcome to attend and to participate. Not more than two study classes have been found practicable in addition to the other individual and collective activities of the Lodge.

Study class meetings last from an hour to an hour and a half—never longer. One student gives the Fundamental Propositions. Four or five speakers in turn do their best to give the teachings of the particular chapter or subject under consideration. Speakers are limited to ten minutes at most. All attempts at oratory, reading from books or manuscripts, memorized recitation and the use of notes are discouraged, in order that reliance may be cultivated on the inherent power in any one to express what he knows. The time limit imposed enables the less confident and less experienced Associates to try, without too severely taxing them; for the other speakers it tends to cultivate concentrated attention to the subject in hand, and discourages the general tendency to run into speculations, personal reminiscences, and diffused or repetitional utterance.

Time is always allowed for questions, and both questioners and speakers are encouraged in every way to be succinct, clear and one-pointed. The position taken is that the Reply is to be the teaching of Theosophy on the question propounded, not the opinion of the speaker; and the answer is to the Question, not the questioner. This makes for accuracy and impersonality.

The method used in study classes has been found by experience to be the one best adapted to maintain interest, to insure both readiness and accuracy, and to enable each participant to correct his deficiencies of manner, of expression and of understanding. While the students in any class necessarily differ greatly in ability, education, energy and devotion, all benefit by the method

employed. It becomes the settled understanding that the Lodge and the classes are a *body of students*, and that the humblest Associate who *tries* is truer to his pledge than the most gifted who do little or who criticize the efforts of those less able. In practice, it is found that the older students assist the younger, and that the more qualified in a mental sense very often learn from the superior virtues shown by those less endowed intellectually. All learn by observation and experience that one defect is no better than another. The prevailing human faults of criticism, pretense, invidious comparison and self-assertion are thus minimized or obviated, and replaced by mutual consideration, good-will, tolerance and respect.

It will readily be seen that the steadily held underlying objects of all private study and of all study classes are to assist every Associate to more and more truly embody in himself the *Declaration*, to cultivate by individual and collective *work* the declared *basis for union*; to bring about in *practice* that unity of thought, will and feeling which will make a *united lodge of theosophists*. Thus the entire work of the Lodge is that of a School—a training-school for the Associates to the extent that each participates, as well as a training-school toward popularizing a knowledge of Theosophy in a nation which, for both masses and classes, is in sore need of its benefits.

Public Meetings and Lectures

Two general public meetings are held each week. On Sundays an extemporaneous talk is given on some

theosophical subject, and on the weekday night meeting the same subject is used for a brief preliminary statement and then the time is devoted to Questions and Answers on the subject in hand and related topics. At each public meeting a statement is made of the objects of the Lodge and visitors are invited to ask for a copy of the Declaration. A short reading appropriate to the subject is given by some student—usually from the *Bhagavad Gita*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, *Letters That Have Helped Me*, and occasionally from other devotional literature. A short but clear statement is made of what Theosophy is and where it comes from, and the fundamental propositions are given as the basis of treatment for the evening's work; followed by a talk on the announced subjects. These meetings are from an hour and a quarter to an hour and a half in length, and invariably close with an invitation to visitors and strangers to examine the books and pamphlets for sale and for loan, to meet the Associates if they desire, and to come again to the meetings and bring their friends.

All the public meetings hold just as closely to the work in hand as do the study classes. It is recognized that the great need of the world is for a wide dissemination of the fundamental teachings of Theosophy, and that people come to the meetings to hear about *Theosophy*—what it is, and what it teaches on the great subjects of human interest. Experience has shown that the question and answer meetings are largely attended by visitors and their friends from the Sunday night meetings, and that their interest is keen. Tact and skill as well as Theosophical

knowledge are of course highly requisite in handling a question and answer meeting. It is peculiarly in such question and answer meetings that prevailing tendencies crop up—to wander into side issues, to inject ideas and opinions from other systems, to raise abstract, moot and controversial subjects. These tendencies, and the occasional attempts of some visitor to monopolize the meeting for purposes of his own, under the guise of a questioner—all have to be met. It usually suffices to remind such questioners that the meetings are strictly for the purpose of presenting Theosophical teachings and that the Lodge is *not* an open forum. The Lodge rooms are maintained solely for the purpose of the presentment of the fundamental principles of Theosophy. Therefore, unless one can conform to this purpose he must needs hire his own hall accommodations.

The public meetings of the United Lodge are entirely free from any taint of proselyting; their purpose is to acquaint those who care to come, with some of the leading ideas of Theosophy, to welcome all who may wish to inquire further, and to facilitate their studies in every possible way.

In all meetings, in those for the general public as well as the study classes, what is consistently kept in mind is the fact that *Theosophy is a body of knowledge*, and that any Theosophical association is, or should be, *a body of students of Theosophy*. This fundamental principle is embodied in Theosophy School which provides for the Theosophical education of children and young people. The adults also have their classes affiliated to Theosophy

School and they learn to keep the end in view of becoming “universal” parents. The history and programme of work of the Theosophy School will be found in the *Teacher’s Manual and Guide to The Eternal Verities*.

Support and Direction of The United Lodge

In the beginning the entire burden of responsibility for the expenses and direction of the Parent Lodge was assumed by Mr. Crosbie and the few original Associates. That principle has never been departed from. It was recognized that the assumption of responsibility without power or knowledge could only result in dissipation of energies and consequent loss. The voluntary help of all who might wish to participate in the necessary contributions of time, money and work has always been welcomed, and the basis of the maintenance of the Lodge always stated. No contributions of any kind have ever been solicited, directly or indirectly. The policy followed has been to state the facts; then leave to every Associate or other interested attendant to determine for himself to what extent, if any, he should participate. Themselves pledged to the support of the Lodge by their own freewill, it was the fundamental conviction of the Founders of the Parent Lodge that each new Associate should have only such obligation as his own free-will should determine. As the years have gone on, other Associates have joined in accepting the same responsibility both for the support and direction of the Lodge, but the very basis of its work, the principles of its establishment, the Objects for which it labours, and the policy adopted—

all render it inevitable that—like any other purely philanthropic effort—The United Lodge of Theosophists depends for its support and direction, in the final analysis, upon the few who are determined to put *Theosophy first*. The existence, growth and undeviating adherence to its *Declaration* through all the years have been made possible by individual Theosophists who knew the right lines and were prepared to hold them—ready and willing to pay the cost of such adherence.

Formation of New United Lodges

Other Lodges have been formed from time to time in other cities, all taking the Declaration of the Parent Lodge, and all in fraternal affiliation with it and with each other, welcoming to their Association and to their activities all who might desire to share in them on the declared basis. Associates of all these Lodges are registered both locally and by the General Registrar of the Parent Lodge. The bond between the various United Lodges is the same as the bond between the Associates themselves, that of a common aim, purpose and teaching. It is to be clearly understood that each United Lodge is wholly autonomous, and stands entirely upon its own feet. The Parent Lodge at Los Angeles, because of its longer experience and greater facilities, gladly assists in every possible way in the formation and work of other Lodges, as it does in the efforts of individual Associates wherever and however situated. The same is done by the Bombay U.L.T. which works in close co-operation with the Parent Lodge; to save time and to facilitate work,

individuals and Lodges within its circle of influence are helped. And it, strictly adhering to the lines followed by the Parent Lodge, specifically and absolutely disclaims any authority over or responsibility for any other Lodge or any Associate. This is for two reasons, among others:

(a) To do away with any and every vestige of *authority* in matters which are, in their very nature, purely spiritual, moral and intellectual;

(b) To put each Associate and each Lodge (or body of Associates) on their own responsibility under the Declaration and the Pledge of Associates. “Theosophist *is*, who Theosophy *does*,” and no amount of official supervision or procedure, or any loftiness of professions, can do away with Nature’s law. One is an *Associate* to the extent that he embodies Theosophy; a Lodge is *United* to the extent that it is true to the Declaration.

Lodge Centres can successfully spread only by the formation of a nucleus of individual Associates who have trained themselves in the right line of thought and study, with the always available help of more experienced Lodge workers. For the mysteries of human nature are manifold, and it will always be found easy to go wide of the intention and lead others wrong, unless there is a constant checking up, both by the philosophy and by the experience and knowledge of those who have been through the needed trials and common experiments. The Associate Cards of the Lodge provide the means of *individual* adhesion to the principles of the Declaration. They are a form of Pledge and on individual honour. *The sum of the individual adhesions makes the cohesive body.*

If individual *students* are rightly trained in Theosophical Education and Solidarity, individual Lodges will always remain united, and the collectivity of autonomous Lodges will always work in true harmony and emulation—not rivalry.

Hence the work of the Parent Lodge has never been in the direction of establishing new Lodges or a Society of any kind, but has at all times been directed (*a*) to public propagandum for Theosophy; (*b*) to affording right lines of study and work to its own Associates and to all fellow-students of Theosophy irrespective of organizational affiliations or predilections. The *holding power* is that of a definite end in view, not merely an ideal to be entertained. This power grows, individually and collectively, exactly in accordance with the soundness of the principles promulgated and the conviction of the Associates as to the reality of those principles.

Communications from interested persons on any of the subject-matter herein discussed are always welcomed, and every assistance possible is gladly rendered to the Correspondent Associates. All such communications should be addressed simply to

The United Lodge of Theosophists
Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai - 400020

DECLARATION OF THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

Theosophy Hall, 40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020

The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the fundamental principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is “similarity of aim, purpose and teaching,” and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

“The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all.”