

PAN AFRICAN THEOSOPHICAL FEDERATION

WEST AFRICA - EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - SOUTHERN AFRICA

PATF NEWSLETTER No12 APRIL 2012

The Pan African Theosophical Federation was formed to promote contacts between the various African Theosophical Sections, Regional Associations, Lodges and Members. We invite contact from anyone interested in Theosophy in Africa, because it is our main aim to spread universal wisdom (Theo-Sophia) throughout Africa and to promote the type of brotherhood and sisterhood that transcends ethnic, religious and ideological differences.

Editor's Message

10th INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ADYAR DECEMBER 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters

We were heartened to be able to meet Pan African Federation members Narendra Shah from Nairobi and Bupendra Vora who is now living in England at the recent 136th International Convention of the Theosophical Society in Adyar. Jack Hartmann from Johannesburg Lodge and I attended also attended the Congress. There were over 2500 delegates from every continent.

The theme of the Congress was "A Regenerating Practical Brotherhood". There were many very interesting lectures and seminars where several important issues were presented, relating to regenerating practical brotherhood in the Society, in order to ensure its future and wellbeing.

On the fourth day of the Convention, Cyclone "Thane" hit the east coast of Tamil Nadu and severely disrupted the Convention with hurricane force winds and very heavy torrential rain. Some events were cancelled and the remaining events were held in the Head Quarters Hall.

International social contacts between these events were very important as a means of sharing experiences and views about the running of sections and lodges in different countries; their successes and ways they resolve their specific issues. European Sections had experienced a fall in membership due to the worsening economic situation there. However, membership has been growing in Asia, the economic growth area of the world at present. So regeneration of membership as far as the Society is concerned, appears to be linked to economic growth, although the practice of forming a nucleus of the brotherhood of humanity should not be restricted to members of the Society or economic conditions.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

As Theosophists we seek to form a nucleus of universal brothers and sisters without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. Our job as Theosophists is to help in breaking down the barriers existing between peoples as a result of their differences in culture, ethnicity, religion, ideology, education and status. So the aim is to help reduce the suffering of humanity and animals caused by man's inhumanity to one another and other forms of life.

Let us as Theosophists develop our own strategies to combat division and alienation amongst the peoples of the world. Let us work upon ourselves to remove our own prejudices and help others to overcome theirs. We must become examples of the Theosophical way, bringing light and love wherever we are, to dispel the darkness of despair and hopelessness. Compassion and insight should be our watchwords.

The greatest help one person can give to another, is to help them to help themselves and in turn to help others to help themselves in a beneficial way.

NEWS FROM THE SECTIONS

EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN SECTION

The Section activities continue in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda. Kenya is still the most active region with Nairobi being the focal point and headquarters. They have 5 Lodges and are trying to revive two previous lodges in Zambia.

The 45th East and Central African Section's Convention was held in Kitwe, Zambia during Easter 2011. Mary Anderson past International Secretary, was the guest speaker

Mary Anderson who was on a month long visit of the Section also visited Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda where she delivered talks at Nairobi Lodge (Kenya), Dar-es-Salaam Lodge (Tanzania) and Nile Lodge, Kampala (Uganda).

One of the highlights of the Convention was the official opening of the new Kitwe Lodge Hall by Mr. Kanoobhai A. Patel, past General Secretary of the E & C Section and past member of Mufulira Lodge in Zambia. He normally resides in Toronto, Canada. He and his wife Savitaben Patel were the Guests of Honour. They also donated the land.

The next East and Central African Section's Convention will be held in 2013 in Nairobi Kenya.

WEST AFRICAN SECTION

The section comprises lodges and centres in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Liberia.

The last Annual convention was held from September 20th to 30th 2011 at the Headquarters of the Society in Accra. The theme of the "Convention was Theosophy and the Challenge of Life". New officers were confirmed by the council for the West African section, the new officers are:

- John O. Boakye - General Secretary
- Newton T. Obro Assistant General Secretary
- Paul B. Kwakyi Treasurer/Financial Secretary
- Dr. Kwadwo A. Tutu Publicity officer
- Bro. Naate Afutu Nartey Librarian
- Sister Akua A. Tutu Organizer TOS

A Board of Trustees has been set up to handle the Assets and prosperities of the Society.

Sometime ago, some members contributed monies towards establishing a book agency. All those who made contributions are now regarded as shareholders of the Theosophical Book company and shareholders meeting is going to be called to deliberate on the way forward of the company.

There has always been an expectation to have delegates from member countries in the West African section attending conventions as participants to represent their countries, but regrettably, it has not been so. It is therefore their strongest hope in 2012, to have participants from our member countries to share the affectionate brotherhood that is generated at these gatherings of Theosophists.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SECTION

Their National Convention was held in Johannesburg on 17&18 March 2012, the theme was "2012 and Beyond a Theosophic Perspective". It was well attended and including a large contingent from Gauteng Lodges. The various lectures were of a high standard.

Tom Davis had agreed to take over as General Secretary in 2010 for two years during which time, succession plans for a new committee were formulated. Therefore during the convention, there was a major change of EXCO officers as follows:

- Jack Hartmann General Secretary
- Desmond Chapman Assistant General Secretary
- Bishop Boudewijn Gaudriaan Secretarial Assistant to the Gen. Sec.
- Mrs. Nete Burford National Treasurer
- TBA National Registrar
- Tom Davis National Lecturer
- Fil Heckrood EXCO Member and Legal advisor

The Southern African Section's web site www.theosophy.org.za

An interesting extract from Madame Blavatski's glossary in her book "The Key to Theosophy" describing Alchemy

ALCHEMY in Arabic Ul Khemy is as the name suggests the chemistry of nature. Ul Khemi or Al Khimia, however is really an Arabianized word taken from the Greek *Chemeia* from *chumos* Juice extracted from a plant. Alchemy deals with the finer forces of nature and the various conditions of matter in which they are found to operate. Seeking under the veil of language, more or less artificial, to convey to the uninitiated so much of the *Mysterium Magnum* as is safe in the hands of a selfish world, the Alchemist postulates as his first principle, the existence of a certain Universal Solvent in the homogeneous substance from which the elements were evolved; which substance he calls pure gold or *summum materiae*. This solvent also called *menstruum universale* possesses the power of removing the seeds of disease t of the human body, of renewing youth and prolonging life. Such is *lapis philosophorum* (philosopher's stone). Alchemy first penetrated into Europe through Geber, the great Arabian sage and philosopher, in the eighth century of our era; but it was known and practiced long ages ago in China and Egypt. Numerous papyri on Alchemy and other proofs that it was the favourite study of kings and priests have been exhumed and preserved under the generic term of Hermetic treatises (see *tabula Smaragdina*). Alchemy is studied under three distinct aspects, which admit of many different interpretations, vis.: the Cosmic, the Human and the Terrestrial.

These three methods were typified under the three Alchemical properties – sulphur, mercury and salt. Different writers have stated that these are three, seven and twelve processes respectively, but they are all agreed there is but one object in Alchemy, which is to transmute gross metals into pure gold. But what that gold is, very few people understand correctly. No doubt there is such a thing in nature as transmutation of the base metals into the nobler: but this is only one aspect of Alchemy, the terrestrial, or purely material, for we see logically the same process taking place in the bowels of the earth. Yet, besides and beyond this interpretation, there is in Alchemy a symbolic meaning, purely psychic and spiritual. While the Kabbalist-Alchemist seeks for the realization of the former, the Occultist-Alchemist, spurning the gold of the earth, gives all his attention to and directs his efforts only towards the transmutation of the baser *quaternary* into the divine upper trinity of man, which when finally blended is one. The spiritual, psychic and physical planes of human existence are in Alchemy compared to the four elements – fire, air, water and earth and are each capable of a threefold constitution, i.e., fixed, unstable and volatile. Little or nothing is known by the world concerning the origin of this archaic branch of philosophy; but it is certain that it antedates any construction of any known zodiac, and as dealing with the personified forces of nature, probably also any of the mythologies of the world. Nor is there any doubt that the true secrets of transmutation (on the physical plane) were

known in the days of old and lost before the dawn of the so-called historical period. Modern chemistry owes its best fundamental discoveries to Alchemy, but regardless of the undeniable truism of the latter, that there is but *one* element in the universe. Chemistry placed metals in the class of elements and is only now beginning to find out its gross mistake. Even some encyclopaedists are forced to confess that most of the accounts of transmutation are fraud and delusion, "yet some of them are accompanied by testimony *which renders them probable*". By means of the galvanic battery even the alkalis have been discovered to have a metallic basis. The possibility of obtaining metal from other substances which contain the ingredients composing it, of changing one metal into another, must therefore be left undecided. Nor are all Alchemists to be considered imposters. Many have laboured under the conviction of obtaining the object, with indefatigable patience and purity of heart, which is soundly recommended by Alchemists as the principal requisite for the success of their labours.

ÉDITORIAL AVRIL 2012

Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu

Présidente de a ST de France

Un enfant est né... et la famille exulte de joie. Une personne est morte...et un monde s'effondre pour ses proches. Il y a certes de la tristesse au départ sans retour d'un être cher parce que la relation sur le plan physique avec lui se termine de façon irrévocable. Ici nous ne parlons que de la mort dite « naturelle ». Combien de morts dans une vie humaine a-t-on pleuré? Et c'est une épreuve inévitable pour les humains pendant toute leur vie sur terre. La mort est inexorable et implacable. Quand un être est né, il est destiné à grandir, vieillir et finalement mourir. Mais très souvent cette vérité échappe à notre vigilance et nous fait oublier l'inexorabilité de la fin. Le fait est que tous les humains ont la mémoire courte...

Tout d'abord, chacun de son vivant vit comme s'il devait durer à jamais. Sans que ce sentiment soit véritablement conscient, il y a cette sensation que l'on existe depuis toujours...jusqu'au moment où quelque chose d'inhabituel vient enrayer tout ce mécanisme de l'inconscient. Alors, on se réveille comme d'un rêve interminable pour entrer dans la « zone » mi-obscurité où la certitude de la fin n'est pas encore totalement acquise ; c'est que l'inconscient lutte pour sa survie en se leurrant de négociations... Mais puisque le temps ne s'arrête jamais, l'inconscient cesse de résister à l'évidence quand on est proche de la mort.

Il arrive aussi parfois que l'absence de vitalité ne permet plus à l'individu d'agir selon ses convictions et sa volonté; l'élémentaire physique, en vue de sa propre survie, en profite pour résister jusqu'au dernier instant en ne voulant pas lâcher prise. Il en résulte une mort qui n'est pas incisive, une mort « qui s'étire ». En fait, la mort commence aussitôt la formation du corps physique complétée, car tout ce qui a atteint le summum doit recommencer le cycle. Il s'ensuit une « dégénérescence » du corps physique qui atteindra son summum à la « mort ». La conscience du défunt entrera dans un autre cycle en passant quelques temps dans différents états intermédiaires (que les tibétains appellent « bardo ») avant de retourner vers le « ré-habillage » par les skandhas pour finalement reprendre un véhicule physique. Alors commence une autre incarnation et ainsi de suite.

La mort jusqu'alors considérée comme une rupture définitive de la vie peut être vue autrement, plutôt comme un intervalle de repos entre deux incarnations, comme le temps de sommeil nocturne réparateur entre deux journées de labeur. Une question se pose de façon légitime : pourquoi est-elle si douloureuse pour ceux qui restent ? Probablement parce qu'elle implique un grand changement qui exige une adaptation simultanée à cette déchirure causée par une absence physique pour le reste de leurs jours. Mais, un individu n'est-il que son corps physique ? Que cette question n'amène pas les proches d'un défunt à tenter l'expérience spirite qui risque de retarder la marche en avant de son âme vers sa libération temporaire, vers son repos nécessaire avant un autre cycle. Certes, un être sensible - et de surcroît un être humain - n'est pas que son corps physique. Ses idées, son intellect, sa manière de vivre, etc. tout cela demeurera dans la mémoire de ses proches. Bien plus, il est une étincelle du Divin, qui s'en rapprochera au moins pour le moment en attendant l'ultime union à l'instant de la libération finale.

Qui va en donner la preuve ? (me demandez-vous...). Vous-même allez donner la preuve... en maîtrisant l'instant de la mort, en en étant conscient. La règle est logique et évidente : on n'est maître d'une chose qu'en la surpassant. Surpasser l'instant de sa mort ce n'est autre que mourir consciemment, c'est-à-dire être conscient de sa propre naissance sur d'autres plans de l'existence. Il va sans dire que cette maîtrise ne s'apprend pas en une seule vie ; mais nous savons que nous en avons d'innombrables.

Comment faire alors ? (me demandez-vous...). Très logiquement, en apprenant à « mourir à soi-même » dès maintenant. Cela revient à dire: commencer à ne plus solidifier son égo terrestre, à le dissoudre, à être attentif à soi et aux autres, à accomplir ce qui nous revient et à s'en aller sans regret, sans attachement à son action.

Comprendre ceci est plus qu'un plaisir intellectuel, c'est une véritable bénédiction.

Please let us have news from around the sections for the next newsletter. Let us have your news, poems and views. Please also let me know what you would like to see in your newsletter.
May love, light and blessings be with you all.

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