

THE PLAN & PRIORITIES FOR THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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GENERAL ARTICLE




SEVEN STEPS TO HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE

The septenary approach is not uncommon to Theosophists. Here is one.



Step 1 – Unity of Purpose

The pursuit of truth and the practice of universal brotherhood are the two pillars at the entrance to a Theosophical life. The motto and the objects of the Theosophical Society constantly reinforce and reiterate the direction in which to move. Of the greatest importance are the Mahachohan's letter of 1881 and the Mahatma's letter to Annie Besant in 1900. Unity of purpose among the members of the TS is a prerequisite to spreading the message of universal brotherhood in the world. In a letter of 1884, the Mahatma says, "Each one individually and collectively has to be utterly unselfish, kind and full of good will towards each other at least—leaving humanity out of the question; there must be no party spirit among the band, no backbiting, no ill will, or envy or jealousy, contempt or anger." This is no easy task, but it is the only choice for any honest member. Another adept once wrote, "You have to make once for ever your choice—either your duty to the Lodge or your own personal ideas." For this, Viveka or Discrimination needs to be developed through mindfulness.



Step 2 – The Strategic Objective

We are asked to "popularize a knowledge of Theosophy". This is the strategic objective. It can be accomplished only by precept and practice. This means that we should encourage a diligent study of Theosophy and make it known that all are welcome to the TS without having to "convert".



Step 3 – Transactional & Tactical Aspects

To complement the strategic aspects of study and dissemination, we need to look at some practical aspects. A Master once wrote, “One who prepares for solving the Infinite must solve the finite first.” Let us consider, in turn, three Ps --- [a] People, [b] Publications & Presentations and [c] Property.

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Step 3 – Transactional & Tactical Aspects

[a] People

There is a debate about quality versus quantity. It is not a matter of doubt that quality is very important. Notwithstanding, the usefulness of numbers should never be downplayed. If we looked at the following matrix it will clarify our perception.

Greater numbers Lesser commitment	Greater numbers Greater commitment
Lesser numbers Lesser commitment	Lesser numbers Greater commitment

We should ensure that we move towards the upper right quadrant and never slip into the lower left quadrant or even the upper left quadrant. The right move cannot be achieved either by a mere membership drive or by spreading ourselves thin with many activities. Good members and staff are to be cared for in every way.

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Step 3 – Transactional & Tactical Aspects

[b] Publications & Presentations

New publications, reprints and translations of Theosophical texts and articles should continue and be enhanced. E-publishing, Internet sites, broadcasts, public presentations and documentary films should be encouraged and CDs and books should be made available at popular bookshops and book fairs.

[c] Property

Perhaps the most mundane and yet an important aspect of our work is the protection and care of TS properties. The magnetism of the meeting place should be kept safe and sacred. Many Theosophists have given generously to the TS. Members and well-wishers should support the efforts in every way.



Step 4 – Building Trust & System

Our attention is drawn to the rules, systems and procedures. While it may be important to adapt to changing times, it is also important to be aware of the fact that a mere change of rules does not guarantee adherence to them. It is important to have a near perfect system, but we cannot do so without a high degree of trust. While the system is the ethical body of any organisation, trust is its ethical soul. Let us look at another matrix here.

High Trust Low System	High Trust High System
Low Trust Low System	Low Trust High System

As we can rest assured that we will never slip into the lower left quadrant, we must also never move into the lower right quadrant. Instead we must move into the upper right quadrant.



Step 5 – Understanding Freedom & Discipline

Freedom and discipline seem to contradict each other. Paradoxically each ensures the existence of the other. Whether it is in terms of our own behaviour or in terms of the organisation's rules and norms, we need to understand both. It is indeed the age for a consultative and participative style of functioning. Inclusiveness should be practised and exclusiveness should be avoided. A Mahatma once wrote about the "wreck and desolation" of nations: "It is selfishness and exclusiveness that killed ours, and it [is] selfishness and exclusiveness that will kill yours."



Step 6 – Principles & Methods

We need to be clear about the difference between principles and methods. This clarity will resolve the debate on centralization versus decentralization. If the central principles of our organisation are clear, the methods of implementation can be decentralized. If these principles are in some cases implicit, it is important to make them explicit and understandable.



Step 7 – The Three Halls of Theosophy

There are people who wish to battle the ills of the world by practical service. There are also people who like rituals and ceremonies. There are allied organisations of the TS that provide opportunities to both sorts of people. The TOS offers an excellent avenue for practical work, while there are other organisations that offer avenues for ceremonial work. This is the first hall of Theosophy.

For those who wish to study Theosophy and address the moral and spiritual sufferings of the world, The Theosophical Society itself offers the second hall of Theosophy.

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Step 7 – The Three Halls of Theosophy

Madame H. P. Blavatsky, like her successors, spoke of discipleship, which is the path leading to the vow of the Bodhisattva. Krishnamurti spoke of "freedom from the known". Many speak of Blavatsky and Krishnamurti being different. The language is different, the teaching is one. If you do not give up your identification with the known, how can you be a disciple? To those disciples who seek freedom from the known and who wish to embark on the Bodhisattva path of renunciation, the third hall of Theosophy is open.

It is our duty to bring people across the threshold into the three halls.



SPECIFIC POINTS



NOTE:

The points have been classified as 'Urgent' and 'Important'. Those which are Urgent would require 1 to 2 years of urgent attention & hard work, while work on those which are 'Important' can begin now and go on. What is 'urgent' can transit to being what is 'important' later on.



URGENT

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Popularising Theosophy

- It is now urgent for us to take the message of Theosophy to different people, who are searching for a genuine source of truth & light. Of these, the most important are the youth starting from their teens going into their early thirties. We need to use, lectures, group interaction, presentations, out-reach programmes & Internet tools. Of course, we should be careful so as not to over-simplify & consequently trivialise the perennial philosophy.

These measures will lead to more people studying Theosophy & consequently joining The Theosophical Society. The various activities of the TS and its allied organisations will provide avenues for 'study, meditation and service'.

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URGENT

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Appreciating & Managing Diversity

- In order to encourage the non-English speaking populations of the world to have access to the body of truths enshrined in Theosophy, it is important to have websites and publications [both e-versions & printed material] available to them. International gatherings should have concurrent sessions in the various languages represented at these gatherings and there may also be simultaneous translations at the plenary sessions where it is cost-effective and feasible. This will encourage many more people to understand and appreciate Theosophy.



URGENT

ADYAR HEADQUARTERS

Care for Employees & Volunteers

- The volunteers & employees [both permanent & on contract] need more attention and care in terms of their needs. Salaries are only one part of the challenge; the other challenges include their general health, the education of their children & meeting other aspirations. These are being addressed now within the means available, but need considerable improvement.

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URGENT

ADYAR HEADQUARTERS

Infrastructure & Maintenance

- The estate & buildings are cared for within the means available. It is now important to improve the general overall infrastructure, including the buildings, the roads, the quality of water, etc. The facilities should meet at least acceptable standards required by a milieu of international residents, without becoming ostentatious or introducing any element of luxury. The simplicity of Adyar is important together with cleanliness, connectivity & care for all who come to reside there.

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URGENT

ADYAR HEADQUARTERS

Our Outlook Towards Earnest Seekers

- The Adyar Estate should welcome sincere & serious students who are earnest seekers of truth. On the one hand, it should never be insular, while on the other, it should not become a venue for [spiritual] tourism. Students of Theosophy who are able to adhere to the rules of simple purity and discipline on the Adyar estate should be welcome to attend programmes, study at the Adyar Library and research there.
- The routine visitors who visit the estate during the day should be first guided to the '*Visitors Centre*' where they can have access to literature on The Theosophical Society and also an audio-visual on Theosophy & The Theosophical Society.

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URGENT

ADYAR HEADQUARTERS

Security & Safety

- Important to ensure the security and safety of the estate and prevention of incursions by burglars.

Court Cases

- Historically, there have been a few court cases that have not yet been resolved. One has to keep in mind the implications and possible repercussions and try to close them in the near future without loss of much money.



IMPORTANT

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Rules & Regulations

- In the last few years, there have been various interpretations of rules and regulations both at the international and local levels. An expert body should be constituted to thoroughly study them and propose suitable measures to make them both democratic and acceptable to all members.

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IMPORTANT

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Comparative Study of Religion, Philosophy & Science

- Comparative study of religion, philosophy and science should be encouraged. Scholars from around the Theosophical world should be allowed to form a think-tank, network and formulate programmes on Theosophy, both from the basic subjects to the advanced ones. They can recommend [not impose] the material they prepare both in electronic and hard copy versions for various theosophical groups to use around the world in different languages.

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IMPORTANT

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

International Gatherings

- International gatherings should become more participative. People should be encouraged to submit papers well in advance for the international gatherings and a committee of senior and well-read members can select the ones that can be presented and ones that can be displayed for all to read near the venue.



IMPORTANT

ADYAR HEADQUARTERS

Tapping into skill sets of volunteers

- There should be possibilities for international volunteers with special skill sets to work alongside the local volunteers for extended periods. Their monetary and non-monetary needs should be addressed, keeping in mind that no disparity creeps in between them and the local volunteers. The skill sets they should bring should be useful in the theosophical, administrative and technical areas. They may work for The Theosophical Society and its allied organisations. The Education work of the Society needs considerable attention and constant upgradation.

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IMPORTANT

ADYAR HEADQUARTERS

Preservation & Safety of Archives

- The rich heritage in the archives and Adyar Library should be carefully preserved using contemporary methods and should also be documented. They should be both preserved in good condition and with adequate security and safety. Only duly authorised persons should handle them, while research scholars can have access after a due process of verification and under supervision.



Those who wish to know more about the author
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PROFILE

Mr Chaganti V.K. Maithreya is a fifth-generation member of The Theosophical Society and is 55 years old. He joined The Theosophical Society in 1968, 45 years ago. He is a graduate in English Language and Literature and has a Post-graduation with Honours in Personnel Management, Organisation Development, Labour Relations, Welfare & Law. He has further qualified in Training & Development. He has worked in industry and has been the owner of a Human Resource Management consulting company with international clients.

At different times, he has been the President of the Vasanta Youth Lodge, Adyar Lodge, Madras Theosophical Federation and Theosophical Order of Service, Chennai Region. He is on the Indian Section Council of the TS and the National Board of the TOS, India. He has been involved with Co-Freemasonry and was the Chief Knight of the Round Table, India and Knight Counsellor on its International Senior Council.

He has been a writer of articles and a speaker on Theosophy who has toured India, the USA, East & Central Africa, Europe, Israel, Singapore, New Zealand & Australia. He has authored the books 'Theosophy, The Theosophical Society & The Founders' and 'The Vision of Sanjaya' [an esoteric interpretation of the Mahabharata].

