

Great Theosophical Days

From *The Theosophical Yearbook 1938*

Pages 21-2

"We shall now have three special festivals for the whole Theosophical Society: February 17, Adyar Day; May 8, Commemoration Day, sacred to those who have passed to the Beyond; November 17, Founders' Day, the day from which our Society dates its life." — ANNIE BESANT, *The Adyar Bulletin*, February 1922.

ADYAR DAY

February 17

ADYAR Day was founded in 1922, Dr. Besant (President) accepting the suggestion that February 17th should be the day on which "the thoughts and love of all our members scattered over the wide world should turn to Adyar." (*The Adyar Bulletin*, February 1922). The President said:

"February 17th brings to us three memories, two of the birth into the higher world that men call death, and one of birth into the lower. On February 17, 1907, our President-Founder left his mortal body, after half a life of faithful, devoted service; he was much criticized, harshly judged, evil-spoken of by many in The Society, but his Master said to him: "Well done, good and faithful

servant, " and gave him the reward he craved— quick rebirth. On February 17, 1600, Giordano Bruno went home, in a chariot of fire, from the Field of Flowers in Rome. On February 17, 1847 [1], Charles W. Leadbeater opened his baby eyes to the dimness which we call light in our physical world. It is a good day to choose, linked with three servants of humanity."

[1] This was the date given during his life and on his passport, though the Church registered birth certificate gives the date as 16 February 1854, 9 months after his parents wedding. This date of birth was given in the English census of 1861, 1871 and 1881. After his mother died, in May 1882, his date of birth was given as 17 February 1847 and it appears in the 1891 census. A mystery. (see CWLworld.info). Either way he is celebrated on the 17 February as intended.—Ed. Note.

Thus on Adyar Day homage is paid to the Society's leaders.

On this day donations are made to the Adyar Fund. The American Section has for some years organized an Adyar Day Fund, and in 1937 generously contributed 2000 dollars.

Dr. Besant has said: "The place of Adyar in the history of The Theosophical Society is unique, and centuries hence it will still be a spiritual centre of The Society."

WHITE LOTUS DAY

May 8

White Lotus Day is the anniversary of H. P. Blavatsky's passing, and the first official reference to it is in "Executive Orders" issued by the President-Founder and published in *The Theosophist*, May 1892 (Supplement, p. ix) as follows:

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The Theosophical Society,
President's Office,
Adyar, April 17th, 1892,

WHITE LOTUS DAY

In her last Will, H. P. Blavatsky expressed the wish that yearly, on the anniversary of her death, some of her friends 'should assemble at the Headquarters of The Theosophical Society and read a chapter of *The Light of Asia* and [extracts from] the *Bhagavad Gita*'; and, since it is meet that her surviving colleagues should keep green the memory of her services to humanity and her devoted love for our Society, the undersigned suggests that the anniversary be known among us as White Lotus Day, and makes the following official order and recommendation:

1. At noon, on May 8th, 1892, and on the same day in each succeeding year, there will be held a commemorative meeting at the Headquarters at which extracts from the before-mentioned works will be read and brief addresses made by the Chairman of the meeting and others who may volunteer.
2. A dole of food will be given in her name to the poor fishermen of Adyar and their families.
- 3 The flag will be half-masted from sunrise until sunset and the Convention Hall decorated with White Lotus flowers.
4. Members living outside Madras can arrange for their food by applying to the Recording Secretary at least one week in advance.
5. The undersigned recommends to all Sections and Branches [i.e., Lodges] throughout the world to meet annually on the anniversary day, and, in some, unsectarian, yet dignified way, avoiding all slavish adulation and empty compliments, express the general feeling of loving regard for her who brought us the chart of the climbing Path which leads to the summits of Knowledge.

H. S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.

Today Theosophists the world over observe White Lotus Day as a Day of Remembrance, not only of H. P. Blavatsky but also of all Theosophist workers who have passed over in the course of the year.

FOUNDATION DAY

November 17

On 17 November 1875 began a great renaissance of Brotherhood and Occultism, for the promotion of which H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott were responsible. It was they who made Theosophy available, and their successors, Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, who made it triumphant.

In September, the direction came to the Founders to form a Society, the building up of which proceeded during September and October. The Preamble and the By-Laws, of which a copy—perhaps the only existing copy—is filed in H.P.B.'s Scrap-book (vol. 1) at Adyar, is dated October 30: The Society was publicly announced on November 17, when the President-Founder delivered his Inaugural Address at the Mott Memorial Hall in the City of New York—the first meeting under the formal declaration of principles.

The Preamble intimates that The Society "is formed neither as a spiritualistic schism, nor to serve as the foe or friend of any sectarian or philosophic body." The work of the Founders is "that which the Spiritualists have neglected, the Materialists have not attempted, and the Theologians have misunderstood and undervalued." "The Theosophical Society has been organized in the interests of religions, science and good morals; to aid each according to its needs."

Chapter II of the By-Laws reads: "The objects of the Society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the Universe." (Compare with the Objects as they are declared today).

The virile confidence with which the President-Founder launched The Society is indicated in this passage from the Inaugural Address: "What is it that makes me not only content but proud to stand for the brief moment as the mouthpiece and figurehead of this movement? It is the fact that in my soul I feel that behind us, behind our little band, behind our feeble, new-born organization, there gathers a MIGHTY POWER that nothing can withstand—the power of TRUTH! Because I feel that we are only the advance-guard, holding the pass until the main body shall come up. Because I

feel that we are enlisted in a holy cause, and that TRUTH, now as always, is mighty and will prevail."

There is a pencil note in the Preamble in the Colonel's handwriting: "The child is born! Hosannah!"

The Theosophical Society was chosen as the cornerstone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity.

Letter 1, Letters From The Masters Of The Wisdom Series 1.