

# Summer School 2017

## Reviews

The theme of this year's summer school was 'Many Paths, One Goal' and true to this All-Embracing, Universal Gnosis, I had the good fortune of attending the same in Rednall, Birmingham. As a fourth time visitor to the United Kingdom in the last decade, this year I visited England with a special intent for it to be a Heritage Summer! Through the quaint bookstore Watkins and then down the road from Baker Street I found my Indian love for Theosophy at 50 Gloucester Place. Many Paths, One Goal has been my very sumptuous, soul reviving one week residence – an inner Adyar! (Adyar – T.S. International Headquarters which I visited in 2007).

To begin to write a review of something as special as a diverse group of people from different parts of a country and even the world, congregating and immersing in communion (of sorts), one can only begin with delight right at the first step. The published programme of lectures, workshops and study groups was like the quintessential Golden Gates, clear enough for a fresh entrant to begin study and perceptibly high and far-reaching to know that one is entering... a place, a realm, a time-space and in reality 'Knowledge.' To speak more practically though, and of course by way of a compliment, it caused me a few moments of heartache to try and choose which option to take in each category! Delight is not easy, especially if it is going to consume you – full and plenty!

The Way of the Sun – Cosmic and Human, The Path of Return – Building a Body Of Light, Cycles Of Eternity, and Chi Kung were the courses I took. These gave me a very good, sweeping, coverage of the Esoteric heart of Theosophy, its historical appearances and unfoldment, the ubiquitous ways in which it surrounds us even in contemporary, current or new world evolution, and also encased me in the rich, high-beam focus of the energy of study and practice. To appreciate Theosophy is to commit oneself to its learning for all of one's life, but that doesn't take away from the immediate appreciation of the devotion present in the visual power of the presentations – some magnificent, some enchanting, some so workable and practically effective with diagrams and worksheets. If it is difficult to process it all, it is equally improbable to find your attention lapse. I love to share here that it is perhaps for the first time in all my academia exposure that I have found multimedia so not to be an excess or extravagance.

The experience extends to all other presentations as well – ones that formed the umbrella to the historical structure or the development of Theosophy, the precious qualities of the Theosophical Movement, or the work of the Theosophical Order of Service, along with the sheer luxury and lush abundance of the Musical Presentation towards the end of the week. The group meditations were such a simple, potent place to both invoke and settle ourselves in all this at the start and end of each working day – one experienced the focusing of our many selves into the one Flame lit, as also our one heart radiating blessings unconditionally in all directions unbound.... perhaps it is a subjective sheer of sentiment that makes me look at it like this but search and belief when they condense make it worthwhile to make such a claim, a claim that gladdens the heart even as it expires!

On a more outgoing note, I took the opportunity to collect as many email Ids as I took pictures and promised to send them across, in the likeness of someone who did point out later that it is such a treasure trove of good socializing as well! It was great to see and

meet many senior age people, so unbelievably buoyant and exuding untainted enthusiasm, the vibrant shine of seasoned and quieter intellects, the happy expectancy of food and the discipline in the vast majority (making an exclusion of myself in clear gratitude), and the quiet, pauseless marshal service by those kept busy organizing it all!

Amongst us, we had writers, poets, artists, a priest and the lovely Hillscourt property – green lawn and a lily pond to reflect in. A walk into a National Trust estate – Whitwick Manor and Gardens was a lyrical ode to beauty, replete with nature, art and family. A group that has put its heads together, made contact in laughter and conversation, travels a good long way to make the journey complete.

### ***G.B. New Delhi, India***

This year's summer school at Birmingham offered interesting speakers and varied activities. But the highlights for me were the yoga and chi gung classes offered by Mike Hall. Mike, a past president of the TS in Scotland, is a playwright, producer and director, lover of classical music and of course a dedicated yoga, tai chi and squash coach. His classes provided the perfect balance to the intellectual side that usually dominates such events. He says:

'My ideal is that people moving towards higher consciousness, on the path of return, will need to build the light body (etheric). Tai chi and chi gung are requisites for attaining this. Based on the understanding that the great masters were aware of the relationship between sacred anatomy and the physical body, they believed enlightenment could be achieved while still in the physical body.'

Mike feels good about what he's doing because it's helping us become lighter while on the ascending path. The exercises, interspersed with some profound pearls of wisdom, certainly left me feeling a good bit lighter than when I arrived! Thanks, Mike. Everyone who attended loved your classes.

### ***P.E.H. Wales***