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CONTENTS

A STEP FORWARD <i>Pradeep H. Gohil</i>	253-254
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, HIERARCHY, AND PERSONALITY <i>Tim Boyd</i>	255-262
THE LIFE AND WORK OF HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY - I <i>Pradeep H. Gohil</i>	263-275
NEWS AND NOTES	276-290

Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

A STEP FORWARD

We have often talked of the three stepping stones to spiritual progress in life- community service, reading theosophical literature and doing regular meditation. Let us try to understand the first step – community service. It is based on the acts performed by someone with a purpose of helping or bringing benefits to his or her community. It is being a blessing to others and letting them know that there are people who care. Performing community service is one way of working towards the first object of the Theosophical Society – ‘Universal Brotherhood of Humanity’. We must help each other because after all we are all one.

The Indian Theosophist is normally read in silence, perhaps even with reverence, mindful of these words of Mother Teresa:

“The fruit of silence is Prayer

The fruit of prayer is Faith

The fruit of faith is Love

The fruit of Love is Service”

The search for individual joy, satisfaction and happiness is a universal goal. True theosophists are men and women who have discovered the great satisfaction and enduring rewards in life that come from serving and helping one’s fellow citizens. The essence of a theosophist’s ideal of service is to help others willingly and without any thought of personal return or benefit. The exciting thing is that many of our own greatest moments of

happiness are found in giving freely of our time, effort and financial resources to benefit other people or for purposes which will last long after our earthy work is completed.

How many times has our life been enriched by merely reaching out in kindness to those in need? How many of our closest friendship have grown when we work side by side in serving others? Isn’t it amazing what a unique feeling of satisfaction comes to us when we respond to a real call for help? Theosophists share a tremendous secret and a universal truth: that real happiness - perhaps the deepest of human longings - may be found most easily by helping others.

I distinctly recall that when I joined the Theosophical Society, it was giving me an opportunity to share my concerns with like-minded people who had the same feeling of working to satisfy the spiritual and material needs of the community. This concern spurred me to action. It is only in the Theosophical Society that one can pool different resources from different people, whether it is time or funds or spiritual insight, to fulfil the needs of the community. It was the basic philosophy of Service above Self and Service through Acquaintance that impressed me the most.

I silently salute everyone who has been a link in the remarkable network of Theosophical Service, cutting across geographical borders, nations and continents. One can consider oneself fortunate to be a part of this network, which can make a person understand both his or her significance and insignificance at once, underlining the need for balancing pride and humility. To serve for the sake of service and not for the pleasure we take in serving, is to take a great step forward, for we then begin to gain that balance, that equilibrium, which enables us to serve.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, HIERARCHY AND PERSONALITY

In theosophical circles we have a high regard for cycles, also for the number “seven”. From this combination of thoughts early in the history of the Theosophical Society (TS), it was determined that every seven years an election for the TS International President would be held. In recent years this caused us some problems when in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, where the TS is registered, it was determined that the seven-year term of office was in conflict with the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act which designated three years as the limit.

As with a number of features of the TS rules, the matter was resolved by the government of Tamil Nadu granting the TS an exception to this rule. The thinking of the government was a combination of factors: (1) the TS is an international organization, making triennial elections unwieldy, (2) the TS and its rules were in existence prior to the Tamil Nadu Act and the state of Tamil Nadu itself, and (3) the high esteem in which the TS is regarded for its role in bringing about the independent nation of India.

In 2014 after the passing of the TS’s longest serving President, Radha Burnier, I was elected as the eighth International President. In my mind I was something of an unlikely choice for the position, having only been at Adyar a total of three times over the previous three years for a grand total of three weeks. My résumé consisted of many years of work solely within the USA — the TS in America, the TOS, and quite locally in Chi-

cago within a spiritual community I participated in founding, back in the 1970s.

Although some of this experience could be generalized and applied at Adyar, I was in over my head. The saving grace for me had little to do with my history, or experiences, and everything to do with attitude and state of mind. I was willing. Whether foolish or naive, I embraced the opportunity for deeper service. My exposure to the wisdom tradition and to profound individuals within the TS who had deeply touched this wisdom left me little choice.

Organizationally the TS has a hierarchical structure. There is a head from whom authority flows downward. This is a form that is consistent with spiritual traditions throughout history. Whether it is the guru, rabbi, imam, Rinpoche, or abbot, the congregation, *sangha*, temple, brotherhood, sisterhood, or order, hierarchy is imbedded in our approach to spirituality. Wherever we find realized people, men or women who demonstrate a closeness to Oneness and the powers that express through such a consciousness, our tendency is to place them on a pedestal and imbibe.

It is a natural and intelligent response to value and respect those who exceed us in wisdom. A distinct problem we encounter in organizations focused on spirituality is that we really do not know what wisdom is. In the Bible it is said that “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”. Genuine wisdom often bears a close resemblance to madness when it appears in our world. The great avatars and prophets of history upended societies and transgressed norms of law and conduct.

The Buddha abandoned his wife and child in search of en-

lightenment. Upon attaining enlightenment his refusal to recognize caste distinctions virtually excluded the Brahmins from access to his teachings. The social order of the time and laws of caste forbade them from even being in the presence of the lowest castes. If so much as the shadow of a member of the “untouchable” caste touched a Brahmin, ritual cleansing was required. Jesus accepted social outcasts as disciples and rejected the religious teachings of his time. Krishna involved himself in a war that brought about the destruction of the Kshatriya (warrior) caste, on occasion giving advice deemed immoral for his time. The spread of Mohammed’s teachings and the growth of his community incited his society to a war against him and his followers.

J. Krishnamurti made the statement: “It is no sign of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.” What seems to be the rejection of social norms by those who are genuinely wise is in reality an expression of the impossibility for wisdom to be confined within the limitations of conventional society. The ocean cannot be contained in a teacup. So we judge its presence by the signs or behaviours that have conditioned our thinking for millennia. How does he speak? Is she well read and knowledgeable in spiritual subjects? Can they quote the scriptures and the great Masters of the past? Does he eat the proper foods? Does she wear the proper robes? Does he seem to have paranormal powers of perception or healing? Is he well regarded and acclaimed by respected members of the community?

All of these are signs which may or may not indicate wisdom. In spiritual traditions around the world knowledgeable or eloquent people are regularly mistaken for wise, to the detriment of others and themselves. Anyone who has embraced a spiritual path for some time has seen their share of manipulative pundits and priests, cruel vegetarians, rogue Rinpoches, self-

absorbed theosophists, selfish devotees, and others who, though exposed to the potent energies of the wisdom tradition, have been thwarted by the inadequate development of the tool of personality. Wherever the direction of an organization and the guidance of its members is vested in an individual, there is the potential for even one flaw of character to affect the whole.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) once made the point that “personality is the curse in the Theosophical Society, as it is everywhere”. This was not intended to mean personality in the popular sense of an individual’s mannerisms, qualities, and characteristics. From the Ageless Wisdom perspective personality has the specific meaning of the organization of the materials of the physical, emotional, and mental, or *mânasic*, fields that define and filter one’s range of response.

HPB refers to personality as a curse, having painfully experienced it repeatedly in her efforts to share some measure of the Ageless Wisdom with the world. Time and again she witnessed how well-intentioned, upright, seemingly well-adjusted people changed when exposed to the heightened flow of power that accompanies even contact with knowledge about spiritual things, let alone actual wisdom.

Like plugging a 110-volt appliance into a 220-volt outlet, unless there is some mechanism to control the electrical flow, the appliance will quickly burn out. The materials that compose it are not capable of conducting current at that level. Like everything else, the limitations imposed by an undeveloped personality are not permanent, but an intelligent and rigorous attention is required to build in materials able to accommodate more potent energies. The maxim emphasized by HPB was: “First deserve, then desire.”

Given the fact that personality is an unavoidable feature of

being human, and that it is the source of all misunderstanding, separatism, and self-centredness, what can be done to mitigate its influence in a spiritual organization? This is a question that all spiritual traditions have had to face. It could even be said that the problematic human personality is the reason for the appearance of every avatar and messiah, and for the establishment of the traditions that grew from their teachings. The starting point for all valid spiritual teachings has been to understand and move beyond the domination of the personal and its unexamined projection into every aspect of human experience. Whether the focus is mindfulness or union with the divine, a grounding in something superior to the personal is the universal direction of spiritual practice.

From an Ageless Wisdom perspective the fundamental idea of hierarchy is that there is an infinite chain of ever expanding consciousness, and that each ascending level exceeds, but also encompasses the former state. So, although more expansive or “higher”, it is inseparable from the preceding condition from which it has grown. No matter how tall the tree, no matter how expansive the view from its heights, it remains deeply rooted in the earth. This understanding gives us a glimpse into the depth of the First Object of the TS: “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood . . .” The level of connection we describe as “Universal Brotherhood” is a fact of Nature. Oneness, or the radical inseparability of consciousness at all levels, is the basis for anything that can be described as spiritual. The nucleus is formed when the fixed and divisive barriers of personality dissolve, even temporarily.

In a sense, the spiritual endeavour succeeds by repurposing the instincts of the personality — self-preservation and self-aggrandizement. The emphasis on cooperation and compassion as avenues to peace and happiness, and access to deepened ca-

capacity gradually draws the attention away from an isolating sense of self to an enlarged experience of connection. We live, move, and participate within a “Greater Whole”, which once experienced eclipses the importance of our engrained limiting behaviour.

What does leadership mean within a hierarchical structure such as the TS, whose focus is the realization of the Unity of all life? The Hermetic axiom says: “As it is Above, so it is Below.” Affinity to the higher benefits all that is beneath. The most efficient service to humanity results from connection to higher orders of consciousness and the energies that can flow unimpeded as a result of that connection. In theosophical tradition great emphasis is placed on selflessness as a condition that enables such connection. Whether it is a guru, God, or a Master of the Wisdom our inability to extend the limiting sphere of self is a barrier to their influence.

This problem is as challenging for the sincere aspirant as for the casual practitioner. One of our great difficulties is that the habits and training of this and previous lifetimes lock us into a way of seeing the world that is separative, isolating, and inherently incorrect. HPB wrote: “The first necessity for obtaining self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance; to feel with every fiber of the heart that one is ceaselessly *self-deceived*.” One function of an organization or group is that it provides a laboratory for the experiment of selflessness.

It is the nature of any group that one is continually in the presence of others whose personality composition differs from one’s own. While we recognize natural harmonies with some, with others we can feel distance, or even aversion. Yet we are drawn together and choose to be together purposefully. The Mission Statement for the TS is: “To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless

Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life.” With this as a motivating direction for our thinking and shared work, our focus is lifted beyond personal preferences, attractions, and aversions. When we lose sight of this, we lose connection and stall in our growth as individuals and as a group.

There is a powerful principle that cuts across spiritual traditions. It has been expressed as “Wherever two or more gather in My name, there I am in the midst of them.” “My name” may be seen differently depending on one’s tradition and training as an ID for a localized activity of consciousness and form. The same name can mean a variety of things to different people depending on their relationship to the “person”. Anyone’s name describes a person who is a neighbour for some, a boss for others, a parent or child, an adversary, and so on. One of the causes of religious tension is absence of a shared name for that which encompasses, yet transcends all name, form, and consciousness. Wars are fought over it. In the higher sense “My name” is not a mere word. It is like a GPS marker on a map of consciousness, leading us to a “location” of heightened activity.

In a hierarchical sense, at any time or place that two or more people can establish a harmonious focus on a greater consciousness, that consciousness becomes available. Our work within the TS is nothing less than this. In this condition, outwardly, great things are achieved. In the outside world the TS is involved in numerous activities — schools, training centres, healing groups, animal welfare work, childcare facilities, anti-stress training, and more. All of these are meaningful, necessary work, but it is the inner condition of a consciously cultivated and deeply felt union with our co-workers that gives life to these efforts.

The power that is accessible to an elevated group consciousness, to the nucleus, exceeds what is possible for the individual, and where the focus is on service to others, or to human-

ity as a whole, the group becomes a conduit for the energies of higher sources. New ideas, new ways of thinking, new solutions to age-old problems reveal themselves and become suddenly practical. Previously unrealized resources and people appear to aid in the work. In the words of Goethe: “A whole stream of events issues . . . raising in one’s favour all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings, and material assistance, which no man can have dreamed would have come his way.”

Whether it is a TS Lodge, or Study Centre, or its International General Council, the most basic requirement is that we learn to think beyond our personal wants and needs. Working together as a group has been the ongoing experiment that mitigates much of the undesired influence of personality. This approach does not guarantee that any decision will be agreeable to all, or even that it is the best course of action in the long run. What it *does* ensure is that the movement toward harmony and the process of forming a nucleus are ongoing.

There is a Tibetan expression that a parrot can live to be 100 years old, but in the end it is still a parrot. Fast forward to April 2021: another cycle of seven years has come and gone and with it my reelection as International President. What has been learned? Seven years ago at the time of my inauguration I commented that the need is to respond to the “ever-calling invitation to *openness*, which is the only way in which we as individuals can be transformed, and the only way in which humanity can experience the regeneration that has been spoken of”. This is territory we will continue exploring together.

(Courtesy : *The Theosophist*, June 2021)

THE LIFE AND WORK OF HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY - I

Helena Petrovna von Hahn was born on 12 August, 1831, at Ekaterinoslav, Russia. Her father, Colonel Peter Alexeyevich von Hahn, was an officer in the Russian army and belonged to a noble family coming from Mecklenburg, Germany. Her mother, Helena Andreyevna de Fadeyev, a renowned novelist, was the daughter of Princess Helena Dolgorukov, a noted botanist and writer and came from one of the oldest Russian aristocratic families.

At the time of her birth, the baby was a feeble little infant, which was not expected to live. In fact, her family decided that it must be baptized at once, called a priest, assembled the whole family in a large room and provided everyone with a burning taper. A little girl in the front row grew very tired and sat down on the floor, with her lighted taper in her hand. Accidently, in the process of renouncing the Evil One and his deeds, the long flowing robes of the priest had caught fire from the little girl's taper and the poor old man was severely burnt. This was considered by the superstitious servants to be a bad omen and a troubled and eventful life was predicted for poor little Helena Hahn.

Contrary to expectations the baby lived and grew up, although for some years her health was delicate. It improved greatly as time went by and at ten years of age she was a good rider. At fifteen she could control any Cossack horse. A Cossack horse is generally considered to have a will and a way of its own, but so had Helena Hahn. She was an exceptional child and at an early

age was aware of being different from those around her. The possession of certain psychic powers puzzled her family and friends. At once impatient of all authority, yet deeply sensitive, she was gifted in many ways. She was daring, very lively, full of humour, with a passionate love for everything unknown and mysterious. She had a craving for independence and freedom of action. She was a clever linguist, a talented pianist and a fine artist who was always in close touch with nature. At a very early age she had sensed that she was in some way dedicated to a life of service and was aware of a special guidance and protection.

She was not even ten when Helena and her younger Sister went to stay with their father for two or three years. They moved about with the soldiers who were commanded by their father. The two of them were chiefly taken care of by their father's orderlies, and Helena, at least greatly preferred them to her female nurses.

Before Helena was eleven, her mother died and she was taken to live with her grandmother, Princess Dolgorukov, at Saratov, where she spent 5 years. It was a home that quickened her love for the mysterious. She was a highly strung, sensitive girl, given to walking in her sleep, sometimes full of mischief and at other times very caring and persistent at her lessons. For her, all nature seemed animated with a mysterious life of its own. She heard the voice of every object and form, she talked with birds and animals and had some means of her own for understanding them. Her power of storytelling was remarkable, for she seemed actually to live in the events she was describing and quite carried her audience away with her.

She made acquaintance of a strange old man and listened with eager interest to all he had to say about the language of the birds and beasts. There was another influence of great importance which ought to be mentioned. At a very early period of her

life, Helena was aware of a Protector, invisible to all but herself, a man of imposing appearance, whose features never changed and whom she met in afterlife as a living man. She knew as though she had been brought up in his presence. This guardianship showed itself in some of the incidents which occurred in her life.

When she was about 14, a horse bolted with her. She fell with her foot entangled in the stirrup and before the horse was stopped she ought to have been killed outright but for a strange sustaining power, which she distinctly felt around her and which seemed to hold her up against gravity.

One day she conceived a wish to inspect closely a picture which hung high on a wall with a curtain in front of it— a wish which was not responded to by her elders. So one day, when there was no one around in the house she dragged a table to the wall, placed another small table above that and a chair on the top. Then she climbed on the chair, leaning with one hand on the dusty wall, she pulled back the curtain with the other hand. The picture startled her and the movement made her fall. She lost consciousness from the time she began to fall. When she recovered her senses, she was lying quite unhurt on the floor, the tables and chair were in their usual places, the curtain was drawn back on the picture and the only sign of her adventure was the mark of her small hand on the dusty wall high up beside the picture.

There was one characteristic of Helena which showed from her youth and remained throughout her life. That was her sympathy for those who were poorer and lower in status than herself. As a child she always preferred to play with the servants' children rather than with her equals. She would try to escape from the house and make friends with ragged street boys. Even later in life, she never cared for her nobility of birth and was always sympathetic towards those who were socially below her.

In 1844 Colonel Hahn took Helena (aged 13) to Paris and to London to give her some good music lessons as she showed great natural abilities as a pianist. She then realized that her knowledge of English was more imperfect than what she had realized as her governess from Yorkshire had taught her to speak with broad o's and a's which made others smile at her. However, before her next visit to England she spoke English quite well.

Mademoiselle Helena Hahn got married in 1848 and became Madame Blavatsky in a strange way. She was once “dared” by her governess to find any man who would be her husband. She accepted the challenge and even though she did not have high regards for an elderly man, General Nikifor V. Blavatsky, Governor of a Russian province, she made him propose to her within 3 days-time. Too late, she discovered that her joking acceptance was really a serious matter and that she would have to face all the consequences. The whole thing was nothing more than a girlish prank—she was only 17 at that time. Her friends tried to impress upon her the solemnity of the step which she was about to take. She then wanted to break off the engagement so rashly made, but this was not allowed and on the appointed day the marriage took place.

In a mood of rebellious independence and possibly with a plan to become free of her surroundings, the young bride resolved to leave her husband within three months. She took a horse and rode away from the country house in which they were spending the orthodox honeymoon. After some counselling from the family, she set out to join her father in Russia. During the journey she feared that her father might insist upon her returning to General Blavatsky, so she asked her escort and a maid at the next sea port to go and find an apartment for her. Then by a liberal outlay of Rubles, she persuaded the captain to sail away

for his next port! It was an adventurous voyage for a girl of eighteen, for at the next port, in order to escape the harbour police, she had to borrow the outfit of the cabin boy and hide in a coal bunker! At Constantinople, however, she had the good fortune to meet a Russian lady of her acquaintance and she travelled with her for some time. She visited Turkey, Egypt, Greece and France. She met an old magician in Cairo and a famous mesmerist in Paris, who discovered her wonderful psychic gifts. All her travel was done on money supplied by her father.

On her 20th birthday, in 1851, she paid her second visit to London. There she met the individual, whom she had known in her psycho-spiritual visions from childhood, unseen to others except herself - a guiding and guarding Presence. She had learnt to think of this Presence as her Guardian and to feel that she was under His protection. One day, when she had gone for a walk she saw a tall Hindu with some Indian princes. To her astonishment she recognized in him the Guardian whom she had already come to revere. Her first impulse was to rush forward and speak to him, but he made her a sign not to move, and she stood as if spellbound while he passed by. The next day she went to Hyde Park for a stroll, thinking that she might be alone and free to think on her extraordinary adventure. Looking up she saw the same dignified Hindu approaching her, this time with the purpose of meeting her and speaking to her.

He explained that he had come to London with the Indian princes on an important mission, and that he was desirous of meeting her in person, as he wished to have her co-operation in a work which he was about to undertake. He then gave her some information as to the work she would be called upon to perform and told her that she would have many troubles and difficulties to face and also that she would have to spend three years in Tibet in order to prepare herself for her work.

But the time for Madame Blavatsky's great work in the world was still far ahead and her intense love of adventure and dislike for any constraint were very strong. Her fancy led her to America in pursuit of North American Indians, about whom she had read in stories. She was introduced to a party of Indians in some Canadian city and immediately started asking them about their customs and the doings of their medicine men. While she was deeply engrossed in this conversation, some of her belongings were stolen by them. Very disappointed in her hopes of the Red Indians she made her way to New Orleans, where the strange magical rites practiced by a sect of West African Negroes, known as Voodoos, excited her curiosity. These rites were very undesirable in character and so she moved on southwards into Mexico. During the Mexican wanderings she resolved to go to India and Tibet to try to meet again that Teacher, whom she now knew physically. She met two other people, one an Englishman and the other a Hindu who also were planning a trip to India. The three of them reached Bombay in 1852 after adventurous travels in various parts of Mexico, South America, via the Cape and Ceylon. She tried to visit Tibet but was compelled to turn back from Nepal. She returned to England via Java in 1853. In the summer of 1854, she went to America again, crossing the Rockies with a caravan of emigrants in a covered wagon reaching San Francisco, where she stayed for some time. She spent about two years in America and then again left for Calcutta, India in 1855, via Japan and the Straits. Her trips were still funded by her father, who was the only person with whom she kept in touch. She then reached Kashmir and with three companions under the guidance of a monk went into Tibet. The other three had to return but the monk and Madam pushed far into the "Forbidden Land". The monk carried a stone talisman and Madam Blavatsky asked him about it. The monk kept a goat's head at the entrance of the tent as warning to the villagers that he was not to be disturbed. It

seemed that he then swallowed the stone. His body became cold and rigid and a deep voice asked what Helena would have. She asked if the questioner can visit three of her friends. One lady in Romania was described as sitting in her garden reading a letter, which was slowly dictated and written down by Madam Blavatsky. Then a misty form of this old lady appeared in the corner of her tent. Months later it was confirmed that on that very day the old lady was indeed sitting in her garden reading a letter from her brother, which was exactly what was written down by Madam Blavatsky. In fact, the old lady had fainted while reading the letter and had dreamt of Helena in a deserted place under a gypsy's tent. She then asked the monk to contact her occultist friend asking for means of return to more civilized parts. A few hours later a party of 25 horsemen rode up and rescued her from the dangerous situation. This incident put an end to her Tibet trip and she was directed by her occult guardian to leave India before the mutiny in 1857.

Her family in Russia had heard nothing of her except some vague rumours. On a Christmas night in 1858, a wedding party was in progress when in the middle of the dinner the doorbell rang impatiently and Madam Blavatsky walked into her house. By then, she was already possessed of occult powers and there were marvelous occurrences in the next few years of her life. Once she was sitting in the drawing room with her relatives, many of whom were sceptical as to her powers. Her brother did not believe in it either. So she declared that she would fix a small chess table to the floor without touching it and no one can then lift it. Everyone gathered eagerly round her while she fixed her eyes, with an intense gaze, upon the little table. She then asked a strong muscular man to lift it. He tried very hard but could not. Her brother now stepped forward and even he could not. Madam Blavatsky laughed and said to him, "try once more". Her brother grasped the table by its leg and gave it a good heave

up and nearly dislocated his arm owing to the useless effort as the table could be lifted like a feather this time!! Her father was also very sceptical until his friends asked him to devise a test. So he went to the next room and wrote a word on paper and put it in his pocket. As he came back a young lady was asked to point her finger on the 26 alphabets one by one. She wrote down the letter under her finger when a rap was heard. There was no rap after 8 letters were written spelling "ZAITCHIK". Everyone thought it was a mistake but Col Hahn examined the word "Zaitchik" and said it was the name of his favourite horse in the Turkish war. "No one could have known about this", he said in utter disbelief of what happened. From that day Col. Hahn was firmly convinced of his daughter's gifts and studied them closely; he sought her aid in completing a history of his family and marvelled at the completeness and accuracy with which she was able to give him, by means of her psychic powers, all the details he wanted. As might be expected, the report of all these strange incidents went abroad and Madam Blavatsky soon came to be regarded as a magician.

Around Christmas of 1858, she became very ill and for days she lay like one apparently dead. She recovered but from that time every happening independent of her will totally stopped. She lived for a short time in 1859 with her sister Vera at Pskov. From 1860 to 1865, she lived and travelled through the Caucasus, experiencing a severe physical and psychic crisis which placed her in complete control over her occult powers. She left Russia again in the fall of 1865 and travelled extensively through the Balkans, Greece, Egypt, Syria, Italy, etc.

In 1868, she went via India to Tibet. On this trip Madam Blavatsky met another Master for the first time and stayed there in his house. In late 1870 she was back in Cyprus and Greece. On way to Egypt a dreadful explosion occurred on her ship and

she was one of the very few on board who were picked out of the water. She managed to reach Cairo, where she suffered many difficulties until money reached her from Russia. In Cairo, she found a certain number of people who were interested in Spiritualism and so started a “Societe Spirite”. She hoped to show them that she herself could produce at will the phenomena which ordinarily they obtained through a medium and thereby to awaken their interest in the deeper side of her teachings. Because of some unsuitable people her efforts failed. She spent a night in the darkness of the King’s Chamber in the Great Pyramid. She also met Madam Coulomb who was then attached to a hotel in Cairo. In July 1872, after further travels through the Middle East, she returned to her family at Odessa, Russia. In the spring of 1873, Helena was instructed by her teacher to go to Paris, and on further direct orders from him, left for New York City where she landed on July 7, 1873. However, an incident had taken place from the port of Havre where she had boarded the ship. She saw a lady with two children weeping bitterly. She found out that her husband had sent money to her from U.S. but she got bogus tickets from a crooked steamship agent who had disappeared. She was penniless in a strange city. Madam Blavatsky went to her agent and exchanged her first class ticket for steerage tickets for the lady, her 2 children and herself. She travelled to U.S. in the crowded discomfort of the steerage of the liner. There were many such incidents in her life showing her sensitivity to people who are in trouble.

H.P. Blavatsky was then 42 years old and in controlled possession of her many and most unusual spiritual powers. In the opinion of the Mahatmas, she was the best available instrument for the work they had in mind, namely to offer to the world a new presentation, though only in brief outline of the age-old Theosophia, ‘The accumulated Wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of Seers...’, that body of Truth of which

religions, great and small, are but as branches of the parent tree. Her task was to challenge on the one hand the entrenched beliefs and dogmas of Christian Theology and on the other the equally dogmatic materialistic view of the science of her day. A crack, however, had recently appeared in to twofold set of mental fortifications. It was caused by spiritualism, then sweeping America. To quote Blavatsky’s own words: “I was sent to prove the phenomena and their reality and to show the fallacy of the spiritualistic theory of sprits”.

In those days (1874) a series of remarkable spiritualistic phenomena were commencing to attract much attention. William and Horatio Eddy were farmers at Chittenden, Vermont State in north east U.S. They were poor and ill-educated, but strong mediums and crowds of visitors came to witness the remarkable materializations which occurred in their presence. Among those visitors was Madam Blavatsky, and, shortly after her, arrived Colonel Henry Steel Olcott – an apparently chance meeting, which was destined to have far reaching effects. Their acquaintance grew into friendship, and Madam Blavatsky began to introduce to him some of the principles of the Eastern Wisdom in which she was versed. She also met William Quan Judge, a young Irish Lawyer, who was to play a unique role in the future theosophical work.

On 7 September, 1875, these three aforementioned leading figures, together with several others, founded a society which they chose to call The Theosophical Society, as promulgating the ancient teachings of Theosophy, or the Wisdom concerning the Divine which had been the spiritual basis of other great movements of the past. Colonel Henry Steel Olcott was appointed its life-President and for 32 years he filled that office with dignity, judgement and tact, winning the love of thousands by the sterling qualities of his heart and the noble work for humanity to which

he set his hand. His inaugural address was delivered in New York on 17 November 1875, the official date of founding of the Society. The original objective was “to collect and diffuse knowledge of the laws which govern the Universe”. This was elaborated with 7 rules and later refined into the three clearly defined objects of the Theosophical Society as they stand today.

Madam Blavatsky had at first tried to create interest in those who were already aware of the phenomena of Spiritualism. Her idea was to break down the materialism of her time. She showed to people the wonders she could perform in the world of marvel and magic. By doing this, she speedily attracted the attention of a large circle of people. This was the objective she had in mind to publicize Theosophy. Later on, when the Society was well established, she devoted herself to her true work as a Spiritual Teacher and refused to yield to the demand for marvels and magic.

The progress of the new Society was very slow at first, indeed after a year’s work, there survived only a good organization, a few members and two friends – Madam Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, who never doubted the existence of their Masters, the excellence of their mission or its final success. The difficulties before them were enormous and so one of the Masters appeared before Col Olcott to encourage him in the work. This incident was immediately shared by him with Madam Blavatsky.

A book called *Isis Unveiled* was commenced in 1875 and published in September 1877 in New York City. It made a powerful impact upon the reading and thinking public. One thousand copies of the first printing were sold within ten days. It outlined the history, scope and development of the Occult Science, the nature and origin of Magic, the roots of Christianity, the errors of Christian Theology and the fallacies of established orthodox science against the backdrop of the secret teachings which run as a golden thread through centuries, coming up to the surface

every now and then in the various mystical movements of the last two thousand years or so. *The New York Herald-Tribune* considered the book as one of the “remarkable productions of the century”. Many other papers and journals showered similar praise for the book. Madam, Blavatsky said about the book, “whenever I write upon a subject I know little of, I address myself to Them and one of Them inspires me”. That tells us who was behind the writing of this book.

On 8 July 1878, H.P. Blavatsky was naturalized as U.S. Citizen, an event which received publicity in various newspapers. In December of the same year, it was decided that the Founders should journey to India via London as the Society was beginning to spread, a branch having been formed in London and a number of Indian members having been enrolled.

Arriving in Bombay in February 1879, they established their Theosophical Headquarters in that city. Soon their rooms were thronged daily with native visitors eager to discuss religious questions with Madam Blavatsky and to hear her explanations of their own ancient Scriptures. The value of theosophy was seen from the fact that it can help equally the followers of various faiths, be it Hindus, Buddhists, Parsees and others who flocked around Madam Blavatsky. Theosophy flows out from the source of all Religions and so each faith is benefited by its coming. The early days in Bombay were not easy for Madam Blavatsky as she made no efforts to be introduced into European Society. The police seeing her with the natives suspected her to be a spy of Russian Government. But those days were made happy for her due to the frequent appearances of the Masters who made her realize more strongly than ever that she and Col. Olcott were not alone in their work, but were being watched and aided at every turn. The two were also contacted soon by Alfred Percy Sinnett, then editor of the government Paper, *The Pioneer*

of Allahabad. This contact soon proved of the utmost importance in the propagation of Theosophy. After a tour of north-western India, the Founders returned to Bombay and started the first Journal *The Theosophist* with H.P. Blavatsky as editor in October 1879.

During the visit which Madam Blavatsky and Col Olcott paid to Alfred Percy and Patience Sinnett at Simla, there occurred many remarkable events recorded in the book *The Occult World* which Mr. Sinnett contributed to the library of Theosophical literature. The serious interest of Sinnett in the teachings and work of the Theosophical Society prompted HPB to establish contact by correspondence between Sinnett and the two Masters who were sponsoring the Society. *The Occult World* (1881) and *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883), both of which had an enormous influence in generating public interest in Theosophy, were based on the said correspondence. The replies and explanations given by the Masters to the questions by Sinnett were published in 1923 as *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. The original letters are preserved in the British Library where they can be viewed by special permission in Rare Manuscript Department.

(To be continued)

NEWS & NOTES

Bihar

National Conference of TS and TOS

A National Conference of T.S. & T.O.S. of Bihar, Bengal, Assam & Utkal Theosophical Federations was organized by Bihar Theosophical Federation & TOS, Bihar Region on 13 & 14 March-2021 on the Indian Section's Cloud HD Video(ZOOM) –Platform[Meeting ID-878 8617 8860 & Pass Code-THEOS1891]. Thanks to Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil Ji for his kind gesture. The theme of the conference was, “EVOLUTION OF SOUL & TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA”. Bro. H. K. Sharan was Chief Guest of the function; Guest of Honor- Bro. P. K. Mahapatra and Special Guest was Bro. K. Shivprasad, National Director, T.O.S., India. The meeting started with Prayers of all religions followed by Universal Prayer by the students of the School run by Chandradeo Theosophical Lodge, Chhapra. Welcome address was delivered by Bro. Chitaranjan Sinha “Kanak”, President of Bihar Theosophical Federation. Bro. Raj Kishore Prasad, Federation Secretary, read out the greetings received.

Bro. H. K. Sharan and Bro. P.K. Mahapatra delivered their talks on the aforementioned theme on the first day of the conference. Colonel B. K. Kailash, Secretary, Sanatan- Noida T.O.S. Group, beautifully explained the Pranic Healing. Short talks on the topic - “Consciousness & Its Expansion” were organized under the Chairmanship of Bro. C. Sinha “Kanak”. Participants were - Sister Nilima Das, Secretary, Assam Theosophical Federation; Bro. Satrajeet Chkravarty from Bengal; (Prof.) A. K. Tiwari, Gopalganj Lodge, Bihar; and Bro. Satyabrata Rath from Utkal Theosophical Federation.

Bro. H. K. Sharan delivered his talk on, “Dhammapad” on the second day. Then, Bro. K. Shivprasad, presented a report on

“Activities of T.O.S. at National Level.” It was followed by Bro. P. K. Mahapatra’s talk on – “Importance of Mahatma Letters”. Short talks on “Love & Service” were organized in the afternoon session. Bro. Raj Kishore Prasad presided over this session and the participants were Bro. Umashankar Shahu from Assam; Sister Jai Sri Das, Assistant Secretary, Bengal Theosophical Federation; Bro. Suresh Prasad Srivastava, Vice-President, Bihar Theosophical Federation and Bro. S. S. Pati from Utkal Theosophical Federation. Participants from Bangla Desh were - Bro. Almasur Rahman, Bro. Nazmuk Hasan Raja, Bro. Abdul Hye and Bro. Prahlad Debanath – all advocates

Vote of thanks was given by Bro. Raj Kishore Prasad, Secretary, Bihar Theosophical Federation & T.O.S. Bihar Region.

Bombay

White Lotus Day was virtually celebrated on 8 May 2021 by Bombay Theosophical Federation along with Blavatsky Lodge. The meeting began with the recitation of Universal Prayers by BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya and the members present. Blavatsky Lodge President Sis. Kashmira Khambatta thanked the members for attending the meeting and read out quotes of Bro. William Q. Judge for his colleague and friend Madame Blavatsky. Significance of the White Lotus Day was explained by Bro. Vinayakji Pandya. Vice-President Bro. Navin Kumar read out passages of the Bhagwad Gita. Sis. Archana Munshi read out passages from *The Light of Asia* in English and Bro. Taral Munshi explained the same in Hindi. Sis. Ruby Khan read out passages of *The Light of Asia*. Hon. Secretary Sis. Jasmine Cawasji read out passages from the *The Voice of the Silence*.

Hon. Treasurer Bro. Arni Narendran took everyone to a blissful meditation. Bro. Taral Munshi recited a poem on ‘The White Lotus Day’. The meeting concluded with Sis. Zeena Rastomjee reciting “The Golden Stairs”.

Kerala

An on-line programme was organized on 26 May to celebrate Buddha Pournima. Dr. M.A. Raveendran, President of KTF, presided. The programme commenced with Universal Prayer.

Sri V.G. Tampi (Poet) was the chief guest. He spoke on the subject ‘Relevance of Buddha in the Present World’. In his speech he pointed out that the relevance of Buddha and his teachings are more important today. The environmental issues we face in the world, violence, atrocities against marginalised people, violence between various religious groups and sects are increasing and the message of Buddha is the solution. He also recited a poem on “*Vaisakh Pournami*.”

Dr. Raveendran spoke on the Importance of Buddha and requested everyone to study *The Masters and The Path* by C.W. Leadbeater. He also explained the Buddhahood mentioned by H.P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* by Swami Subba Rao.

Bro. K. Dinakaran, Secretary K.T.F., spoke on the influence of Buddhism in Malayalam literature. Great poets of Malayalam like Kumaranasan and Nalappatt Narayana Menon translated *The Light of Asia* into Malayalam. *Dhammapadam* was translated into Malayalam by Thelappurath Narayanan Nambi -Editor of *Sanathana Dharma* magazine - which is the official journal of the Kerala Theosophical Federation. Poets like Mallur also translated *Dhammapadam* into Malayalam. Various other literary figures also translated or wrote stories and novels on Buddha during the last century which enriched the Malayalam literature.

The programme concluded with the chanting of *Mahamangala Suktham*.

Federation Secretary Bro. K. Dinakaran gave a talk at an on-line programme arranged by the Indian Section on 23 May 2021 on the subject 'Mysteries of Reincarnation' based on the book *The Key to Theosophy* by H.P. Blavatsky. Bro. Pradeep Mahapatra presided and members from all over the globe attended this programme.

Marathi

Adyar day was celebrated on 17 February 2021. Besides, a special on-line programme by virtual video meetings was organized for the duration of about a month. The programme included a series of lectures of four national lecturers. The lectures were delivered in Marathi language between 11 February and 7 March, 2021. Each lecture was of 40 minutes duration. In all, 16 lectures and a concluding lecture were held. Each lecture was followed by question-answer session. The lectures were attended by the members whose number of attendance ranged from 22 to 48.

The lectures delivered in the aforementioned programme were on 'Selfless service, Solutions to human problems, *'Satyannasti Parodharma'*, and 'Social Service' by Bro. N.N. Raut; *'Atmonnati'* (soul grows incarnation after incarnation) by Bro. C.A. Shinde; 'Theosophy, Use of theosophical study, Man's condition at death, reincarnation' by Bro. A.P. Lokhande; 'Guidance of Mahatma, *'Yogsadhana'*, 'J.Krishnamurti and Theosophy, Theosophy in life' by Bro. B.D. Tendulkar. Besides, a group discussion was held on 7 March.

White Lotus Day:

A meeting was called on-line in memory of Madam Blavatsky on 8 May 2021. Bro. Sanjay Potey welcomed everyone present in the meeting. The universal prayer was recited. Bro. B.D. Tendulkar, National Lecturer, explained the importance of the day and the programme. Bro. Abhyankar read out

abstracts from *Bhagwatgita* as well as *The Light of Asia*. Bro. Palkrut gave vote of thanks.

On the eve of White Lotus Day, the event was organized constituting i) Lectures by the members of different Lodges of the Federation; ii) Study class; iii) Lectures of the youngsters (age 10 to 19 years) on the subjects concerning theosophical teachings as well as skills of the children below 10 years and iv) T.O.S. activity.

The entire event was conducted by virtual video conferencing/meetings. These were held on holidays and on the days excluding working days between 1 and 26 May and were organized in two sessions (morning and evening) per day on selected days of the event.

So far as the lectures of members of the Lodge are concerned, each member was allotted about one hour for delivering his/her lecture which was then followed by brief discussion of the audience with the speaker. In the event, 33 lectures were presented by 14 brothers and 6 sisters. Nine out of these 20 speakers presented their views before public for the first time on theosophy related topics. Number of persons who attended the video conferences/meetings varied from 28 to 82.

An on-line study class was conducted by Bro. B.D. Tendulkar on *Yogshastra* i.e. Science of Yoga. The class was conducted in the afternoon session for two hours on three consecutive days. The number of participants attending the class ranged from 20 to 38. The study class was followed by question-answer session.

Efforts were made to search and bring forward the youngsters, boys and girls, of the age between 10 to 19 years to study theosophical teachings and speak in virtual video conference/meeting on any relevant subject. The youngsters prepared their

own subjects and presented them in short span of time (duration of 15 minutes was allotted to each participant). The programme was conducted on 26 May. Bro. Milind Joshi and Sis. Prof. Pravina Shah conducted the programme. Certificate of participation were sent to the participants by on-line.

The young participants were Bro. Ved Vaidya who spoke on 'Reincarnation and Karma' and Sis. Sharayu Wagdeoi spoke on 'Bhagwatgita and Bhakti'. Both these speakers were from Nagpur.

The subject of Sis. Kasturi Dharashivkar of Akola was 'Dr. Annie Besant'. The two speakers of Pune, Sis. Urvi Palkrut and Bro. A.V. Shinde spoke on 'Brotherhood and Theosophy' and 'At the Feet of the Master' respectively.

Bro. A.S. Shinde of Bangalore also expressed his views on 'At the Feet of the Master'. The subject of Sis. S. A. Tidke from Washim was 'Childhood of Krishnmurti' and Bro. Amit Palkhade from Akot spoke on 'Spirituality and Life'.

There were three speakers from Amravati namely, Bro. K.A. Wankhade, Bro. S.M. Wankhade, and Bro. Kajale and the subjects they spoke on were 'Right living and thinking', 'Memories of Adyar visit' and 'Theosophy' respectively.

Besides, some more youngsters also showed interest in presenting their views on different aspects of spirituality and theosophy. They presented their views on 26 May. They were: Sis. Yuna S. Agnihotri of Chennai; Sis. Arya Shinde from Bangalore; Sis. Anandi Mirajkar and Bro. Shaurya Mirajkar from Muscat. They expressed their views on 'Chanting of Gayatri Mantra', 'Hindu kids and Development' and 'Importance of Mantra'.

A special programme was organized on the day of Baisakh Poornima in which the importance of this day was narrated by Prof. Mirajkar and the meditation class of 30 minutes was con-

ducted by Prof. Shinde. In all, 48 persons attended the meditation session.

T.O.S.- Maharashtra paid annual dues of 5 college students for becoming member of Akola Lodge T.S. One of these students, Miss. Drusthi Singh has topped the list of Amravati University in her subject of graduation. On 16 May, TOS-Maharashtra and the Federation jointly felicitated the student for her brilliant academic performance. The felicitation programme was conducted on-line by virtual meeting and Miss. Drusthi was awarded with a certificate, memento and set of books on theosophy by the hands of Prof. Sonone. In her talk, she emphasized the need of social work. Bro. Sanjay Potey, President, TOS-Maharashtra, presented report on TOS-activities in the region and emphasized on helping others. In all, 53 persons attended the programme.

U.P. & Uttarakhand

Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, held on-line meetings on 05, 12, 19 and 26 May, 2021, when talks were delivered on the topics 'OM and its practical significance', 'Birth-Death-Birth', 'Gita-Ch. I', and 'Paigambar Khalil Gibran'. The speakers were Bro. U. S. Pandey, Bro. Ashok Gupta, Sis. Kusum Singh and Sis. Vasumati Agnihotri respectively.

Nirvan Lodge, Agra, held on-line meetings on 06, 13, 20 and 27 May, when talks were delivered on 'Ashtanga Yoga' by Bro. R.P. Sharma, 'Self-Force' by Dr. Partibha Sharma, 'Fear', by Bro. C.R. Rawat and 'Vishad Yoga in Ch. 1 of the Bhagavad Gita' by Smt. Kusum Singh. A seminar on "Life and Works of H. P. Blavatsy" was organized on the occasion of White Lotus Day on 08 May, 2021.

Bharat Samaj Pooja was performed on 09 May by Bro. Gyaneesh Kumar Chaturvedi.

Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, organized on-line meetings on 02, 15, and 23 May when talks were delivered on the topics ‘Three Great Truths and Three Fundamental Propositions- a comparative study’, ‘Allegorical Study of How to expel Minotaur from Personal Labyrinth’, and ‘Comparative study of different Eastern philosophies and Theosophical Approach’. These talks were given by Bro. N. C. Krishna, jointly by Bro. Issac Hauli & Dr. Enrique Reis, and by Sis. Vasumati Agnihotri respectively.

An informal on-line get together of ‘Anand Festival’ was organized on 30 May 2021 in which about 130 persons participated. The function started with a message from International President Bro. Tim Boyd.. Thereafter some of the participants presented poems, songs, music etc. The festival concluded with Healing Meditation.

The members of Sarvahitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, joined in the meeting organized by Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, on 2 May 2021. Besides, they joined in the two meetings organized by Indraprastha Lodge, Delhi, on 09 and 16 May. The Lodge held its on-line meetings on 23 and 30 May when talks were delivered on the topics ‘Corona and stress management’ and ‘Service for Sacrifice’ by Bro. Ajai Rai and Bro. L.S. Shukla respectively.

The following meetings were organized by Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad: Sis. Swati Reddy delivered a talk on the topic ‘Yoga and Spirituality’ on 2 May 2021. Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted study of the book *Masters and the Path* (Chapters 3-The Way to the Master, and 4- Probation). This study was conducted on 9, 16 and 23 May 2021.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted on-line study class for children and youth on ‘Good habits in daily life’ and ‘Importance of Thought Power’. It was held on every Sunday morning at 07.30 am.

During the on-line meeting at Noida Lodge held on 02 May, study of the book *The Voice of the Silence* was continued by Sis. Lalita Khatri. Besides, a talk on the topic ‘The Number Seven’ was delivered by Bro. U. S. Pandey on 16 May.

Members of Chohan Lodge, Kanpur, participated in a joint Lodge meeting organized by Indraprastha Lodge of Delhi Federation on 02.05.21.

In the on-line meeting of Chohan Lodge held on 9 May 2021, a talk was delivered on ‘Inner Voice’ by Bro. S. K. Pandey. Bro. S. S. Gautam gave three talks on ‘Viveka’ and Vairagya’. These were held on 16, 23 and 30 May.

Some members practiced ‘Healing Meditation’ daily from 10th May, 2021.

Contribution in other Federations:

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Delhi, Sis. Suvralina Mohanty delivered a talk on the topic ‘Science of Yoga and Daily Life’. It was held on 23 May.

Sis. Vibha Saxena conducted the study of Mahatma Letter 48 on 14.5.21.

Contribution in the events of other Forums:

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty read out and summarised the ‘Introduction’ and ‘Reincarnation’ portion from the book *The Theosophic Life* in a meeting of Young Indian Theosophists Group. This programme was held on 23 May.

Many members of the Federation participated in the events related to White Lotus Day programme organized by the Indian Section on 06, 07 and 08 May, 2021.

National Lecturers

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Delhi, Bro. U. S.

Pandey delivered a talk on the theme 'Idol Worship and Animated Statues' on 02.05 2021.

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered a talk on the theme 'Allegory behind Churning of Ocean for Elixir of Life'. It was held on 22 May.

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Delhi, Bro. S. K. Pandey delivered a talk on 29 May. The subject of his talk was 'Search for Guru'.

On invitation by Madras Federation, Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered a talk on the theme "Theosophising our life". This was held on 2 May 2021.

Bro. S. K. Pandey delivered a talk on 'Visakh Full Moon Day Festival' on the occasion of Vaisakh Poornima. He mentioned in his talk about many important events in Gautama Buddha's earthly life—his birth, his attainment of enlightenment, and his departure from the physical body. Buddha had promised to appear once in a year to outpour upon the world a flood of his blessings. Bro. Pandey described the ceremony performed by the White Brotherhood in Northern Himalayan range on this occasion, as mentioned in the book *Masters and the Path* by Bro. C. W. Leadbeater. Besides, Bro. Pandey also recited *Mahamangal Sutta* in Pali language and explained its meaning.

On invitation by the President of the Theosophical Society in Russia, Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered a brief talk on "Homage to H.P. Blavatsky" during an on-line programme held on the occasion of White Lotus Day. His talk in English was simultaneously translated into Russian language by the host.

International Seminar on *The Secret Doctrine*: Bro. U. S. Pandey joined as a panelist in an international seminar organized on-line by 'Adamant' Lodge, Moscow, of the Theosophi-

cal society in Russia, on 29 May. The theme was "Sloka 6, of Stanza I of the Secret Doctrine-Cosmogogenesis". As desired by the host, Bro. Pandey made brief supplementary comments on the presentations of five speakers.

Several members from countries like Russia, Great Britain, Greece, South Korea, Philippines, Australia, Portugal, Brazil and India participated in this seminar.

Gone to Peace

Sis. Havovi Rustom Cooper, a member of Blavatsky Lodge, passed away on 12 April 2021. She and her husband Rustom learnt about Theosophy when they used to attend Dr. Darius H. Umrigar's classes at Blavatsky Lodge. Both became members of Blavatsky Lodge. During membership of Nine years, she accompanied her husband Rustom, Managing Committee's Member of Blavatsky Lodge, for meetings, Red-Letter Days and Support Conventions. Sis. Havovi greeting everyone with a smile will be fondly remembered by Brethren.

Sis. Kety Marolia, a member of Shanti Lodge, passed to peace on 20 April 2021. Hers was a dedicated membership of 45 years. She was active when Shanti Lodge was at Dalal Estate. Due to age & health she could not attend the meetings of the Lodge at Vijay Niwas, Sleater Road, but was very particular to receive her issues of *The Indian Theosophist* and *BTF Bulletin*.

Sis. Pratima Bhattacharyya (Dip. No.59562), wife of respected Bro. Birendra Lal Bhattacharyya, passed to peace on 28 May. She was attached to Bharadwaja Lodge, Bengal Federation. A very pious, kind hearted noble lady with all humane qualities was loved by all. She used to attend all the functions of TS and perform the Hindu Prayer nicely

Bro. Amal Krishna Mandal, (Dip No 86044) of Bharadwaja Lodge passed away on 25.02.21. He was the Secretary of the Bharadwaja Lodge & Treasurer of the Bengal Theosophical Federation.

Bro. Gangaram Hazra (Dip. No.94472), of Bharadwaja Lodge passed to peace on 25 May. He was the Regional Secretary of the TOS, West Bengal.

Sis. Amita Shah of Mayfair Lodge,(Bengal), Dip. No.62830, left for her heavenly abode on 27 April.

The following members of U.P. & Uttrakhand Federation passed to peace:

Shri Braj Bihari Lal (Dip. 94569) of Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, passed to peace on 12.05.2021. Shri Lal was one of the Founding members of Dharma Lodge at Lucknow. He was Secretary and then Vice-President of Dharma Lodge for a number of years.

The others who passed away were: Shri R. S. Tandon (Dip. 59753) of Mirazapur lodge on 27.04.2021. Shri Vinod Kumar Jain (Dip.96961) of Agra lodge on 29.04.2021. Shri C. B. Mishra (Dip. 69557) of Barabanki on 30.04.2021. Shri U. C. Verma (Dip. 103078) of Agra lodge on 04.05.2021. Shri K.K.C. Vishwapremi (Dip. 91385) of Gorakhpur lodge on 30.05.21

May their souls be blessed with Eternal Peace.

APPROVED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, RULES & REGULATIONS OF INDIAN SECTION, THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, VARANASI

(In the meeting of the Indian Section Council held on 18-12-2020 and approved by the International President Bro. Tim Boyd on 29 May 2021.)

Sr. No.	Page No., Article- Rule	Approved Words
1.	21,II-22-b(iii)	Secretary Vice-President
2.	23,II-28	The business of the Council shall be transacted either in meeting or by circulation to members. The meeting may be in person or through recorded video conference. In both all cases, a majority is...
3.	24,II-37-(a)	Assistant Secretary Secretary
4.	34,IV-5	October September
5.	34,IV-5(c)	Married Couple Dues per year (HHQ Rs 33, Ind Sec Rs 96, Fed Rs 96,)- Rs 225 This category be deleted

6. 34,IV-5-g(iii) ~~Long term (15 years for members) Rs 300~~
This category be deleted

7. 34, IV-5-g(iv) ~~Long term (15 years of non-members) Rs 500~~
This category be deleted

8. 34,IV-7
Members whose annual dues for the next year have not been received by the Section in advance by 30th September shall be deemed to be in arrears and not in good standing from one year after the following 1st October, till their dues are paid.
Members not in good standing will have no right to vote in any Lodge, Federation, Section or International National election of T.S.

9. 36,IV -15
If a Lodge member loses his Lodge membership by failing to pay his Lodge dues according to the Rules of the Lodge but has paid his dues to the Section, the ~~Secretary~~ **Member** of the Lodge shall at once notify the President, giving ~~the~~ **his** name, address ~~of the member and reason for his non-payment of Lodge dues.~~ There upon the President shall ~~register~~ **decide whether to accept** the said member as an Unattached member, and collect his dues as an unattached member.

41,VI-4-(c) **Admission to membership, whether attached to a Lodge or Centre, or unattached, shall be at the discretion of the President and he shall refer to the Executive Committee of the Indian Section such applications as are not acceptable to him, for its decision.**

41,VI-4-(d) **There will be no provision for life membership in the Lodge. Any life member of the Lodge may collect what he had paid as Lodge life membership from the Lodge Secretary after showing the Lodge Life Membership Certificate or Receipt.**

**Great is philosophy which moulds the minds of men,
great is science which gives light of knowledge to
the world: but greater than all is religion which
teaches man his duty, which inspires man with
strength to accomplish it; greatest of all is that
knowledge of the human soul which makes daily
service the path of progress and finds in the lowest
work the steps that lead to the highest achieve-
ment.**

ANNIE BESANT

The Universal Law of Life

September 1893, TPH, Adyar, pp. 9-10