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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

Cover Picture by Archives, Adyar : **HPB and H.S. Olcott during
their last meeting**
(Courtesy: *The Theosophist*, November 2000)

A STEP FORWARD

The subject of how to prepare for death is one of great interest to all of us, not only because we all must certainly die one day, but far more because all the people around us also will die some day. If one can somehow prepare them for death, it will be a great favour done to them. An effort has been made here to discuss the subject of how to prepare for death for the busy men and women of the work-a-day world. This is based on my limited knowledge gained from the theosophical literature. The objective is to make plain some of the great truths that render life easier to bear and death easier to face or accept.

In a nutshell one can prepare for death in the following way:

The first thing we must realize about death is that it is inevitable and a perfectly natural incident in the course of our life. Even Dhirubhai Ambani could not escape it. Our acceptance of death is required not just at the intellectual level but at heart.

Secondly, we must never fear death. This should really be obvious to us immediately, because if we believe at all in a God who is a loving Father, then we should know that a fate like death which comes to all alike, cannot be evil, and that whether we are in this world or the next, we must be equally safe in His hands. This consideration alone should have shown us that death is not something to be dreaded, but simply a necessary step in our evolution. Death is no darksome king of terrors, no skeleton with a knife to cut short the thread of life, but rather an angel bearing a golden key, with which it unlocks for us the door into a fuller and higher life than this. There is no heaven or hell awaiting us. We ourselves are the spark of the divine being.

Thirdly, believe that there is life after death and there are great truths behind this which can be discovered by any man

who is willing to devote the necessary time and patience to their unfolding. There is vast literature to be studied or the man who prefers may make investigations for himself at first hand.

Fourthly, it is not found that any sudden change takes place in man at death, or that he is spirited away to some heaven beyond the stars. On the contrary, man remains after death exactly what he was before it - the same in intellect, the same in his qualities and powers; and the conditions in which he finds himself are those which his own thoughts and desires have already created for him. There is no reward or punishment from outside, but only the actual result of what the man himself has done and said and thought while here on earth. In fact, the man makes his own bed during his earthly life and afterwards he has to lie on it. That is why it is so necessary to prepare for death.

Fifthly, not to commit sins which injure others, as they are definitely and obviously wrong but not to even have jealousy, hatred or ambition even though they do not show these feelings in deed or in speech. A glimpse of the after-world shows us exactly how such feelings injure the man who harbours them, and how they would cause him suffering of the most acute character after his death.

Sixthly, consciously and gradually try to reduce attachment to the body, feelings and thoughts. Remember, everything we see or feel in this world is impermanent. It is of the nature of arising and passing away one needs to be an observer of what is happening instead of reacting.

Seventhly, learn how not to identify one's self with one's body, mind, intellect, feelings - our egoself. This creates the biggest fear of death. The fear can be done away with if we have concern and care for others as much as we do for ourselves and our near and dear ones. One needs to bring into practice of giving to others rather than expecting or demanding all the time. This is very powerful in dissolving ego and thus removing fear. Although, the body perishes at death, Life survives. We are each a spark of the Divine Life that survives the dissolution of the gross body. Life is a conscious existence, unbroken by death,

and the soul that escapes from earthly life returns to its home in the spiritual realm. Our earthly life is but a means to spiritualize the material life before we pass on to life after death.

Eighthly, we must become one-pointed, and the work of helping others must be ever the first and highest duty for us.

Ninthly, we must practice perfect self-control — try to be above anger, fear and nervousness. We must never allow our emotions to interfere with our work in the slightest degree.

Tenthly, always try to be calm, serene and joyous.

Eleventh, acquire as much knowledge as possible about “who I am”, “death” and how one’s consciousness pass from one stage to other.

Twelfth, be perfectly unselfish as you are a part of every other person. Be above the foolishness of wounded feelings and think not of yourself but the work you have to do, be it humble or great.

Thirteenth, have a heart filled with love for all — not sentimentalism but an intense desire to serve.

Fourteenth, perform regular meditation, preferable early in the morning at a specified time.

Fifteenth, read theosophical books like *‘Death and After’* by Annie Besant, *‘The Other Side of Death’*, *‘The Devachanic Plane’*, *‘Invisible Helpers’* *‘Life After Death’* by Bishop Leadbeater and so on.

Sixteenth, every night sleep with these points in mind. You may not be conscious of the result; you may not remember anything in the morning but be well assured that your effort will not be fruitless. This will be the best preparation for death.

The practice of these few steps will not only make the remaining life happier, rather one will accept death as a natural phenomenon. This may seem difficult but if taken seriously, certainly achievable and will be a great step forward in our present life.

TIM BOYD

THE PRACTICE OF INSPIRATION—I

There is a familiar expression that we hear across cultures: “Practice makes perfect.” The “theory” behind it is that repetition tends to ingrain behaviours, and if we repeat something sufficiently that behaviour becomes perfected. However, at least based on my personal experience, the idea is more nuanced than the simple expression implies.

Long ago, when my basketball-playing days ended, I had to switch sports and found myself playing tennis during one summer. Soon I realized that I could serve the ball very fast. So I practiced it, over and over. By the time the summer was ending my serve was getting weaker and my shoulder was hurting. Too late I discovered that my method of practice was not using proper mechanics, resulting in a damaged shoulder.

When I moved to Chicago from New York City I had the opportunity to meet some long-time, profound, spiritual students. One man in particular was renowned for his knowledge of metaphysics. There came a time in his life when he ran into some difficulties. We invited him to come and live with us in our spiritual community. We felt it would be beneficial for him as well as for us young people to be able to imbibe a lifetime of wisdom and practice.

He was almost encyclopedic in his knowledge of various texts and spiritual matters. At that time every morning we had a group meditation. Shortly we came to find out that this gentleman had no grounding in meditation. Even though all of his life he had been involved in study, his concept of meditation was nothing more than the repetition of affirmations. The whole pro-

cess and practice of quieting the mind eluded him during a lifetime of practice; he was eighty years old. This opened my eyes that practice, in and of itself, does not make perfect; proper practice does.

The key for us is not the mere repetition of behaviours or ideas, but the proper choice and attention to those things. When we practice we are creating habits. It is a repetition of the body, emotions, and mind that creates a certain habit. The difference between our ordinary living and focused practice is awareness and attention. The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, we are *always* practicing.

During the course of each day we are rehearsing patterns of behaviour; whether or not they are productive to our unfoldment is another issue. Often we are practicing our best methods to express our anger. Almost everyone who watches the nightly news has moments when they are practicing awakening feelings of fear and anxiety. All of these are repetitive behaviours that we engage in unconsciously. It is the unconscious aspect that separates it from a viable approach to unfoldment.

Habit is overcome by habit. This is what we engage in when creating new or different habits. If we are honest, *any* habit, whether we call it good or bad, ultimately limits or restricts the consciousness. This is a paradox because although habit is limiting, also it is an avenue to freedom.

For instance, anyone who has been involved in learning to play a sport, music, cooking, or learning how to drive knows that it is an exercise in intense concentration. When I was trying to teach my daughter to drive there were moments when she would be gripping the steering wheel and even perspiring from having to concentrate on so many different things at the same time.

The concentration required is greatest in the beginning, as we are learning to develop a skill. Once we have reached a point where that skill is engrained, it becomes completely unconscious. Any experienced driver can listen to the radio, have a conversation, watch the traffic, eat a sandwich, and still drive. So, concentration, the restriction of our attention, develops a capacity that leads to a greater freedom. Whenever our focus becomes the cultivation and unfoldment of consciousness this process becomes more pronounced.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) very frequently referred us to the Hermetic Axiom which says: “As above, so below; as without, so within.” We learn from observing and from the analogies of outer to inner processes.

An analogy with magnetism is familiar to most of us from science experiments in early years of school. Magnetism is a force that can be described scientifically, even though it is not completely understood. A magnet has the capacity to attract to itself “ferromagnetic” metals, which are strongly attracted by a magnetic force. This is so much so, that if a magnet were to touch a nail or an ordinary piece of iron, the nail would become magnetized and would attract metals as long as it is in contact with the magnet. Remove it from contact with the magnet, and its magnetism goes away.

This material example illustrates a process of the inner life — the process of inspiration and being inspired. To the extent that we are in contact with some magnetic or higher source, we also become similarly charged. When removed from the presence of that source, that inspiration fades. The analogy is also relevant when we consider what might be meant by a “practice of inspiration”. In those same childhood science experiments we find that not only does contact with a magnet temporarily convey magnetic properties, but that a nail, or other suitable

ferromagnetic piece of metal, can become *permanently* magnetized.

If a magnet is repeatedly drawn in one direction along the length of the nail, the materials in the nail are realigned, making the nail a magnet in its own right. Although nothing new is added, the act of regularly exposing ourselves to “higher” forces brings the materials of our personalities into an altered alignment.

There is a foundational principle underlying this whole subject of practice. It is that consciousness is universal. All matter, at whatever level, is conscious and capable of responsiveness. According to the degree that attention is focused on this matter, currents of energy are generated that affect the structure and composition of the material object, whether it is physical, emotional, or mental matter.

Nowadays we are quite aware of this. Not so long ago people like HPB, Annie Besant, and others would make pronouncements about the effects of such things as meditation, regular exposure of the mind and emotions to higher levels of activity, saying that regularity of intelligent practice results in unfolding of dormant capacities. The science of their day was not yet able to demonstrate these things experimentally.

In our time so many studies have been done about the effects of meditation practice. It has been studied in a variety of ways, largely through brain imaging, and has been found to have a dramatic effect on the brain. For example, over a very short period of regular meditation practice the physical structure of the brain is altered. The synapses, the web of linkages between the neurons in the brain, increase. With long-term meditators, specific areas of brain matter become denser and more enriched, particularly those related to open thought and compassionate response.

It has also been observed that a physical structure within the brain called the amygdala shrinks as a result of long-term meditation practice. The amygdala is a structure of the ancient, “reptilian”, brain involved in the expression of conditioned fears and anxiety, and the “fight or flight” syndrome we engage in when we are fearful.

Our response to stressors is altered. All of these and more are demonstrable outcomes of meditation practice. So in many ways the practice we engage in has very definite results in terms of physical brain structure and our capacity for higher emotions and other aspects such as healing. All this has been observed.

Before considering the Practice of Inspiration we should start with asking ourselves: “What is inspiration?” The root of the word means “breathing into”. *Spiritus* is breath; it also means spirit. So inspiration is the process of being filled with a life force. Everyone has had the experience of being inspired, so it is not difficult for us to draw on our own memories and experiences. Depending on our temperament our moments of inspiration are associated with our contact with a person, an idea, or an encounter with beauty, art, or poetry.

The avenue through which this light shines into our world is what we then experience. It has a twofold aspect. In the presence, in the moment of the experience, we would describe ourselves as being inspired *by* something, by the poetry, by the words of the Dalai Lama, or by a variety of inputs that create this moment of inspiration. So we are inspired *by*. One of the effects of this condition of inspiration is that we are also inspired *to* express it, to transmit it, to actualize it in our own lives. So it has this sort of twofold aspect.

In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, in writing about the advance of a popular understanding of the Ageless Wisdom,

it is said that “science will be our greatest ally”. Recently, in some outlying corners of the scientific community, there is work being done on the nature of inspiration from a scientific point of view. In order to describe what qualities are related to inspiration, in one particular scientific study they developed a three-fold way of analyzing the practice of inspiration.

The first aspect these scientists talk about is that the inspirational experience is “evocative”. It is not something we call down at will, or that is controlled by the one who experiences it. This is what we find is true for the times that we have actually been inspired. We can say in hindsight that “this is what occurred in the presence of that person”, or “because I was reading that poem”, but we cannot invite it at will.

At different times I have been in the presence of people of power, people with an ongoing connection to some spiritual source. It always has been fascinating to me how strange things happen in the presence of these people. For us, normal, undeveloped people, we may meet someone, greet them, say a few words, and then they walk away pretty much unchanged. But on a number of occasions I have seen things that shed light on the transmission and source point of inspiration.

(To be continued)

(Courtesy: The Theosophist July 2021)

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

THE LIFE AND WORK OF HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY - II

In May, 1882, a large estate was bought in southern India at Adyar, Madras (Chennai), and the Theosophical Headquarters were moved there at the end of the year. This Centre soon became the radiating point for a worldwide activity. Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott engaged in trips to many places in India, establishing branches wherever they went and arousing public interest in their work. Everywhere they sought to inspire the true spirit of patriotism among the natives, by explaining to them the beauty and dignity of their own religions and the spiritual worth of their ancient Scriptures. It was during these long and fatiguing tours with Madame Blavatsky that Col. Olcott engaged in widespread mesmeric healings for which he became famous throughout India. The end of 1882 was marked by the grave illness of Madam Blavatsky at Mumbai. The strain of constant labour, travelling and misrepresentation, and her natural excitability of temperament combined to bring about a collapse. She was directed to go north via Darjeeling to meet her occult Guardians, and although she only spent two or three days with them she returned practically well again.

In February 1884, Madam Blavatsky went to Europe. She went to Naples first and then to Paris, where she met many Theosophists from all parts of Europe and America and also some of her own Russian relatives. Countess Wachtmeister, who met her then for the first time, gives some very interesting descriptions of those days, when many celebrated men and women gathered round her to listen to and join in her conversation, and

perchance to witness some of the remarkable phenomena which occurred in her presence. She crossed to London in summer of 1884 and attracted a great deal of attention to herself and the movement she served.

After staying almost for five months in Naples, Paris and London, she visited Germany during late summer and was busily engaged in writing her second work, *The Secret Doctrine*. Meanwhile, a vicious attack on her by Alexis and Emma Coulomb, whom she had first met in Egypt, and whom she had helped by employing them as stewards in her house at a time when they were penniless, was rapidly building up. She returned to Adyar on 21st December 1884 to learn the details of the situation. She wished to sue the couple, already dismissed from Adyar for their gross libel on her concerning the supposed fraudulent production of psychic phenomena. Overruled by a committee of leading T.S. members and in disgust she resigned as corresponding Secretary of the Society. On 31st March, 1885, she left for Europe, never to return to Indian soil.

The Coulomb attack, as was later proved, had no solid foundation whatsoever. HPB had at once denied that the letters had ever been written by her. One of the first acts of Dr. Annie Besant after her election as new President of the Theosophical Society was to publish a full and complete defence of HPB. The entire case was based on forged letters, purporting to have been written by HPB. A Christian missionary magazine in Madras published the most incriminating portions of these letters. A lot of mischief had been done by the Coulombs as house-keepers when they had the charge of the establishment. It took a long time before a full and correct account of these occurrences was obtained and in the meantime a great blow had been dealt on the Theosophical Movement, which was almost crushed. On HPB fell the brunt of the storm and the suffering. Only a few of her friends in the West were faithful to her, but in the East, particu-

larly in India, the majority of the members stood by her. But her health had again deteriorated.

Out of misfortunes, however, some good speedily began to come. HPB felt that by her writings she might justify herself and draw the Movement together. She was right, for her writings from that time to her death are those by which her memory will live and the Society will grow. Having left India for Europe, she settled first in Italy and then in August 1885 at Wurzburg, Germany, where she worked on *The Secret Doctrine*. Countess Wachtmeister went to live with HPB at Wurzburg, in 1885 upon learning that she was in need of care and companionship. The routine of HPB's life was mentally very exhausting. By seven in the morning HPB was at her desk writing, with only a pause for breakfast, until 1 pm, when sometimes she would stop for lunch. At other times her door would remain closed for hours longer, to the despair of the maid who bemoaned the spoiled food. At 7 pm, writing was laid aside and the rest of the evening was spent pleasantly with the countess until 9 pm, when HPB went to bed with a bunch of Russian newspapers which she read till late night.

The writing of the Secret Doctrine was long and hard labour requiring the greatest possible freedom from distractions. As in the book she wrote *Isis Unveiled*, HPB was constantly helped in this work by the Masters, who dictated to her, wrote for her occasionally, or showed her ancient events and scenes, descriptions of which were required. Quotations and references were made to books which HPB did not simply have at hand. The book has the life history of one earth and the system to which we belong. As a result the book has the grandest picture of evolution ever written. But the writing of the book took a heavy toll on her health. In July 1886, she relocated to Ostend, Belgium where the Countess Wachtmeister accompanied her. There matters grew worse and two doctors were called who saw no hope of her recovery and were surprised that HPB has lived this long with

the complicated medical condition she was in. One night matters reached a crisis and HPB told the countess that the time had come for her to lay down her body. She was glad at the prospect of being free from such a worn out instrument even though she had hoped to give more to the world. At last she became unconscious and the Countess felt that it was useless for HPB to make this sacrifice and suffer, for the movement was very weak to continue without her. She was the life-blood of Theosophy. Then, worn out with the fatigue of nursing and the sorrowful thought around, the countess also sank into unconsciousness. When her eyes opened in the morning her first thought was that HPB had probably died when she was sleeping. As she turned around in the bed she saw HPB looking at her with clear grey eyes. She asked HPB how she has suddenly become so well. HPB said "Master has been here. He gave me my choice that I might die and be free or I might live and finish the Secret Doctrine". He has warned her of her suffering in England where she was soon to go. In the interest of the students and the Theosophical Society she accepted the sacrifice.

In May of 1887, at the invitation of English Theosophists, she moved to a small house at Upper Norwood, London. The Theosophical activities began to move rapidly, the Blavatsky Lodge was formed and started publicizing Theosophical ideas. Since HPB had lost control of *The Theosophist*, she founded a monthly magazine *Lucifer*, in September 1887, now known as the *Theosophical Review* and edited it for nearly 4 years. The objective was to bring to light the hidden things of darkness. In the same month HPB moved to a larger house at 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London. She continued to write her great work until it was published as *The Secret Doctrine* in two large volumes between October to December of 1888. It was the crowning achievement of her literary career and received outstanding reviews in all newspapers and magazines worldwide. Volume-I is concerned mainly with the evolution of the Universe

and the explanation of the fundamental symbols contained in the great religions of the world. Volume-II describes the evolution of humanity.

Besides, in October 1888, HPB formed the Esoteric School of the Theosophical Society for the deeper study of the esoteric philosophy by dedicated students and wrote for them her three "E.S. Instructions". In 1889, HPB published *The Key to Theosophy*, a clear explanation in the form of Question and Answer, of the Ethics, Science and Philosophy for the study of which the Theosophical Society was founded. In the same year was published a devotional mystical gem called *The Voice of the Silence*, containing selected excerpts translated from an Eastern scripture, *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, which she had learnt by heart during her training in the East.

The four years of strenuous work by HPB from 1887 to 1891 in London formed the foundation for many of the well established activities of the Theosophical Society and literary gems. It was because of these and owing to the stimulus of her presence that the whole of the movement in England, which had been confined almost entirely to London, grew and flourished. This indeed was a wonderful record of work that was done with such a worn out body. In addition to all this HPB continued the still more important task of training pupils, so that the movement might be carried on when she is gone. For twelve hours a day she would work at her desk and in the evening would receive a wide circle of pupils and sympathizers, amongst whom were some of the best of Society's workers. They were well known men of science, learned professors, literary men, agnostics and socialists, artists, businessmen, industrialists, all finding some attraction in this wonderful Russian woman whose profound knowledge commanded attention and respect. On Thursday evenings she would be present at the meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge and answer questions to clarify different points in her writings.

Among these visitors came one Annie Besant, to whom *The Secret Doctrine* had been given for review.

Before long Lansdowne Road was outgrown and a move was made at Mrs. Besant's invitation to her house on Avenue Road. A lecture hall was built beside the house and No. 19, Avenue Road, became the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in London for 12 years, until it was moved nearer the centre of London. HPB passed away on May 8, 1891, at this place during a severe epidemic of Flu in England and her remains were cremated at Working Crematorium in Surrey. However, by then the Theosophical movement in England had been placed on a firm footing and pupils had been found to carry on the work to which she had devoted her life. With her endurance and patience, her writings and teachings, her life and character, her mission and occult powers, her fostering care she gave to the Society she founded, taking upon herself all the storm and stress, she ensured that within the shell there might be peace. As a mother gives her life to a child, so did HPB identify her life with that of her child – the Theosophical Society she founded. Madam Helena Petrovna Blavatsky is recognized as the greatest occultist in the history of Western Civilization, a direct agent of the Himalayan Masters and Mother of Theosophy.

Every spiritual movement seems to be mothered in this way by some great Soul, who walls it around with shielding arms and breathes into it the living warmth of Spiritual Life. Madam Blavatsky did exactly that through her teachings given through her various books like *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *Practical Occultism*, *The Collected Writings*, *The Voice of the Silence*, etc. The teachings of Madam Blavatsky are the need of the hour. Truths in these aforementioned books are in no sense put forward as a revelation; nor does she claim the position of a revealer of a mystical lore, made public for the first time in the world's history.

Truth contained in *The Secret Doctrine* was scattered throughout in thousands of volumes embodying the scriptures of the great Asiatic and the early European religions, hidden under glyph and symbol and hitherto left unnoticed because of the veil. She gathered the oldest tenets together and made them one harmonious and unbroken rule. The teachings contained in 'The Secret Doctrine' belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian nor the Egyptian religion, nor to Buddhism or Islam, nor to Christianity, exclusively. The 'Secret Doctrine' is the essence of all these. Madam Blavatsky's effort was to assign man his rightful place in the scheme of the universe; to rescue from degradation of the archaic truths which are the basis of all religion; to uncover the fundamental unity from which they all sprang and to show that the occult side of the nature has never been investigated by the modern science.

The Secret Doctrine describes itself in its title. It does not present the 'Secret Doctrine' in its entirety, but a selected number of fragments of its fundamental tenets. Firstly, it indicates that a perception of true universals may be obtained through a comparison of the cosmogenesis of the ancients. Secondly, it gives a clue with which to unravel the racial history of the Humanity. Thirdly, it presents to the eager intellect, to the intuitional and the spiritual perceptions, the scientific "secrets" of the Universe for apprehension. They are still secrets as long as they are not realized.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, she gives the secret of the spiritual path in reply to a question of a disciple about reaching wisdom and gaining perfection. The teacher replied "Search for the Path, but O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thy takest the first step, learn to discern the real from the unreal, the fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate head learning from soul wisdom, the 'Eye' from the 'Heart' Doctrine". She gives reference to the three halls and other states of human consciousness. "The three halls, O con-

queror of Mara, will bring thee through three states in to the fourth and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of Rest Eternal... The first hall is ignorance-Avidya. Second is the hall of learning, in it thy soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower lies a serpent coiled. The third is the hall of wisdom, beyond which stretch the shoreless waters of Akshara, the indestructible fount of omniscience... ye Lord; I see the Path; its foot in mires, its summits lost in glorious light of nirvana. And now I see the ever-narrowing portals on the hard and thorny way to *jnana* (wisdom)... these portals lead the aspirant across the 'waters on the other shore', each portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate; and these keys are:

1. **Dâna**, the key of charity and love immortal.
2. **Āla**, the key of harmony in words and act, the key that counter-balance the cause and effect and leaves no further room for Karmic action.
3. **Kshânti**, patience sweet, that nothing can ruffle.
4. **Virâga**, indifference to pleasure and pain, it is illusion conquered and truth alone perceived.
5. **Virya**, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal truth out of the mire of lies of terrestrial.
6. **Dhyâna**, whose golden gate once opened, leads the adept towards the realm of eternal truth and its ceaseless contemplation.
7. **Prajñâ** (wisdom), the key to which makes of a man, a God creating him a Bodhisattva.

HPB had declared in the 19th century that there is no dead matter but only living organisms. She says in *The Secret Doctrine*, "All is life, and every atom of mineral dust is a life, though beyond our comprehension and perception, because it is outside the range of the law to those who reject occultism". In the three

fundamental propositions, she declared that there is only one eternal immutable principle, the cause of the manifestation of numberless universes and there is fundamental identity of all souls with the Universal over-soul. Besides, she has mentioned in the *Practical Occultism* that out of the four branches of knowledge- i.e. *Yajna-Vidya*, *Mahavidya*, *Guhya-Vidya* and *Atma-Vidya* – "This last is the only kind of Occultism that any Theosophist who admires 'Light on the Path', and who would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after."

HPB opened the long closed doors of the mysteries; she revealed once more the truth about man and the nature; she bore witness to the presence on the Earth of the Occult Hierarchy which guards and guides the world. She was honoured by many thousands, for she was and she is a beacon, lighting the pathway to the heights which all must ascend. She gave the Golden Stairs which are the definite steps to wisdom.

Madam H.P. Blavatsky is no longer around in a physical body. But her teachings remain in the minds of most members of the Theosophical Society.

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NEWS & NOTES

Bombay

White Lotus Day was virtually celebrated by the Bombay Theosophical Federation along with Blavatsky Lodge on 8th May 2021.

The meeting began with the Universal Prayer recited by BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya and the members present. Blavatsky Lodge’s President Sis. Kashmira Khambatta thanked the members for attending the meeting and read out quotes of Bro. William Q. Judge about his colleague and friend Madam Blavatsky. Significance of the White Lotus Day was explained by Bro. Vinayak 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”.

A Virtual Condolence Meeting was organized on 10 May 2021 by BTF President Bro. Vinayak Pandya along with other lodges. Members from Gujarat Federation too attended the meeting. Tributes were paid on this occasion to Bro. Rustam Dalal by most of the members. Sis. Mahazaver Dalal and Sis. Freny Pagdiwala thanked all the members.

Karnataka

The Karnataka Theosophical Federation has been organizing on-line Zoom meetings.

On-line (Zoom) study class on ‘Science of Yoga’ is being

organized on every Thursday since May 2021. The study of Chapter – I, ‘Samadhipada’ was conducted for Six weeks by Bro. M.R. Rajagopal Setty (of Bangalore). Study of Chapter– II, ‘Sadanapada’ is conducted by Fed. Lecturer Bro. H.C. Jagadeesh since June 2021. It is held on every Sunday at 6.55 p.m.

The month of May was dedicated to Madam H.P. Blavatsky and ‘Anthropogenesis’ (*The Secret Doctrine*) was selected for study.

Swetha Padmastami (White Lotus Day) was celebrated virtually on 8 May. Dr Jyothi Nagesh (of Bangalore) spoke on this occasion on ‘Significance of Swetha Padmastami’.

Vaishaka Poornima was celebrated virtually on 26 May 2021 at 4.00 P. M. and Sis. A.M. Puttamma of Bangalore spoke on this occasion on Vaishaka Poornima Festival.

Sis. B. Sandhya Rani spoke on ‘Being & Becoming’ (An approach to reality). It was held on 2 May.

Bro. M.S Sreedhar , West Zonal Organiser, spoke on 1st 2nd & 3rd Root Race. This was held on 9 May.

Sis. K Parvathamma, Secretary, KTF, delivered a talk on 4th Root Race on 16 May.

Federation Lecturer Sis. N Sraraswathamma delivered a talk on 5th Root Race on 23 May.

The subject of Bro. B. V Thippeswamy, President, KTF, was 6th Root Race and it was held on 30 May.

The month of June was dedicated to Bro. C Jinarajadasa and his book *First Principles of Theosophy* was selected for study. The name of the office bearers and the subject taken up by them on different days (Sunday) were:

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Bro. Reddapachari, Federation Lecturer, spoke on “The Rise & Fall of Civilization”.

Sis. Usha Prakash, Secretary of Sri Krishna Theosophical Lodge, Davangere, spoke on “The Law of Reincarnation” (Chapter 3).

Sis. R. Madhavi. President of Sathyakama Theosophical Lodge, Srinivaspur, spoke on Chapter 4 - “Law of Karma”.

Bro. Adikeshava Prakash Shastry, Federation Lecturer, spoke on Chapter 5 - ‘The Invisible Worlds’.

Hukkeri Theosophical Lodge’s new building and Lodge’s Silver Jubilee Celebrations were inaugurated on 16 April 2021 by Ex -North Zonal Organizer Bro. K L Thyagaraja Setty. Sis K .T. Shylaja was the Chief Guest.

Dharwad Theosophical Lodge conducts study class on ‘Theosophy’. It is held daily and the study is conducted by Bro. K L Thyagaraja Setty at 11.30 a.m. Besides, the study of ‘*At the Feet of Master*’ is conducted by Sis. K T Shylaja by Google meet at 1.45 p. m.

Huliyar Sanmarga Theosophical Lodge conducts study class on “Seven Rays” lead by Bro. Raghavendrachar. The class is held on five days in every week.

Kerala

Kerala Theosophical Federation organized an on-line programme on 21 June to celebrate the Universal Yoga Day. The programme commenced at 7 p.m. with Universal Prayer. Federation Secretary Bro. K. Dinakaran welcomed the on-line participants and explained the Universal tradition of yoga which is beyond all barriers of Caste, Creed, Sex or Religion. He said that we can find the streams of this tradition in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sufism. In the theosophical literature, Madam H.P. Blavatsky stressed the Raja Yoga Tradition which deals with the human regeneration.

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Dr. M.A. Raveendran spoke on the *Bahiranga* and *Antharanga* divisions of the Patanjali Yoga. He also explained Sankara's *Aparokshanubhuti* and Yoga of Bhagavad Gita. Then, he quoted from *The Secret Doctrine* and explained the relevance of Yogic practice on various subtler bodies of man and also explained the views of Damodar K. Mavalankar.

Bro. Harihara Raghavan from Adyar explained that Yoga should not be reduced to mere physical exercises which will only strengthen the outer garment of a man. Members from various parts of India viz. Assam, Bangalore, Chennai, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala participated in this on-line programme.

U.P. & Uttarakhand

Dharma Lodge, Lucknow, held on-line meetings on 02, 09, 16, 23 and 30 June, 2021, when talks were delivered on the topics 'Paigambar by Khalil Gibran' (contd. from the previous talk on the same topic), 'Odor and Jiva', 'Birth-Death-Birth, (contd. from the previous talk on the same topic), 'At the Feet of the Master' (Discrimination and Desirelessness), and 'Mind and Consciousness as per J. Krishnamurti'. These talks were delivered by Sis. Vasumati Agnihotri, Bro. U. S. Pandey, Bro. Ashok Gupta, Bro. B. K. Pandey and Bro. N. N. Raut respectively.

The following talks were delivered in the on-line meetings of Nirvan Lodge, Agra, in the month of June: 'Art of Healing' by Dr. Rakhi Singh, 'Specialities of Theosophical Knowledge' by Bro. Askhok Lokhande, 'Vairagya of Ram' by Bro. S.K. Pandey, and Mission of the Theosophy and Three Great Truths' by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri respectively.

Bharat Samaj Pooja was performed on 13 June by Bro. Gyanesh Kumar Chaturvedi.

Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, held five on-line meetings in the month of June. Talks were delivered in these meetings on the

topics 'Guided Meditation on Dreams and Angels' by Bro. Arni Narendran, 'Theosophy as Path of Perfection' by Bro. Narsinh Thakaria, 'The Art of Raja Yoga' by Sis. Linda Oliveira, 'Yoga- a holistic approach to life' by Sis. Swati Reddy and 'Gandh ji's Theosophical approach and Environmental Stress' by Bro. Ajai Rai respectively.

Sarvahitkari Lodge, Gorakhpur, held on-line meetings on 06 and 20 June in which talks were delivered on the topics 'Occult Doctrine and constant renewal', and 'Brahma Vigyan' by Bro. Ajai Rai and Bro. Ram Achal respectively. Besides, members of the lodge joined in the two meetings organized by Pragya Lodge, Lucknow, on 13 and 27 June 2021.

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Delhi, Bro. S.B.R. Mishra delivered a talk on 13 June on the theme 'One Life, One Consciousness'.

The study of Religions was conducted by young members of Prayas Lodge, Ghaziabad, during the on-line meeting held on 6 June.

A public talk was organized by the lodge on 13 June 2021 in which Bro. U.S. Pandey spoke on 'Brotherhood of Religions'.

Sis. Suvralina Mohanty conducted on-line study class for children and youth on every Sunday morning at 07.30 a.m. The subjects covered during June, 2021 were "Self- review" and "Purpose of our actions."

Study of the book *The Voice of the Silence*- Part II-Two Paths, was continued by Sis. Lalita Khatri in the on-line meeting of Noida Lodge on 6 and 20 June.

Bro. S. S.Gautam spoke on 'Desirelessness' in the on-line meetings of Chauhan Lodge, Kanpur, held on 6 and 20 June. The subject of his talk on 27 June was 'Self-control as to the mind'. Bro. Rajiv Mathur delivered a talk on 13 June on the topic 'Shiv-Sutra.'

U.P. and UK Federation Study Camp: The Federation organized on-line study of the book “*THEOSOPHY as the Masters See It*” written by Clara M. Codd. In all, eight sessions have been planned for the study of the book during June, July and August 2021. The first two sessions were organized on 18 and 19 June 2021. During the first session on 18 June, Bro. U. S. Pandey introduced the theme of the book and its importance in understanding the teachings of the Masters. He also covered the contents of part 1 (The Theosophical Society) of the book. During the second session on 19 June, Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri covered a portion of Part 2- The Work i.e. sub-parts: (I.) Why the Masters founded the TS?, (II). Theosophical Propaganda, and (III). Religious Reforms.

Many members from other federations also participated in this programme.

National Lecturer

On invitation by Shankar Lodge, Delhi, Bro. S.K. Pandey delivered a talk on the theme ‘Different dimensions of Meditation’. It was held on 5 June.

On invitation by Indraprastha Lodge, Delhi, Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered a talk on the theme ‘Who am I? What does it mean to be human?’. It was held on 20 June. The subject of his talk on 27 June was ‘Science of Morality’.

On invitation by Maru Lodge, Bhubaneswar, Bro. U. S. Pandey delivered a talk on the theme ‘Be a Lamp unto yourself through mindfulness’. It was held on 24 June.

Bro. S. K. Pandey and Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri participated as panellists in discussion on the topic “Elemental World” organized on 12 and 22 June 2021.

Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri delivered an on-line talk on ‘Human Regeneration and Theosophy’ during an event organized by

CRDG foundation with defined values group. It was held on 11.06.21. Besides, he delivered a talk on ‘Brave Words’ in a group of Young Indian Theosophists. It was held on 20 June.

Contribution in the Indian Section on-line programmes:

Sis. Vibha Saxena, Secretary of Noida Lodge, conducted study of Mahatma Letter No. 54. These were held on 04, 11 and 18 June, 2021

Bro. Ajai Rai participated as a panellist in discussion on ‘Elemental World’ on 12 June.

Bro. S.B.R.Mishra delivered a talk on the topic ‘Mandukya Upanishad and Theosophy’ on 19.06.21.

Sis. Vibha Saxena delivered a talk on “Adi Sankaracharya and Nirvana Satakam” on 20.06.21

Obituary

Brother Sheikh Muhammad Zaiki (Diploma No. 88650) of Dum Dum Bharadwaj left his mortal coil on 12th May, 2021, at 11a.m. at Fortis Hospital by attack of Corona. He was the founder of Assembly of Angels Secondary School at Barrackpore, with his wife Mrs Saira Zaiki as principal of that school.

He attended the conference of TS and TOS held at BTS Hall, Kolkata, many times. He also founded a TOS group in the name of his mother and hosted one East Zone TOS conference on 2nd March 2014 at his beautiful Garden House. It was attended by more than hundred delegates.

Brother Zaiki was a very kind hearted man who did many work for the benefit of those who suffered. He supplied money and relief materials without any expectation. He was well connected person and was loved and respected by all. He was also President of TOS, WB.

May his soul be blessed with Eternal Peace.

The right motive for seeking self-knowledge is that which pertains to *knowledge* and not to *self*. Self-knowledge is worth seeking by virtue of its being knowledge, and not by virtue of its pertaining to self. The main requisite for acquiring self-knowledge is *pure love*. Seek knowledge for pure love, and self-knowledge eventually crowns the effort.

H. P. Blavatsky
Practical Occultism