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Editor

PRADEEP H. GOHIL

STATE OF THE INDIAN SECTION ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INDIAN SECTION

I. Bird's-Eye View of Indian Section's Work:

Just like every year, this year also, I am very pleased to inform you all that the state of the Indian Section is very healthy. Let me give you a bird's eye view of the Indian Section's work during the Theosophical year 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023.

The highlight of the year was the second successive increase in membership of the Indian Section from 11,549 to 12,231 — an increase of 682 members or an increase of 5.9%. This has to be seen in light of an increase of 2,510 members in the previous year. This shows that the move to abolish admission fees for membership in the Indian Section and abolish annual dues from the members of the Indian Section has really contributed in the increase of membership. This has happened despite the fact that 1983 members could not renew their membership in time. This year we have been very strict in renewing the membership of the members only after they put their signature indicating that they would like to renew their membership and give their choice of the language in which they want to receive *The Indian Theosophist*. This a very appropriate control that the Indian Section exercises in order to ensure that there are no ghost members now as we had earlier. I would like to thank all the Federation Secretaries and Presidents as well as Lodge Secretaries and Presidents for sending 12,231 signed sheets for renewal of membership. The Indian Section has facilitated their work by sending a lodge wise list of members with their diploma numbers to every Federation Secretary/President who had not renewed their membership by 1st of September, by 15th of September and finally by 23rd of September 2023. All the Lodge Secretaries had to do was to get the signature of each member, mention his or her choice of the language of *The Indian Theosophist* on the list and send it to the Indian Section at 'renewalindsemem@gmail.com'.

As an administrative guideline we had decided not to enforce the renewal requirement to continue the membership on any new member who has joined after 1st of October for one year.

On 1st October 2021, there were 1,188 life members when the constitutional amendment of abolition of annual dues came into force. On 1st October 2022, 745 life members were dropped for not maintaining contact with Indian Section and not getting their life membership renewed. As a result, 173 life members out of the 745 that were dropped earlier got revived. Further, 32 life members passed to peace and 30 were dropped for not getting the renewal of the life membership. Thus, we have 554 life members at present.

For a second year in a row we have a new record of new members. There have been 2804 new members during the year against 2258 last year, which is the highest new members taken during a year in several decades and that is why I consider membership development to be the highlight of the year 2022-2023. During the year the Indian Section had compensated all Federations at a rate of Rs 75 per member as of 01/10/2022. The goal of increasing the membership of youth was achieved last year and the percentage of youth in the membership increased further this year.

The trend towards on-line lectures that was set due to corona a few years back has really blossomed. There are members like Brother Taral Munshi of Mumbai Federation who organizes lectures with two to three speakers in English, Hindi and other regional languages broadcast every Tuesday for one hour on his programme called Triveni Tuesday. Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri and Sister Catalina broadcasts many programmes regularly on serious Theosophical subjects. Bro. Pradip Mahapatra, who in partnership with Bro. Shikhar has taken a lead in organizing such programmes in the beginning, still continues to offer many talks regularly, the Masters' Letters' being his favourite subject. Our members like Bro. U.S. Pandey gives on an average at least two on-line and 'in-person' lectures every week. Sis. Vibha Saxena, Bro. N.C. Krishna, Bro. Pradip M.S., Sis. Smita Prangya Patrao, Bro.

C.A. Shinde, Harshvardan Sheth and many other speakers regularly give some very good lectures. I believe that emphasis on youth contributed to increase in quantity of youth membership and these lectures improved the quality of our membership in general.

This year, the President has recommended to the Executive Committee, the name of Bro. V. Narayanan, Treasurer of the Indian Section, for the third “Dr Radha Burnier as the Theosophist of the Year”. He will receive this award during the opening of the Indian Section Convention at Adyar on 1st January 2024. He has contributed immensely as the Treasurer of the Indian Section from January 2018 till now and gifted the Indian Section’s Financial position from one in which there was a loan of Rs 50 lakhs to the International T.S. to having a surplus of about Rs 2 crores every year and a revenue reserve of about Rs 10 crores this year. He has suggested a number of ways of making money and saving them smartly to earn good interest income. Additionally, he has worked very hard as an In-charge President to ensure that the show goes on even in the absence of the President. He has endured the extremes of climatic conditions of Varanasi in staying here around the year. He has also contributed as the Secretary of the executive Committee and as the chairman of the Property Committee of the Indian Section. He has definitely earned this award.

Another highlight of the year was a plan and proposal of the Indian Section Executive Committee to contribute 2 crores for the participation of about 100 members of the Indian Section in the 12th World Congress of the Theosophical Society that is to be held at Vancouver in Canada from 23rd July to 27th July 2025. Eventually the Indian Section Council also voted for the resolution by circulation in this matter with a vote of 40 for, 3 against and 5 abstaining. This will be a great opportunity for the hundred odd members of our Section to widen their horizon on a world stage in a foreign land. The different ideas they will exchange with theosophists from other countries will certainly help in areas like propagation of Theosophy. An eight members selection committee will select the best qualified members of T.S.

of Indian Section, based on the selection criteria, purely on merit.

We had published all the 12 monthly issues of “*The Indian Theosophist*” during the year in English and Hindi. The former General Secretary, Mr. S. Sundaram even not being 100% in good health still gives a lot of his time every day for a top quality magazine with lots to learn about Theosophy. We should all wish and pray that his health would allow him to work on his job for many more years to come. Similarly, Bro. Shyam Singh Gautam from Kanpur, continues to translate the English version of the Indian Theosophist, in a limited span of time, into Hindi for the members that want it in Hindi. To do this month after month is not an easy job!!

Still another highlight of the year was the Indian Government mandated acquisition of about one acre of our 17 acre campus for making a ropeway project from Varanasi Cantt. Railway Station to Rathyatra Crossing and on to a place very near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. A very handsome amount of twice the market value was given by the government but I was sad to see a part of the playground of Besant Theosophical School, the Amphitheatre and combined Lord Shiva & Bharat Samaj Temple go in the hands of the government. Our resistance did not go too far with the authority commanded by our popular Prime Minister Mr Modi’s pet project. We are also reimbursed to build a new temple, the construction of which has already started, and Amphitheatre within our campus.

The case made by the Indian Section against Varanasi Development Authority, asking for a compensation of about Rs 4 crores for the land acquired by it to widen the Gurubagh Road is still languishing in the Allahabad High Court. Our lawyer comforts us that we will win the case and get interest on the amount also in the time to come. Our case in the SDM’s office at Tehsil Sadar Varanasi, to do a mutation in the Khatauni from the name of Upendranath Basu to the Indian Section, the Theosophical Society is currently on the hearing and evidence presenting stage. This is important for us as the Indian Section land has been in the name of the General Secretary, Mr

Upendranath Basu ever since Dr Annie Besant gave it to the Indian Section in 1907. Unfortunately, no administrative head at the headquarters had tried seriously to get a mutation from the SDM's Court. In another twist, the great grandson of Upendranath Basu's Brother has now sold our land in Varanasi to a builder and more than Rs 1 crore has been spent by the buyer in government taxes, payment to Basu, lawyer's fees, etc. One can wonder as to how the land, an which we have uninterrupted possession for 116 years along with the original registered sale deed, can be claimed in a court to belong to anyone else. There have been death threats issue to some of us at the Indian Section and two criminal cases have been made in the Varanasi court against me. Despite all this, I am confident that we will eventually win this case.

II. Indian Section Conventions

Under the aegis of the Indian Section, Theosophical Society, Varanasi, the three-day 131st Indian Section Convention was held from 28 to 30 October 2022 at the Radha Burnier Amphitheatre, Indian Section Headquarters, T.S., Varanasi. The programme commenced with the 'Prayers of All Religions' and Universal Prayer on 28 October.

The welcome address was delivered by Bro Pradeep H Gohil, President, Indian Section. He presented the Annual Report of the Indian Section and informed that from last year *The Indian Theosophist*, a monthly magazine is available in Hindi as well and appreciated the efforts of Bro Shyam Singh Gautam of Chouhan Lodge Kanpur for translating the English version into Hindi within the minimum possible time. He also announced that the admission fee and annual dues are abolished for becoming a member of the Indian Section of TS in line with the resolution passed in the year 2021-22. Consequently, the membership of TS has increased by 300 now reaching 11,549 members. He wished for the success of the programme. It was followed by greetings given by the representatives of various Federations. Bro. V. Narayanan presented the Treasurer's report of the Indian Section.

Bro. U.S. Pandey was felicitated on this occasion with the 2nd Radha Burnier award of 'Theosophist of the Year 2021-22'. So also Brother Pradip K Mahapatra was felicitated with the 1st Radha Burnier Award of "Theosophist of the year 2020-2021"

Thereafter, Sis. Deepa Padhi, International Vice-President, TS and Chief Guest of the programme delivered the keynote address. She mentioned that war, terrorism, global warming, gender disparity and racism are big challenges in today's world. Citing Bhagavadgita, Rigveda and Upanishads, she said that Universal Brotherhood (*Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam*) forms the roots of Sanatan Dharm. She added further that one of the lessons taught by Covid-19 is that one cannot consider oneself safe if another person is suffering in the other corner of the world. This is an apt example of our interconnectedness with each other. She emphasized the need of nurturing altruism, compassion, humility, love and peace to achieve Universal Brotherhood.

The second session was chaired by Bro. Divyarth Dubey. Bro. Adi Keshab Shastri spoke about the Essence of Brotherhood. Quoting Isha Upanishad, he said that the whole universe is an envelope of God and HE dwells in the entire universe. Mentioning Adishankaracharya's words he said that Shakankaracharyaji not only said '*Aham Brhmasmi*' but also said '*Tat Twam Asi.*' So, one has to be conscious of oneness in all. He also mentioned 15 important rules as said by *Mahachohans* such as Kill Ambitions, Kill Desire for life, Kill separateness, Kill desire of sensation, Kill hunger for growth etc. then he quoted Odiya poet Santh Kavi Bhimo Bhoi "*Mitu mora Jiban*".

Thereafter, Bro. Sheo K Pandey, Secretary of U.P. & Uttarakhand Federation, delivered a talk on the topic of 'Selfishness is the root cause of Strife'. He said that Theosophists believe in every religion and the wisdom of theosophy is above the boundaries of nations. He added that the process of analyzing and discriminating keeps running all the time in our minds and we seek peace externally. We are a consequence of what we think and feel. We accept

separateness and consider it normal, however, it makes us selfish in our endeavours. Citing the example of the functioning of the physical body, he emphasized that cooperation and coordination are deep-seated in nature everywhere and it is also required to be imbibed within us to achieve the Universal Brotherhood.

Dr Ajay K Rai said that Universal Brotherhood is an essence of our existence. He emphasized removing 'I', nurturing Love and Compassion and attaining the quality that makes a person happy. He stated four ways to avoid 'reaction' in any situation. The ABCD of these ways are as A- being Alert, B- let it Bypass, C- maintaining Cool and D- Diverting to positivity. Further, he mentioned that to avoid confrontation, one should focus more on 'What is Right' in any given day-to-day situation rather than focusing on 'Who is Right'.

In the third session, Bro S. Sundaram, former GS of the Indian Section, TS, delivered a lecture on 'Rohit Mehta: Sharing some Reminiscences' followed by a deliberation given by Bro U.S. Pandey on 'Universal Brotherhood- Our Dharma'.

Bro N C Krishna delivered a Special Lecture in the evening session on 'Brotherhood- Is it a fact or myth?'. Dr. Rachna Srivastav, Principal of Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalay, chaired this session.

The Ritual of the Mystic Star was performed in the Annie Besant Hall at 7 p.m.

In the 1st session on 29 October the Chairperson Sis. Mitalini Mahapatra invoked the Universal Prayer. Then, Prof. P Krishna of KFI, Rajghat, delivered Dr. Radha Burnier Memorial Lecture on "The other man is yourself". Prof. Krishna described our duties to the other man who is not other but yourself.

The 2nd Session was for the Young Indian Theosophists [YIT] and the Chairperson was Sister Chandra Prava Bhuyan, Vice-President of Assam Federation. The speakers were Sister Kritika Goel of Prayas Lodge who spoke on "Making Brotherhood a Reality", Sister Monica

Vakare of Pune Lodge spoke on "Religion Decay without Brotherhood", Brother Pradeep M S of Bangalore City Lodge spoke on "Brotherhood without Distinctions" and Brother Prof. Darshan Jha of Anand Lodge, Prayagraj, spoke on "Self" is visible in everything and everything visible in "self".

Brother Pradeep H Gohil, President, Indian Section, TS Varanasi, was the Chairperson of the Special Lecture programme held in the 3rd Session. Dr. Rachna Srivastav introduced the guest speaker Prof. Sudhir Kumar Jain, Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. He delivered a talk on "Indian Universities: Challenges and Opportunities". The vote of thanks was given by Sister Uma Bhattacharyya.

The 4th Session was TOS Programme, in which the Chairperson was Bro. K. Sivaprasad- National Director of TOS, India. Dr. Deepa Padhi, International Vice-President of Theosophical Society, delivered a lecture in this session on "TOS Actions in the changing times". Then, Brother Satrajit Chakroborty spoke about "TOS School Education in West Bengal".

A symposium was held in the 5th Session in which the Chairperson was Bro. Rajeev Mathur. Bro. Narsinh Thakaria described beautifully "How to apply Universal Brotherhood in Daily Life". Dr. Rachna Srivastav expressed her views on "Universal Brotherhood and World Peace" and Sis. Suvralina Mohanty explained that "Separateness comes from ignorance".

The 6th Session was presided over by Brother P Raghu Rama Rao and the Speaker Sri. Sandeep Pandey spoke on "Fundamental Duties in Indian Constitution" describing the role of Indian people as enshrined in the Constitution of India. The 7th session was the Cultural Programme organized by KTS, ABS, BTS, VKIC, VKM of Varanasi and Prayas Lodge, Vaishali, UP.

The three-day 131st Convention of the Indian Section, Theosophical Society concluded on 30th Oct 2022. It started with

devotional recitals by Sushil Bandher, Manjula Thakkar and Vidhu Ben Patel followed by a One-Act Play performed by Mr Taral Munshi of Mumbai.

A Q &A session was held on the theme of the convention ‘Universal Brotherhood- the need of the hour ‘. The panellists were Sis. Uma Bhattacharyya, Manager, VKM, Bro. U.S. Pandey, President UP & UK Federation and Bro. N.C. Krishna from Hyderabad. During the session, Sis. Uma Bhattacharyya informed the participants about a ‘Value Added Course on Theosophy’ that has been commenced for the graduation level girls’ students of VKM Inter college. She further added that a training programme will be soon started to introduce theosophy to the youth of the country.

It was followed by an open house discussion chaired by Bro. Adi Keshav Shastri and moderated by Sis Vibha Saxena. The theme of the session was ‘Branches of Theosophical Society as the harbingers of a Universal Brotherhood.’ The gist of the session was that Universal Brotherhood is not an idle phrase rather it already exists at the higher plane. It must be brought down at the level of lodges realizing that all of us are one and the transformation of the lodges will start by transforming ourselves. For self-transformation, the members of TS should earnestly follow the three steps i.e. Study, Meditation and Service.

The Closing Session was chaired by Bro. Pradeep H Gohil, President, Indian Section. He stated that if we walk and talk together, meet and eat together and stay and play together, then we can propagate brotherhood and peace within and around us. Various participants shared their experiences of attending the convention. The convention concluded with the vote of thanks given by Bro. Pradeep Mahapatra.

This event was observed by 755 delegates from different corners of the country that includes Karnataka, Odisha, Assam, Andhra

Pradesh, Bihar, W. Bengal, Gujrat, and U.P. & Uttarakhand.

III. Election

Two members contested for the post of the President of the Indian Section, namely Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil and Bro. M.S. Raghunath. A voting was held on 4th January 2023 in this respect and Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil got 39 votes and Bro. M.S. Raghunath got 9 votes. Bro. Pradeep H. Gohil was declared as the President of Indian Section at Adyar for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

IV. Indian Section Headquarters

The 175th Birth Anniversary of Dr Annie Besant was celebrated at the Indian Section HQ, Varanasi on 1st October 2022. Floral tributes were paid to Dr Annie Besant by the students and staff of the Educational Institutions, workers and members at the Section HQ.

The 175th Birth Anniversary of social reformist and visionary Dr. Annie Besant was celebrated in VKM PG College jointly by Progression of Annie Besant Spirit Committee and five units of NSS, VKM. A dedication of flower-petals was done in the morning in the Annie Besant Hall of the TS. Later, volunteers of National Service Scheme offered floral tribute to Dr. Annie Besant in the Annie Besant Hall of Theosophical Society and took out a Women Education Awareness Rally from Dr. Besant’s residence ‘Shantikunj’ which ended with a tour of Kamachha, Birdopur and Sidhgiribagh areas.

In the college’s seminar hall the programme started with *Kulgeet* and Annie Besant Eulogy. Principal, Prof. Rachna Srivastava said that Annie Besant was a great personality who initiated social and educational reforms for the people of India and other parts of the world and students can learn a lot in their lives from her honesty and uprightness. Manager, Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya highlighted Dr Besant’s immense contribution in the field of education especially for women and her cooperation to Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya in founding Banaras Hindu University. A short play “Charaiveti” directed by

Dr. Nairanjana Srivastava was staged by the students on this occasion portraying an event from the life of Dr. Annie Besant and J. Krishnamurti. Dr. Shubangi Srivastava, Asst. Professor, Hindi, expressed her views on Annie Besant's Concept of Education.

Prof. Meenu Pathak, Co-ordinator of the Value Added Course on 'Self Realization through Theosophy' presented details of the activities organized in the session 2021-22. Students shared their experiences about their learning and beneficial outcome of the course. Certificates were distributed to the students on successful completion of the course. The programme was attended by the students and staff of the college. Dr. Manju Kumari anchored the event and formal vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Nairanjana Srivastava.

Foundation Day

The Indian Section, the Theosophical Society, celebrated 147th Foundation Day function through on-line mode on 17.11.2022 at 4:30 P.M. Chief Speakers were Sister Uma Bhattacharyya of Kashi Tattva Sabha, Varanasi and Brother Solomon Babu of Gauthwami Lodge of Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

Sister Uma Bhattacharyya spoke on the topic *Foundation for future of Humanity*. She in her talk discussed how the strength of an organization depends on its foundation. Pervasiveness of the Theosophical Society and its worldwide influence reflect how deep and strong are the roots on which the magnificent structure of this society has been established. She further explained that the Theosophical Society is the world organization dedicated to the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. Its objective has great relevance in the context of modern day world which is torn by hatred, violence and terror. She emphasized the importance of bringing change in our inner world which would only lead us to the real understanding of Universal Brotherhood. She further added that having a pure and awakened mind is of immense value as it bestows on us the highest blessing that is illumined state of being which would lead humanity to

an evolved future. Explaining the motto of the T.S., she explained that the Theosophical Society specifies that the truth is the ultimate goal which we should always strive hard to attain.

Brother Solomon Babu spoke on *Importance of Foundation Day for TS Members*. In his talk he discussed that the two core values of Theosophical Society are truth and oneness. Theosophical Society not only speaks of oneness of humanity but also oneness of methods to know the ultimate truth. He further said that the Theosophical Society is the only colourless platform in the entire world from where any seeker of any belief at any stage of the spiritual journey can seek truth from anybody from any part of the world.

Views were expressed by Bro. Raghu Rama Rao, Secretary of Telugu Federation, regarding the motto of the Theosophical Society and eternal search of truth by religions. Brother V. Narayanan, Treasurer, Indian Section explained the practical side of theosophy, which means how much we are contributing through our own consciousness. The objectives of oneness can be achieved by understanding one's self by realizing the *Purusha Prakriti*, which is the doorway to self.

The Vote of Thanks was extended by Prof. C.A. Shinde. He expressed his thoughts on oneness of life. He also thanked the speakers for sharing their valuable views on the occasion of Foundation Day.

Adyar Day

The Indian Section, the Theosophical Society, organized Adyar Day in online mode on 17.02.2023. The programme started with the welcome address and universal invocation by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri, moderator of the programme. He delivered a short speech, highlighting the relevance of the day. He also gave a brief history of Adyar, how it came to be known as Adyar Day and the origin of the tradition of observing this day as Adyar Day.

The first speaker of the session was Mr. Divyarth Dubey,

Federation Secretary, M.P.& Rajasthan Federation. His topic was *Col. H.S. Olcott and Theosophy*. He gave a brief introduction of Olcott's life, the first President of the Theosophical Society. He discussed his efforts and contribution in spreading Buddhism in different parts of the world and how Col. Olcott encouraged the educated Indians to work towards India's future.

The second speaker was Prof. Rachna Srivastava, Principal, Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Varanasi. She spoke on *Krishnamurti & Theosophy*. She explained that Krishna ji's influence upon the members of the Theosophical Society has been profound. He gave to humanity the key to solve all problems created by a selfish mind when he says that solution to all problems lies in understanding and stopping our mind which is the trouble maker and sees things in fragments and not in their entirety.

The third speaker was Dr. Chandraprava Bhuyan, Vice President of Assam Theosophical Federation and Member, Executive Committee of the Indian Section, The Theosophical Society. Her topic was *C.W. Leadbeater and Theosophy*. She explained the significance of Adyar Day when great soul like C.W. Leadbeater was born. She informed about the role of C.W. Leadbeater in the progression of truth, which is the essence of theosophy.

The programme concluded with the vote of thanks given by Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri, illustrating the significance of the day. He ended with a quote of C. Jinarajadasa, the 4th International President of The Theosophical Society, indicating Adyar as a source of hope, encouragement, positivity all around.

White Lotus Day

White Lotus Day was observed on 8 May, 2023, in the Annie Besant Hall at the Indian Section HQ of the TS, Varanasi. The programme started with Prayers of All Faiths and Universal Prayer. Dr. Kumud Ranjan, President, KTS, welcomed the guests. Excerpts

from the books *The Voice of the Silence*, *The Light of Asia* and *Bhagwadgita* were read by Smt. Uma Bhattacharyya, Smt. Bharati Chattopadhyay and Dr. Annapurna respectively. A lecture on "H.P. Blavatsky and Theosophy" was delivered by Dr. Abha Srivastava, Member, Kashi Tattva Sabha. In her address she highlighted the ageless wisdom, honesty, clairvoyant and straight forward personality of HPB. She explained that HPB imparted knowledge of ancient wisdom and also enlightened path to attain that wisdom. She explained how one can detach oneself from the world while performing one's duty sincerely. She highlighted that whatever life we choose we should be completely dedicated towards it and should have a clean and open mind and eager intellect. The Vote of Thanks was given by Dr. Annapurna, Vice- President, KTS.

V. The Easter Theosophical Conference

The 99th Easter Conference was conducted on 7-8-9 April 2023 at the International HQ, TS, Adyar. A total of 105 (38 locals and 67 outstation, including 1 foreigner from Europe) delegates registered for the conference from Karnataka (9), Kerala (6), Madras (Adyar included - 43), Rayalseema (18), Tamil (9), Telugu (16) and Utkal federation(3). All the sessions were fully attended by all the delegates at the serene ambience of Blavatsky Bungalow.

The theme of the conference was "*The World Around Us*" – The book is a compilation by Prof. C.A. Shinde of Dr Radha Burnier's 'On the Watch-Tower' articles published in *The Theosophist* during 1980-2007.

The conference consisted of sessions having short talks by speakers from different federations, Group discussion session, Bharat Samaj Pooja, Ritual of the Mystic Star and the Cultural evening including classical dance, instrumental music, devotional songs & ventriloquism.

The conference opened with the recitation of Universal Prayer

by Bro N.C. Krishna and welcome address by the Conference Officer Bro. Shikhar Agnihotri. The opening address was delivered by the International Secretary of the Theosophical Society Sis. Marja Artamaa, followed by the bird's eye view of the book by Prof. C.A. Shinde.

The other speakers included Dr. R. Revathy, Sis. H. Sri Priya, Bro. C.S. Nandakumar, Bro. N.C. Krishna, Sis. Sonal Murali, Bro. R. Krishnamoorthy, Bro. K. Dinakaran, Bro. G. Suresh Kumar, Sis. B. Sandhya Rani, Bro. K.V.L. Kantha Rao, Bro. K. Damodaran, Sis. M. Lakshmi, Dr. M.A. Raveendran, Dr. Nagesh L., Sis. B. Vijaya Sri, Sis. M. Vijayalakshmi, Bro. P. Devarajan, Bro. Vinay Patri, Sis. Upasika Maithreya, Sis. Rajeswari, Bro. S.S. Sri Harsha and Bro. Y. Srinivasa Murthy.

The following themes of significance from the book were taken up by the speakers: Theosophy & Theosophical Society, Brotherhood, Ethics, Freedom, The Art of Living, True Knowledge, Maturity of Mind, Religion-Science-Technology, Civilization, Rights & Responsibilities, Evolution, Women, Inhumanity & Violence and Nature. The speakers presented the aforementioned subjects with great enthusiasm and created an interest in the audience for the same.

The group discussions took place along the following themes under the respective Group leaders:

1. Spare the rod and spoil the child . . .is it moral or discipline? – Sis Sonal Murali
2. Being extremely religious, is it discipline or dogma? – Sis. B. Sandhya Rani
3. Is desire for power immoral? Bro. G. Suresh Kumar
4. Embracing entertainment is against the principle of self-restraint – where is the line of control? Bro. S.S. Sri Harsha.

The concluding remarks and vote of thanks were given by the

General Manager of TS, Adyar, Bro. Jaikumar Kannan and the closing prayer for peace was recited by Sis. Jaishree Kannan, Librarian & resident of TS Adyar.

All the departments of TS, Adyar, coordinated very well in conducting the conference smoothly.

VI. Indian Section Study Camp

This year Indian Section Study Camp was not conducted.

VII. Study Camp at the Himalayan Study Centre, Bhowali

Bro. V. Narayanan reported that Five Federations conducted Study Camps at Bhowali from 26th April 2023 to 11th June 2023 as detailed below:-

1) Gujarat & Bombay Federations, 2) Karnataka Federation, 3) Bihar & Utkal Federations, 4) Marathi Federation, 5) U.P & UK, Raj Federations. Apart from the above, an E.S. Camp was also conducted.

Participants were appreciative of the arrangements made including excellent food services. Most of them also availed the services at the Purnima Restaurant. Most of the books kept at the Bhowali Center were distributed to lodges free of cost for better utilization of the same. Most of the lodges utilized this opportunity to augment their library with these books. Earlier, during November 2022, about 40 girl students from the Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya conducted a study-cum tour programme in the Bhowali Study Center. Bro. V. Narayanan conducted an introductory session for the students on Theosophical principles as it applies to them.

VIII. Workshops and Study Classes at the Section Headquarters, Varanasi

There were no workshop and study classes held at the Indian Section HQ, Varanasi.

IX. Propagation of Theosophy in new Areas

Bro. Pradip Mahapatra, Mrs Mitalini Mapatra, Bro. Duryodhan Sahoo and Bro. Chitranjan Sapathy visited Bhawanipatna, Balasore, Jagatsinghpur with secretary (then and now) and President of UTF as well as with senior TS members to revive the old lodges. Therefore Bhawanipatna lodge received Charter on 15.10.2023. Further old lodges at Balasore and Jagatsinghpur are revived after addition of new members on 04.10.2022 and 06.09.2023. Then with Secretary of UTF visited rural area Village Alana, P.O- Bilasuni under District -CUTTACK and a new lodge Gopal Jee Theosophical Lodge was formed on 27.09.2023. President and Vice President of Cuttack lodge formed a new lodge known as Ashok Lodge on 15.08.2023 at new place in Cuttack which is very active now.

X. Indian Section President's Visits

A number of on-line talks were given by me during the year, the prominent were those of a talk on "Theosophy & Ecology – Practical Wisdom for Living in the Contemporary World" to the Russian group, a talk on "The Days of the Camelot— the Annie Besant Days to the lodges in the New Zealand Section and two talks during a personal visit a Chitradurga during the Annual Conference of the Karnataka Federation.

XI. National Lecturers' Visits

The activities conducted/directed by all the 24 National Lecturers during the year under review (2022-2023) have been published in the Annual Report (2022-23). For details please see pp. 12-29 of the Report.

XII. Besant Education Fellowship (BEF)

Currently the BEF is managing two schools under its supervision. They are 1.) VKM Inter College for Girls & BTS Higher Secondary School for boys. Both the schools are under U.P Board of Education

and have produced very good results. In all, about 1,300 students are attending these schools. Detail report on the activities of the Educational Institutions appear elsewhere in the report.

XIII. Centenary Conferences

No report has been received from any Federation for their Centenary Conference.

XIV. Visitors

The guest speaker Prof. Sudhir Kumar Jain, Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, delivered a talk on "Indian Universities : Challenges and Opportunities". It was held in the Indian Section Convnetion on 30 October 2022.

XV. Membership

1. The membership of the Indian Section on 30th September 2023 was 12231 compared to the membership of 11549 on 30th September 2022.

2. There was a net increase of 682 members during the year compared to a net decrease of 2268 members last year. This was largely because of an increase of 2804 new members in the Indian Section, a large per cent of which are young members.

3. Total number of members that passed to peace during the year was 284 against 25 last year.

4. At present there are 528 Lodges and Centres against 502 last year under 16 Federations and Headquarters (unattached members).

5. This year 2804 new members joined against 2258 last year. This can be largely attributed to abolition of admission fees and annual dues and excellent propagation of Theosophy in colleges.

Maximum efforts will have to be put by all Federations and

Lodges to ensure that all members would renew their membership annually between June 1 and August 31 along with their signature in the renewal letter. The same has to be sent by email to “renewalindsecmem@gmail.com”. There will be no amnesty next year and every member regardless of his/her designation will have to do this if they want their membership to be continued.

XVI. The Indian Theosophist (IT) & Indian Section Website

A. The Indian Theosophist

Our monthly magazine was published regularly in all the 12 months in English and Hindi. The material value of this magazine is always quite high along with the ease of reading the large fonts and a pleasing to the eye coverage with a different colour every month. It should also be noted that *The Indian Theosophist* is being sent free of cost to members that ask for it, whether in English or Hindi. I express my gratitude to Bro. S. Sundaram, former General Secretary for the English version and Bro. S. S. Gautam, National Lecturer, for doing the Hindi translation on a timely basis, month after month.

B. Indian Section Website

The address of the Indian Section website is “www.theosophy-india.org”. A number of Federations and the Indian Section load their magazines on this site and are available for the people to read. It contains lot of information about the Indian Section and a list of upcoming programme on-line and off-line with the name of the speaker, the subject and the date. The following is the information on use of our website during the last year.

Sr. No. Item	2020-'21	2021-'22	2022-'23
1. Total New users	5836	5832	5970
2. Total Visitors to the Site	5905	5892	6033
3. Total Sessions	7641	7533	7721
4. Ratio of Session/User	1.30	1.28	1.28
5. Total Page Views	20,948	19,028	21,124

6. Ratio of page/session	2.74	2.53	2.74
7. Average Session Duration	1.46 mins	1.43	1.45
8. Bounce rate	48%	49.93	48.8
9. %Users of India	57%	61.39	63.26
10. % New visitors	15%	13.30%	12.2

The Indian Section joined social media for the dissemination of THEOSOPHY. The name is THEOSOPHY INDIA.

[1] YOU TUBE: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmghC_GjLOGKHR90TcD6peQ

[2] FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081315351270&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

[3] INSTAGRAM <https://instagram.com/theosophyindia?igshid=ZDdkNTZiNTM=>

(4) Further the Section started quarterly E-Newsletter INSIGHT on 08.05.2023. The Editor-in-Chief is Bro. Pradeep H Gohil, President Indian Section TS, Editor -Sister Suvralina and Co-Editor- Bro. Adi Keshav.

XVII. The Theosophical Order of Service

The activities of TOS were with regard to the active participation of the members at National, regional and at group level during this year with a focus on reducing suffering of all living beings. Executive committee meeting was held on 27th October 2022 at Varanasi to review and approve accounts and reports by the National committee. Empowerment of women continues to be focal theme for TOS in India. On 30th October 2022 Annual General Body meeting was held at Varanasi in which Youth forum formation by Odisha region was emphasized by Dr. Deepa Padhi as a new initiative to give opportunity to young members to join as volunteers to experience the joy in service activities including education, health, disaster relief, justice, environment, old age issues, empowering women, skill development etc.

Significant programme of this year was celebration of 175th Birth

Anniversary of Dr. Annie Besant by conducting a National conference at Adyar, Chennai on 8th and 9th July 2023 in the International Hq of Theosophical Society. Prior to this, K. Sivaprasad, National Director, TOS in India worked in the Library at Adyar in the month of March 2023 for ten days to gather information from archives to know deeper aspects of Dr. Besant. From the founding time of 1908 the old biography, pamphlets, annual reports and letters were compiled in the form of Souvenir 2023 covering these articles. The content exposed immense dedicated efforts made in the past by the office bearers at that time and situations prevailing then. Lot of history is there to learn from that past old leaves which will inspire new generations towards altruism. 500 copies of books were printed, each book with 250 pages were shared with all participants and available for future distribution in the meetings. It was amazing to listen to eminent speakers from Adyar campus on the multifaceted personality of Dr. Besant a Humanist, social reformer, Human rights, animal rights, freedom fighter, Activist, Struggle for justice, sacrifice, women empowerment, compassion, Service to poor and reducing suffering in all living beings are her life teaching for many decades. In this conference 80 participants from all over India participated and shared their experiences. Keynote address by Nancy Secrest touched upon the achievements of Dr. Besant in social service activities and TOS overview in other places.

On 9th July 2023 TOS in India convened an Annual General body Meeting at Adyar with all the participants attending National conference from all regions in India. It was resolved to continue empowerment of women as the theme for TOS in India for future also considering it as the priority focus area in the current social context. Further more opinions were invited from the members for any modifications and new initiatives in the policies for the TOS in India, it was suggested to convey their views whenever they feel to the National Secretary, TOS in India for consideration to implement by all regions and groups. All the members were informed to use the website indiatos.org to strengthen the network of the organization and to reach out to the needy communities.

During this year in response to the Syria and Turkey earth quake an appeal was made by TOS in India and the response was good. The collected amount of Rupees 140600 were sent to United Nations for the earth quake relief measures exclusively for Syria and Turkey relief. TOS in India Appreciate all the group members who donated for this cause and to show our United TOS concern for the support of brotherhood in difficulty.

From 1st Oct.2022 to 30th Sep.2023 new membership of TOS enrolled are 103 (life members 82 and Patron 21) and one new group formed.

Regional annual meetings were held by the respective regions where TOS is active to review their actions and future interventions. In spite of best efforts made some regions like Chattisagr, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir are still dormant and have to be revived to undertake TOS programmes. Rest of the regions are doing very well with their enthusiasm in carrying out normal service activities regularly with the involvement and cooperation of the members.

Keeping in view of the free movement from place to place, it is time to get back to the practice of zonal conferences in East, West, South and North as the Corona Pandemic situation is improving. This interaction is necessary for mutual learning and sharing of experiences.

During this year Rupees 90000 were received from L&T and Info vision corporates under CSR contribution for the TOS Odisha region. All other regions of TOS are suggested to approach the corporate bodies to get this social development fund to address most suffering people of underprivileged sections. Educational and Health support continues to be priority need faced by the groups keeping in view of vulnerable sections not able to access the Government support for the weaker sections.

XVIII. Status of College and Hostel Run by the Indian Section

The activities conducted by four colleges during the year under

review have been published in the Annual Report of the Indian Section (2022-23). For details please see pp. 33-43 of the Report.

The activities conducted/directed by all the 24 National Lecturers during the year under review (2022-2023) have been published in the Annual Report (2022-23). For details please see pp. 12-29 of the Report.

Vasant Balika Vihar Hostel, managed by the Indian Section, offers hostel accommodations for Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya students. Situated in the heart of the city, it caters to the high demand from students seeking proximity to the college. The hostel addresses the essential needs of female students who wish to pursue their studies in Varanasi but reside at a considerable distance. The facility comprises a total of 9 bhawans. The following chart illustrates the occupancy levels in the different bhawans of Vasant Balika Vihar during the 2022-23 session:

Session 2022-2023

Name of the Building	Total No. of Seats
Anand Bhawan	45
Vinay Bhawan	12
Shanti Bhawan	15
Maitrey Bhawan	27
Blavatsky Bhawan	36
Damodar Bhawan	08
Dhruv Bhawan	06
Bhojanshala Bhawan	20
Rohit Mehta Bhawan	146
Total	315

The college has an enrolment of approximately 2200 students, most of them hailing from outstation locations. Consequently, there is a substantial demand for hostel accommodations. The hostel provides

students with options for individual rooms, twin-sharing arrangements, or dormitories that can accommodate varying numbers of students, ranging from 3 to 12 per room. Currently, 202 seats are already occupied by existing students, and in the upcoming session, we will be able to allocate 113 seats to newcomers. Along with the aforementioned buildings Sri Ram House will now also be accommodating students with a strength of 20 girls. Due to late admission and high demand of hostel inside the campus 8 girls who have been accommodated in Damodar, and 6 girls of Dhruv will further be shifting to Sri Ram house after renovation.

Vasant Balika Vihar features two mess facilities: Maitry Mess and Sri Devi Mehta Mess. These messes provide students with nutritious and hygienic meals, including high-quality milk and fresh fruits.

XIX. Review of Financial Position of the Indian Section

The financial position of the Indian Section is on a progressive curve. While the surplus of the Section in the previous year was Rs.2,00,53,540, during the current Financial Year ending 2022-23 a surplus of Rs.2,57,57,617.05 is reported. It is to be noted that the Indian Section Convention has cost the Section an amount of Rs.12,08,857. An amount of Rs.10,74,741 was distributed as Propagation Grant to Federation and Lodges. The Section has received contributions from the Educational Institutions and Hostels an amount of Rs.1,57,05,636. In the last year's Treasurer's Report, he had referred to a possibility of the U.P. Govt acquiring a land parcel from the Sections land for the purpose of the Varanasi Ropeway Project. Even though the land acquisition took place in the current financial Year (2023-24), it is appropriate to make a mention of it here.

XX. Report of the Central Property Committee (CPC)

As mentioned in our last year's report, the following Indian Section Properties have been taken up for further work. 1) Chittoor Property of Indian Section: there was no working lodge in Chittoor and the roof of the building has fallen. And also, the compound was being

misused by antisocial elements. The CPC members visited the place, restored all title documents and appointed a lawyer. There are no liabilities and encumbrances on the property. 2). Rajamahendrapuram Property of the Indian Section:- A case was filed in the local court to obtain the eviction of an unauthorized occupation. The matter is still pending in the court. 3). Krishnagiri Property of the Indian Section:- The two PA Holders for this property are no more available for work. Bro. Harihara Raghavan has gone to peace & Bro. M.V. Rengarajan is to be relieved on health grounds. New PA holder is being appointed. 4.) Triplicane Lodge:- The lodge is no more functional and the premises is being occupied by antisocial elements. The matter is under active consideration of the Section for immediate and appropriate action..

XXI. Gone to Peace

Bro. S. Harihara Raghavan (Diploma No. 43201) of Adyar Lodge passed to peace on 18 June 2023(Sunday, 7:15a.m.). He was a member of the National Executive Committee of the Indian Section, of the Theosophical Society and also a member of the Indian Section Council for some years. Besides, he was carrying on some responsibilities at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar.

Bro. Amubhai Raval, a Stalwart Theosophist of Central & East Africa TS Section, when stationed in Mumbai was a member of Blavatsky Lodge. Sis. Deepa Kapur informed us about his passing away to Light Eternal. Though staying in London, he used to be in touch of the activities of Blavatsky Lodge. When he learnt about Blavatsky Lodge's Attendant Ganpat's ill-health and medical aid required for him, Bro. Amubhai Raval sent a donation through his contacts in Mumbai. May his soul blessed with eternal peace continue to inspire TS Brethren from Higher Planes!

Sis. Soonoo Vesunaa, member of Shanti Lodge, passed away to Light Eternal on 17th April 2023. Her contribution in keeping Unity Youth Lodge alive by motivating her students to join Unity Youth Lodge and to participate in BTF activities is commendable. She used to bring

her students for The Ritual of the Mystic Star also. She was keen that poor students get Theosophical Values, so she used to pay their fees. Sis. Meherangiz Baria writes, Sis. Soonoo used to teach several poor children in her neighborhood and this she used to do free of cost despite her own financial limitations. May the soul of dedicated Teacher with generous and caring heart be blessed with peace!

Commemoration for Dear Bro. Purvez Gandhi by Sis. Parinaz Gandhi, Secretary TOS, Mumbai Region: To some a beacon and to many an inspiration, Bro. Purvez Gandhi passed on to light eternal on March 28, 2023, at the age of 66 years.

Influenced by Theosophical ideals since a tender age, Purvez had joined the Lotus Class and Maitreya Round Table as a schoolboy. On attending the international convention in Adyar in 1973, Bro. Purvez joined The Theosophical Society. During his years of association with the Unity Youth Lodge, he served in different capacities including as President. Thereafter his membership was transferred to the Blavatsky Lodge where he continued as a silent yet devoted Life Member while his professional commitments saw him rise to the post of Chief Financial Officer of Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd.

He actively lived and practiced Theosophy for 48 years. For the Theosophical Order of Service—Mumbai Region, he was the guiding light and principal benefactor. He, an epitome of selfless service, humility, graciousness, and generosity will be best remembered for his countless deeds of kindness and love undertaken with a cheerful disposition.

Equally keen to promote the Round Table movement where he had oft times officiated as Leading Knight, his last participation was in the Christmas Ceremony in December 2022. Unable to attend the meetings thereafter as cancer continued to ravage his physical body, in February he had written, "Will be joining the meeting virtually!"

We wish this ever-obliging soul further progress on the higher planes of the Invisible World.

Shri Shiv Kumar Srivastava (Dip. No. 64423) of Anand lodge, Prayag Raj, passed to peace on 16 April. A special meeting to pay homage to Bro. Shivkumar Srivastav was held at Anand Lodge on 23 April 2023.

Sri Prakash Gupta (Dip. No. 70572) of Kashi Tattva Sabha, Varanasi, passed to peace on 18 April 2023.

XXII. Tasks Ahead

1. The most important task at the present time is to follow up and concentrate on the case made by us for the mutation of the name of Upendranath Baus to the Indian Section, The Theosophical Society in the Khatauni at Tehsil Sadar, Varanasi, in the court of the SDM there. Regular follow up and attending all hearings is required by our team. It is equally important for me to be acquitted from the two false criminal cases against me in the Varanasi criminal court.

2. We have to continue to follow up on the write petition we have made in the Allahabad High Court against Varanasi Development Authority for having acquired 10,586 sq. ft. strip of our land on Gurubagh Road to widen it.

3. To arrange to start the Commerce Faculty, the education faculty (B. Ed) and the Management Faculty (BBA/MBA) at the new college building of VKM.

4. To continue to follow up with VDA for their official approval of Rohit Mehta Hostel Building, Harmony Building and College Building.

XXIII. Gratitude

Every year I start this Section by thanking Bro. V. Narayanan for the great help and support in my work that he has given throughout the year. This year is no different. He is a very co-operative and positive person and easy to work with.

I have to thank the great help Bro. S.L. Dar has given me in the

administration of the campus and for attending the court cases against the Indian Section and me. Similarly, I must thank Sis. Uma Bhattacharyya for taking the entire burden to run the hostel and VKM college. She also helped in motivating college students to become members of T.S. I must also thank the very dependable Mr Sundaram for his help in publishing *The Indian Theosophist*.

I have the deepest feelings of gratitude for Bro. Pradip Mahapatra for organizing so many Indian Section programmes and for having done outstanding propagation of Theosophy work, keeping everyone on their toes. He has silently encouraged so many young theosophists and have been involved in the programme committee.

I cannot find words to express gratitude to Mr Om Prakash Yadav for his continuous help to me in my office work without seeing the day or time. He performed perfectly this time on entering the data of all members that renewed their membership. I also thank Mr A.N. Singh for his precise accounts work, Mr Atul Kumar Singh for his taking over many administrative responsibilities, Smt. Madhuji for taking professional care of me while. I am at Varanasi and the indomitable and experienced Rajkumar Pandey for taking care of number of jobs I give to him. Also thank Raju and his wife to keep Shantikunj clean, I thank Santosh Yadav, Chuuna, Somnath Maurya, Mr Jha and Ilaka of the security department for having worked diligently.

It was a pleasure and privilege for me to work with this team.

Date: 28.10.2023
Place: Varanasi

Pradeep H. Gohil
President Indian Section
TS

NEWS AND NOTES

100th EASTER CONFERENCE - 2024

The 100th Easter Conference will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, Chennai from 29th to 31st March 2024.

The theme of the conference will be ***“THE PATH TO PERFECTION.”***

Members of the Theosophical Society [TS] in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates, and are requested to study the following reference books:

1. *At the Feet of the Master* by Alcyone
2. *The Voice of the Silence* by H.P.Blavatsky
3. *Light on the Path* by Mabel Collins
4. *Masters and the Path* by C.W.Leadbeater
5. *Freedom from the Known* by J.Krishnamurti

Venue: Blavatsky Bungalow, Ground floor, TS Adyar

Registration Starts: 15th Jan 2024 (Registration link will be activated at 9am on 15th Jan 2024)

Last date for cancellation: 15th March 2024 (No refund after this)

Cancellation: Rs.300 will be deducted and the remaining will be refunded if cancellation is done up to 15th March, after 15th March no refund will be done.

Last date of registration 7th March 2024

First come first serve basis. Limited Ground floor beds.

Accommodation only for members.

For any queries, kindly send email to the Conference Officer, Mr. Shikhar Agnihotri: easterconferenceis@gmail.com Or Whatsapp on 8840926268

Package options for registration for the Easter Conference

The package starts from 28th March Dinner to 1st Apr Breakfast. The rates taken are the standard rates as follows:

A. Leadbeater Chambers with A/C package - Rs. 4,400 per person (includes the registration fee, accommodation and meals)

B. Leadbeater Chambers without A/C package - Rs. 3,500 per person (includes the registration fee, accommodation and meals)

C. New Quadrangle accommodation package - Rs. 2,600 per person (includes the registration fee, accommodation at NQ and meals)

D. Registration for attendance only - Rs.300 per person

(includes the registration fee required for attending the Conference, without accommodation or prepaid meals - meals can be bought on the spot with prior intimation to the kitchen)

IF YOU ARE FACING ISSUES COMPLETING YOUR PAYMENT ON-LINE, PLEASE EMAIL US AT TREASURY.HQ@TS-ADYAR.ORG

Allotments:

Accommodations will be decided by the Conference Committee during the Third week of March 2024.

REGISTRATION PROCESS:

Complete Registration and Payment process is ON-LINE. Following is the link for Payment cum Registration page. The form can be filled for **ONLY ONE DELEGATE** at a time. So, if you wish to stay with family or a group, **DO NOT FORGET** to mention the names of Family/Group in the **SPECIAL REQUEST FIELD** of the form at the end and **ALSO FILL THE REGISTRATION FORM FOR EACH OF THEM SEPARATELY.**

Link will be activated at 9 a.m. on 15th Jan 2024. Following is the registration cumpayment link. <https://rzp.io/l/h2fmEfAqvN>

STUDY CAMP AT AMRAVATI, MAHARASHTRA

Shrikrishna Theosophical Lodge, Amravati, is conducting a study camp from 29 January 2024 to 2 February 2024.

Brother Umashankar Pandey ji will be the Guest Lecturer for this study camp.

The topic of the study camp is from the book "***THEOSOPHICAL BLOOMS***".

Study camp is free for the members of the Marathi Theosophical Federation.

The members from other federations can join the study camp with formal permission from the organizer that is the study camp co-ordinator.

The registration fee for the study camp for the members from other Federations is Rs 100/- only. The registration fee includes 5 days board & lodging.

N.D.Raut
Treasurer,
Shrikrishna Theosophical Lodge,
Amravati, Maharashtra.
Mobile No - 70576 76080.