



OPEN & ALIVE - Edition 3



White Lotus Day edition

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A commemoration and celebration of the life and work of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the modern Theosophical movement.

12.08.1831 — 08.05.1891



White Lotus Day 2020

An invitation to a virtual celebration

For more than one and a quarter centuries, TS Circles throughout the world have met as close as possible to the 8th May, known as 'White Lotus Day', to commemorate the anniversary of the passing in 1891 of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

The humble wish of this enigmatic woman, one of the most influential of her era, was that TS members might meet on a date close to the 8th May and read excerpts from 'The Bhagavad Gita' and 'The Light of Asia'.

Colonel Olcott, who inaugurated the day, was especially anxious that the TS avoid any 'hero worship', emphasizing that it was to be a commemoration of HPB's life and accomplishments 'in some simple, unsectarian, yet dignified way, avoiding all slavish adulation and empty compliments.' (Executive Notice of 17th April 1892.) Olcott emphasized that, though a flawed and imperfect human being, HPB was nevertheless a great teacher and exponent of the way to holiness or wholeness, i.e. the way to Unity of Being.

John Algeo explained the white lotus as a symbol of this way. 'Like the lotus flower, we are rooted in physicality, often a very murky, grubby condition. Like that flower, we need to extend ourselves upwards, with a resolute, firm stalk, through emotional waters, to blossom in the pure intellectual air of understanding. We cannot yet actually reach the blazing sun of spirituality, but we can open ourselves to its warmth, we can absorb its energy.' (The Theosophist, May 2008.)

It is said that the morning after HPB's passing, the Buddhist pond at Adyar was full of white lotus blossoms, symbols of the ultimate, unified wholeness of all life.

Restrictions imposed as a result of the current pandemic prevent our traditional commemorative gathering. Nevertheless, let us all pause for a time on 8th May, and, in our state of physical isolation, ponder the symbol of the white lotus and the wisdom of the woman whose philosophy it represents. The world has seldom been in such need of wholeness and universality.

Pamela Peterson

Secretary, Blavatsky Lodge Executive Committee



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Why HPB was Chosen

Extracts from the article "HPB in Tibet"

The passages below present, sometimes in detail, the unique process that HPB went through. It goes without saying that only a highly resourceful individual would have been able to face it like she did, without any allurements of personal gain whatsoever.

Below is the Mahatmas description of the challenging process that leads a candidate to the state of Chelaship, which HPB achieved:

Every human being contains within himself vast potentialities, and it is the duty of the adepts to surround the would-be chela with circumstances which shall enable him to take the "right-hand path," — if he have the ability in him. We are no more at liberty to withhold the chance from a postulant than we are to guide and direct him into the proper course. At best, we can only show him after his probation period was successfully terminated — that if he does this he will go right; if the other, wrong. But until he has passed that period, we leave him to fight out his battles as best he may; and have to do so occasionally with higher and initiated chelas such as H.P.B., once they are allowed to work in the world, that all of us more or less avoid.

(The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, Letter 92, chronological edition.)

In the next passages Mahatma K.H. points out how the Adepts' chiefs searched for a long time to find someone like HPB as well as how the formation of the TS was conceived by the Brotherhood of Adepts:

After nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European body upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own.

(Letter 22, chronological edition)

On the 17th of November next the Septenary term of trial given the Society at its foundation in which to discreetly "preach us" will expire. One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitionally, that the occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others — wiser as it would now seem — held differently, but consent was given for the trial. It was stipulated, however, that the experiment should be made independently of our personal management; that there should be no abnormal interference by ourselves. So casting about we found in America the man to stand as leader — a man of great moral courage, unselfish, and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best, but (as Mr. Hume speaks in HPB's case) — he was the best one available. With him we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them she had strong personal defects, but just as she was, there was no second to her living fit for this work. We sent her to America, brought them together — and the trial began.

(Letter 45, chronological edition)

The above-mentioned passages strongly imply that the success of the new venture — the Theosophical Society and the dissemination of Theosophy — was based in no small measure on HPB's occult training in Tibet. It becomes apparent that such training could not be conducted in any other country but required her physical presence in that secluded country where her Teachers lived.

Pedro Oliveira
National Education Officer, The Theosophical Society in Australia

The full text can be seen here:

[http://www.cwlworld.info/HPB in Tibet - full version.pdf](http://www.cwlworld.info/HPB_in_Tibet_-_full_version.pdf).





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A Fragment of Sri Krishna

White Lotus Day (8th May) is a commemorative day shared by the various Theosophical organisations around the world to celebrate the life of Helena Petrova Blavatsky, (12 August 1831 - 8 May 1891).

Blavatsky asked her friends to gather on this day and read from *The Light of Asia* (Sir Edwin Arnold) and also from *The Bhagavad Gita* (Krishna Dvaipayana also known as Veda-Vyasa).

One of my favourite quotes from *The Bhagavad Gita* is:

"Having pervaded this universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain."

This brief statement says so much. It signifies how incomprehensible the Absolute is from the perspective of our mundane minds – yet we are all a fragment of the fragment. We cannot speculate on the Absolute as it is "unthinkable and unspeakable", but during our evolution I believe our purpose is to learn all we can about the fragment. As the Great Hermetic Axiom states "as is the Great, so is the Small", we are a microcosm of the macrocosm - a reflection or fractal of the fragment and by learning to understand our Self we will eventually comprehend that fragment.

Rosanna Sheridan
Vice President, Blavatsky Lodge

Listen to the song of life

From *Light on the Path* by Mabel Collins

5. Listen to the song of life

Note – (7) Look for it and listen to it, first in your own heart. At first you may say: "It is not there; when I search I find only discord". Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause and look deeper again. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced- but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love. He that chooses evil refused to look within himself, shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his soul. He does this because he finds it easier to live in desires. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality.

Find them and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blind himself to the fact and build up for himself a phantasmal outer form of horror. In that sense it is that I say to you: all those beings among whom you struggle on are fragments of the Divine. And so deceptive is the illusion in which you live, that it is hard to guess where you will first detect the sweet voice in the hearts of others. But know that it is certainly within yourself. Look for it there and once having heard it, you will more readily recognise it around you.

Narelle Johnston
Blavatsky Lodge Executive Committee Member





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Some quotations to reflect upon:

'Light on the Path' (Mabel Collins)

8. Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is imbodyed, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you. Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge, and plant your foot on the first step of the ladder. Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal. But it must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.

12. For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes. Study the heart of men, that you may know what is that world in which you live and of which you will to be a part. Regard the constantly changing and moving life which surrounds you, for it is formed by the hearts of men; and as you learn to understand their constitution and meaning, you will by degrees be able to read the largest word of life.

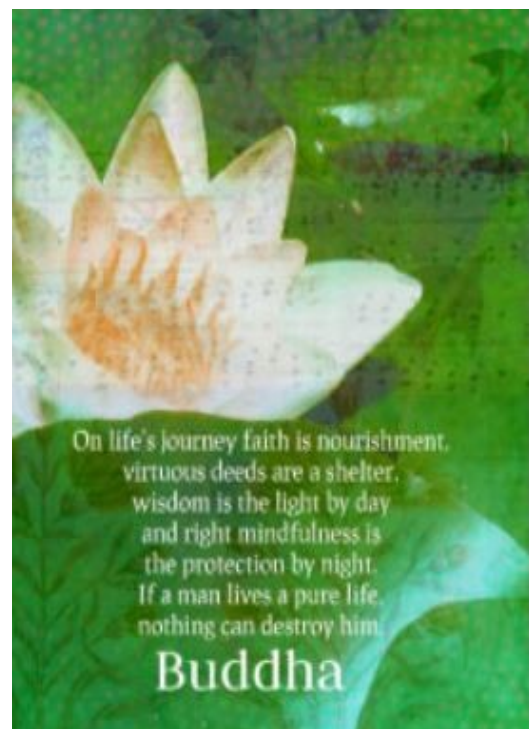
20. Seek it not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onward. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of man are steps indeed, necessary – not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone.

'Bhagavad Gita'

16. From the heavens
Downwards
All worlds involve
Transmigration.
But on reaching me
As Self, Awareness,
Consciousness, Peace
Godhead, Awareness, Source
Of your Being
There is no return.

20. Matter is the cause
Of the effect
Of the body
And its senses.
Spirit causes
The experience
Of pleasure
And pain.

26. However,
The restless, rude,
Unruly monkey mind
Rebels mischievously
Like a naughty schoolboy,
Impishly insolent.
One reins it in
And returns to the Self.



Pamela Peterson
Secretary, Blavatsky Lodge Executive Committee



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Passages from the Bhagavad Gita

Hello Everyone;

I hope you are doing well at this time, unusual as it is, with the pandemic touching not only a few individuals but the whole global village.

Many questions have been asked in the recent past regarding the treatment humanity has lashed out on our great planet. Perhaps now is the time for humanity to examine its past unwise actions. It would seem that a battle is being forged by the great forces of evolution in nature. Great battles are not new to this earth, many have been recorded, and of biblical proportions. We hardly know of the Powers or Forces that govern our planet, but we are gradually learning, surely aren't we?

I would like to talk about a book entitled *The Bhagavad Gita*, (2007) by Eknath Easwaran, a monumental poem which, according to Easwaran, is the cornerstone of Hindu religion. The book, a translation, is one of many of its kind to be found in our own library.

The poem takes the form of a dialogue between the Prince Arjuna & Sri Krishna. It explores mankind's spiritual dilemmas and the various pathways the aspirant can explore if he/she chooses to do so.

Chapter 3:36

Arjuna asks – *“What is the force that binds us to selfish deeds, O Krishna?*

What power moves us, even against our will, as if forcing us?

Sri Krishna – *It is selfish desire and anger, arising from the guna of rajas; these are the appetites and evils which threaten a person in this life.”*

It is important to note that the Gita issues encouragement and compassion as, steadfast through effort, we move along the path, however rocky and thorny at times.

Krishna declares that he is impartial to all creatures: he neither favours nor rejects anyone. It is their sincere love that is important.

Chapter 4:11 & 12

Sri Krishna: *“As men approach me, so I receive them. All paths Arjuna, lead to me.”*

Chapter 2:40-41

*“on this path effort never goes to waste and there is no failure.
Even a little effort towards spiritual awareness will protect you
From the greatest fear.”*

*“Those who follow this path, resolving deep within themselves
To seek me alone, attain singleness of purpose.
For those who lack resolution, the decisions of life are many
Branched and endless.”*

I would like to finish with this verse in Chapter 7:10 & 11

“My eternal seed, Arjuna, is to be found in every creature.

*I am the power of discrimination in those who are intelligent,
And the glory of the noble.*

*In those who are strong, I am strength, free from passion and
Selfish attachment. I am desire itself,
If that desire is in harmony with the purpose of life.”*

For further study on the Gita I recommend a webcast called “A Bhagavad Gita Course with Ravi Ravindra” and “Inner Transformation through Yoga in The Bhagavad Gita” also by the same author.

Wendy Fitzpatrick

Blavatsky Lodge Library Assistant

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Excerpt from *The Light of Asia* (p.51)

*Wild music makes the wind on silver strings-
And those who lay around heard only that;
But Prince Siddartha heard the Devas play,
And to his ears they sang such words as these: -*

*We are the voices of the wandering wind,
Which moan for rest and rest can never find;
Lo! As the wind is so is mortal life,
A moan, a sign, a sob, a storm, a strife.*

*Wherefore and whence we are ye cannot know,
Nor where life springs nor whither life doth go;
We are as ye are, ghost from the inane,
What pleasure have we of our changeful pain?*

*What pleasure hast thou of thy changeless bliss?
Nay, if love lasted, there were joy in this;
But life's way is the wind's way, all these things
Are but brief voices breathed on shifting strings.*

*O Maya's son! because we roam the earth
Moan we upon these strings; we make no mirth,
So many woes we see in many lands,
So many streaming eyes and wringing hands.*

*Yet mock we while we wail, for could they know,
This life they cling to is but empty show;
'Twere all as well to bid a cloud to stand,
Or hold a running river with the hand.*

*But thou that art to save, thine hour is nigh!
The sad world waiteth in its misery,
The blind word stumbleth on its round of pain;
Rise, Maya's child! wake! slumber not again!*

*We are the voices of the wandering wind:
Wander thou, too, O Prince, thy rest to find;
Leave love for love of lovers, for woe's sake
Quit state for sorrow, and deliverance make.*

*So sigh we, passing o'er the silver strings,
To thee who know'st not yet of earthly things;
So say we; mocking, as we pass away,
These lovely shadows wherewith thou dost play.*

Eleana Papagiannopoulou
Blavatsky Lodge Member





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Vale Tony Fearnside



Sadly, we have received news of the passing of Tony Fearnside. Tony's partner Janice Scarabottolo shared the following with us.

"On Saturday 18 April 2020 Tony Fearnside passed into transition at Clare Holland House, Canberra.

Tony was my dearly beloved partner and had been enduring health ailments for some years with a fortitude and determination which is quite remarkable.

His involvement in the Theosophical Society was lasting. He had been actively involved for almost 30 years and was at one time President of the Canberra Branch, and later Secretary and Treasurer.

As well as his administrative roles Tony also gave talks, arranged discussions etc over the years; but most of all it was his dedication to TS which never left him, even in the past few difficult years.

Tony's passing was very peaceful, I am grateful that I was able to be with him at Clare Holland House in the days he was there, where the staff were marvellously caring. Although he was asleep for the last two days, Tony and I had shared together an excerpt from Nelda Samarel's text, *Preparing for Death and After* and *Oh Hidden Life* shortly before he passed peacefully.

Thank you, to all who knew Tony.

Janice Scarabottolo

Useful resources/ Links

New Member Letters

Retrospective: For those who wish to re-read or download missing copies of the set of 22 Letters to New Members, Section has made them available on the national website where they can be reached via the HIGHLIGHT on the home page or by going directly to the item under EDUCATION then OTHER RESOURCES in the main menu. These letters are for TS members only, so you will need to sign up (top right corner of home page) as a USER and then shortly (usually 24hrs) after your USER status will be changed to MEMBER to gain access to the Letters.

<https://theosophicalsociety.org.au/highlights/letters-to-new-members-580fa80b-9592-4572-89b5-1889345d9596>

Contributions to our Newsletter

If you would like to contribute anything to future editions of this newsletter, please send your articles, poems etc in word or soft copy format via e-mail to adyar@tssydney.org.au for consideration.

The deadline for submissions for our next edition of the newsletter is 4:30pm on Friday 8th May. Anything received after this time will not be included.

Disclaimer: opinions expressed by individual members do not necessarily reflect the teachings of the Theosophical Society.