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*Awakening the
Heart-Mind*

India Adventure

COVID

MEDITATION

TheoSophia



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THE MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Our Mission is to serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation and the Unity of Life.

July 2018 Naarden meeting of the TS



Cover:
Peacock Plume
By Adjana C.

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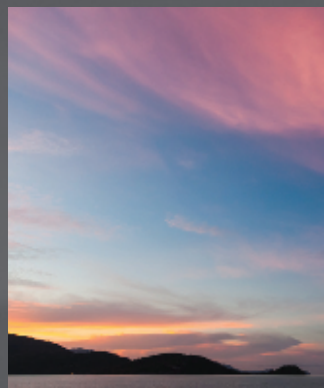
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Letters to the Editor

TS FIRST OBJECT USE OF THE WORD *BROTHERHOOD*

I am thoroughly delighted to see our Doug's letter printed in the December issue of *TheoSophia* and the concurrent articles by John Vorstermans, Clive Conland and Renée Sell, all of whom agree that use of the word *brotherhood* [In the First Object statement of the TS] is no longer applicable in today's world. HPB was a genius, especially for her time, in setting out the objectives of the Theosophical Order, and I feel sure that if she were doing it in this day and age, she would have used a different word.

The rewording of this First Object will open up new horizons, it will reach many more people who previously could not hear the message, because of feeling excluded by the language.

Language is a powerful living tool that carries energy and mana.

Aotearoa has a wonderful role to play in this, being the first to see the 'light'. I want to express a heartfelt gratitude/kia ora to all those who are in the process of making this happen.

Ruth Tideman

I'd like to admit to being one of the people who crossed out brotherhood and put family on my application for joining the Theosophical Society. And I'm grateful to have been supported by my local branch and to have been accepted by the National Office.

Never have I for one moment felt part of any brotherhood even though I grew up in the 50s and 60s in New Zealand where women's rights were a long way off even being talked about. So how could I join a society that asked me to be a brother?

Thank you, Doug, for your well worded letter and also the other writers of articles expressing a need to be more rather than less inclusive. Nothing stays the same no matter how much we want it to. Better indeed to navigate than to be drowned.

And may I also weigh in on the side of those suggesting without discrimination/distinction? It's what was meant surely, is future proof and covers any human being.

Nga mihi,

Rhona Vickoce

In the spirit of 'Freedom of Thought' here is another approach to the use of the word *Brotherhood* in the first Object. While there is a greater awareness of gender bias in our everyday thinking and language and it is understandable that at first glance gender may be assigned to the word *Brotherhood*, yet it must also be said that any tendency to prejudice and narrow-mindedness is the antithesis of the Theosophical attitude. Given this, let us look at *Brotherhood* a little further:

- Brotherhood is described in the first Object as being Universal and without distinction. A list is given to help us, which includes race, creed, sex, caste or colour. It is likely that this list was not intended to be definitive and that the word Brotherhood was chosen specifically for its generic quality, uniting all diverse groups with a common thread of origin and purpose.
- The overarching meaning of the word pertains to the highest regard, devotion and love for all one's fellows. It implies sympathy and support for any selfless cause in the interest of human rights.
- Brotherhood is the ideal which binds families together. All true relationships are founded on love and kindness and indeed all those virtues which pertain to a harmonious whole.
- Finally, we may say that 'Universal Brotherhood' is a uniquely unifying Principle recognised by the Theosophical Society as essential to its work. It corresponds with an unconditional surmounting of difference and separateness, one only made possible by recognising the eternal sacredness in every living being.

Let us try to think of Brotherhood therefore as less a word and more a concept of inclusiveness. Through all the storms, trials and hardships of earthly life we may find in Universal Brotherhood the inspiration that we seek.

Michelle Osborne

Please see John Vorstermans's, Clive Conland's and Renée Sell's comprehensive articles on this subject in the December 2019 issue of *TheoSophia* – Ed.

TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING ON ONE 'OM'

The meditation gathers quiet momentum
As the group sits silently in stillness
The seed thought of unity presents itself
Within the centre of balanced bodies and minds
The sharing of common energy touches all
Even without holding hands

A relaxation devoid of words
Rests upon each cushion
The imagined light is now real
A pervasive force comes through the shadows
And continues as a steady rhythm
The openness acts as an invigorated receptacle

As each individual is filled to overflowing
The group can now go forward
The closing chant of a single syllable
Symbolises how to accomplish something on
one *om*.

Murray Rogers

Time to Meditate

It's quiet. The busyness has ceased. Few people are going anywhere. Now is the time to stop, breathe, relax and meditate – benefitting ourselves and others. The *Theosophical Encyclopaedia* says that the ancient art of meditation can form part of a way of life that leads to enlightenment as well as relieving stress, overcoming addictions, improving concentration and so on.

With this *TheoSophia*, we are posting a booklet *Guidelines for Meditation* compiled by Vicente Hao Chin Jr. As we isolate ourselves it seems an opportune time to read about and practise meditation strategies.

In this magazine, John Vorstermans has written special articles related to covid-19 (p.16) as well the heart-mind (p.5) while Pablo Sender adds to our understanding of meditation (p.10). Orest and Julia Tarnawsky report on their experiences at the TS International Convention in India (p.18 and p.22) and Renée Sell considers this extraordinary time (p.28).

The peacock feather is on our cover not only for its beauty but also for its traditional Greek, Hindu and Buddhist symbolism denoting such concepts as: good fortune, patience, openness, compassion and renewal. May these blessings go with you as you meditate while staying safe and well.

Pamela Zane Keys
Editor

DIARY DATES

September 30 Close of nominations for Governance Board

NOTICE: In line with best practice to help control COVID-19, TSNZ has cancelled or postponed all national events and speaking tours.

Check for updates and details of these events: www.theosophy.nz

FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2020		
September	<i>The Pilgrim's Journey</i>	1 July
December	<i>Theosophy in Action</i>	1 October
2021		
March	<i>Soul and Spirit</i>	1 January

Email: editor@theosophy.org.nz

CALL FOR TSNZ NOMINATIONS FOR TWO GOVERNANCE BOARD MEMBERS

Nominations are now open for two Governance Board members for the Theosophical Society in New Zealand. These are for a three-year term, commencing after the AGM in January 2021. Each proposed nominee must have been a member of the Society in good standing for a minimum of three consecutive years. Nominations must be in writing and proposed by five current members of the Society, who have been members in good standing for no less than three consecutive years.

Candidates are to provide, along with their nominations, on one A4 page:


- A short statement of their background.
- A visionary statement.
- A passport size photo.
- Description of previous experience including relevant experience in leadership, finance, governance, strategy and policy development or similar leadership and business skills.

These details will be included in the ballot paper.

Nominations with all the required details must reach the Election Officer by 4pm, Wednesday 30 September 2020 at 18 Belvedere St, Epsom, Auckland 1051.

Details of the role descriptions for these positions and nomination forms can be obtained from the National Section Office or Website at: <https://theosophy.nz/about/jobs>

INTRODUCING



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A NEW RESOURCE CENTRE FOR ALL THINGS THEOSOPHICAL

theosophy.world is a resource centre dedicated to helping you find what you are looking for. As a new online resource, material is building all the time.

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RESOURCE CENTRE

*... once a student abandons the old
trodden highway of routine, and
enters upon the solitary path of
independent thought – Godward –
he/she is a Theosophist, an original
thinker, a seeker after the eternal
truth, with an inspiration of their
own to solve the universal problems.*

H.P. Blavatsky

New Zealand's National President of the Theosophical Society, **John Vorstermans**, discusses the journey toward...



Awakening the Heart-Mind

The exploration of processes to awaken our spiritual potential incorporates the development of a perception that has a heart-mind focus. Below are some of the practical steps to the operation of awakening the heart-mind.

According to Theosophy, the Mind and the Soul *are the same things*. The Soul is also referred to as our *permanent individuality*, in contrast with our *present personality*.

It is this Mind-Soul-Ego which incarnates and reincarnates, from life to life and body to body, on a long journey of progressive evolution and inner unfoldment.

In H.P. Blavatsky's book, *The Voice of the Silence*, the chapter on *The Two Paths* draws attention to differences between the Eye and Heart. She says:

- The Dharma of the *Heart* is the embodiment of Bodhi, the Permanent and Everlasting.
- The Dharma of the *Eye* is the embodiment of the external, and the non-existing.
- Eye = Head Learning; Heart = Soul Wisdom; Bodhi = True Divine Self

The Eye reflects the nature of the outward turned Mind, focused on knowledge, the external, the impermanent. It has strong passions, desires and attachments which it finds itself immersed in and conditioned by. The human Mind is associated with our inherent animal nature.

The Heart represents the Mind which is turned inwards, associated with the *buddhi*, our spiritual Soul and is free from the attachments of human self or personal ego. Ultimately we need both fully developed with our awareness focus in the Soul. At this stage of our human evolution, the challenges we face are at the level of the Mind. There is a battle between the lower and the higher Mind, or between the conditioned and unconditioned Mind. It is referred to by many names and is the most significant battle we have before us. As we move our attention from the outward turned Mind, to the Soul, a more accurate reality is revealed. J. Krishnamurti talks about the Heart and Mind as follows:

...when the heart enters into the mind, the mind has quite a different quality; it is really, then limitless, not only in its capacity to think, to act efficiently, but also in its sense of living in a vast space where you are part of everything.

A complete change of perception or awareness takes place where you truly experience the unity of life that lies at the very core of the Soul.

WHAT IS OUR SOUL?

The Soul (Heart)

- Atma or True Self
- Buddhi
- Mind (*Manas*) linked to Buddhi



The Human Nature

- Mind (*Manas*) linked to passions/desires/attachment
- Prana / Astral
- Physical



HOW DOES THE HEART ENTER THE MIND?

HOW DO WE MOVE AWARENESS TO THE SOUL?

By moving awareness to the Soul, we can see what is true and real. This step requires the *development of discrimination*, a willingness to question everything that presents itself to us that we take for granted, our views, perceptions and beliefs. To develop a perpetual awareness of everything that is happening, both externally and internally, is part of this process.

Much of the illness we suffer from in today's world is the result of inner disharmony or conflict, where our actions in this world do not align with universal values. For example, through the process of the comparative study of the great religions, we learn that 'harmlessness' (*ahimsa*) is a universal value. Living a life of harmlessness is noted as the first step to be taken in all the great religions. To cause harm by our action or thoughts creates a physiological imbalance. This imbalance results in dis-ease or ill-health, physically, emotionally and mentally. Therefore, the dead man of sense is made alive in the consciousness of Spirit; the lost is found, such as 'harmlessness' results in a realignment to universal values and removes harmful habits. By adopting this practice, we experience greater respect for life, become non-judgemental, have a healthier lifestyle and develop a more compassionate nature.

LIFE ITSELF HAS A WAY OF TEACHING US IF WE WOULD BE PRESENT TO WHAT IS HAPPENING EVERY MOMENT.

When we disagree with someone, or someone 'pushes our button', causing a reaction within us, then it is an excellent time to reflect on what underlies such a response. A disagreement often happens when a conditioned belief confronts us. If we look at what is going on, we may find we are holding onto an idea that is not true but is a part of our incorrect view of reality. Such triggers are valuable moments allowing us to look at ourselves and reflect on our perceptions. Life experiences, especially fears, create emotional patterns that affect and condition our responses to specific events. For the heart to enter the mind, these conditioned patterns we have created must be released. As H.P. Blavatsky says in *The Golden Stairs* we must have an open mind. To know our Self is to drop or let go of what is not-Self. Consider for a moment that humanity is living in ignorance. We live in reality as perceived by our senses, which created this make-believe reality. In the movie called *The Matrix*, everyone is trapped in a collective dream which they believe is real. One of the dreamers begins to see inconsistencies in the dream, at first not understanding and therefore ignoring them. After a great deal of struggle, he is able to awaken from the dream illusion to a new reality. *The Matrix* story is not far from the truth of our existence.

Take a look at the dream (illusion) where we find ourselves.

Personal desire is strong; the acquiring of possessions is the hallmark of success in this dream world. We see ourselves as distinct, separate beings, another apparent distortion of reality. We have lost touch with our inner awareness, our heart-mind. In this reality, we exploit the planet to gratify desires, to outdo our neighbours, even though we can see the world's resources running out, the effects of climate change, and so on. Millions of people live in poverty and sickness in this dream. At the same time, a small percentage of people collect all the wealth and manage food supplies and medicines, where corporate profit is more important than social wellbeing. Is it time to wake from this dream of the lower Mind and awaken into our Heart, our Soul? When will we wake up from this dream?

HOW DO WE GROW OUR AWARENESS TO AWAKEN FROM THE DREAM AND PERCEIVE REALITY?

The first step required is one of simple observation. It is often described as meditation, of reflecting on the thoughts which arise in the Mind. It is not about trying to inhibit these thoughts; instead, to become aware of them. If we are willing to look at our recurring thoughts, we begin to identify conditioned thinking, thought patterns or thought-forms which filter our perceptions of reality. Once we become aware of these patterns of thinking, we have a choice of giving them energy or letting them go and eventually dissolve.

Meditation, one of our most significant methods of developing self-awareness, is invaluable in the development of the right kind of awareness. Through observation of the Mind and in the creation of mindful awareness, we develop an understanding of mind-nature and inner awareness. We might start a meditation practice for 10 minutes a day which allows us to connect with the inner watcher or witness who watches over everything we do, think or desire. It is this watcher who is aware of our thoughts during meditation, reminding us that we have lost our focus and become distracted by some thought pattern. Note the distractive thought pattern to reflect on later to try and identify the pattern or conditioned thought, then bring our attention back to the observation. Once we connect with our inner watcher, then meditation moves from a short daily process to constant observation of our thought, speech and actions. This process is called *choiceless-awareness* – always aware.

We are unconscious pilgrims on a soul journey. As we awaken to the reality of the journey centred in choiceless-awareness, the road to Self-discovery has begun, opening and centring ourselves in the heart-mind. We then awaken from the dream to the true heart connection.

Pilgrimage Stories are often allegorical stories which hold valuable clues to our awakening. The ancient wisdom suggests there are seven keys to interpret sacred texts such as the biblical stories or

parables. The first key and most obvious is the story itself which often depicts a historical event such as the life of Jesus or in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the battle taking place before Arjuna. You can also read these stories as an allegory for our pilgrimage. In this case, the main character of the story, such as Jesus or Arjuna, represents the spiritual journey we take to awaken our heart or soul awareness. Other characters in the story represent qualities that we must develop to be able to complete the journey. Thus the biblical story of Jesus is our own story. We learn to master our lower passions and desires as represented by the crucifixion, not literally but symbolically. Similarly, for Arjuna, the battle he is facing is the battle of righteousness we are all facing.

The Prodigal Son is a biblical story where the metaphysical meaning of the 'two sons' of the Bible (Luke 15:11) describes the two aspects of the Soul or consciousness. The son who stayed at home is the religious or moral son; the son who went into the far-off country is the human incarnation of the Soul, into all the pleasures of the senses and passions. Going into a 'far country' is separating the consciousness from its parent source. The first step in being able to return to the Father's house is repentance and confession. If we are truly repentant, the Father will forgive; He will have compassion, and the bounty of Divine Mind will be poured out upon us. When there is unity between the outer sense and the inner Spirit (the return of the younger son to his Father's house), there is great rejoicing; vitality and understanding awaken. The 'fatted calf' in the story represents the richness of strength always awaiting the needy Soul. When all these relations have been established between the within and the without, there is rejoicing. The dead man of sense is made alive in the consciousness of Spirit; the lost is found.

The Wizard of Oz was written by Frank Baum, a notable Theosophist. The entire story of *The Wizard of Oz* is an allegorical tale of the Soul's path to illumination. This is the story of Dorothy's awakening. The Yellow Brick Road represents the evolving self. Silver shoes represent the silver cord – the link between the material and spiritual selves. The Scarecrow, Tinman and Cowardly Lion who are searching for a brain, a heart and courage represent qualities required to be developed in the pilgrim. The cruel wizard in the emerald city is a personification of the personal god of Christianity. In the final part of the story Dorothy is awakened on her return to Kansas in her heart-mind.

The Pilgrimage is a book written by Paulo Coelho. *The Pilgrimage* recounts the spectacular trials of Paulo Coelho and his mysterious mentor, Petrus, and a journey across Spain in search of a sword. This fascinating parable explores the need to find one's path. In the end, we discover that the extraordinary is always found in the ordinary and simple ways of everyday life. Paulo is on a quest for his sword which he is told he will find at the end of the Camino Trail. Along the journey, he is beset by one

challenge after another that slows him in reaching the sword, his goal. Eventually, he has the realisation that it is the challenges we meet in everyday life that are our teacher. Paulo eventually learns the valuable lesson of being present to the learning every moment on the journey and recognises that the destination (the sword) is simply a distraction.

We can see the same allegories playing out in many modern movies. Some examples are: *The Lord of the Rings* – Gollum epitomises our dual Mind and Frodo on his transformational journey with his companion Sam exemplifying the qualities needed to complete the journey. In Star Wars, Yoda is the Master we will all become; The Force, the universal intelligence. The Skywalkers, Anakin, Luke, Ren, etc., represent the challenge we all face between the light and the dark forces. Light and dark are not separate; they are two aspects of the whole which we must integrate to be complete. *Harry Potter*, created by J. K. Rowling, as the innocent, curious child depicts qualities we must all possess on our journey. Harry faces the light and shadow within, epitomising our journey. Harry and Voldemort are part of each other, just like we all have the light and the shadow within ourselves. We like to show our light and hide the shadow; however, to become whole, the two must be integrated, processed, just as we need to process our conditioned nature to awaken in the Heart.

It is vital to observe, to be aware of what is passing through the Mind. The study of sacred texts and reading the stories as if they are our journey provides us with valuable insights. An allegoric view is a fascinating tool we can apply to our own lives, with constant reflection and mind awareness. The journey is not about the destination. It is about the challenges we face along the way. The Soul's Journey is taken through many incarnations as a human life, consciously trying to reconnect with the Soul and move beyond simple mental/emotional awareness, to become aware from a Soul perspective.

Living Deeply is a book published by the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) based on a decade-long research program into the transformative process experienced by many people. IONS was founded by the NASA astronaut Dr Edgar Mitchell who had a life-changing transformative experience on his return journey from the Moon to Earth. Of all the people interviewed in the research, no one formula, religious, or particular spiritual practice was found to induce transformative experiences. However, the research also included interviews with many well-known people who had these experiences and who shared essential aspects of their journey of transformation.

Various spiritual practices, such as meditation, do not directly bring about transformative changes, however such methods are often helpful in creating the fertile ground to enable such experiences to happen. Other elements in a practice that were

considered necessary are the importance of right intention, attention, repetition and guidance.

Realisation isn't something we can do, it's only something we can be ready for. Practice isn't the cause of realisation, but it helps you to be more open and ready to receive what the universe has to offer.

Zenkei Blanche Hartman (2003)

MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT OF HEART-MIND

Each of us must find our means or way of developing Heart-Mind or Soul awareness. Some possible ways that may be helpful are:

1. A close and careful examination of the world in which we live. Consider the advice of Great Teachers alongside your own experience, reasoning and of research, such as what modern science has to say.
2. Work carefully and with dispassion on exploring what is real and unreal and being open to questioning our understanding of what we discover. We will quite possibly find that things are not what they appear to be and that will bring changes to our actions.
3. Create a 24-hour choiceless mindful-awareness.
4. Prepare a fertile ground for transformative experience by setting up your awareness practices.

This is helpful for every individual who wishes to develop Spiritual Intuition or Self-discovery, a heart-mind. One of the adepts said: "Come out of your world into ours."

THE MEDITATIVE MIND

A meditative mind is silent. It is not the silence which thought can conceive of; it is not the silence of a still evening; it is the silence when thought – with all its images, its words and perceptions – has entirely ceased. This meditative Mind is the religious Mind – the religion that is not touched by the church, the temples or by chants.

The religious Mind is the explosion of love. It is this love that knows no separation. To it, far is near. It is not the one or the many, but rather that state of love in which all division ceases. Like beauty, it is not the measure of words. From this silence alone the meditative Mind acts.

J. Krishnamurti



Theosophical Digest



The *Theosophical Digest* is a quarterly magazine which condenses wholesome articles on meditation, comparative religion, Ancient Wisdom, art of living, health, science, theosophy, spirituality, philosophy and more.

The compact format of short articles, snippets and humour from authors around the globe makes the *Theosophical Digest* a great read for short relaxing interludes at any time. These books also make great gifts – perhaps as a subscription to an organisation, or someone you know who would appreciate some thoughtful inspiration in a busy world.

Subscriptions in New Zealand are \$25 annually, and the magazine is sent out quarterly. Back copies of individual Digests can also be ordered for \$5 each, and are subject to availability. The *Theosophical Digest* is published by the Theosophical Publishing House in the Philippines and reprinted in India.

To order an annual subscription, or for back copies and internet banking information, email Maureen Paterson with your contact details including address and phone number at thedigests@gmail.com or post a note to Theosophical Digest, Box 183, Kaeo 0448 or phone Maureen on 09 405 0707.

Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society, reflects on the solidarity of our lives and oneness.

The Human Project

At this point in my life, I have done a significant amount of travel, yet there are still certain things that never cease to amaze me. Often I find myself waking early in the morning to go to the airport. Within a few hours I am getting off of a plane in a place whose flora and fauna, geography, climate, language and customs have shifted dramatically from those of 'home.' The outfits people wear, the ways they recognize and celebrate divinity, the foods they eat, even the way they eat their foods can seem so different. While visiting with my wife's family in the multicultural and cosmopolitan city of Singapore, more than once I have had the experience of eating breakfast with my fingers, lunch with a spoon and fork, and dinner with chopsticks, depending on whether I found myself in an Indian, Eurasian, or Chinese community.

One side effect of travel is that you find yourself exposed to a host of differences, but also to similarities. Just scratch the surface, and shared, even universal, qualities appear. The costumes we wear are made of different materials and have different styles and colors, but we all wear clothing. The foods and the instruments we use to feed ourselves differ, but we all eat. The names, symbols and imagery for the local concepts of divinity vary widely, but everywhere people attempt to reach out to something beyond their limited selves.

One of America's dubious gifts to the world is the modern shopping mall. Beginning in the 1960s, this phenomenon swept across the U.S. and Europe and now has taken root in the rest of the world. It may be surprising to some, but originally the shopping mall was conceived as a community center where people would converge not only for shopping, but also for cultural activity and social interaction. In Chennai, India, where I spend a good deal of time these days, the phenomenon is relatively new. On those occasions when I have found myself at one of Chennai's glittering new Western-style malls, I have been impressed, not with the products or shops, which closely mirror those of the rest of the world, but with the people and the vitality. Except for the oldest and the poorest, all types of people find their way there.

For someone like me, the vision of humanity on display is both fascinating and awe-inspiring. Thousands of people stream through the place on weekends and holidays. From one of the upper levels, looking down at the movement of people, their collective motion literally resembles a river – a flow of humanity. Although each person and family has their separate thoughts and particular destination, collectively all are moving as one body. Like a river, the human flow has its eddies where families break away from the motion and the children play their games or dance alone, oblivious to the surrounding crowd;



or where young couples sit simply talking and enjoying a 'private' moment together before rejoining the flow.

As much as we cling to the idea of ourselves as separate, self-determining individuals, when we actually look, it becomes apparent that we are subsumed in some larger life. What is so impressive is the solidarity of the human experience. However much we may cherish a sense of independence and individualism, our participation in a greater whole is undeniable and at times breaks through to our normal awareness.

Since its founding, the Theosophical Society has espoused a worldview that embraces the unity of the human family. Its First Object, "to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity," has been emphasized again and again from the Society's early days until now.

The "universal brotherhood" at the heart of the Theosophical movement is rooted in oneness.

Taken from Tim Boyd's *Viewpoint* article, in *Quest* magazine, Winter 2017, USA.





The Theosophical Path of Meditation

A practice which benefits all, from beginners to the highly evolved, is described here by Pablo D. Sender to encourage us.

The Theosophical Society was arguably the first organisation in modern times to widely promote meditation in the West. Today more and more people are aware of meditation as an important aspect of the spiritual life, and when they get in touch with Theosophy they want to know what the recommended practice is. Although the theosophical approach refrains from promoting any particular system of meditation for all people to follow, a wealth of teachings about meditation can be found in the theosophical literature. In this article we will explore some of the methods recommended.

THE AIM

People come to meditation for a wide variety of reasons. Many of them see in it a relaxation technique, or a method to reduce stress caused by daily living. Some look at it as a way to generate pleasant emotional or psychological states, like peace, harmony and joy. Others meditate in order to experience visions or to develop psychic powers. From a theosophical point of view, meditation has a more transcendental aim. Although its practice may produce some of the effects described above, its real purpose is, as I. K. Taimni says, “to bring the lower personality in conscious touch with the Higher Self, thus making it increasingly aware of its divine origin, destiny and nature.” Once that aim is accomplished, its practice can take the aspirant even further. Geoffrey Hodson said: “The second objective [of meditation] is to realise that the Spiritual Self of man is forever an integral part of the Spiritual Self of the Universe.”

If one comes to meditation simply to derive physical or psychological benefits, a fairly simple practice can bring the desired results. This kind of practice is frequently suitable for people beginning to explore meditation. Nevertheless, while it may build the foundation for a deeper approach, in and of itself it may not be enough to enable the aspirant to get in touch with his or her true spiritual Self. In order to attain such a high aim, the practice of meditation has to fulfil certain conditions. In addition, the whole life of the aspirant has to be gradually brought in tune with this lofty purpose. This is why the theosophical tradition sees meditation as only part of spiritual practice, which must be accompanied by study, service, self-knowledge, and a general effort towards self-transformation.

FOUNDATIONS

The first thing that most people ask when approaching this subject is what technique to practise. This may not be the best place to begin. Before starting to walk, one should make sure that one is heading in the right direction. Hugh Shearman wrote, “The question then, is not what technique of meditation is being used, but who is using it, what motivating selfhood has activated this process.” Theosophical meditation aims at transcending the personal self and if used as a means

for personal aggrandisement, it may produce some results at this level, but is unlikely to have any transcendent effect. It is important to give some thought to this question because spirituality is frequently approached like mundane life – as a process of acquiring. One may not be accumulating objects, but all the same one is trying to acquire virtues, peace, happiness, etc., as personal possessions. While it is true that the development of virtues is necessary at a certain stage of our spiritual growth, virtues can flower only when they are pursued not for our personal enjoyment but because they are doors through which our real spiritual nature can express itself. Most people do not realise that the personal self is the real source of conflict. Letting go of it and discovering the true Self is the only way to real happiness. In fact, spiritual meditation begins when one is able to leave the personal self behind. Techniques are merely preliminary means to get to this point. One will never be able to reach that point if one comes to meditation trying to acquire something. As Annie Besant said, “Meditation means this opening out of the soul to the Divine and letting the Divine shine in without obstruction from the personal self. Therefore it means renunciation. It means throwing away everything that one has, and waiting empty for the light to come in” (*The Building of the Kosmos*). Thus, in the theosophical approach, the practice of meditation aims at leading the aspirant to a state where he or she must leave behind the personal self and all mental processes to get in touch with his or her spiritual nature.

All serious spiritual traditions talk about the need for physical, moral and mental preparation in order to be able to meditate effectively. The theosophical tradition also emphasises as part of spiritual practice the gradual adoption of a pure and healthy lifestyle; the development of emotional maturity, which comes from moral living and lessening our attachments, passions and lower desires; the cultivation of an understanding of oneself and the universe; and the development of an unselfish attitude. This, of course, does not mean that one cannot meditate starting right from where one is at this moment. On the contrary, when the approach is holistic, the practice of meditation will aid the efforts in these areas, and vice versa.

METHODS

Meditation on Spiritual Concepts

In this approach, the practitioner chooses a relevant spiritual subject and employs all his or her mental powers to deeply ponder, inquire and reflect on it. When a process of inquiry takes place with a very focused and calm mind, there is the possibility of awakening spiritual intuition. But for this to happen, there has to be an effort to grasp the truth of the subject in its more universal aspect. C. Jinarajadasa said, “As the mind contemplates the facts which have been brought into a framework of unity, there dawns on the mind the new faculty of intuition. Consciousness then understands the true and inner nature of all that is present before the mind” (*The New Humanity of Intuition*). This is a good method for beginners. This deep inquiry stimulates the higher or abstract mind, which perceives spiritual realities and receives the flashes of intuition. Thus meditation on spiritual concepts provides insights into the reality of life and into oneself, gradually producing wisdom.

Some central theosophical themes to meditate on are the unity of all life, the law of karma, spiritual evolution as the purpose of life, the power of thought, and the real Self beyond the temporary vehicles of consciousness. One can also meditate on spiritual aphorisms. A collection of them may be found in books like *Thoughts for Aspirants*, *Gifts of the Lotus*, among others. There are also inspirational books like *At the Feet of the Master*, *Light on the Path*, and *The Voice of the Silence* that can be used for this purpose.

Meditation on Virtues

Theosophical literature explains that every thought and feeling one entertains attracts subtle matter that builds one's emotional and mental bodies. Through these bodies one thinks, feels, perceives the world and reacts to it. Meditation on a virtue will gradually purify the subtle bodies and enable them to vibrate in response to higher and more refined emotions and aspirations. In addition, this type of meditation helps expand consciousness through insights into the nature of the virtues. Remember, however, that when we meditate on a virtue, we should do it with humility – out of love of, and devotion to, that particular expression of Truth, and not out of

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greed to acquire it.

For this type of meditation, you may choose any virtue that attracts you – a quality that you believe a spiritual aspirant should have. Alternatively, you may examine your character to identify a distinct shortcoming you want to be free of. You should not meditate on the weakness itself but on its opposite virtue. Thus, if you are irritable, you may meditate on patience. But you must examine yourself and try to go to the root of the problem. For example, if you are not truthful, you would naturally think you should meditate on truth. But if you are not truthful because you are anxious about being accepted by others, you may want to meditate on courage or on self-confidence. Once you choose the virtue, you can meditate, first, by trying to realise its essence. Then try to perceive this virtue inside of you as well as the inner obstacles that are hindering its expression. Finally, you can meditate on how this virtue would express itself in your life, in general or in specific situations.

In addition to the above technique, there is a different approach that involves the use of imagination. Here, you visualise yourself as the embodiment of the virtue. Annie Besant describes this process: “One favourite way of mine – for I was very irritable in my younger days ... was making myself an embodiment of patience; you never saw such a saint as I was in my meditation; whatever I might have been outside of it during the day, I was absolutely, completely and perfectly patient in it! Then I brought up round me mentally all the most unpleasant and provoking people that I knew, and I heightened their power of provocation as much as I increased my own power of patience; and so I made a little mental drama, in which they provoked me in every possible way, and I answered as a modern Griselda” (*Man’s Life in This and Other Worlds*). As Besant indicates, this technique requires that one strive to express that virtue as much as possible in daily life, so that the process of building the subtle bodies is not undone during the rest of the day.

Meditation on the One Life

One of the central concepts in Theosophy is that ultimately there is only one life and one Self animating everything in the universe. Although consciousness in most people is constrained to work through what they call ‘me,’ this limit is not intrinsic to consciousness itself. It is perfectly possible to perceive the one life as it manifests in any creature because there is no real boundary to consciousness, as many mystics have said.

At the beginning of the practice, the perception of unity may be mainly at an intellectual level, or at the level of the imagination. Gradually, this perception becomes more and more intuitive until an actual expansion of consciousness may be experienced. A typical approach to this meditation involves an expansion of mind, in imagination, in all space, embracing larger and larger areas. As the mind expands, one tries to conceive and feel the unity with all, including every manifestation of the divine life. You may start by imagining that you are looking at your house from above while trying to feel unity with all people that live there, whether you feel affinity for them or not. You can then include those who frequently visit the house, as well as other forms of life there, such as pets, birds, insects and plants. Do not focus on the *forms*, but think of the divine life that is animating them all. Take your time in this step until you feel ready to go further. Then, as if zooming out, go higher, above the town you are in. Try to feel unity with everything that is there; with good people as well as with the ignorant, the unhappy and the criminal; with both beautiful and ugly places. Again, disregard the outward appearances and try to identify with the one life that is struggling to express itself through all these different forms. As C. W. Leadbeater wrote, “During meditation one may try to think of the Supreme Self in everything, and everything in it. Try to understand how the Self is endeavouring to express itself through the form.” Remember that the universal Self is always perfect, pure and divine, even if the form obstructs and

distorts its manifestation. In this same way, go higher until you include your country, then the whole world, then the solar system, and finally the entire universe. But remember not to hurry through the different steps. You do not need to go through them all. It is more important to do your best to realise the unity at each step, including in your consciousness all the different elements that belong to each stage.

Meditation on a Divine Being

During this meditation the aspirant puts before his or her mental eye an ideal of perfection, embodied in the form of a holy or divine being. In the Theosophical tradition the object of meditation is usually a Master of Wisdom, or the Higher Self. But aspirants can also meditate on any deity, sage, or holy person toward whom they feel devotion.

For this meditation to be effective, it is necessary to be careful not to project one's own limitations, such as feelings of jealousy, partisanship, anger, or selfishness, onto the divine being. Otherwise it will not be possible to get in rapport with the divine. Mahatma Morya warns about "the magnetism and invisible results proceeding from erroneous and sincere beliefs." Thoughts are living things, and when an aspirant holds a wrong belief, it "attracts millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful agents around them" that block spiritual influences. Theosophists were the first in the West to talk clearly and openly about the Masters of Wisdom, more than a century ago. Today there are all kinds of incompatible ideas about them. For example, the New Age idea of Ascended Masters has features that differ in very important aspects from the theosophical one. While this is a complex subject, basically the New Age treats the Master as if he were an acquaintance of ours, but endowed with supernatural powers so that one can ask him things for one's personal needs. Thus, in this view one can summon him, visit him whenever one wants, and so on, as if the Masters were just hanging out on the inner planes. HPB once wrote a letter to certain members who had begun to conceive of them in this way, saying that they were desecrating the Masters by doing this. She contended that the Masters regard this physical plane as an illusion and do not care much about the personality. Their work is mainly at the level of the developing Higher Ego, and they engage with the physical plane in a very limited way, and only if it is really necessary. Consequently, in the theosophical view their personalities, bodies, names, etc. are not as important as they are in the New Age. The external attributes are taken just as the shadow of that magnificent state of consciousness that the Master really is. To use the Master of Wisdom as the object of meditation, it is first recommended that one study about their nature as described in theosophical literature. The first chapters of the book *The Way of the Disciple* by Clara Codd can be a good place to start. For this meditation you can proceed in two ways:

- Visualise the holy figure in front of you and concentrate your mind on the image with a feeling of love or devotion, or try to feel one with this being. If the feeling of devotion is not particularly strong, you may deeply ponder on the real nature of the divine being, while contemplating its image. If you are unable to form a clear and stable image, there are two additional options: either concentrate on the *feeling* of the holy presence before you, or meditate with your eyes open while looking at a picture, statuette, or symbol of the object of meditation.
- Alternatively, the holy figure may be visualised in the region of the heart. Mahatma Koot Hoomi is reported to have said, "Your best method is to concentrate on the Master as a Living Man within you. Make His image in your heart, and a focus of concentration, so as to lose all sense of bodily existence in the one thought" (quoted in Blavatsky, 12:696). The heart is highly regarded in most spiritual traditions. Blavatsky wrote, "The Heart is the organ of the Spiritual Consciousness ... [It] is the abode of

Remember that
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always perfect,
pure,
and divine...

the Spiritual Man, whereas the Psycho-Intellectual Man dwells in the Head." It is important to understand, however, that here the heart does not mean the physical muscle. It refers to a nonphysical centre situated in that region of the body through which we can contact spiritual consciousness. The figure can be visualised either in the cavity of the heart or just outside the body, at the level of the physical organ, where the subtler etheric centre is found.

Meditation on the Subtle Bodies and Beyond

The last method that will be explored is based on the theosophical teaching of the subtle bodies. Therefore, a fairly good grasp of this subject will greatly help the process of meditation. According to Theosophy, besides the physical body human beings possess several subtle bodies: the emotional, mental and causal. The physical, emotional and mental bodies compose the personal, or lower, ego. Beyond the personality there is the causal body, which is the vehicle of the individual soul, also called the Higher Ego. Even beyond the causal body there is the spirit or Monad, the divine spark in each person that is one with the universe. In his *Meditation on Life*, N. Sri Ram wrote:

The first object in meditation is to discover one's own Spiritual Selfhood as distinct from the personal vehicle, physical, emotional, mental, and the consciousness active within them. So we begin with an exercise in dissociation seeking both to realise the distinction between the Immortal Spiritual Self and the mortal changing personality. We then come to realise that the Spiritual Self of man is forever an integral part of the Spiritual Self of the universe, the All-Pervading Supreme Lord. Man is One with God and through that with All that lives.

There are two general approaches to this type of meditation, which can be called 'positive' and 'negative'. The positive approach seeks to generate the highest possible vibration in each body so as to progressively raise the level of consciousness. For example, first try to generate a sense of health and harmony at the physical level; next go to the emotional level and feel peace and love; and then go to the mental level and think of any spiritual concept that is appealing. Now go even further and picture yourself as being the Higher Ego in the causal body. Feel that your real Identity is beyond the body, emotions and mind. Finally, try to realise that you are an inseparable spark of the divine fire, and dwell on the feeling of unity.

The negative approach, as its name suggests, is based on a process of negation. With this practice, try to realise that you are not the lower principles, leaving behind one body after the other. Realise that, since the physical body is not eternal, this cannot be your real Self. Do the same with your emotional and mental bodies, leaving behind emotions and thoughts. Finally, stay in the highest possible state without picturing anything, but waiting for the higher consciousness to arrive. This meditation helps generate the habit of identifying yourself with the higher. This

should be complemented in daily life with an effort to perceive things beyond the personal point of view.

This is just an overview of a few methods of meditation recommended in the theosophical literature. For further information and material you can visit the web site: www.dzyantheosophy.org.

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The Art of Meditation

THE PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

The ultimate goal of meditation or of yoga, is to allow the personal self to experience the greater Self, the Oneness which we can think of as Universal Divine Consciousness, Nature, or God.

AN INNER CENTRE OF PEACE

As the pressures of the world increase and multiply, many people see meditation as a step toward a calmer life, and toward direct realisation of the wellspring of strength and peace within themselves.

We must not lose sight of the fact that this is an inner journey. For just as the ocean has quiet depths, untroubled by agitation on the surface, so has every human. In those depths – the true centre and source of all that we are – abide stillness, peace and beauty. And we can reach this inner centre – through meditation.

MEDITATION USING MANTRA

Mantras are words, phrases, or syllables which are chanted thoughtfully and with focused attention. Mantra meditation involves chanting a word or phrase until the mind and emotions are transcended and the higher consciousness is clearly revealed and experienced.

As the mind wanders so much, the music and rhythm of a mantra easily rescues the mind and brings it back to the object of meditation. Both the rhythm of the mantra and its meaning combine to guide the mind safely back to the point of meditation: the higher consciousness or the specific spiritual focus.

Typical mantras are:

- *Aum*, meaning Spirit, the Word of God, which creates, preserves and transforms;
- Tibetan Buddhist mantram: *Aum Mani Padme Hum* which usually translates as: Om the jewel is in the Lotus Hum;
- Hindu mantram: *Om Namah Shivaya* which is generally translated as: I bow to Shiva. Shiva is the supreme reality, the inner Self. It is the name given to consciousness that dwells in all. Shiva is the name of your true identity – your true self.

FROM WHISPER MEDITATION TO MENTAL CHANTING

Generally mantra meditation involves chanting out loud at first until there is calm: body, emotions and mind become serene for meditation. Then whisper meditation almost automatically occurs and the life force begins to withdraw inward from out-loud chanting to whisper chanting. In whisper chanting the *prana*, the life force in the body, is balanced and harmonised, preparing the way for a deeper state of serenity and balance of mind and emotions. Whisper chanting easily dissolves and the life force moves even deeper within as you enter mental chanting.

Mental chanting is practised as long as thoughts are occurring to the mind. Whenever the mind is distracted, the mantra is simply chanted in the same area of the mind that the distraction is occurring. The mantra always wins if given a chance.

As the mantra frees you from one thought, then another, and also helps to dissolve distractions, the mantra then begins to reach the border of super-consciousness. Chanting becomes effortless. No effort, nor warding off distractions is needed. Chanting becomes a pleasure. Peace and gentle joy fill your mind.

Theosophy NZ website
<https://theosophy.nz/news-resources/the-art-of-meditation>



John Vorstermans reflects on these challenging times and asks,
What is it that we are to learn from the Coronavirus?

COVID

An event such as the COVID-19 pandemic has on a deep level, something profound to teach us. At this time the world is confronted by the Coronavirus resulting in an international lockdown in March, April, May and possibly further into 2020 with millions infected and hundreds of thousands of deaths. We are person-distancing and required to stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus. This personal separating is quite unnatural for us as we are social beings, so it has its stressors associated with it which many of us are challenged by during this period. There is suffering everywhere, with people losing family members, anxiety and fear of catching the virus, workers made redundant, businesses failing, finances becoming constrained and invested retirement savings dwindling. Even missing simple habits such as going for a morning coffee at the café and talking with friends face to face is now a daily challenge. In the news, there is fear and anxiety about this virus which is not yet fully understood. Scientists continue to conduct research to find out more about Corona.

However, some of the positives we see in New Zealand include a move by the Government to help people through this difficult time. They are keeping some in jobs through wage subsidies, providing hotels for the homeless, paying for overseas travellers to stay in quarantine for two weeks, providing daily briefings to the country while promoting a compassionate way of progressing through this process together. We must be thankful for the essential services where people put themselves on the line every day for us.

In the Theosophical Society in New Zealand, we stopped holding public meetings in mid-March. We explored alternative ways to keep in touch with each other and study Theosophy. Many members are using Zoom, a video conferencing tool which allows us to connect with people and talk together, hold online meetings and join in group guided meditation sessions and webinars. The U.S. Theosophical Society has created many additional webinars open to any of us to join as well as running online courses. Please see: <https://www.theosophical.org/programs/events-workshops-retreats>. There are many ways we can remain connected.

So what is it that we are learning? An email attributed to Bill Gates (perhaps wrongly) went viral recently. It made some useful suggestions, including:

- 1) [Covid-19] is reminding us that we are all equal, regardless of our culture, religion, occupation, financial situation, or how famous we are. This disease treats us all equally, perhaps we should too. If you don't believe me, just ask Tom Hanks.
- 2) It is reminding us that we are all connected, and something that affects one person has an effect on another. It is reminding us that the false borders that we have put up have little value as this virus does not need a passport. It is reminding us, by oppressing us for a short time, of those in this world whose whole life is spent in oppression.
- 3) It is reminding us of how precious our health is and how we have moved to neglect it through eating nutrient-poor manufactured food and drinking water that is contaminated with chemicals. If we don't look after our health, we will, of course, get sick.
- 4) It is reminding us of the shortness of life and of what is most important for us to do, which is to help each other, especially those who are old or sick. Our purpose is not to buy toilet roll.
- 5) It is reminding us of how materialistic our society has become and how, when in times of difficulty, we remember that it's the essentials that we need (food, water, medicine) as opposed to the luxuries that we unnecessarily give value to.
- 6) It is reminding us that our true work is not our job, that is what we do, not what we were created to do. Our true work is to look after each other, to protect each other and to be of benefit to one another.
- 7) It is reminding us that this can either be an end or a new beginning. This can be a time of reflection and understanding, where we learn from our mistakes, or it can be the start of a cycle which will continue until we finally learn the lesson we are meant to.
- 8) Whereas many see the Corona/Covid-19 virus as a great disaster, we could see it as a 'great corrector'.

The virus is the effect of some cause which in Theosophy we call karma – cause and effect. Some researchers believe the origin came from eating wild animals, but perhaps there is a deeper cause or lesson humanity has to learn from this. Some of these may be:

- We are one world and a united human family. There are no real borders, physical, religious or social, which are simply human belief systems.
- Recognising the Unity, our underlying deep connection, is vital. The virus certainly demonstrates this.
- It is not economics that is moving us; rather, it is social concerns, human welfare that is the priority. Economics must support the human family.
- Moving from *me* to *we* perception where we care for those around us. Helping those we see suffering. Developing genuine compassion.
- Spending more time on deeper inward reflection concerning events confronting us.
- Learning that the Earth is responding to the destruction we are inflicting on it through depleting the natural resources, deforestation, pollution, extinction of birds and animals and so on. Is the Earth attempting to reduce our numbers?

Imagine if there was a *Unity Virus* that required us to work closely together, accepting differences as simply conditioned views of reality. If we did not come together as a united family, then we would get sick and possibly die. How quickly we would change. Are we so caught up in separation, that the cause of ill-health is the result of not living as though this Unity reality is real?

To truly understand what COVID is trying to teach us requires turning inwards and asking the searching questions. For each of us, the lesson to be learned might be different from our partner's or neighbour's, as we each have a unique relationship to what is happening. On a social and country-level the specific lessons to be learned will differ, ultimately to overcome the ignorance of our way of life.

Many of us now have the time and opportunity to explore some of these more profound questions, to develop some practices that help create the mindfulness that awakens an awareness of thoughts, feeling and actions and we can learn to listen to that inner voice. Taking time to be aware of our breath, hear the sounds around us, observe nature and be present to what is happening within us. Rather than continually engaging in the thoughts that travel through our mind, we can simply watch them without allowing them to grab our attention. These are simple steps to help realise who we are at a much deeper level. Simply learn to be aware of what is going on within ourselves, first for short moments, but with practice, this can extend to a constant awareness at all times.



John Vorstermans is the National President of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand and Past President of the Indo-Pacific Federation. John has a deep interest in the Ageless Wisdom tradition and over recent times John has focused on transformative processes that help people to understand themselves and to create change in their lives.

World Healing Meditation

Join us for meditation from home or wherever you might be, for at least 10 minutes daily at 8:00 a.m., noon and 8:00 p.m.

The central theme of this meditation is to send Healing thoughts and prayers to all. You may meditate and pray in your way and the language that is close to your heart. Simply project a bright, positive light of healing starting from you, to your family, spreading to community, the nation and the world.

Let our hearts and minds be together and be a strong link of this chain of healing and help heal all beings. May we take care of all living beings. May all beings be healed completely.

*O Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;
O Hidden Light, shining in every creature;
O Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness;
May all who feel themselves as one with Thee,
Know they are therefore one with every other.*

Annie Besant

2020 India Adventure

Jurij-Orest Tarnawskyj describes his discoveries during a five-week first visit to India in all its diversity...

Bodhi Zendo near Perumalmalai in the Palani Hills was our last major place of retreat on our Indian visit. The Indian Headquarters of the TS in Varanasi was the first point of call. Both centres were visited for at least five days. This was our first visit to India for both my wife Julia and myself and these places illustrate the presenting diversity evident in our Indian experience.

Our plane landed in New Delhi and delays due to extremely poor visibility, a result of fog conditions, introduced us to the acceptance of long delays by the conditioned populace.

This acceptance of a continual state of visual disorder was a challenge for us. Yet there are places where order and harmony prevail. Bodhi-Zendo was exemplary with regards to the standard of aestheticism. There a pride in beauty and cleanliness was evident. Adyar was a definite improvement which was encouraging.

It would be easy to linger upon the external appearances and miss the inner essence of Varanasi! One example concerns the purchasing of an Indian SIM card to reduce the costs of phone service providers from New Zealand. We were directed thrice by different helpers until we located a small shop off the main beat. This shop was filled with Indians wanting to re-activate their cell-phones. We patiently waited our turn while observing events. No one person was responsible for the resolution of a problem; it was a combined interactive combination of sequenced events that followed a seemingly haphazard path, yet an over-riding intelligence co-ordinated this team work resulting in a restoration of functioning. We spent three hours there as photos were re-taken, documents copied, procedures reorganised while different members of the team carried out their responsibilities. There was no frustration, anger or resentment evident, just a patient restructuring as each factor



amiss was rectified until finally we had our Indian SIM cards working in our phones at a moderate charge for the next eight-week period. This 'right-human relationship' was strongly evident as a mutuality of co-operation between the four or five workers.

The same level of functioning was also most evident by the group responsible for the International Conference in Varanasi. This type of functioning was not top heavy with a CEO on an astronomical salary; it was team-work at its best. This small 'hive' was assisted by the 'mother-hive' from Adyar. School children were active in this co-operative functioning. It was a pleasure to see.

A second 'essentiality' that emerged while engaged with the various conference activities I will call 'Recognition'; the recognition of another being, that unfoldment of a deep mutual attraction, an interaction involving the sharing of significant ideas, all resulting in the confirmation of each other and the blossoming of a friendship. In some cases this resulted in a future meeting and strengthened friendship through shared experiences.

Some 'recognitions' are spontaneous and burst into flower, other recognitions require a little nurturing as weeds that obstruct are removed. One such latter recognition gradually emerged and later at Adyar, this recognised person spent hours showing us through the Theosophical museum. It was there another form of recognition dawned when a particular marble sculpture engaged my focussed attention. It drew me into a rapport, demonstrating a strong power that filled my being. Somehow the significance of this engagement became apparent, shifting obstructions that dimmed my earlier assumptions. Yes! Art works, music and locations hold that power to convey a deep remembrance as an inner 'recognition'. This is the experience of a sacred presence bringing revelation and insights. The significance of the power of this person embedded in marble was released.

Visiting Rome on turning 70 and seeing marble and bronze sculptures that were well known, was a beautiful gift bequeathed to me by my three children. As an art teacher and sculptor, much general recognition prevailed though one particular sculpture had an impact that was quite shattering. I never thought that experience could be matched. However, an unknown (to me) bust of Annie Besant exceeded the Roman experience. The 'power' of resonant entrainment is magnificent! By this statement I mean that the crystals of which the marble is formed under thermal or mechanical compression or expansion, give off piezoelectric energy which conveys both sound and structured information. [The Piezoelectric Effect is the ability of certain materials to generate an electric charge in response to applied mechanical stress – Ed.] These energies may impact the sensitive receiver.

As a part of our Indian experience we entered the meditation chambers of Helena Roerich at Crockety house, Sri Ramana Maharshi's chambers at both his ashram and hill dwelling; at Madanapalle we meditated with Mother Meera, also with friends at Auroville and with monks at various monasteries. These meditations involved 'recognition' as did entering the 'womb' of Theosophy both at Adyar and the Indian section at Varanasi, particularly within the Shiva Temple and museum. My request to Theosophy would be to provide a formal meditation centre for all members and visitors thus encouraging meditation to become a regular spiritual practice for all.

The intensity of the experience of this 'recognition' involves the degree of engagement and also may relate to the convergence point as you enter the funnel of compression and more pressure as you enter this birthing tunnel, says I.K. Taimni who wrote books such as *The Science of Yoga*. Yes, meditation can birth or nurture the divine seed.

Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme as revealed by Swami Lakshmanjoo is edited by John Hughes and this book was conveyed to me by Divakar Maurya. I.K. Taimni

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was both a theosophist and a student of Kashmir Shaivism texts. His influence upon my thoughts has been considerable. Divakar and I met by chance at Varanasi and he agreed to act as our guide on the Ganga banks and at the Shiva Temple in the University grounds. Divakar is a student of philosophy at Varanasi University and was very surprised at my attempts to understand these teachings.

Taimni's photo was in the main TS building and some of his meditation sculptures now adorn the local temple. Taimni's many books are a part of the foundation of Theosophical thinking so meeting a student, seeing his photo and obtaining this 'e-book' were significant events. With Divakar's help I purchased a white marble Shiva Lingam which was dedicated during a puja service in the local temple. Then the residing priest placed it with the other objects for further ritual blessings before it was returned to me. It now is a part of my personal home altar. I am having Lakshmanjoo's book printed to be studied. Sound is an essential part of Kashmir Shaivism and is one of my major areas of interest. All these factors combined with a degree of synchronism to make my Varanasi experience memorable.

Duminda sat on the airport seat seemingly internalising, withdrawn into a cocoon of invincibility. Yet my gaze penetrated slightly and was acknowledged with a returned touch of greeting; twice this slight interchange took place. At Varanasi airport he made the gesture of introducing himself and enquiring if we were going to the international TS Conference. We shared a taxi to the Indian Section Headquarters and our contact was established. Prior to this happening, an exchange took place with an Indian named Lucas who was flying to Bagdogra, a census town in Darjeeling district in the Indian state of West Bengal. Bagdogra is a part of the Greater Siliguri Metropolitan Area. This exchange held my attention and Duminda's presence receded to an extent, later to emerge in

the fullness of recognition.

Who is this Duminda? A small group of pilgrims may carry the essence of their nation's group soul... so as different groups gather, the chalice of potential is filled. A small group from Sri Lanka formed a ring of power. Entering this threaded circle via one bead (Duminda) became possible for me. This recognition of Duminda allowed later interaction (at Adyar) with fellow beads. Also this circle linked with the other circles forming a mandala of beauty. This is the third 'essentiality' of some international convergences. The realisation of brotherhood is demonstrated.

Acceptance and gratitude are the qualities that India can engender and even demand. This also became evident as we experienced the International Theosophical Conference at the Indian Sector at Varanasi. Many were challenged by the living quarters and moved for health reasons. Our camping experiences in NZ helped our acceptance of circumstances although we were not immune to chest problems. The nearby shop sold thermal underwear and extra blankets were available which helped with the cold.

As a young child in a dormitory in an orphanage twice I recall asking to be sick as the asthmatic child received the love and attention that I so wanted. This childhood invocation I realised was behind my respiratory weakness and this insight led to my releasing the power of this sounding. This significant revelation alerted me to the immense power that intention, feelings and directed thought have as creative manifesting power. I accepted what was happening but now consciously released the past and restored the potential healing processes. The context of presenting circumstances requires to be expanded to apprehend the dynamic matrix of energies manifesting. This I am learning.

There is so much that we take for granted. Running water, hot or cold; heated homes; clear views and personal

space; a range of available foods; privacy and ownership of material wealth, toilet paper with toilets... and so the list goes on. There is also a facade of wellness. A deceptive outward appearance that suggests all is OK. India's facades are down. All is exposed and presented as it is with the poverty, filth, injustice, corruption and all these contrasting existences or extremes... in your face! This was a challenge. To be present in the presence of this actual life was not easy. To see, smell, be touched... this intimate exposure was an unavoidable reality. Yet we were in enclaves of relative protecting barriers and the fullness of that extreme reality was to a degree excluded.

Gratitude became a fire of warmth and a feeling of being held by love. It became a deep sense of the abundance possible in life and the will to share this abundance through service. It was this serving of others that past theosophists like Annie Besant espoused and demonstrated. The evidence was still around us. This was the 'talk of her marble sculpture' ...this I came to hear!



Long time student of Theosophy in both Australia and New Zealand, Jurij-Orest Tarnawskyj has spent the last 11 years at Christ College of Trans-Himalayan Wisdom, a Meditation school at Akaroa now known as The Southern Lights Centre. As trustee, teacher and caretaker there, Jurij-Orest bases his service on the Ageless Wisdom teachings described by Alice A. Bailey. Jurij-Orest's Master's Degree in Esoteric Psychology is from the USSR gained via ESCEF in Adelaide.



THE POWER OF VISUALISATION

Since Julia Tarnawsky attended the International Convention of the Theosophical Society held in Varanasi, India, she has recalled many special memories.

When I read that this convention was to be in Varanasi I immediately imagined myself there, imbibing the Hindu culture of this ancient holy city. As well, I would be meeting delegates from around the world with whom to connect in an ongoing network of love, light and goodwill.

Thanks to the sponsorship of TSNZ I found myself there on December 30th last year. I fulfilled the first visualisation and began the networking which is continuing with delegates I met. Hopefully, sharing my experience in Varanasi can offer enrichment to other theosophists back here in New Zealand.

THE CONVENTION THEME: *NURTURING THE DIVINE SEED*

For me that seed is the monadic spark of fiery spirit in our hearts, originating in the Sun. As spirit and matter meet, soul consciousness is generated.

At the Convention, in the ancient Hindu Temple in the TS compound, during the puja or cleansing ritual, I joined the chanting of the Gayatri, the ancient Hindu invocation to the Sun to aid our pilgrimage from matter back to the Sun. As the puja proceeded, the priest of the Temple used water to ritually cleanse stone figures of Shiva and Parvathi, and the shiva lingam/yoni (spirit/matter, masculine/feminine) in a shrine at the other end of the Temple. Both represent the union of spirit and matter (masculine and feminine) from which creation proceeded. After the puja the participants gathered at the Shiva shrine to chant and scatter flowers. The new Radha Burnier Auditorium, in which the Convention was held, backs onto this temple.

IDEAS 'SEEDED' IN ME AT THE CONVENTION

The soul as the Divine seed. The seed as an embryonic life with a protective shell. Layer after layer of the culturally assigned identity builds as a hardened shell which we accept and expand on. This ensnares us. International President of the TS, Tim Boyd in his book, *The Relevance of our Work*

says that the “seed must rupture the shell.” When this shell dissolves, the radiance of the soul is revealed, we are transformed, becoming aware of the reason for our being. This process of awakening occurs through observation of the self and questioning “Who am I?” as we seek our true identity in the consciousness beyond roles assigned to us. We are gardeners nurturing the seed hidden within us.

Linda Oliveira wrote in her book *The Sublime Symbolism of the Lotus*, “The trajectory of our spiritual destiny is reflected in nature and the unfolding of a plant to its full potential.” The lotus provides an understanding of this process across ancient civilisations and in the writings of Helena Blavatsky. The divine seed nurtures all beings and realisation is reached when there is identification with the divine leading to the vanishing of the personal ego. See Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu’s *Symposium on Realizing the Divine Within*.

“The essence of the seed is subtle and is the basis of all existence... The seed is the blueprint of the invisible and its own plan of evolution. All events are lessons on the laws of the universe unfolding. Don’t interfere with the process.” So said Shikar Agnihotri, Convention Manager, “*Who is Nurturing Whom?*”

Visiting the ghats on the banks of the Ganges River, where bodies are regularly and publicly cremated, signified for me the Hindu acceptance of the cycles of birth, life, death, rebirth – the Law of Periodicity in action. There was an air of timelessness and acceptance of how things have been for centuries.

This acceptance of the way things are was evident in the TS compound where poor families live in a row of shanties with one outdoor tap to serve them all, near to the stately buildings built during the flowering of the Theosophical Society over a century ago.

A sudden and unexpected cold snap hit northern India when the Convention started. The residents of the compound gathered around outdoor fires fuelled with branches of trees; delegates hurried to nearby clothing stores for thermal underwear, braving and weaving through the melee of honking tri-wheeled taxis, motorbikes, cows and stray dogs in the road

outside the TS compound; some delegates moved out of the accommodation with its glistening damp walls fresh from rendering for the Convention and unable to dry in the cold and fog of the nights and mornings on the compound; some were adorned with rugs during the Convention sessions.

INAUGURATION OF THE RADHA BURNIER AUDITORIUM

The new auditorium was inaugurated at the beginning of the Convention. It is like an aircraft hangar with white fabric walls. Fifteen hundred participants packed the auditorium. There are three schools in the compound, providing primary through to tertiary education. School girls gave out candles and facilitated the candle lighting ceremony for the inauguration. Boys in smart blue uniforms cheerfully guided delegates around the grounds. For the opening of the Convention, students costumed accordingly, chanted prayers of the various religions.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

It was wonderful to catch up with delegates from Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and New Plymouth branches. We made friends with Malaya from Pondicherry and he showed us around the Sri Aurobindo Ashram while we were there. Gerard and Brigitte, originally from the Netherlands and Austria, were at the Convention and later we caught up with them in Auroville where they live. I met people from around 15 nations and from many provinces in India. The delegation from Assam totalled 55 people, according to an Assamese who teaches Sanskrit in a university there.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONVENTION:

- The exhibition of the original paintings of thought forms seen etherically by Annie Besant, displayed in her former residence in the compound
- The conversation between Tim Boyd and Professor P. Krishna, about his relationship with J. Krishnamurti, explored in his book on Krishnamurti entitled *A Jewel on a Silver Platter* (2015).
- The LEAP Boundary Breakers Children’s Choir from Chennai. The classical Indian songs with drum accompaniment were enchanting.

There was an air of timelessness and acceptance of how things have been for centuries.

- The Indian Section Convention, in which I learned about the activities of the branches in India including a goal-setting project involving all branches, Teacher Training with 120 delegates from colleges in Varanasi, the new Rohit Mehta Hostel in the compound for students' accommodation which also housed Convention delegates, the academic achievements of undergraduates in the compound school, a students' workshop in Varanasi: *Self-realisation through Theosophy*.
- The classical dancer devoted to Krishna, dancing with a single leg, telling his story through dance of losing a leg in an accident and, in a vision of Krishna, being exhorted to continue his devotional dancing with his single leg. This he continues to do.
- A tour of the modern Shiva Temple in the Benares Hindu University by a Convention delegate, a student of Philosophy at that university. He pointed out that Annie Besant started a school on the university site before it became the university.
- An invitation by the art teacher at the high school on the compound to see his art works in his house there. He had painted a splendid portrait of Radha Burnier.

In India I felt a continual need to choose “the noble middle path” of the Buddhist teachings as I was confronted with pairs of opposites side by side – great affluence and extreme poverty, modern technology next to ancient methods, gracious beauty and ugly squalor, covered Muslim women in black and the bare midriffs of Hindu women in colourful saris.

I shall miss the colourful saris, brightly painted houses and Hindu shrines. I definitely feel more “rooted and grounded in love” (*The Bible: Ephesians 3:17*) from the continual close physical presence of the multitudes of people and their interest in us, the closeness of people to the land, and the vegetation surrounding us during our five weeks in India.

I shall miss the colourful saris, brightly painted houses and Hindu shrines.



Julia Tarnawsky lives and teaches at Southern Lights Centre for meditation and retreats at Akaroa. Formerly an educator and psychologist in clinical practice in Australia, she now explores the relationship of cosmos with psyche as well as models for psycho-spiritual development with young people (from 26 countries thus far) who stay, study and work on the land. Julia is a

Governance Board member and National Speaker for the Theosophical Society in New Zealand. See also: www.southernlights.org.nz

Isolation Anxiety

In the bubble worrying about covid-19 and toilet rolls...

While locked-down in our isolation bubbles, slowing the spread of covid-19, some of us worry. We're life's worriers. We worry about catching the virus ourselves or that our loved ones will. We worry about where the world is heading and about groceries – even about toilet rolls!

Amidst the isolation situation, amazingly for me, last night I slept right through. This only happens once or twice a year so it's a big thing in my life. I woke realising that at last I had taken the advice I've been giving out to friends and family by phone: Stop worrying. It's a waste of time and energy. It changes nothing. Let it go! Now at last I had taken the advice myself and slept! Spending time talking and laughing with loved family and friends has blessed me – including with what is needed for sleep: peace and calm.

Most of my life I've had a background hum of anxiety in my mind. However, once during Lent, abstinence helped me. Lent is the 40 days' run up to Easter when people can give up things to keep them mindful of the season. My Grandfather always abstained from eating butter during Lent. Coming from hard times in Dalmatia (Croatia) he saw butter as a luxury to give up.

One Sunday morning prior to Lent, our congregation was invited to write down what we wanted to give up for Lent on little pieces of paper which were gathered up and burnt on the altar. I decided to give up *worry*. The ritual impressed me and helped to strengthen my resolve. Over the next few weeks I found myself wondering what was missing – it was *worry*. I felt happier. This exercise taught me that I could change my thinking patterns, which in turn altered my mood: less worry, less anxiety, more peace, more calm.

When we give up something: food, drink, bad habits; it usually works best if we replace it with something else. Ex-smokers often chew gum, for example. Worry addicts need to occupy minds in other ways. Helpful examples include: reading, thinking, talking, hugging, cleaning, walking, helping others, dancing, fitness exercises, singing, or praying (this last especially in the anxious early hours). Some unhelpful activities include: over-eating, over-drinking or drugging, over-use of devices and TV – all to escape worry. Unfortunately these last unhelpful activities have been shown to increase anxiety and insomnia.

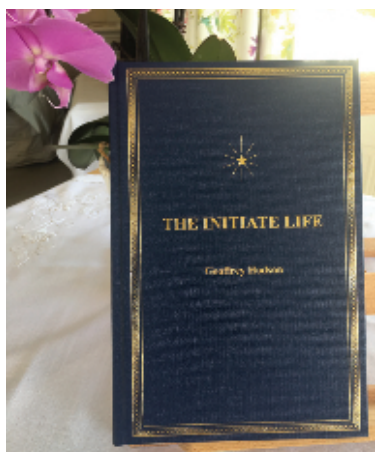
Once, at two o'clock in the morning, I lay awake in bed, worrying about the mammogram and scan my doctor had scheduled next day for the lumps in my breast. Suddenly my bed-side phone rang. At two in the morning? "Hello," I croaked. My son replied: "Hi Mum, I knew you'd be awake." He had previously complained of being the last to find out when I had breast cancer a year earlier so this time I had phoned him and left a message about the current scare. We talked in the early hours and it was good. Afterwards I was able to sleep. [The lumps were just cysts. Worrying had been unnecessary.]

Worry and anxiety are expressions of fear. The opposite of fear is love (not hate as some assume – hate can be quite close to love). Talking with family and friends is a loving activity. So, to let go of isolation anxiety, replace worry with love, phone a friend or relle. Give them your listening and caring self. Ease your anxiety as well as theirs. They will be happy to hear from you and you will benefit as well.

Love is one of those gifts that bless the giver as well as the receiver.

A TSNZ member contribution.





The Initiate Life

A Guide to the Path of Hastened Unfoldment by Geoffrey Hodson

The Path of Hastened Unfoldment is one of Geoffrey Hodson's key teachings and this new book, compiled from his talks and study notes, contains material on this very subject. It is relevant for the serious student, aspirant, disciple, or initiate. While many of the talks were addressed to Theosophical Society members and audiences, the message of the Ancient Wisdom and the Path of Swift Unfoldment is applicable to all humanity.

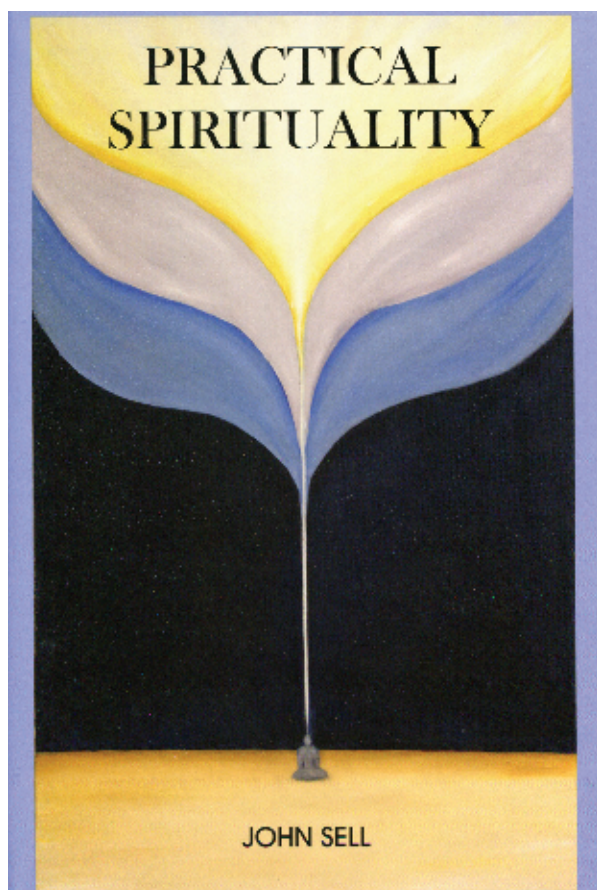
Geoffrey Hodson is acknowledged the world over for his near lifelong dedication to spreading the Ancient Wisdom, Theosophia, and for his depth of knowledge of its multifaceted aspects. He was so highly regarded that wherever he travelled, people sought his counsel and were guided by his unique insight.

Order online at: <https://theosophy.nz> Email: nvp@theosophy.org.nz

Book cost: NZD \$85; free postage within New Zealand
extended for 2020; postage overseas: NZD \$40

The Theosophical Publishing House, Auckland (2018).

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY Selected Works of John Sell



Two of John Sell's qualities that come through this book are his sincerity and his ability to engage the reader... This is evident in every chapter, providing uplifting support as the reader delves into what are often difficult and complex issues on the path to self-understanding and personal transformation.

Practical Spirituality also contains a useful article by Elizabeth Sell [who edited the work] titled *Service: A Dynamic Challenge*, that focuses on the importance of committing ourselves to practical activities that are of lasting value to both the local and world communities. In addition to illustrations by John Sell and Lionel Taylor, *Practical Spirituality* contains full-colour reproductions of rare paintings by Elizabeth Sell that are as beautiful as they are inspiring.

Practical Spirituality: Selected Works of John Sell offers a wealth of useful, step-by-step teachings of Theosophy that will challenge, inform and inspire. In addition to being important to the library of every theosophical lodge or study centre, this will be a 'core text' for individual students wishing to expand their insight, compassion and understanding of life's mysteries.

Extracts from review by Nathaniel Altman in the American TS magazine *Quest*, Fall 2019.
See complete book review on line at www.theosophy.nz/

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STUDIES IN THE WISDOM TRADITION

By David Reigle and Nancy Reigle

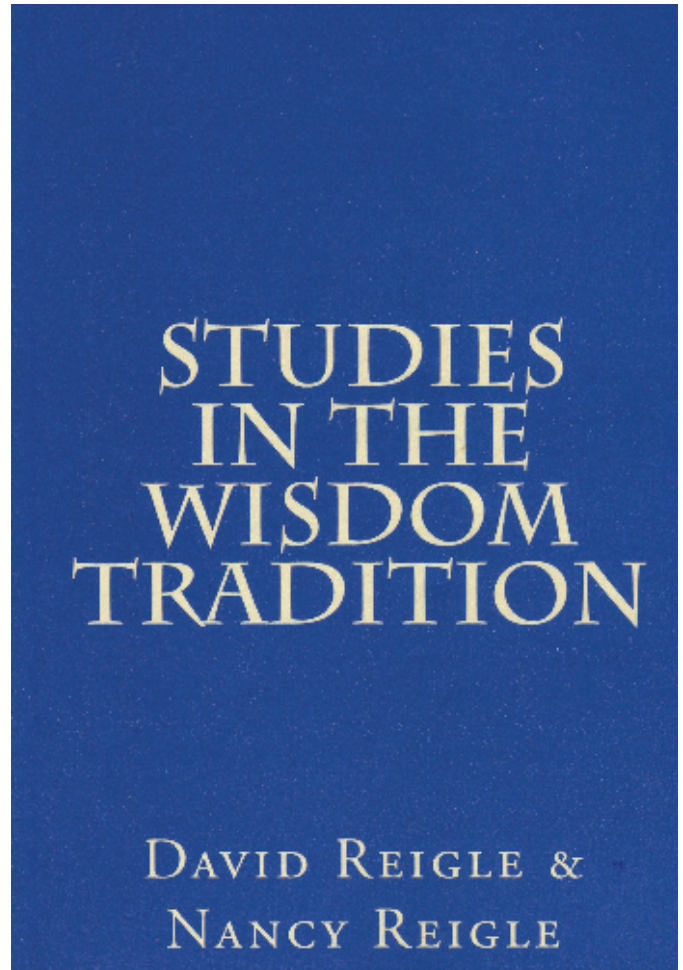
A SPECIAL BOOK REVIEW BY JOHN VORSTERMANS

Those interested in the origins of theosophy, and the roots of the current Theosophical movement, will find this book insightful. Theosophical scholars David and Nancy Reigle have studied theosophy's origins and founding literature to a depth we rarely have the opportunity to appreciate, including *The Book of Dzyan* on which H.P. Blavatsky based much of *The Secret Doctrine* and which she linked to *The Secret Book of Maitreya Buddha*.

While theosophy predates known civilisations and can be traced back to a pre-Vedic era called Āryāvarta, David and Nancy believe that Buddhism contains within its teachings more of this theosophy than any other tradition or religion now accessible. This is especially true for the teaching of Tsongkhapa (1375-1410), the founder of the Gelugpa order of Tibetan Buddhism who created what would be called exoteric and esoteric Buddhist schools. Links can be found through the study of Tsongkhapa's teachings and that of some of his mentors, and the *Three Fundamental Propositions* found in *The Secret Doctrine* by Blavatsky. The Mahatmas behind the founders of the Theosophical Society are considered to be Buddhists from this esoteric school about which very little is known today.

Studies in the Wisdom Tradition explores Buddhism (pre-Vedic Buddhism) as well as the Sāṃkhya philosophy, often incorrectly considered a dualistic tradition. The origin of Śaṅkarācārya is discussed with clear evidence that he was alive a thousand years earlier than modern scholars have suggested.

The Reigles place before us the idea that all the major religions, especially of the East, did not have this concept of what we call God today. This was slowly introduced over time, as the translators of the commentaries on the original teachings, through their own ignorance, created the idea of a God. Now God is a strong part of the religions which have distorted much of the original wisdom and have become largely devotional because of it. Sadly, today none of the original texts of these great religions are accessible as the original teachings have become lost. Much more is discussed including a chapter on the First Fundamental Proposition, and the *Doctrinal Position of the Wisdom Tradition* and Ātman/Anātman in Buddhism.



Studies in the Wisdom Tradition is itself a journey which captivates one's attention, brings insight into a wider perceptive of modern Theosophy and is great for cracking open some of the fixed ideas we might have and re-examining them. One thing is clear, when we study Theosophy, we always need to go ever deeper to find the truth, both externally and internally.

Studies in the Wisdom Tradition is available on Amazon and will appear in the National Section library of TSNZ later this year

John Vorstermans is the National President of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand and Past President of the Indo-Pacific Federation..



Renée Sell, National Coordinator for the Theosophical Order of Service in New Zealand, quotes John F. Kennedy as she considers these exceptional times...



‘A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats’

The year kicked off with a busy start and then... who would have thought that, as I write this, we are now three weeks into an all New Zealand lockdown, because of a sub-microscopic infectious virus? While a strange space to be in, unprecedented, really quiet but dare I say it, ‘welcome’ in terms of time-out from the trappings of a busy life! Over the past four years, my calendar has been full, weekdays and weekends with commitments: speaking engagements, travelling, meetings, studies and preparation and family gatherings with no time to stop and smell the flowers. We all lead busy lives. A chief complaint has always been ‘there is not enough time’ ... to do ... to just be. Is this the theosophical life? That life is always just around the corner, when everything quietens down, and we know that it never quietens down enough for us to be still. Well, here we are, the corner has arrived for most of us...

We know that change in the world comes from individuals, that true inner peace is something that is within each one of us, in our hearts, maybe deeply buried. However, the discovery of this inner peace is the birthright of every human being. What if we could tap into this, just by slowing down, being still, listening to nature and bathing in the silence of who we truly are? We would be carving out space in our own lives, to flower from within! To know who we are; Self-Knowledge of that Being, that vast, magnificent Spiritual Being.

Seeing this earthly life as a brief sojourn in a much bigger picture with purpose and meaning, is a mindset to be cultivated. We may not understand the purpose and meaning of life, but we can slow down and take time to discover our true selves, to feel and experience life and be present to what is, what makes us tick. What motives are behind our thoughts and actions? What experiences do we let define us? In quietness and stillness we can discover the real spiritual beings that we are.

Have you thought of yourself as a spiritual being having a human experience on this planet? We are a vibration on a continuum and we can raise that vibration anytime we choose to do so, beginning with our own thoughts. Thoughts are like pebbles thrown into a pond, which sooner or later will set in motion every single drop of water in that pond. While considering the interconnectedness of everything, all we need to do is find our centre through the quiet, still mind, to discover peace and equanimity that is unparalleled. Each of us is unique in our gifts and capacity to love. If we can trust ourselves, trust life, that we are exactly where we need to be at any given moment, we have the capacity for stillness and silence to deepen our human experience. The choice is ours, if we want to open the gates of our own being.

Meditation in the deepest sense of the word is coming home to who we truly are, in this present moment. Let us stop right now, and take three deep breaths

If we can touch this aspect of our inner selves, we know a joy that can change our lives forever.

down into the tummy and release. That is how close the essence of our being is, the one true Reality: 'nearer to us than breathing and closer than hands and feet,' to quote The *Upanishads*. If we can touch this aspect of our inner selves, we know a joy that can change our lives forever. This is the cornerstone of true spirituality, to help us awaken within ourselves, find balance, inner peace and equanimity – for true service to humanity.

We cannot fix what's going on in the world, and as a TOS organiser and supporter, this initially brought me a feeling of helplessness and then, a deep sense of connection and compassion to all, as we navigate this unknown territory. Maybe this is the catalyst that is required for us to reset our lives, to catch our attention and bring our unique human factor of choice into the picture by bringing closer into alignment, all aspects of our being. We have a choice in our response to current situations; will it be in a fearful way, or a positive, helpful way, adding to the energy of the planet?

It is my understanding of the Ancient Wisdom teachings, that it is our duty to act for the benefit of all and what greater task could one do, than to raise their own vibration which will in turn lift the vibration of the whole and help the onward progress of humanity? We often cling to words, books, views, things, people, all attachments, rather than go within our own selves, untie the ropes and let the great spiritual being that we are, slip our moorings and slide out into the deep blue sea – to be free.

Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING and the rest,
but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.

From *The Voice of the Silence* by H.P. Blavatsky

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Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, Margaret Johns can see some hopeful possibilities ...

Life is full of surprises, challenges and change isn't it? Perhaps the COVID-19 shut-down has caused us to stop and re-evaluate our lives and everything around us. With the shut-down of fast food outlets people are forced to re-think how and what they eat and maybe return to more basic, healthy food choices. I was surprised to hear of panic buying of flour but discovered people had been buying it to make play-dough for their children! At the time of writing, the NZ Vegetarian Society is helping people with advice and recipes via its website and by email, with our office staff working from home. It is hoped that people come out of this enforced shut-down with a greater appreciation of fresh fruit and vegetables and those who grow and supply them. Home gardens can be a boon in times of

need, so maybe there will be an upsurge in these, certainly all the seeds and seedlings disappeared from the garden centres prior to lock down! We need to consider how much we rely on packaged food and make changes for the better. I also hope that governments around the world will push for closure of markets where dangerous viruses originate and develop.

It is encouraging to see the NZ Vegetarian Society's message of caring and kindness shared, publicised and emphasised. I hope it is a message which has been taken to heart, put into action and will blossom throughout New Zealand society for many years to come. In line with a 'back to basics' theme, try the following recipes:

HAZELNUT AND COURGETTE BAKE

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 45-60ml (3 to 4 Tbsp) oil
- 100g shelled hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- 550g courgettes, diced
- ½ Tbsp sesame seeds
- ½ Tbsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ¼ tsp grated root ginger
- 75g medium oatmeal or rolled oat flakes
- 75g ground nuts (peanuts, cashews or almonds)
- 50g grated coconut
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste



- 150g canned tomatoes, puréed
- 1. In a large frying pan gently sauté the onion for 3-4 minutes in 2 Tbsp oil. Add in the hazelnuts and courgettes and cook over moderate heat until nuts have browned lightly and courgettes are soft. Add extra oil if required.
- 2. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F) (gas mark 4).
- 3. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in small, heavy-based pan. Mix the sesame, cumin, turmeric and ginger and fry over medium heat, stirring, for 2-3 minutes or until they darken.
- 4. Away from the heat, mix the onions, hazelnuts and courgettes with the spices, oatmeal, ground nuts, coconut and cayenne and work everything together thoroughly. Season well and stir in the puréed tomatoes.
- 5. Grease a 450g loaf tin and press the mixture in well. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until the top is well browned and firm to the touch. Serve hot.

BROCCOLI SOUP

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 15ml (1 Tbsp) sunflower oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 450g green broccoli, chopped
- 570 ml vegetable stock
- Salt and pepper
- Juice of ½ lemon



GARNISH

- 100g broccoli florets
- (Optional) 60ml mixed sour cream and single cream (dairy or non-dairy)

1. In a large, heavy-based pan sauté the onion and garlic in the oil with the bay leaf until soft (about 3-4 minutes).
2. Add the broccoli and stock, bring to the boil and simmer gently, covered, until the broccoli is tender but still bright green. Remove the bay leaf and let the soup cool a little.
3. Liquidise the soup until it is completely smooth. Season to taste, add the lemon juice and reheat gently in a clean pan.
4. Meanwhile, steam the broccoli florets until just tender, scatter them over the soup and stir in the cream just before serving.

More recipes, information and the NZVS revised and updated *Home Tried Favourites* recipe book, are now available from www.vegetarian.org.nz



Vasanta House Library



Books can be ordered from the library at TSNZ national headquarters by using the postal facility available and contacting the librarian at email: library@theosophy.org.nz or 18 Belvedere St, Epsom, Auckland 1051, or telephone 09 523 1797 (Saturday afternoons).

Cost to members is the return postage, non-members may join for \$10.

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Casual accommodation is available at TS National Headquarters, Vasanta House in Epsom, Auckland. There is a range of rooms: single, double and bunk rooms with and without en-suite plus kitchen and laundry facilities. We welcome those in sympathy with the TS Objects and willing to abide by vegetarian, smoke-free and alcohol-free requirements.

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Theosophy is the body of truths which form the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guides its evolution.

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From *Exploring the Mysteries of Existence* published by The Theosophical Society - <http://theosophy.nz>

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see newsletter on TS webpage
President: Benjamin Upton Ph 027 517 6739
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WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THEOSOPHY TODAY?

The problems humanity faces: war, overpopulation, exploitation, prejudice, oppression, greed, hate; are just the symptoms of a disease. We need to treat the symptoms; but to cure the disease, we need to eliminate its cause. The cause of the disease is ignorance of the truth that we are not merely unconnected, independent beings whose particular welfare can be achieved at the expense of the general good. The cure is the recognition that we are all one with each other and with all life in the universe, and then applying this realisation to daily life.

Despite the superficial cultural and genetic differences that divide humanity, we are remarkably homogeneous; physically, psychologically, intellectually and spiritually. Biologically, we are a single human gene pool, with only minor local variations. Psychologically, we respond to pleasure and pain in the same way. Intellectually, we have the same curiosity about our place in the universe and the same power to discover truth. Spiritually, we have a common origin and a common destiny.

We are part and parcel of the totality of existence stretching from this planet Earth to the farthest reaches of the cosmos in every conceivable dimension. When we realise our integral connection with all other human beings, with all other life forms, with the most distant reaches of space, we will realise that we cannot either harm or help another without harming or helping ourselves. We are all one.

To know this is to be healthy in body, whole in mind, and holy in spirit. That ideal is expressed in the following words, known as the *Universal Invocation*, written by Annie Besant, the second President of the Theosophical Society:

O hidden Life, vibrant in every atom,
O hidden Light, shining in every creature,
O hidden Love, embracing all in oneness,
May all who feel themselves as one with thee
Know they are therefore one with every other.

<http://theosophy.nz>

The true basis of morality is utility; that is,
the adaptation of our actions to the promotion of the
general welfare and happiness; the endeavour so to
rule our lives that we may serve and bless humankind.

Annie Besant



June 2020