

PHILOSOPHY · SCIENCE · RELIGION · THE ARTS

TheoSophia

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THE JOURNEY OF
SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Personalising
the Wisdom

*Moving to
Enlightenment*

**THE MYSTIC PATH
TO INNER PEACE**

TheoSophia



TheoSophia is the official magazine of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand.

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Contributions are welcome. Articles will be considered if up to 1,500 words, and sent as an email attachment to the editor. Note that *TheoSophia* articles will also be used in part or whole on the website: www.theosophy.nz

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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 all Life.

July 2018 General Council meeting of the Theosophical Society.



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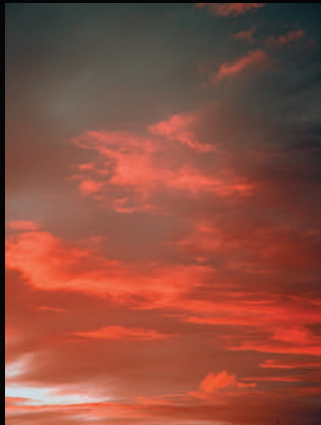
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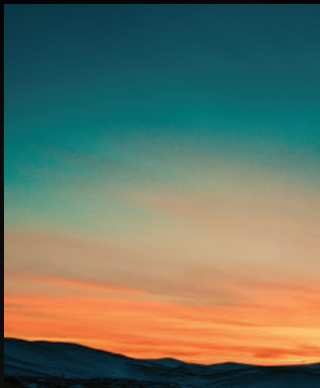
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127TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN NZ INC.

OUR MYSTERY

EXPLORING THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

11 - 16 January 2024

At the Scenic Hotel Cotswold, Christchurch

Come and join us as we explore together to deepen our understanding of the Mystery of which we are all a part. Why are we here? What is our part to play? How do we open ourselves to the possibilities hidden within? What can we learn from others? This theme is at the very heart of Theosophy. We look forward to sharing together the journey of discovery.

OUR SPECIAL GUEST BARBARA HEBERT



Past President of the Theosophical Society in America, Barbara Hebert is a third-generation theosophist. She has been a member of the Theosophical Society since the mid-1970s and active in local, regional, national and international theosophical work. In her professional life, Barbara Hebert has been an educator and counsellor, receiving her Ph.D. in Counsellor Education. She has served in a number of different roles as counsellor educator, including a private practice as a therapist and an adjunct professor at Southeastern Louisiana University.

Barbara's keynote presentation is: **THE SOUL'S JOURNEY: The Heart of Theosophy**

VENUE

The convention will be held at Scenic Hotel Cotswold, Christchurch (Westminster Conference Room), Merivale, Christchurch 8014. The venue's conference room provides an elegant and relaxed atmosphere, surrounded by picturesque gardens. Shared accommodation will be across the road at Acland House, Merivale. Acland House is a boarding house run by Christchurch Girls High School and is an original historic homestead with adjoining dormitory wings.

ALSO

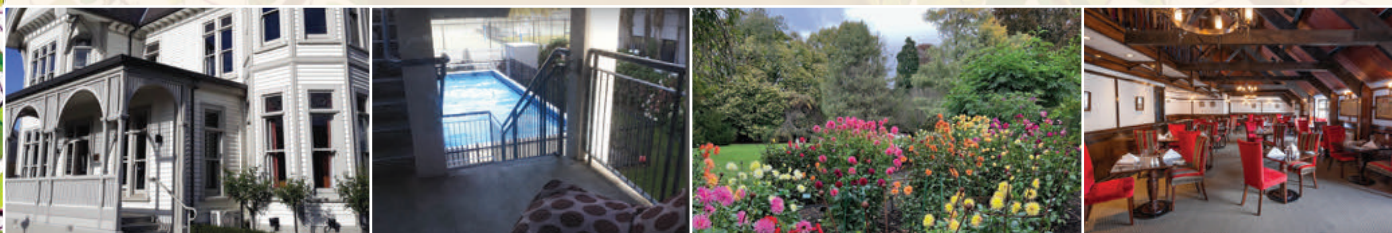
- Presentations from various speakers, guided meditations and workshops.
- A special TOS session update from Carol Collier.
 - An outing in Christchurch.
- Time to share and chat over a cup of tea.

FURTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Richard Sell, National President
Susanna Roskilley, Canterbury Branch President

Plus other local and invited speakers including
John Vorstermans, Renée Sell, Susan Kaschula, Alastair Murray, Kirsty Morton and more.

REGISTRATION: see registration form in this issue.



ON TURNING SEVENTY

The mountain's whining wind
Insinuates around the creaking flue.
Possums flaunt themselves on the deck
Eating Begonias.
It's one of those nights.

In my hotbed I radiate the calories
Of too much pizza.
A torrent of thought floods the mind.
I wonder why I am here in rural isolation
And not ensconced in placid suburban plot
Tamed by the nine to five rhythm of the street.

I wander to the idea of gratitude
And find myself bowing to inevitable providence,
That which pumps the heat of heart
The bellows of the lungs
For an allotted life span.
Is it not too glib
To humble myself to Being?

It is the lot of the elderly
To live out their days in dignity or despair.
I am one of these now
A septuagenarian.
A decade ahead of mindless time killing
Or filling the days... with what?

In my mind I row to the centre of a lake of stillness,
Hoist up a mast of meditation
And tie myself to it,
Heart centre strapped to wood,
Beneath it the thymus
To regulate, protect the sense of Self against not-Self.

I call upon Will and Love
That, overshadowing, hold coherent
Creative flow around the planet.
I give myself to downflow
Heart pressed to this hope
This providence;
That it may be a fountain outlet
Beyond my petty frettings.
Brave, bold, bare
Beyond control
Flowing, free
Conduit for the World Tree.

That I may be a shaman strange
Beyond banality, brutishness
And greyness...
Somehow a light.

Julia Tarnawsky

Transforming Ourselves

On the cover of my copy of the book *The Process of Self-Transformation* by international theosophist, Vicente (Vic) Hao Chin Jr are the words 'Mastery of the self and awakening of our higher potentials'. It also says on the website www.theosophy.nz/ that this book shows approaches in handling psychological conflicts that prevent the capacity to live more fully and have more meaningful relationships. It also helps the deepening of spiritual practices. I strongly recommend both the book and the course that goes with it (see p.16).

Writing around this theme of self-transformation in our Spring issue of *TheoSophia*, are Richard Sell (p.6), Tim Boyd (p.8), John Vorstermans (p.12), Barbara Hebert (p.18) and Edward Abdill (p.23). More writing that will inspire is by Julia Tarnawsky (p.20), Kirsty Morton (p.21) and Robert Haywood (p.22).

Feedback from the TSNZ Immersion Weekend provides interesting reading while news of Robert's move (p.5) brings you up to date with changes in personnel.

We encourage you to join a new on-line lecture series with Martin Leiderman which has TSNZ members excited (p.4). Also, register early to participate in the National Convention 2024 (p.2) where you can gain inspiration to further your personal progress toward self-transformation.

Pamela Zane

Editor

editor@theosophy.org.nz

CORRECTION: The picture that was attached to Elizabeth Sell's article on page 8 in the June 2023 issue of TheoSophia was incorrectly attributed. The artist was Ethelwynne M. Quail.

DIARY DATES

2023

September 3 3pm – First of four monthly Martin Leiderman lectures online. Further lectures on 8 October, 5 November and 3 December. (See page 4 for details.)

2024

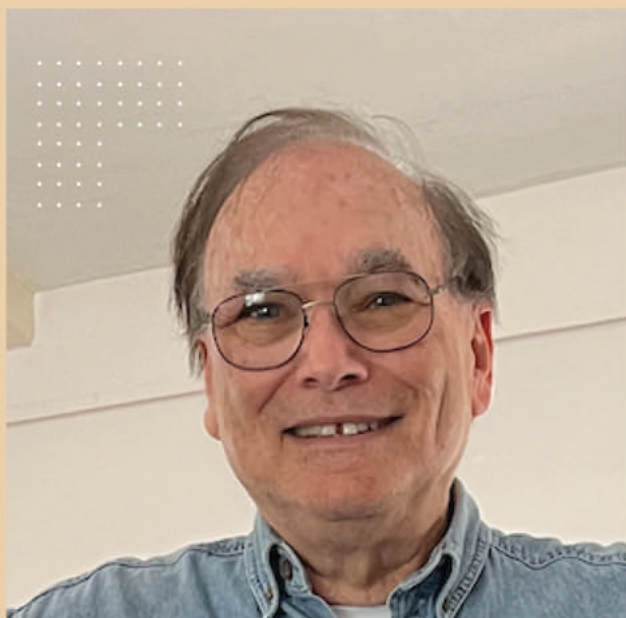
January 11-16 127th National Convention of the Theosophical Society in NZ Inc. National Convention 2024 Christchurch
January 12 TSNZ Annual General Meeting

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

FUTURE ISSUES

Date	Theme	Deadline
2023		
December	Living in an Interconnected World	1 October
2024		
March	The Hidden Side of Things	1 January
June	Harmony and Tolerance	1 April

Email: editor@theosophy.org.nz



THEOSOPHY NZ NEW ONLINE LECTURE SERIES

Has Arrived!

THE SECRET DOCTRINE WITH MARTIN LEIDERMAN

THE ONLINE SESSIONS WILL BEGIN AT 3PM EACH DATE

**The One and The
Many: An Eternal and
Periodical Principle**

**SUNDAY 3
SEPTEMBER**

**The Three Logoi in the
S.D. as the Inner Master
in *The Voice of the
Silence***

**SUNDAY 8
OCTOBER**

**The Third Fundamental
Proposition and the
Evolutionary Chain of
Beings**

**SUNDAY 5
NOVEMBER**

**Key Ideas in the
Cosmogenesis
Stanzas of Dzryan**

**SUNDAY 3
DECEMBER**

Must register, attendance is free.

Martin Leiderman is head of the West Los Angeles Theosophical Study Group, on the Board of Directors of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy, and a renowned international lecturer. Join us each month as Martin takes us on a fascinating journey exploring Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*.



For more information visit
theosophy.nz/events



Farewell Robert Jones

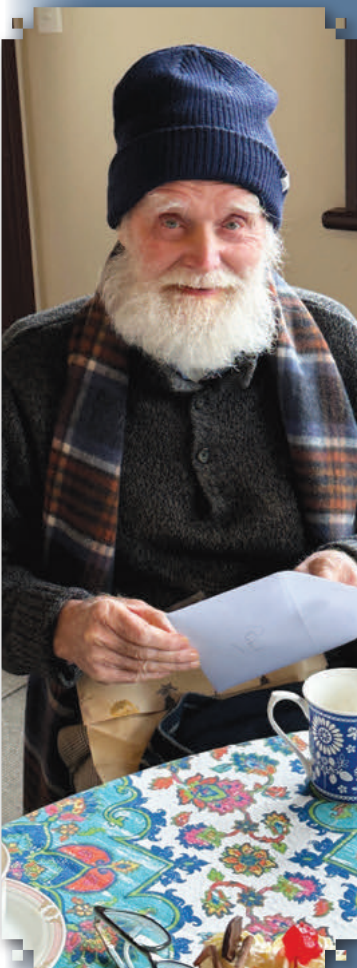
Many of our readers will know Robert Jones, who has been housekeeper at Vasanta House in Auckland, the National Office of The Theosophical Society in New Zealand. Robert has moved to a retirement village close by and a special morning tea was put on for Robert in July.

Robert has lived at Vasanta House for around 25 years. In that time, he has provided much service to the Society and members alike. Robert assisted in the renovations of 17 Belvedere Street (the house Geoffrey Hodson lived in) and also on the strengthening of the retaining wall behind Vasanta House where the library extension was built. He kept the grounds clean and tidy, while keeping the birds who visited well fed. When help was needed Robert was always keen to step up.

Many will recall Robert picking up or dropping them off at the airport while sharing his insights with his passengers and always with a smile. Robert helped his partner and previous housekeeper, Dorothy Sewell and then took on this responsibility after she passed. Robert's kindly face, bringing around daily samosas and offering to help out anyone wherever he can, will be missed at the office and by those visiting and staying at Vasanta House.

We wish Robert the very best in his new home which is close enough for a walk and a visit to Vasanta House or for friends who may wish to pop in and see him. Thank you Robert, from our heart, for all your service.

Richard Sell



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 theodigests@gmail.com or post a note to Theosophical Digest, Box 183, Kaeo 0448 or phone Maureen on 09 405 1653.

National President of TSNZ **Richard Sell** encourages us on the journey of self-transformation.

WINGS OF CHANGE



There is an old wise saying that after many years of admiring the teapot, a seeker eventually realises that one must drink the tea. The accumulation of spiritual knowledge is a little bit like this; very interesting but not in itself the end goal. Its purpose is to help guide the seeker in the practical application, in daily life, of the living wisdoms. We don't travel very far down this road before we realise that the true barrier to success is not the world, other people or circumstance, rather it is our very own self. From this vantage point of understanding, which the Buddha calls 'right view' or 'right seeing', we begin to work on removing the impediments by a process called self-transformation and very quickly come to the realisation that the process is exceedingly difficult.

Understanding who we are and what we are is a necessary step in this journey. Understanding the Self is to identify with that which is eternal, rather than that which is transitory, our terrestrial body and emotions and so forth, however, glimpses are found by those in search of them. Dr Annie Besant said in her book *Initiation: The Perfecting of Man*,

Just as the sun in the heaven is unchanged, but is mirrored as a thousand suns in ponds, lakes, rivers, and oceans, so do you know the Sun of the Spirit within you from the broken reflections that you find in the lower self.

From the standpoint of our lower-self, maintaining our awareness of the true Self is harder to do than one might think. Intellectually we may be comfortable with the concept or idea, but how soon we slip back into identification of the 'I' with the body, emotions and thoughts. Gaining this connection or link with one's true identity is one of the fundamental purposes of meditation. By consistent practice we build the bridge between our lower nature and the higher principles within us, called the *Antahkarana*. Building this bridge is the critical work of the seeker and can well be considered the Path itself. There is a bridge between the lower self and the Soul to be built by our hard work and practice, but also at later stages, there is a gap to be woven between Soul and Spirit – a second *Antahkarana* if you will. It is onwards and upwards always.

Self-transformation of course is not the end of the journey although it is vital effort we must make on the pathway to self-

realisation. Spirit's purpose is to be fully consciousness and master all seven planes of existence in our localised cosmos. The personality gets in the way of this and must be tamed; and become a willing collaborator with the Soul. For this to occur it can offer no resistance to the workings of the Higher Self through our lower nature of selfishness, pride, anger, conceit and other so-called human failings. Therefore, this is the purpose of self-transformation, that of the Soul gaining gradual mastery over its vehicles called physical, physiological, emotional and of course thinking limitations which are highly conditioned.

The personality has tied to it a bundle of attributes called *Skandhas* in Buddhism or *Samskaras* in Hinduism. There are five generally spoken about, but there are in fact seven, since the universe is sevenfold in its nature, although the last two are not disclosed in Theosophy at this stage. Every human being is composed of these five skandhas and they make up what is called our present personality. At incarnation they are attached to the incoming person to shape and form their being and their character. At death, they are put aside, in abeyance, until the Soul has been through the cycle of Bardo and re-emerges into a new incarnation. What are these Skandhas? Our physical form, sensations, abstract ideas, tendencies and mental powers and moral predispositions. The skandhas at birth are formed from their parent, being but the old ones from the past incarnation. The physical body is a new form at each birth, but its tendencies modified by Karma are based on the old previous template. Madame Blavatsky puts it like this in *The Key to Theosophy*:

After allowing the Soul, escaped from the pangs of personal life, a sufficient, aye, a hundredfold compensation, Karma, with its army of Skandhas, waits at the threshold of Devachan, whence the Ego [soul] re-emerges to assume a new incarnation. It is at this moment that the future destiny of the now-rested Ego [soul] trembles in the scales of just Retribution, as it now falls once again under the sway of active Karmic law.

From this we can see that the character is a work of art, to be cut, chiselled, sanded and smoothed, life after life. This is how we transform the human chrysalis into the godlike butterfly which is our true being. It is an unfoldment of consciousness that changes from within, sometimes radically. The butterfly in

nature undergoes physical metamorphosis, in humankind it is a spiritual metamorphosis and is the basis of all true alchemy. Swap the words used in alchemy 'changing base metals into gold' and replace them with 'transmuting the lower nature into the higher' and we have our answer to the riddle of life.

On this road of transformation, we tend also to place far too much importance on the opinions of others. This is not necessary and means we are not coming from a place of inner poise but a place of doubt and fear. We are fumbling in the dark if we live our life in this way. Eckhart Tolle said "Stop looking outside for scraps of pleasure or fulfilment, for validation, security, or love – you have a treasure within that is infinitely greater than anything the world can offer."

A Master of the Wisdom wrote on this to Col Henry Olcott, in the early days of the Society, "Brother mine, he who cares for the opinion of the multitude will never soar above the crowd."

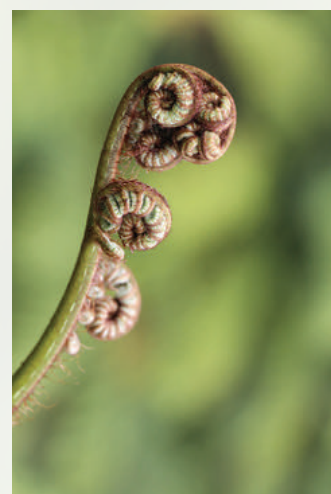
This means we need to go places and take steps that are uncomfortable for us. We will stand firm in matters of principle and ethics, we are willing to admit when we don't know or when we are wrong and to say sorry. This is the working out of Pride versus Humility. H.P. Blavatsky's *Golden Stairs* are a wonderful help in such matters. Enter stage, the concept of duty in daily life and how that modifies behaviour. As the Soul exerts more influence on the personality, we feel this presence through our Buddhic faculty, which we would recognise as conscience or intuition at times. That feeling of right and wrong dovetails with that of duty, sometimes called *Dharma*, although the word *Dharma* does mean other things as well. Sometimes duty and what is expedient for the personality, come into opposition with each other. This is a testing time whereby the seeker now has to choose and our faculty known as discernment comes into play. What is the best course of action? How should I proceed? This we find out for ourselves through trial and error and hopefully learning occurs along the way – pain and suffering are always good teachers because, as has been stated by some, "comfort is the cemetery of the Soul", where we neither learn nor grow. It was the wise Epictetus who said, "Be not diverted from your duty by any idle reflection the silly world may make upon you, for their censures are not in your power, and consequently should not be any part of your concern."

This journey of self-transformation is also a wonderment of discovery. There are joys before us as our relationships grow and deepen, our fields of observation and experience widen and meditations become more contemplative. Our attitude in daily life starts to change in subtle ways as our Intuition grows. At first, we may distrust it and follow only our rational mind and senses, however over time one learns to be guided by that inner voice, which is the Soul responding in proportion to our efforts. The wise listen to it. A snare on the way is not to be deceived between true response from the Higher Self, in contrast with our mind telling us what we want to hear from the personality's point of view. Again, trial and error are in play and learning in this area too is experienced. The person becomes more assured of themselves, more centred and the feeling of really starting to know oneself better can be very reassuring and encouraging, that progress is actually being made.

The true Self ever shines on the being in the outer world we call by our birth name and by our own efforts we change identification from personality to that of Soul, the Self. Beyond is Atma, or Spirit and our true divine nature. Annie Besant translated the beautiful poem found in the Chāndogya Upanishad which speaks of the final realisation of our Higher Self:

More Radiant than the Sun
Purer than the snow
Subtler than the ether
Is the Self,
the Spirit within my Heart
I am that Self of Light
That Self am I.

Through the winding hills and dales of journey and discovery, each step we take creates our own Path towards finding that radiant Sun. What better journey can there be, flying on the wings of change to a glorious future?



PERSONALISING THE WISDOM THE RELEVANCE OF APPLIED THEOSOPHY

Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society,
discusses the process of living.

When the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, much that we have come to take for granted as teachings of the Ageless Wisdom were utterly unknown in the Western world. The language to describe the inner life and the hidden side of Nature was ill-formed in the West. They had to develop a consistent means of expression in order to plant the seeds of these ideas for the benefit of future generations. We are that future generation, the ones who, simply by virtue of being born into the world today, have ready exposure to the ideas of karma, reincarnation, and the various levels of the inner life. With the passing of time the task of rooting these ideas in human consciousness has been done. The priority of our time has changed. Our need is to understand how we can apply and internalize the teachings.

Wisdom is impersonal. Although it permeates all, it exceeds the level of the personality. In the Bible there is an expression: “God is no respecter of persons.” The personal aspect makes absolutely no difference to the wisdom. In much the same way, Theosophy, the Ageless Wisdom, is unchanged and unchanging regardless of whether there are theosophists or not. It is one of the many paradoxes of the spiritual life.

On the one hand there is wisdom, which is utterly impersonal, and on the other hand there is the human being, the person, with all of our limitations and strengths. When we find that the truths expressed in the Ageless Wisdom tradition have value, then we embark on what many describe as the spiritual path. We commit to an effort to understand and draw closer to these truths, to internalize and make them active in a manner specific to our personal lives.

We all have a personality with its own particular features and idiosyncrasies. Our bodies, senses, emotions, minds, and thoughts are differently calibrated according to who we are. Some of us are more emotionally active, others are more intellectually inclined, and some are more physical. From the Ageless Wisdom perspective, one way the personality has been described is “the soul’s toolbox”. It is a set of tools the soul can utilize to make itself felt in the world. The idea of “Personalizing the Wisdom” comes down to this: How can this wisdom become something that is active within our lives?

Recently I had the thought that it would be a valuable exercise for me to put in writing, in the most concise form possible, what is my understanding of living this life. No extra words, as simple as I could make it. What is the meaning and direction of this process of living, and how does it relate to principles of the Ageless Wisdom? Albert Einstein said: “We must make everything as simple as possible, but no simpler.” We have to refine and express our comprehension of wisdom, but there is a limit. We need to be careful about oversimplification.

The Buddha, after his experience of enlightenment, spent the next 50 years of his life attempting to teach a path to end suffering and experience self-transformation. Over the course of his life, he presented profound teachings in many ways. Toward the end of his life, he simplified his teachings to just three things: 1) do no harm, 2) do good, 3) purify your mind. Each one of them connects to a vast body of profound teachings. For our benefit, the Buddha, as all great teachers, made things “as simple as possible, but no simpler”.

Although H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) could express herself in very expansive language, she was not immune to simplification. In her introduction to *The Secret Doctrine*, she refined her presentation to three points

that were of the highest importance in her view: 1) the Absolute, 2) the cycles that govern human life and are active in Nature, and 3) the obligatory pilgrimage of incarnation in which we are all engaged. In order to expand on those three things, the next thousand pages of *The Secret Doctrine* were written.

There is a quote from the Mahatma Letters that expresses what I would like to share with you: "Theosophy must be made practical and has therefore to be disencumbered of useless discussion." It goes on to say that "It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit ... of mutual tolerance, charity, and love." The manner in which we approach our life, society, friends, and community, has to find an all-embracing expression that is not merely situational. This is the task before us. To the degree that we expose ourselves to this Ageless Wisdom, with time we find that our view of the world and ourselves changes. Self-transformation is a fundamental goal of this work.

We have to keep in mind that whatever we see as true or real is partial, conditioned by our inherent limitations. It is the highest that we are capable of at the moment, but there is always a deeper possibility. It is best seen as our most recent highest understanding, but always there is that what lies beyond our field of vision.

In my effort to simplify my understanding of the Ageless Wisdom, I came up with some aphorisms of my own: 1) Only a few things truly matter 2) It is a marathon, not a sprint 3) The world and I are complex, but it is all really simple 4) We can choose 5) We will know 6) There is only one 7) No words.

Obviously, these need some expansion: 1) Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the great American transcendentalists said: "Society everywhere is in conspiracy against ... every one of its members... The virtue in most request is conformity... Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." So, the safeguarding of the integrity of the mind is most important. Of the few things that truly matter, this is one of them.

There are numerous practices we are encouraged to utilize in order to protect the mind. One such tool is "mantra". The literal meaning of this word

is "that which protects the mind". This is worth some exploration. What is it about mantra that is protective of the mind? With a confused, deranged, or poorly functioning mind, our spiritual path and our path through daily life will be clouded. By focusing the mind's energies on sound and elevated meaning in a powerful way, mantra protects the mind from itself — from its conditioned and uncontrolled habitual functioning.

In the little book *At the Feet of the Master*, J. Krishnamurti makes a statement about study. In the theosophical tradition we talk about a three-pronged approach to the spiritual life: study, meditation, and service. He says: "Study first that which will most help you to help others." So, what is it that matters in terms of our study? Within the Ageless Wisdom tradition, the information, knowledge, and facts that are possible to obtain is limitless. How do we determine what will be most valuable? No matter how long we live, we have a very short time. So, we experiment to determine that which will most help others. That is one of the few things that really matters.

In many spiritual disciplines great emphasis is placed on using the short span of a lifetime well. Because there are so many avenues into which we can pour our time and energy, we have to develop a sense of what is most important — a sense of priorities. I have a number of friends who have had near-death experiences (NDEs). Although the experiences may be slightly different, what is true in every case is that having left this world of embodied existence, even for a brief while, and returned, each one returns with a different sense of priorities — of what is actually important. These are things we have to examine for ourselves. Look, see, and determine, based on our living and inner experience, what are those "few things that truly matter". That is my first aphorism.

2) "It's a marathon, not a sprint." Even from the perspective of a single life, it is a *long* journey from infancy to old age. There is an occult expression by Ibn Arabi: "God [Consciousness] sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal, and awakens in the human." This is the arc of the unfoldment of consciousness from the mineral realm to the human, and of course there is an

endless hierarchy of consciousness far beyond humanity. From the Ageless Wisdom perspective this one life is like a pearl on a string of many such lives. The thread of continuous consciousness connecting them is termed the *sutrâtma* in Sanskrit. The possibility for unfoldment of consciousness is not something isolated to this moment; it takes place as a result of actions and thoughts we bring to every moment over a long series of lives — “a marathon, not a sprint”.

3) “The world and I are complex, but it is all really simple.” If we have had any exposure to the teachings of Theosophy, we come away with a sense that there is a great deal of complexity involved in these teachings. Just for starters, we speak of seven planes through which consciousness expresses. Add to that the thought that there are seven sub-planes for each of those seven planes.

This describes a multidimensional universe and us as multidimensional beings that live, grow, and exist within it. With all of these different currents as part of our makeup, complexity is the nature of things. But it is all really simple in this sense: All of these streams and activity are an expression of one consciousness — a universal consciousness present throughout and expressing through its infinite forms. The interblending of numerous levels and forms of consciousness as the activity of one thing is not foreign to us, if we give it a little bit of thought. To take the analogy of our own body, within it there are countless processes going on simultaneously — the electrical processes with the nerves and the brain, the chemical, and the biological processes. There are trillions of cells that compose the human body, each one composed of an individual life with its own needs and form of expression. Yet they all come together to form this one thing that I call “me”, “I”. “This world and I are complex, but it is all really simple” when we dig down into it.

4) The fourth aphorism says: “We can choose”. So often we feel as if we are at the mercy of random forces of life. To a certain extent, of course we are. If we are standing outside and it starts to rain we do not change the rain. Gravity is a law whether we like it, understand it, or not. If we step off from a bridge, we are going down. Those things we cannot control. What we can control is our mind, our response. I know people who, if it is raining outside on a given day, become unhappy, depressed, complain about the weather. “I can’t live my life today because it is cold, because it is raining”; this is common.

There is an advice toward the end of the little book *The Idyll of the White Lotus* by Mabel Collins, which says: “Each person is their own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to their self; the decreer of their life, their reward, their punishment.” It describes an inner capacity always available when we are aware that we can choose. At the time I am writing this we are living in the midst of a global pandemic that has instilled fear, great uncertainty, even depression globally. This is the condition: there is a virus which poses a certain degree of threat, and has affected economies, populations, and societies around the world. But does that mean that we have to succumb to being fearful? It does not. No matter how we live our life, a basic fact is that at some point it ends. So we live our life with intelligence. We make choices that address our highest possibilities, recognizing that even “our highest” will elevate as time goes on. Focusing on the few things that matter, we cultivate our mind, and the capacity of our heart for a deepening level of compassion. Pandemic or not, we can focus on these things. “We can choose”, and those choices have consequences.

5) “We will know.” At the stage that we are in now, there are certain things that we do know; it is very little, but even during the course of one lifetime we are very aware that the scope of what we know and grow to understand has expanded enormously from the time that we were little children. The Bible says: “When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became an adult, I put away childish things.” (1 Corinthians 13:11) Evolution, in the spiritual sense, is what becomes one’s focus. Evolution literally means “unfoldment”.

For example, if I had someone’s photo and folded it many times, in the process of evolution/unfoldment I unfold one corner of it. From that unfolding I see an ear. For a time, the scope of my understanding

of the reality of the person is only one ear. As more of the photo unfolds, we see more and more of the reality. Ultimately, we see it all. So “we will know” at some future point, if we persevere. Even if we do not persevere, this awareness will ultimately open as we are swept along with the evolving wave of humanity. Part of the choice that we make in exposing ourselves to Theosophy is to try to be in the forefront of this unfoldment, not just so that we can feel good about ourselves and have a good life and be happy, but because in this process of forced unfoldment, we are able to transmit something to humanity as a whole that is much needed in this world.

6) “There is only one.” In the three Objects of the TS, this object is the first: “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color”, or any of the separative elements that divide us. “Brotherhood” is another expression for oneness, unity, interdependence, and interconnection. These are words we use in our attempt to describe a fact of the universe.

The deepest problem that humanity faces, from the perspective of the Ageless Wisdom, HPB described as: “The heresy of separateness” — our deeply rooted conviction that each of us is fundamentally separate from everyone else and from all other things. Even though our deepest experiences of love and compassion demonstrate the underlying possibility of union, a separative view of life seems to be confirmed in our daily experience. The value of the previous aphorisms is that, together, they move us toward the experience of Oneness.

7) Finally: “No words.” The *Tao-te-Ching* says: “The Tao (Way, Truth) that can be spoken, is not the eternal Tao.” There are no words to describe what occurs within us when we actually experience these deep truths that we now study.

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Tim Boyd, International President of the Theosophical Society was born in New York City and studied at Brown University then at the University of Chicago. In Chicago Tim joined the TSA in 1974 and co-founded a Theosophical spiritual community in Chicago's inner city. They held classes on the Ageless Wisdom, meditation and healing and formed a business which helped stabilise neighbourhoods through the training and employment of local youth and creation of affordable homes. Tim has been involved in Theosophical work at many levels: from lodge member, to TSA president and president of the Theosophical Order of Service USA. He has spoken across the USA and every continent except Africa. Tim's articles appear in journals around the world.

John Vorstermans describes a process that is not easy
but is rewarding.

The Journey of Self-Transformation

“To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless
Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.”

This Mission of the Theosophical Society includes ‘cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of ... spiritual self-transformation’. As humans we are ever on a journey to know, feel and grow in realisation, through a transformation to knowing who ‘I am’. The journey itself is our teacher, with the unfolding events of daily life awakening awareness of the magical mystery of being human.

Pioneer psychologist, Carl Jung said, “The core of the individual is a mystery of life, which is snuffed out when it is ‘grasped’... True understanding seems to me to be one which does not understand, yet lives and works.” It is by living, working, loving and having compassion that we ultimately define ourselves as human. The search to understand who we are has been the subject of art, philosophy, literature, poetry and going back into the timeless past found in all the great religious traditions and in world mythologies. As humans evolve, there is a change within and something inexplicable happens, a shifting, a deep awakening where life takes on a new purpose and meaning.

UNDERSTANDING WHO WE ARE FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE

To understand our human identity, it is helpful to explore the various parts of which it is composed. We have a physical body with its own unique characteristics; we have feelings, thoughts and ambitions. When we meditate or at times of inner reflection, there comes an awareness of something deeper, something beyond our normal perception which is untouched by the mind, indefinable yet real and true.

H.P. Blavatsky defined the human as being made up of seven principles which are given in various theosophical books and pamphlets. The two highest are called: *Atman*, the universal Self, and *Buddhi*, its spiritual soul or consciousness. (HPB termed the combination of *Atma-Buddhi* as constituting the Monad or

the Pilgrim). H.P. Blavatsky goes on to say: “...the two higher principles, can have no individuality on Earth, cannot be man, unless there is (a) the mind, the *Manas-Ego*, to cognise itself, and (b) the terrestrial false personality, or the body of egotistical desires and personal will, to cement the whole, as if round a pivot to the physical form of man.”ⁱ

“Essentially, three factors are involved in understanding our human state: ⁽¹⁾ the *Monad (Âtma-Buddhi)*, which expresses itself through ⁽²⁾ the mind – or the entire psychological nature, which, in turn, functions through ⁽³⁾ a terrestrial... personality.

“The focus of our human journey towards Self-realisation is at the central point of *manas* or mind. Here the true battles are fought and won. Here is the field of choice where the great decisions must consciously be made. The power of conscious choice is truly a human characteristic. Not only must we face the consequences of our choices, we must recognise that others cannot make our choices for us.”⁽¹⁾

In *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky presented a table of systems adopted by various schools.ⁱⁱ Regarding the *Târaka Râja Yoga* classification, she says “for all practical purposes [this] is the best and simplest, ... though there are seven principles in man, there are but three distinct *upâdhis*⁽²⁾ [bases], in each of which his *Âtmâ* may work independently of the rest.” The three *Upâdhis* are given as:^{iv}

1. *Kâranopâdhi*, spiritual soul or *Buddhi*, the base which provides the principle of causality [*Monad*]
2. *Sukshmopâdhi*, or the mind, including *kâma rupa*, the body or form of egotistical desires, as well as of volitions and feelings, the word *sukshma* itself meaning not only subtle, precise, intangible, but also carrying the connotation of the subtler principles relating to the psychological nature of the human being [*Intellectual*].

1 *The Human Journey – Quest for Self-Transformation* by Joy Mills, Paperback Adyar Pamphlets No.4

2 *Upâdhi* (from the verbal root *dhi*), which means ‘to hold’ or ‘to nourish’, is generally translated as “container” or “receptacle.” But it also has the connotation of something that imposes limitation and gives qualification to that which is being held, nourished or contained within it. Therefore, the three *upâdhis* through which the universal (*Atman*) becomes particularised both limit and nourish the One Consciousness in its individualised expression

3. *Sthulopâdhi*, or the dense physical with its etheric and *prânic* aspects, the word *sthula* meaning that which is tangible, gross, bulky, and therefore referring to the perishable body which has mass and weight, the vehicle in which the human and spiritual soul is invested for an incarnation [*Physical*].

These all seem a very technical view of the human constitution and somewhat abstract which becomes clear when we look further where H.P. Blavatsky states:

... there exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme for the formation of the three periodical upâdhis; or rather three separate schemes of evolution, which in our system are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point. These are the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical evolutions... Each of these three systems has its own laws, and is ruled and guided by different sets of the highest Dhyânis or Logoi^v. Each is represented in the constitution of Man, the Microcosm of the Macrocosm; and it is the union of these three streams in him, which makes him the complex being he now is.^{vi}

Only we can unite the three streams of evolution which we do through the presence of *manas* (the mind), which makes self-consciousness and choice possible. Our human condition is dependent on the use of *manas* for its progress. It is the battleground where our choices are made. H.P. Blavatsky described this battleground in quite a dramatic way as:

There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe: I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards there is reward past all telling – the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.^{vii}

THE HUMAN JOURNEY

To understand what the human journey and self-transformation is, let us look at one of the fundamental propositions on which the occult doctrine itself is based:

The pivotal doctrine of the esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations.

Relating this to the three *Târaka Râja Yoga* classifications above we can see that the processes involved here are:

1. Reincarnation – where the conscious sheaths of the physical body develop over successive lives according to the awakening life within.
2. Metempsychoses – through which the psychological aspects of our nature are inwardly transformed by personal effort and merit into the likeness of the ‘Heavenly’ or archetypical ‘human’.
3. There is a process – which is not really a process at all, rather a spontaneous full awakening that we may call enlightenment – when the spiritual nature stands fully revealed.

These processes relate to three kinds of time. *Reincarnation* takes place in chronological or linear time. Linear time enables us to speak of past and future lives. It allows us to say, “This is my present incarnation.” *Metempsychosis* occurs in *mythic time*⁽³⁾. It has the ‘once-upon-a-time’ quality of all myth and allegory in which transpires the hero-journey of the soul. In *mythic time*, a beginning is possible at any moment in terms of linear time⁽³⁾. One does not need a new incarnation to undertake the quest for self-transformation. The eternal quest is begun the moment the choice is made to take the road that leads to the “heart of the universe.” And *Enlightenment* (which, as stated earlier, is not

The focus of our human journey towards Self-realisation is at the central point of *manas* or mind.

Each of us has
to explore the
question within
ourselves...

a process) takes place outside of time altogether. It is the 'now' which is always – that 'now' which can enter the world of time at any moment, as the experience of the Buddha clearly showed. It may be ascribed to what has been called mystic time – that time beyond time, that timeless moment in which total transformation occurs.^{ix}

Once we become aware of the direction we are taking and note that we are drifting aimlessly with no clear direction, we can choose to take ourselves in hand and make the decision to determine our destination. This is where self-realisation begins.

H.P. Blavatsky gives clarity of the process in *The Voice of the Silence*:

Saith the Great Law: In order to become the KNOWER of ALL-SELF thou hast first of Self to be the knower. To reach the knowledge of that Self, thou hast to give up self to non-self, being to non-being. And now thy self is lost in Self, thyself unto Thy self, merged in that Self from which thou first didst radiate.^x

To truly come to know our true divine SELF we have to let go of that which is not real. Asking the question, 'Who am I?' will lead us to explore what is not real in our journey to find the SELF. Each of us has to explore the question within ourselves, for the answer is one of experience rather than knowledge. H.P. Blavatsky uses the term *metempsychosis* in *The Secret Doctrine* to refer to the crucial psychological transformation that must take place in human consciousness, through which the only hope for peace and the full realisation of Kinship with all can happen. Metempsychosis should not be confused with reincarnation which alone is not sufficient to achieve the goal, nor is it an alternative term for transmigration. It is about a change that takes place within us, from attachment to desires and passions to an inner reflection of awareness and understanding of unity. In theosophical terms we would say a change, a metempsychosis, from *manas* (mind) imprisoned and enslaved by *kâma* (desire) to *manas* (mind) inspired and inflamed by *buddhi* (spiritual soul). It is a complete change or reversal within, into a fully spiritual state.

One of the questions often asked by a student of their teacher or guru who has gone through this process of metempsychosis is "what is it like?" or "what knowledge do you learn?" The Adept Teacher pointed out when answering this sort of question from A.P. Sinnett, "The Secrets are incommunicable. The illumination must come from within."^{xi} It might well be that this illumination from the *buddhi*, the Spiritual Soul, is a perception or insight in unconditioned reality that cannot be cognised by *manas* (mind).

So how do we accomplish this metempsychosis? As is said in the "pivotal doctrine of the esoteric philosophy," through "personal effort and merit" we proceed on the human journey that leads to the ultimate transcendence of the human condition. Theosophical luminary, Joy Mills suggested:

How may we engage in such a work while in the midst of our ordinary lives? The method by which soul transformation is accomplished has been variously defined. In *The Key to Theosophy*, HPB referred to the process of theurgy or "divine work." That term is very old and is part of the vocabulary of the mystery traditions. And, as HPB stated in a footnote (see *Abridgement of the Key to Theosophy* edited by Joy Mills, p.2), theurgy "was a mystic belief – practically proven by initiated adepts and priests – that, by making oneself as pure as the incorporeal beings – i.e., by returning to one's pristine purity of nature – man could move the gods to impart to him Divine mysteries..."^{xii}

There are specific lessons we have to learn to gain this wisdom we are seeking:

1. The lesson of discrimination. Without it we will never be able to sort out the hopeless mixture of ideas and mixed emotion within us. We have to sieve the true from the false, through our own

³ Mythical time isn't tethered to our modern linear conception of time, it's much more abstract. They happen in a place where time does not work the way it does for us. As a consequence, from our perspective the myths have happened, are happening, and will happen again – simultaneously.

effort. It is here easy to become confused and make the wrong choices unless we engage the heart, our inner-knowing as part of this process.

2. To learn that emotions should not be ignored but rather to bring them to a state of calmness where they are able to reflect the light of *buddhi* (spiritual soul). There is a strong link between the emotions and the *buddhi* nature which is clear to see when the emotions are calm.
3. To learn to unite within ourselves the highest and the lowest, the spiritual and material. To do this requires that we live a pure life, develop an intuitive spiritual perception and a compassionate nature.
4. The self that was must die if the Immortal Self is to be born. The soul, fallen into a slumber, needs to be awakened into that new existence in which all egoism has disappeared and one knows oneself as truly one with all life. The human soul is transformed into the spiritual soul. *Atman* (spirit) and the physical become one.

This in today's language may be called self-actualisation and individuation, a psycho-mental transformation of the soul.

The Voice of the Silence suggests there are seven gates we must travel through as part of this journey. Each gate has a key which is required to pass through the gate to the next. The keys are: 1) Giving or Generosity, 2) Morality, 3) Patient acceptance, 4) Develop an indifference to pleasure and pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived, 5) Vigour, a dauntless energy, 6) Meditation, contemplation, 7) Insight, Wisdom.^{xiii} These give us some clues to our own journey of metempsychosis.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky stated explicitly that the next developmental stage in our evolution would have "more to do... with psychology than with physics..."^{xiv} Clearly, the focus of our work today is at the psychological level, the second of the three streams of evolution.

The road of self-transformation must be taken in full awareness of the mystical task before us. There is no other way to go. If we ourselves are in darkness, the world cannot know light. Within ourselves are all the possibilities for world destruction or world redemption. There is an inspiring Upanishadic verse:

From the unreal lead me to the Real.
From darkness lead me to Light.
From death lead me to Immortality.

In summary, we have seen that metempsychosis is the transformational process that takes place at a psychological level, requiring personal effort and merit for the soul to awaken to a new existence in which the sense of the personal disappears and one knows oneself as truly one with all life. The human soul is transformed into the spiritual soul. For this to happen we must each do the work required, not easy but with effort, success is guaranteed. The journey that takes us inwards, past all knowledge that cannot be shared through the mind, must be experienced.

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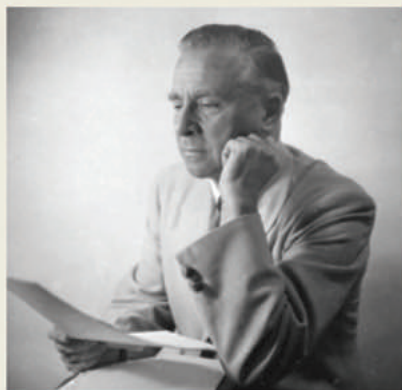
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John Vorstermans is the past National President of the TSNZ. With a deep interest in the ageless wisdom, he has focused on transformative processes that help people understand themselves and create change in their lives.

The Geoffrey Hodson Library



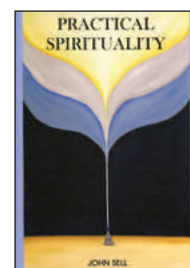
Make 2023 your year to commit to reading and studying more theosophical literature. The Geoffrey Hodson library at National Section's Vasanta House has the widest range of spiritual, theosophical and esoteric material available in New Zealand, all of which is free for members to access. For those outside of Auckland who are unable to access the library in person, borrowing is still a breeze. Simply make your selections from the catalogue online, <https://tsnz-library.theosophy.org.nz> and email us at library@theosophy.org.nz to have them posted to you.

Obtaining more knowledge and understanding of who we are and how to best make meaning and use of this life are some of the most important things we can do for ourselves, for others, for the planet, and for all living beings that are connected to one another in the ever-expanding universe. Reading is foundational, let's commit ourselves to keep on learning.

The Journey of Self-Transformation

► PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY by John Sell

For those exploring the nature of spirituality and inner unfoldment, this book provides practical examples to help in the journey of self-discovery.



► THE PROCESS OF SELF-TRANSFORMATION: MASTERY OF THE SELF AND AWAKENING OF OUR HIGHER POTENTIALS

by Vicente Hao Chin Jr

The self-transformation process covers four areas:

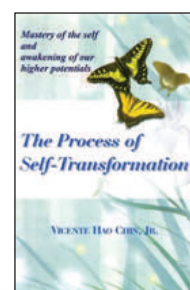
Review of one's map of reality

Self-mastery

Clarification and integration of values

Transcendence

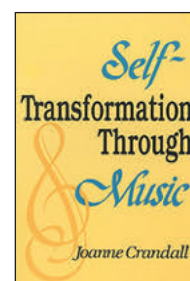
Each aspect contains exercises that the reader can apply and explore.



► SELF-TRANSFORMATION THROUGH MUSIC

by Joanne Crandall

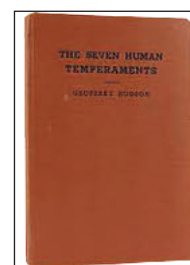
In this self-help book of theory and practical exercises, the author explains how we can put music to good use in our daily life, make it a part of our living experience and let it penetrate our soul so that we truly become One with the tones, rhythm, harmonics and cadence of music.



► THE SEVEN HUMAN TEMPERAMENTS

by Geoffrey Hodson

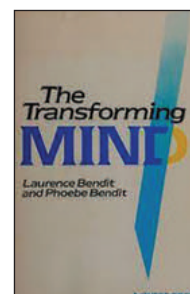
In the esoteric tradition, the number seven occurs frequently. The Seven Rays refer to seven different human temperaments. The author describes the characteristics of people in each of these rays, their strengths and weaknesses, ideals and methods. He also points out that most people show forth in daily life the characteristics of several rays. Ultimately, we must develop the qualities of all the rays, although the unique characteristics of one of them will predominate.



► THE TRANSFORMING MIND

by Laurence Bendit and Phoebe Bendit

This book suggests that once a person looks inward to encompass the whole of nature, they will automatically re-order their world and save it for peaceful use by their children and their children's children.



IMMERSION WEEKEND

Feedback from participants is testimony to the value of this inspiring event

The National Section sponsored Immersion Weekend held in Auckland was a special time. The opportunity was there for all to deepen their inner growth and to share with members from various centres around New Zealand. There were 28 participants including new and longer-term members. All enjoyed the theme for exploration: *Theosophy, A Path Of Discovery*.

Each day began with an attunement meditation to set the atmosphere and eight speakers from around New Zealand offered their own unique insights into this expansive topic. Simple and healthy food was enjoyed and the musical Saturday evening with invited special guests Fay McNeal & Juan Kim was truly magnificent. All agreed that it is very heartening to be a part of a weekend like this and to see *Theosophy in Action!*



Richard Sell



Carol Collier



Murray Stentiford



Participants

PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

I feel really lifted and positive after attending the Immersion Weekend in Auckland.

It was really nice to listen to such a lovely variety of speakers, who each had their own style, yet complemented each other beautifully. We all grew closer as the seminar progressed and by the end of the weekend there was a real feeling of unity in the room.

Wendy Rapp

A lovely weekend thanks. Another chance to catch up with old colleagues and meet new ones in a constructive atmosphere of sharing our varied research and experience. Many thanks to the organisers and keen participants.

Jim Scrivener

The obviously well-prepared keynote from National President Richard Sell was packed full of information that could take a weekend to unpack. Here's hoping Pamela will secure a copy and give us some excerpts over the next few issues of TheoSophia.

The final presentation from Carol Collier silenced the room transporting us all into a present moment that eclipsed time, resonating together with the heart of the poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Toni Weir

I certainly did have a wonderful weekend. Immersion Weekend left me feeling blessed and strengthened from having re-connected with my Soul Family and Theosophical awareness and insights. Thankyou.

Robin de Mandeville

I thoroughly enjoyed the Immersion Weekend. It was a brilliant weekend. The speakers were great and I came away with a renewed strength for working on my inner personal work. I enjoyed meeting everyone.

Sandra Nicholls

Immersion Weekend in Auckland was rich in content and personal connections especially in the Vasanta kitchen/dining room. Guitar music, singing, laughter and story-telling was enjoyed.

Richard Sell's and John Vostermans's presentations were excellent and worthy to be printed in TheoSophia for more members to enjoy.

Barb Zanarb

Barbara Hebert, Past National President of the TS in America,
encourages us in this pursuit...

MOVING TO ENLIGHTENMENT

The theme of Enlightenment is a pertinent topic for our times. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines *to enlighten* as “to furnish knowledge; give spiritual insight to.” The prefix *en-* means *in* or *into*. Combining it with *light*, we come up with the definition of *leading into the light*.

According to some traditions, the Buddha gained enlightenment overnight. It is unlikely that most of us will reach it in this way, so it makes sense to talk about enlightenment as a journey, a process of increasing awareness and understanding of the reality of the world around us.

Enlightenment implies moving from darkness into the light. Much of humanity seems to be living in darkness, unaware of the Ultimate Reality and the unity of all beings. This state of non-knowing is called *avidya*. Living in this state, many experience fear and uncertainty. These feelings are then overlaid by anger. At this time in history, much of humanity seems to be experiencing anger, which is evident in divisive behaviour and on occasion even eruptions of violence. Therefore, exploring the process that leads from *avidya* to enlightenment may provide understanding for us during difficult times.

A child who falls asleep may wake up in the night with the room shrouded in darkness. In this darkness, the child may see shadows and perceive scary things. The child cries out in distress. The parent enters the room and turns on the light. The light allows the child to see clearly and understand that those scary things were simply toys or stuffed animals.

As we move into the light, we also gain perspective about what we originally perceived as frightening or overwhelming. As Paramahansa Yogananda says: “If you are in a dark room, don’t beat at the darkness with a stick, but rather try to turn on the light.” The example is simple, the statement is simple, and it makes the entire process sound simple, but of course it’s not.

When we talk about enlightenment from a spiritual perspective, it is helpful to read the words of the Filipino Theosophist, Vicente (Vic) Hao Chin Jr on the website theosophy.world. He says that enlightenment is “the experience of illumination of the consciousness, accompanied by transcendent insights or realization. The experience of enlightenment is universally

recognized in all major religious traditions, and in non-religious literature as well.”

A transcendent insight or realization does not mean that we have attained complete enlightenment such as was attained by the Buddha, but it does indicate that we are increasing our awareness and understanding. We are moving into the light. Vic goes on to say:

All the spiritual traditions are unanimous regarding the need for preliminary preparations before such a state of enlightenment can be attained. It requires the initial awakening of one’s intuition which leads to what in Christian literature is called the “divine discontent.” Then one goes through a process of search for the wisdom and the Path. When the Path is found, there is a need for purification or purgation of the lower self or personality which has been the subject of conditioning from the past and from society. Only after these are successfully done can the aspirant hope to enter into the gates of illumination and union.

This journey will likely be somewhat different for each one of us. Clarifying and expanding upon our belief system is one way of turning on the light. This expansion brings about personal transformation. Ravi Ravindra writes about this work of moving toward the light, saying: “One common lesson of all the scriptures and teachings of the sages is that if I remain the way I am, I cannot come to the Truth or the Real or God. A radical transformation of the whole of my being is required.”

Many people begin this transformative process through open-minded inquiry, exploration and study, which provide a basis



for expanding our awareness and understanding. We begin to look beyond what we think we know. This portion of our journey toward enlightenment is an exciting and stimulating time. We can almost feel our minds expand as we strive to grasp amazing new concepts and ideas.

The *Voice of the Silence* tells us that this portion of our journey encompasses movement through the Second Hall, the Hall of Learning. It is an essential part of our movement toward enlightenment; however, it is only part of the journey — not the end! *The Voice of the Silence* warns us not to spend too much time in the Hall of Learning. “In it thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled ... stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale.”

The Buddha shared the following parable about dependence upon structured ways of learning. He talked to his disciples about using a boat to cross a river. The boat is a metaphor for the learning that we believe will bring us to enlightenment. He reminds us that, like the boat, learning is a tool. It helps us for a portion of our journey, but once we have reached the other side of the river, it is no longer useful. We must leave the boat on the shore: this tool has taken us as far as it can. If we continue to carry it once we reach shore, it becomes an obstacle. It slows us down and becomes a burden as we continue on our journey.

Learning is essential, but it can only take us so far. We study with an open mind. Through our study, the change begins. Not only do we purposefully begin to change the ways in which we live, think, and interact with others, but we also unconsciously change as our intuitive understanding grows. We begin to grasp the difference between the temporal and the permanent, between the Real and the unreal. Transformation begins to take place as we make these changes.

What specific changes occur? They are probably different for each one of us and are likely to change through time. Some people may change the way they care for their physical bodies, making conscious decisions about eating, exercise, and so on. Others may realize that their emotions have been in charge for too long, while others may begin to recognize the conditioning that has affected their thought processes. We may realize that we have been acting, feeling and thinking from a place of conditioning. We may begin to listen to the intuitive aspect of ourselves, relying on the inner voice from within. In other words, we are transforming all of the various aspects of ourselves.

We are becoming aware that there is no need to seek the light, because we carry the light within us. We are becoming aware that each one of us is rooted in the All, the ground of being. From this perspective, we are never alone, never trapped, never shrouded in darkness. These are all aspects of *avidya*, the state of non-knowing, which is not a part of the Real.

We must travel from the state of *avidya* to an understanding and awareness that we *are* the light. This movement is a journey into ourselves. As Rumi said, “Why do you stay in prison when the door is so wide open? Move outside the tangle of fear thinking. The entrance door to the sanctuary is inside you.”

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From this perspective, we are never alone, never trapped, never shrouded in darkness.



Barbara Hebert, Ph.D., Past National President of the Theosophical Society in America, is Director of the Southeastern Louisiana University Counselling Centre and is a Licensed Professional Counsellor. A third-generation theosophist, Barbara says that Theosophy provides the guideposts through which she endeavours to live her life and that while the Ancient Wisdom is important, it is essential to continue to grow and evolve so that the shared Theosophy message remains relevant.

Be a Transmitter of Ideas

In Theosophy, the seven rays are said to be seven major types of light-substance that compose the created universes. These are also believed to convey divine qualities. **Julia Tarnawsky** considers the potential of the Second Ray.

The Theosophical Society is guided by the Second Ray of Love-Wisdom which expresses through teaching, communication and writing, as 'light workers', so as to lift human consciousness. In this way the unfolding of the Vision of the Theosophical Society occurs: "to inspire and serve the evolution of humanity and all life."

A Second Ray Master, in a meditation for His students, wrote, "A knowledge of truth and the reception of ideas lays on you the responsibility to be a transmitter to others" in *Discipleship in the New Age* Vol. II by Alice A. Bailey.

In times past, this transmission was often through the giving of a talk or lecture by an authority or expert for an audience eager to develop their own cognitive framework. According to the Society, the Divine Wisdom within (from the Greek: theos and sophia) stirs us to want to discover who we are.

Now, with the advent of Aquarian Age group work, the focus is shifting to the resonance of the group field in which ideas, as seeds, may find nourishment to grow. Thus, the incoming spirituality embraces the science of energy and consciousness.

The speaker becomes the facilitator of this group resonance by his or her radiance and intention, utilising the voice, heart, mind, soul, eyes and hands to convey energy in which the ideas are embedded.

What is happening is the blending of his or her energy field with that of the group, forming a vesica piscis or mandorla in which the Christine energy of love, which is relationship, relatedness and resonance, is generated. The ethical stance of the Theosophical Society holds that "our every action, feeling and thought affects all other beings."

This energy stimulates the inner yearning and quest for truth, meaning and significance within listeners and engages them in a dynamic interchange as adult learners, each with their own wealth of lived experience. A melding of the known with

the new and unknown expands the consciousness. In some cases, what is already known within the soul, from past lives, is activated and deeply recognised.

The new group field may continue on as members discuss their insights after the talk or event. Once ideas become significant for listeners, they have the potential to influence the values, the world view or the lifestyle.

The support of the pursuit of spiritual self-realisation is part of the Mission of the Theosophical Society. It encourages enquiry with open hearts and minds. If this particular resonance is already within the listener it may continue to reach into their bones and marrow and their crystalline structures as a felt knowing, a gnosis, an anchor, even when the circumstances of the outer life are tumultuous.

In this way we, as searchers for truth, become Christ-aligned and radiant over time. We can become transmitters of ideas – for the good of all.



Julia Tarnawsky was formerly an educator and psychologist in clinical practice in Australia. Now she explores the relationship of cosmos with psyche as well as models for psycho-spiritual development. Julia was a member of the TSNZ Governance Board and is currently a National Speaker. Julia lives and teaches at Southern Lights Centre for meditation and retreats at Akaroa.

Kirsty Morton considers theosophy in action.

ADVENTURES TO DENTURES

At lifetime TS member, Vicky Weston's memorial service I was reflecting with friends on her amazing adventures, and it was mentioned that she had an aversion (nay, downright refusal!) to getting dentures which had become necessary – hence the term 'Adventures to Dentures' evolved which I determined to put into use. I now take the opportunity to do so in this article.

For me, Life is about recognising and/or creating opportunities, and being responsible for that decision in the moment to either take an opportunity, or not. It will play out as it can.

I made myself available for the Theosophy NZ Governance Board role as I see in it an opportunity to serve, develop and act in the intention of constructively progressing true harmony in diversity. I also believe that it is our responsibility to create as much choice as possible for an eligible candidate list to increase group confidence in our team.

The Governance and Management teams are necessary bodies to manage an organisation as large as Theosophy NZ in moving forward, not getting unnecessarily held back in a personality quicksand (pit) and to also meet legal requirements, for example, the Charities Commission and Health and Safety who have protective protocols and have developed clearly aligned vision regarding strategy and purpose.

Given Governance Board membership is an elected position, I only needed to be confident that, if I was voted for, I could fulfil the role with the time and skills required and the resilience and maturity to not need an attachment to the outcome. As members simply make a choice by utilising their vote, we hope to support people putting themselves forward to increase the potential wider range of choice to more fully enable a preferred option. The more candidates the better!

Having now become a Governance Board member, I look forward to practically using the opportunity to hone 'We' more than 'Me' respecting 'All' in this aspect the best I can and learning as I go. An observation made over a few years in various roles is that we benefit from understanding the difference in clarity of the relevant details of an issue from the personal communication surrounding it. It seems simple to remind ourselves of the agreed values we espouse – altruism, respect, diversity, recognising of the oneness of all life, co-operation, integrity.

It is clearly not always simple to put these values into our natural personal behaviour of communication, especially when we can feel strongly about an issue, which may affect our perspective, at least temporarily. Sometimes we need to appreciate the importance of timing and patience through the unfoldment of what is needed and be able to reflect and refresh our understanding.

What I would like to achieve as a Board member is that wonderful balance of values being lived beyond the immediate self-need, to allow harmony. If we are putting things forward with respect and relevance it will be unlikely to incur an unnecessary off-course diversion. We each and all have a place in every interaction we are part of, for what we are creating. I encourage myself, and you, to take our place as best we can.

Theosophy is an opportunity to practise intelligent Love.



Kirsty has been a Theosophical Society member since 2012 and fulfilled all local roles, currently Branch President and TSNZ Governance Board member and Chair. She is active in community service and has a strong interest in ongoing learning, open-mindedness and creativity. Her favourite word is 'Equanimity' and her intention is to promote increasingly harmonious relations at all levels. Kirsty notes that she has earned her 'silver cap' over the last 60 or so years!



Robert Haywood considers
Mother Earth as a living,
breathing sentient entity.

CLIMATE CHANGE *The Third Reality*

It is hard not to notice that those acknowledging that we are living in a climate change potentially catastrophic situation, including the scientific communities plus children and young adults with doomsday predictions, are getting huge support across all arms and expressions that the media is capable of bringing to the table.

Likewise, it is also hard not to notice that the climate deniers' or nay-sayers' community is also coming in for notoriety, from those same broad-reaching expressions that the media can employ to sway its argument or agenda to the masses.

What has been noticeable, by their absence, are the voices of the Elders – and I refer to both indigenous and non-indigenous Elders who may well be aware of that other reality, that, to date, has not been spoken about – even by those of a green persuasion, again highlighting a level of breathtaking ignorance of that which they claim to fight on behalf of, and, know so much about.

There is a third reality, that remains unspoken about, much less shared, and it would appear, very little known and acknowledged by those who profess to know so much. That is that climate – changes... and...

We refer to Planet Earth, among many names. We use the feminine, Mother Earth. We use Gaia, Papatuanuku and many other titles depending on the culture, legend and wisdom passed down tribally and otherwise. Prithvi, Gaia, Terra, Tellus, the world, the globe, Sol III, the list goes on...

What we do not hear and, it would appear, what many do not know or believe, is that Mother Earth is a living, breathing, evolving entity in Her own right. Consider for a moment, do you realise that She can speak to us?

FROM GAIA

'Long before you all were a vague thought in Great Mystery's mind, long before time ever came into being in your young minds, I, the being upon which you live and draw breath, was already old. None of you have claims upon Me. None of you are favoured, one tribe over another, one belief over another. In the greater scheme of Universes, your negligible presence



concerns few, other than yourselves. History has provided experience beyond measure, yet repetition has become your constant companion. And you have the temerity to bicker over what you see as prior or privileged ownership of Me? You own nothing. You are very temporarily living your experiences, then moving on. I shall continue My journey long after the last of you have faded beyond the recall of any memory. You, all of you, can do better. The clock is ticking and profound change is already well underway.'

That Third Reality is the awareness, the Wisdom, that Mother Earth is a living, breathing sentient entity, whose power is far beyond the ability of the reasoning mind to comprehend and who has Her own journey, Her own evolution and path to walk, whilst providing a schoolroom for the very slow learning humanity that walk upon Her grounds.

Sure, as a humanity, we can do better, treat Her and ourselves more gently and with more respect, but we are deluded and arrogant to think and to believe that we can do Her serious damage. The media, the ill-informed and the frightened young will have you believe differently.

So, be a sheep and follow the frightened herd and remain ignorant and unaware. Or just wake up, stand a few paddocks over and see a very different view from the fear driven reality that some need the masses to believe.

..... ❖❖❖



Robert James Haywood is in his 70th year. Fifty of those years have been spent learning, sharing and teaching in metaphysical healing and philosophy. He is known as a sound weaver, music medicine man, totem animal wisdom sensitive, author, cultural wisdom keeper, international speaker and presenter. He has self-published several books over the last 30 years and is currently finishing another. He says his is not the only voice crying in the wilderness.

The Mystic Path to Inner Peace

Renowned American Theosophist, **Edward Abdill** describes a way chosen by the few.

“There is a Road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a Road. And it leads to the very heart of the universe.” So wrote H. P. Blavatsky about the metaphorical road that leads to enlightenment. But how can any road lead “to the very heart of the universe”?

Such a statement will not seem impossible if we first consider the theosophical view of what we really are as human beings and how we evolve through time. We human beings have a complex nature. We are, theosophically speaking, a compound.

Clearly, we are physical creatures and just as clearly our physical nature has no permanence. It is said that every seven years our bodies consist of a totally new set of atoms. The physical body is thus in a constant state of change, dying once every seven years of our life. Yet the sense of self that we feel so strongly endures throughout our whole life. If that self were only the body, surely we would be a different person every seven years, but we are not. We are still the same self.

We also have an emotional nature that is in a constant state of change. It is subject to immediate changes from moment to moment and over the years to gradual, even in some people transformative, change. The self that endures through these changes cannot be the emotional nature.

We also have a mind that has extraordinary potential. Like the animals, we can use our mind to help us get what we want but unlike the animals, we are capable of abstract thought and of self-examination. Changing thoughts run through our mind

and the way we view the world through our minds may change radically over the years or, in some cases, with a flash of insight.

Through all these changes, the self remains the same and at the deepest level of our consciousness lies a most extraordinary power: the power of self-transformation. It is a power that inheres in what religion calls the immortal soul and what Theosophy calls the reincarnating ego. It is the Inner Self, the observer, the witness, consciousness itself, that endures through the changes. True, we can and do express ourselves through the body, the emotions, and the mind. Yet we can also observe our physical, emotional, and mental states.

Although our conscious attention is drawn by every fascinating or terrifying event in our lives, the pure consciousness called “self” is unperturbed by the objects before it. The Ancient Wisdom suggests that the enduring self inheres in the Eternal, in the “very heart of the universe.” The self that we are is, as Walt Whitman said in *Song of Myself*, “both in and out of the game.” We can stand apart and witness the whole process that we call “me” and we can change it.

If that is true, then we might ask why we do not identify with that Inner Self. We might just as well ask why we do not identify with our own personal subconscious. Psychologists know that our focus and our sense of self often block perception of the darker aspects of our own mind. Can it not be that our sense of self, that is, those experiences we call “self” also block even deeper aspects of our own

being from conscious experience? If so, then is it possible to bring that innermost self to full consciousness?

The esoteric teaching is that not only do matter and form evolve in our world, but the subjective states that include our emotional, mental and spiritual natures also evolve. Through all the kingdoms, up to the human stage, evolution proceeds without self-conscious intervention. It is a passive process not under the direct control of individual plants or animals.

At the human stage, that changes. Physical evolution has come to a halt. There is no evidence that new, more evolved, more capable, physical creatures will appear on our earth. The human form seems to be the final physical stage in our world. Evolution of the subjective domain, however, is far from complete. If there is to be any further evolutionary change in our psychological and innermost nature, we must bring that change about by conscious effort. Modern psychology recognizes that, if we wish to be free of neurotic behaviour and resulting pain, we must make an effort to see the world in a different light and change ourselves. We cannot buy a psychological pill from the therapist with the assurance that if we take it, we will live happy and productive lives. We must delve within ourselves, see ourselves, and seek new insights and ways of responding to the world if we are to become whole.

Curiously, our development tends to recapitulate the evolutionary process. As humans, we move through the passive states rather quickly in the womb and

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during infancy. Then we begin to gain mastery over each level of our being. At first, we identify with the physical body. We need to get some reasonable control of it at the beginning of each incarnation, as the race as a whole did in the distant past. Then the maturing process demands that we get a reasonable control over our emotions and that part of our mind closely associated with our emotions. We also develop our intellect, some only slightly, others very highly. Most stop there.

The wiser ones of the race sense, as Walt Whitman did, that we are not contained between our hat and our boots. There is an Inner Self that urges the conscious self to change, to develop, to reveal more of the potential that lies within, to gain mastery over the whole self at all levels of its expression. That Inner Self is Plato's charioteer, reining in the horses so that the charioteer is in charge rather than the horses.

The Inner Self has a purpose for each incarnation. We incarnate for a reason. We are not here only because of biological processes. In a single life, our own Inner Self determines to develop particular qualities and strengths. It strives to achieve positive results by overcoming resistance.

We readily accept that to develop muscles we must overcome the resistance of weight. What we do not realize is that the very same principle is applicable at the emotional, mental, and spiritual levels. Not only do we grow physically strong by overcoming physical resistance, we grow strong psychologically and spiritually by overcoming resistance.

Every human being experiences some emotional and mental anguish in life. We may worry about our financial security; sorrow over a lost love; have anxious concern for the well-being of relatives, friends, or ourselves; or experience many other disturbing events and situations. It would be delightful if our problems would simply go away or others would take care of them for us. Yet deep down we know that we must solve our own problems. We must change ourselves, grow, develop, and become stronger without losing compassion. Even so, most of us change only when our weaknesses force us to do so.

The process is something like this. If we lack self-confidence, we may find ourselves dominated by others. We may even provide an opportunity for the unethical to take advantage of us. If we remain timid, we cannot adequately express our own potential. Lack of self-confidence results in frustration that eventually becomes more than we can bear. The resulting emotional pain may then force us to develop our own will and courage.

Those who are habitually angry soon alienate others and find themselves without friends. Loneliness may result. From being left out of social occasions, such individuals may learn to replace anger with patience, become more flexible, and even less self-centred.

If we tend to be disorganized, we find that we are inefficient. Our supervisors on the job discover this as well and if we don't do something about it, we may find ourselves out of a job. Such karmic consequences force us to train our minds. This process of being confronted by the consequences of our weaknesses and of our erroneous actions gradually leads to greater insight and character development. After a near incalculable length of time over many incarnations, this process eventually awakens the Inner Self to conscious life, and eventually to enlightenment.

There is, however, a more direct route – one that only the few dare to take. Just as the outer evolutionary process proceeds by orderly, definable stages, so does the inner side of evolution in human consciousness. Most human beings travel the broad path that winds ever so slowly around the mountain toward its summit. A few take a more direct and arduous route, sometimes referred to as "the Path". They take this difficult route, not out of desire for personal benefit, but from a one-pointed yearning to serve suffering humanity more effectively. Each step on this Path is marked by a major shift in consciousness – a kind of new birth.

The more difficult route has been called by various names in different mystical traditions. In China it is “the Tao”, in Hinduism “the Path of Initiation”, in Buddhism “the Noble Eightfold Path”, in Judaism “the Way of Holiness”, in Christianity “the Way of the Cross”. Plato described it in his analogy of the Cave, and in *The Voice of the Silence*, H. P. Blavatsky speaks of its stages as “portals”. All those sources indicate that it is difficult and dangerous but that, if successful, it brings reward past telling.

To enter the Path one must be consumed by, as Blavatsky puts it, “an inexpressible longing for the Infinite.” In Biblical terms, one must “love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.” And one must be willing to face the dangers and hardships of the way ahead, and be willing to lose one’s life for the sake of the Infinite in order to find it in Life Eternal.

Nearly all traditions report that the personality must be purified. That is, we need to see and destroy habit patterns that are inimical to the development of the Inner Self. These habit patterns are not simply physical ones such as smoking or drinking. In fact, the more insidious ones are those that take refuge in the subconscious levels of our emotions and mind. They are subtle manifestations of self-centredness that throw a mist over the conscious mind so that we are unaware of the motive behind our actions.

H. P. Blavatsky outlined the qualities she believed to be essential on the spiritual path in a simple, yet profound, statement entitled “The Golden Stairs”. They include a clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, and a valiant defence of those unjustly attacked.

From the pulpits of temples and churches, one often hears about the requirement to live a clean life. Indeed, that is important, but it is only the first step for those who want to press onward to what Blavatsky called “the Temple of Divine Wisdom.” However difficult it may be to live a clean life, to develop the other qualities requires far more effort. In fact, they may take not only many years, but many lifetimes.

Theosophical sources tell us that entering the Path in earnest draws down upon us the karma of more than one lifetime. It concentrates the work, speeds everything up. Challenges that would ordinarily be spread over several lives are concentrated into one. Depending on the intensity and sincerity of our commitment, we are forced to confront and overcome many more difficult problems than would ordinarily face us. This intense acceleration of our karmic debt is what makes the Path, or as mystical Christians call it, the Way of the Cross.

Speaking of this Path to an English newspaper editor, A. P. Sinnett, one of Blavatsky’s teachers, wrote:

You were told, however, that the path to Occult Sciences has to be trodden laboriously and crossed at the danger of life; that every new step in it leading to the final goal is surrounded by pitfalls and cruel thorns; that the pilgrim who ventures upon it is made first to confront and conquer the thousand and one furies who keep watch over its adamantine gates and entrance, furies called Doubt, Skepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation – especially the latter; and that he who would see beyond had to first destroy this living wall; that he must be possessed of a heart and soul clad in steel, and of an iron, never failing determination and yet be meek and gentle, humble and have shut out from his heart every human passion that leads to evil. Are you all this?

Mahatma Letters, no. 62, chronological 126

Paradoxically, the very first steps on the Path do not seem so difficult. Rather, they tend to be joyous. One feels born into a new and higher life. In the scriptures and myths of various cultures one often finds allusions to the entrance and various stages along the Path. In Christianity the beginning of the Path is symbolized by the Nativity, a joyous time. Speaking of this first stage, Blavatsky (*The Voice of*

Nearly all traditions report that the personality must be purified.

Symbolically, it is the personal ego that must die so that the divine Inner Self may rise from the dead.

the Silence, “The Seven Portals”) writes: “The road that leads there through is straight and smooth and green. ’Tis like a sunny glade in the dark forest depths.”

The second portal is also somewhat joyous, but omens of difficulty appear. In Christianity it is the Baptism. In the Christian story, Jesus is now an adult and he must surely know that although he is beginning his mission, his life will not be easy. About this portal, Blavatsky writes: “And to the second gate the way is verdant too. But it is steep and winds up hill; yea, to its rocky top. Gray mists will overhang its rough and stony height, and all be dark beyond. As on he goes, the song of hope soundeth more feeble in the pilgrim’s heart. The thrill of doubt is now upon him; his step less steady grows.”

The third gate reveals the full extent of the future sacrifice. It is symbolized by the Transfiguration in Christianity. For the first time, Jesus tells his disciples that he will be taken from them and killed. He now fully knows his destiny. Symbolically, it is the personal ego that must die so that the divine Inner Self may rise from the dead. Blavatsky writes:

The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet. The path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire, the light of daring, burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale and that alone can guide. For as the lingering sunbeam, that on the top of some tall mountain shines, is followed by black night when out it fades, so is heart-light. When out it goes, a dark and threatening shade will fall from thine own heart upon the path, and root thy feet in terror to the spot.

The fourth and final gate is symbolized in Christianity as the Crucifixion. Blavatsky writes:

For, on Path fourth, the lightest breeze of passion or desire will stir the steady light upon the pure white walls of Soul. The smallest wave of longing or regret for Maya’s gifts illusive, along Antahkarana – the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arouasers of Ahankara – a thought as fleeting as the lightning flash will make thee thy three prizes forfeit – the prizes thou hast won. For know, that the ETERNAL knows no change.

Only through the death of the personal ego can the Divine Self come forth to reign. What appears to be death is in fact a gateway to the awakening of the Inner Self that inheres in the Eternal. We may ask, with Christina Rossetti, “Does the road wind up-hill all the way?” The answer comes, “Yes, to the very end ... my friend.” We can make it to the end. But if we fail, we can try again and again until success comes.

Yet even if we shun the difficult Path and take the longer, more common route of evolution, it is helpful to remember that often the things that we think are important are, from the view of the Inner Self, completely unimportant.

The next time we get very upset over something, we might remember the little boy who would not eat his prunes at dinner. His mother told him that he had been very naughty. “People are starving in the world,” she told him, “and you won’t eat your prunes. God will punish you for this.” Then she sent him to his room for the rest of the evening. About an hour later a terrible thunderstorm came and she remembered what she had said to her young son. She ran upstairs to his room to comfort him and to explain that God was not punishing him by sending the storm. When she opened the door, she found him standing with his hands on his hips, looking out at the storm and saying: “Such a fuss for two prunes.” Could it be that, however gigantic our problems seem, most of them are just two prunes?

As near-death experiences suggest, what is finally important is what we learn, how much we grow in strength, insight, compassion, wisdom, and self-mastery. Few other things matter much, and most things don’t matter at all. They are just two prunes.

In Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, Prince Tamino was not concerned with small matters. He took the noble Path filled with danger. His bird-catching friend Papageno took the more common route. To him, a happy life with wine, food and a loving wife was enough. Papageno was not wrong. He was a good man but what was important to him was the cares and concerns of the personal self. The Prince was willing to make personal sacrifice to obtain the ultimate prize. He took the mystic Path to inner peace.

No matter which path we choose, when we pass through a difficult time, we might remember to dig within ourselves to find the resources, the strength, the hitherto unknown talent buried deep within our own selves, to solve the problem. For it is in the solving of a problem, meeting resistance head on and conquering it, that we grow. The arduous trials and the luminous hopes of this mystic path to inner peace are succinctly expressed by Blavatsky in a short piece called simply "There Is a Road":

There is a Road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a Road. And it leads to the very heart of the universe.

I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inwardly only, and closes fast behind the neophyte forever more.

There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer.

There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through.

There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount.

For those who win onward, there is reward past all telling: the power to bless and save humanity.

For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.

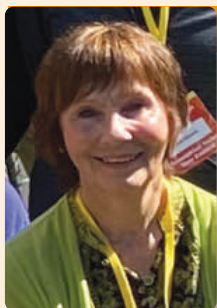
In this poetic form Blavatsky tells us of the difficulties but she also assures us that there are no insoluble problems. We can succeed, if we will listen to one of her teachers who wrote, "We have one word for all aspirants: TRY.

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For it is in
the solving of
a problem,
meeting
resistance
head on and
conquering it,
that we grow.



Edward Abdill is a former Director of the Theosophical Society in America and a past president of the New York Theosophical Society. He lectures in both English and Spanish around the nation and internationally. He is a Phi Beta Kappa and has a Master's Degree in Latin American Studies from New York University.



'A Union of those who Love, in the service of all that suffers'



Carol Collier, National Director of the TOS in New Zealand reflects on the transformative nature of service

'A Union of those who Love, in the service of all that suffers' is the mission statement given to the Theosophical Order of Service by then Theosophical Society President Annie Besant in 1908. 'Service' is a life-long dedication and commitment to helping others to a better life and to higher standards.

To provide 'Real Service' demands the giver has the benefit of others as the priority. When sacrifice is combined with service, there is transformation that is completely focused on the well-being of others.

Bill Keidan, a long-standing supporter of the TS and the TOS in New Zealand shares a few words on *Service and Sacrifice*:

Service relates to the willingness to help a desired goal to be achieved. Sacrifice involves the willingness to suffer in relation to achieving such a goal.

GurujiMa.

However, sacrifice for a noble cause is only an 'apparent sacrifice' because what causes limitation, or even pain, spells a certain liberation of the soul. Nowadays, most of us are not called upon to make the sorts of sacrifice such as the early martyrs of religion, but still if we sacrifice our time or money in acts of service we are often, without knowing, releasing ourselves from the karmic restraints of the past.

Someone once said that human beings only have two coins to pay for the mistakes of their past, one being suffering and limitation and the other being good actions in the present which neutralise those mistakes. Also service and sacrifice to help those less fortunate than ourselves is the embodiment of Karma Yoga, which is a very safe form of Yoga, since it does not involve stimulating energies which may already be over-stimulated.

Apart from doing something meaningful to help others, our work in the Theosophical Order of Service is an antidote to being merely 'armchair philosophers' and moves our spiritual life along in a meaningful way.

..... ❖❖❖

Service takes many forms. There is direct hands-on action like distributing food to the poor. There is advocacy work to achieve the system-wide changes necessary to end hunger. There is self-purification so that our social action is as effective as possible. There is education on the spiritual principles that can gradually transform society. All these forms of service have their place within the TOS. None is superior to another. The TOS aspires to become of greater and greater support to the TS in making theosophy teachings of transformative value in the world.

An act of service can have a profound flow-on effect on those who come into contact with the light that emanates from it. This light never diminishes. I recently had the opportunity to witness this service in action. We were privileged to have Bill Keidan spend eight days at the Waikato Study Centre in Hamilton recently. Bill presented seven talks covering topics which included: *The Real Meaning of the Inner Life, The Theosophical Society, Discipleship and Initiation* and *Geoffrey Hodson*. Those present included members and friends of the study group and visitors who had never heard of the TS. On the last informal evening, two young friends who had been encouraged to come along by a visitor from the evening before, arrived at the door. The young woman is interested in healing modalities and the young man is a machine operator and member of a Punk Rock band. He is also looking for a 'new pathway'. The question "What drew you to the TS?" and specifically "What drew you here tonight?" arose. The two young visitors became very engaged in the conversation and expressed how they both felt safe and nurtured in the group. There were also moments of silence and deep connection. At the end of the evening the young man expressed an interest in acquiring a book to read on spirituality so I showed him our library. He was quite overwhelmed and decided to just pick one that jumped out at him. He quickly ran his finger over the shelves of books and then said "this is the book that jumps out." We both laughed when we saw the title of the book *Practical Spirituality* by John Sell.

I told him that we do not usually let this book out to non-members, however I decided to let him take it out. He

looked at me and said "Thank you for trusting me, it means a lot to me. I promise to return it." And he did. It made a big impression on him. This is why the TS and the TOS exist.



Bill Keidan

Thank you John Sell, Bill Keidan and all those beautiful souls who keep the light shining so brightly through their acts of Service.



No soul that aspires can ever fail to rise;
no heart that loves can ever be abandoned.
Difficulties exist only that in overcoming
them we may grow strong, and they only
who have suffered are able to save.

Annie Besant



Artwork by Helen Dynes

The silent auction for the artwork by Helen Dynes, Mixed Media Artist, TSNZ member and TOS supporter from the Hawke's Bay Lodge, has been extended to 30th September 2023. This signed artist proof, titled 'JOY' is inspired by the poem by Kahlil Gibran. If you would like to place a bid on this painting, please email: tos@theosophy.org.nz

Helen lost everything in her art studio when the Artists Village was wiped out during the devastating cyclone that hit the Hawke's Bay. All that was left was the original painting, which Helen had taken home the night before the floods.

To help contact:
CAROL COLLIER

Phone:
027 668 4554

or
Email:

tos@theosophy.org.nz

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Vegetarians Today

From the New Zealand Vegetarian Society, Margaret Johns urges us to make our own healthy meals.



Recently I took part in the New Zealand Garden Bird Survey. It reminded me that despite all the havoc and destruction caused by the forces of Nature, there is still much beauty to be admired; from the wonderful colours of the Kingfisher (two visit us every morning), the graceful flitting of the fantail from tree to tree, to the sound of the tui joining in the dawn chorus. It's nice to know the NZVS Think Kind school competition, this July and August, is encouraging young people to look after the environment as a whole, as well as birds and other animals.

With rising food costs caused by loss and destruction of food-producing land, we need to be inventive with what is available, so we can still eat well and maintain good health. There are numerous options for proteins either tinned or dried, such as chickpeas, lentils, a variety of beans and even jackfruit. If you have a local Bin Inn (or similar store) where you can take your own container to fill, you can stick to your budget and do your

bit for recycling at the same time. Yes, it takes longer to prepare dried lentils or chickpeas, but if you have a freezer they can be done in bulk and frozen in usable lots for future use. Dried soup mix is not expensive and with added mixed vegetables, can make a nourishing meal.

Maybe we've all become too used to instant gratification and having everything pre-prepared for us. Can we think ahead, prepare weekly menus and spend time preparing food in advance while making better use of the freezer?

There are numerous recipes available on the internet, particularly on the NZ Vegetarian Society website (<https://www.vegetarian.org.nz/veg-living/recipes>) and with World Vegetarian Day on 1 October, there are recipes from all round the world. So, why not try some, especially ones you haven't tried before?

RED LENTIL, CARROT AND KUMARA SOUP

(4 large servings)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 large onion • 1 tsp (1-2 cloves) minced garlic • 2 tsp ground cumin • 4 cups vegetable stock or 4 tsp stock powder in 4 cups water • 1 cup red lentils • 2 stalks celery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt and freshly ground black pepper • 2 Tbsp olive oil • ¼ to ½ tsp minced red chilli • 1 tsp turmeric (optional) • 2 medium-sized carrots • 1 largish kumara • basil pesto |
|---|--|

DIRECTIONS

Chop the onion in 1cm chunks, add to a large saucepan and cook in the oil for about 5 minutes without browning. While cooking, stir in garlic, chilli, cumin and turmeric. Spices should smell fragrant but should not burn.

Add liquid and lentils. Simmer, stirring now and then, while you cut the carrots and celery in 5mm slices and the thinly peeled kumara into 1cm cubes. Add to saucepan and cook gently for 15-20 minutes, or until tender. Leave soup chunky or puree it, depending on the texture you like. Thin with extra stock, water or milk if very thick. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

To serve, top with basil pesto. Sour cream or small cubes of tofu can also be added.

(Recipe from *Very Easy Vegetarian Cookbook* by Alison Holst and Simon Holst)



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 \$50.

Vasanta House Accommodation

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. For bookings and more information please contact the office 09 523-1797.

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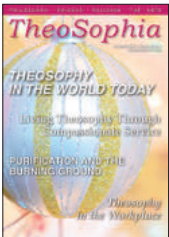
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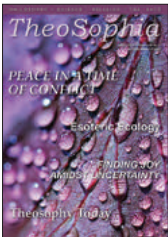
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Theosophy

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.

Theosophy puts death in its rightful place as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the science of the spirit, teaching one to know the spirit as oneself and the mind and the body as one's servants.

Theosophy literally means divine wisdom: *theosophia*. Theosophy illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions, by unveiling their hidden meanings; thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone who is willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high and to work perseveringly, is welcome as a member and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

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

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Contact: Ph 021 1755 170 / hpbpres@theosophy.org.nz
President: Renée Sell
Website: hpb.theosophy.org.nz

CANTERBURY

Venue: Aldersgate Centre, rear entrance from Chester Street West, Christchurch
Public Talks: 1st Wednesday of month 7:30pm
Contact: theosophycanterbury@gmail.com
President: Susanna Roskilly
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/canterbury>

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Meetings: Wednesdays 7:30pm
Contact: James Fox
0272 923 699 / theodunedin@gmail.com
President: James Fox
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Venue: Theosophy Centre, Waikare Ave, Kaero
Contact: Maureen Paterson (09) 405 0707 / farnorththeosophy.president@gmail.com
President: Maureen Paterson
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/far-north>

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Venue: 73 Anglesea Street
Meetings: Sundays 7.30 pm
Contact: hamiltontheosophy@gmail.com
Website: <https://hamiltontheosophy.weebly.com>

AFFILIATED CENTRE

HAWKE'S BAY

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Meetings: 2nd & 4th Thursday 7.00 pm
Contact: Sue Harrison 027 976-1563 / hawkesbayts@gmail.com

NEW PLYMOUTH

Venue: 30 Hine Street, New Plymouth 4310
Meetings: Public - see newsletter on website
Members - 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 7.30pm
Contact: Jim Scrivener 021 251 1011 / tsnewplymouth@gmail.com
President: Jim Scrivener
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/new-plymouth>

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Meetings: Varying
Contact: Heather Bell (09) 427 0149 / palumbo@xtra.co.nz
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PALMERSTON NORTH

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Meetings: See website
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President: Helen Sussmilch
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/pn>

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Meetings: Public - Tuesdays 7-8pm
Members - Some Sundays 2-4pm (see programme)
Contact: tswlgtm@gmail.com
President: Simon Webber
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/wellington>

WHANGANUI

Venue: Community Arts Centre, Taupo Quay
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Contact: Kirsty TXT to 021 212 3819 / theosophywhanganui@gmail.com
President: Kirsty Morton
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/wanganui>

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Contact: Paul Henderson (09) 436 2661 / mjcloss2014@gmail.com
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Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/whangarei>

STUDY CENTRES

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Contact: David Simpson (03) 213 0424

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Contact: National Section on office@theosophy.org.nz
Website: <https://theosophy.nz/centres/nelson-study-centre>

TAKAKA

Venue: Members' homes
Meetings: Usually alternate Tuesdays
Contact: Murray Rogers 022 072 4569 / jmrwordplay@gmail.co.nz

WAIKATO THEOSOPHICAL STUDY CENTRE

Venue: 40 Marama Street, Frankton, Hamilton 3204
Meetings: 1st and 3rd Thursdays of month 7-9 pm
Contact: Carol Collier 027 668 4554 or Sue Mitchell 027 636 6435
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REFLECTION

The greatest achievement is selflessness.

The greatest worth is self-mastery.

The greatest quality is seeking to serve others.

The greatest precept is continual awareness.

The greatest medicine is the emptiness of everything.

The greatest action is not conforming to the world's ways.

The greatest magic is transmuting the passions.

The greatest generosity is non-attachment.

The greatest goodness is a peaceful mind.

The greatest patience is humility.

The greatest effort is not concerned with results.

The greatest meditation is a mind that lets go.

The greatest wisdom is seeing through appearances.

Gautama Buddha



There is no *other* in this world.
Each is a separate form,
but One Spirit lives
and moves in All.

Annie Besant



September 2023